



# ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

*Nascantur in Admirazione*

"Let Them Be Born in Wonder."

## St. Thomas PreK-10 School Newsletter February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024

### *School Mission Statement*

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School exists to form disciples of Jesus Christ. Educating in the Eucharistic culture and classical intellectual tradition of the Catholic Church, students are led to encounters with the transcendental good, true, and beautiful. In wonder, confidence, and virtue, students are prepared to engage our broken world for the glory of God, the good of others, and for their own sanctification.

### Virtue for the School Year: Faith

- Assenting, through grace, to God's revealed truth

### Virtue for Scholastica Term: Friendliness

- Acting in a becoming manner towards others



## ~ Upcoming Events ~

February 23<sup>rd</sup>  
**Dress-down Day**

March 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Financial Aid Application Deadline**  
**Next School EF Mass**

March 5<sup>th</sup>  
**Technology Discussion Night, 7-8:30 p.m., school library (see below)**

March 6<sup>th</sup>  
**No School - ICLE PD Day**

March 28<sup>th</sup>-April 7<sup>th</sup>  
**Easter Break**

SAVE THE DATE: April 19<sup>th</sup>  
**St. Thomas Gala - Weber's Inn**



## **Congratulations, Mrs. Jackowski!**

Samuel Thomas Jackowski, born February 16<sup>th</sup> – Mother and baby are home and doing well!



## **From the Headmaster**

Last Tuesday, Zach Good gave a wonderful presentation to an audience of around 40 people, roughly half of which was comprised of non-school people. Zach had a number of great points and insights to offer from his experience, some of which I want to pass along for those who weren't able to make it. He made clear that not

everything is perfectly applicable, nor did he intend to offer a blueprint that could simply be copied. Obviously, each school encounters a unique set of circumstances.

After speaking about his own background and his work at Sacred Heart, he got into things he learned from the process of developing a classical K-12 school. One challenge faced by a classical school today is that what it means to be “classical” can be hard to define. One reason for this is that, while trying to recover principles and a vision, we are addressing a very different context than, say, 150 years ago. For example, it is historically a recent and anomalous thing to seek to put all children in school beginning at the age of 5. Thus, we are working on an entrepreneurial endeavor.

In forming and developing a classical Catholic school, “the answer is probably ‘no.’” This refers to the fact that, once you have your core identity and functions down, there needs to be a high level of scrutiny about adding new things. Lots of things are “good,” but not many things are “best.” You may think that you’re simply adding this one good thing, but, really, you’re introducing a whole set of new unforeseen variables. Using an example from Sacred Heart, he pointed out that, once you add a football team, you’ll want a homecoming, which requires pep week and a pep rally, which requires a cheer leading team, and so on. None of these things are “bad,” but they bring about a multiplying effect that can have a larger-than-anticipated impact on your school culture. As Zach put it, “nothing” can actually be pretty good – meaning just the day-to-day running of a school. He was certainly not advocating avoiding all new things, but his advice stressed the “no” part because schools, and high schools in particular, tend to succumb to having lots of things, to activism, and always having more options, more things to do.

Going along with that point, he stressed the importance of limitations and knowing the reasons for boundaries. Depth over breadth, focus over survey, etc. – these ideas are critical in forging a distinct identity, such that a school doesn’t just become a conventionally-run affair with a classical “sprinkling.” Of course, when you get into particulars about what to have and not have in a curriculum or in other parts of the school’s life, this can involve tough decisions that don’t necessarily please everyone. This shouldn’t be surprising if a school is really trying to operate on principles and assumptions that are not always shared in more conventional school contexts. Of course, this isn’t merely about saying “no,” but about cultivating a culture of excellence.

Another insight he offered focused on parents. We often have expectations of “what a school/high school experience ought to be” based on our own experience and what we had growing up, things we are often attached to. It is critical that parents are able to let those things go. Indeed, that detachment is a key part of forging a

distinct, classical Catholic identity, since much of parents' own experience draws from a conventional school culture and its underlying assumptions.

Finally, during the question-and-answer session, he was able to address the "college-readiness" question. Despite the fact that they don't inflate GPA and don't have AP classes, Sacred Heart has done very well at helping students gain admittance to colleges of their choice. Granted, many students track, by choice, into liberal arts' Catholic colleges or universities. The model that Sacred Heart chooses to follow for high school doesn't necessarily track a student into a University of Michigan or Notre Dame, and that is mainly a factor of a conscious choice that the school has made, knowing that they won't be able to offer what all students might be looking for in a high-school experience. Nonetheless, students are still, with the support of an in-house college counselor, able to get into a wide array of colleges and do quite well at staying the course once there (bucking the growing drop-out trend among college students). Sacred Heart has students take the CLT and prepares them to take the SAT and/or ACT. Students have also been able to take (and pass), as needed, AP exams without taking AP courses.

## Gala Tickets Now on Sale!

Please see the attached flyers for ordering tickets to our scholarship gala on April 19<sup>th</sup>!

## March 5<sup>th</sup> Technology Discussion Night

I look forward to fostering further dialogue among parents about the use of technology at home. Mike Hanley and I will be hosting from 7:00-8:30 p.m. in the school library. Please see the February 5<sup>th</sup> newsletter for a full write-up on the event.

## Upcoming Lenten/March School Events

Mrs. Deemer, the teachers, and I are finalizing details for the events and competition of March is Reading Month, which will begin during library times the last week of February. This will be a fun opportunity for Mrs. Deemer and the teachers to highlight the importance of reading worthwhile books. More details are coming next week.

Mr. Votel is coordinating, with his 6<sup>th</sup>-grade class, a Lenten food drive for Hope Clinic. This drive will run through the week before Holy Week. A list of desired items and more details are coming shortly.