



# ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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*Nascantur in Admirazione*

"Let Them Be Born in Wonder."

## St. Thomas PreK-10 School Newsletter February 5<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 5<sup>th</sup>

**Registration Due for Returning Families**

February 7<sup>th</sup>

**Dress-up Day**

February 13<sup>th</sup>

**Special Presentation: Zach Good, 6:30-8:30 p.m., parish hall**

February 14<sup>th</sup>

**Ash Wednesday**

February 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>  
**Mid-Winter Break**

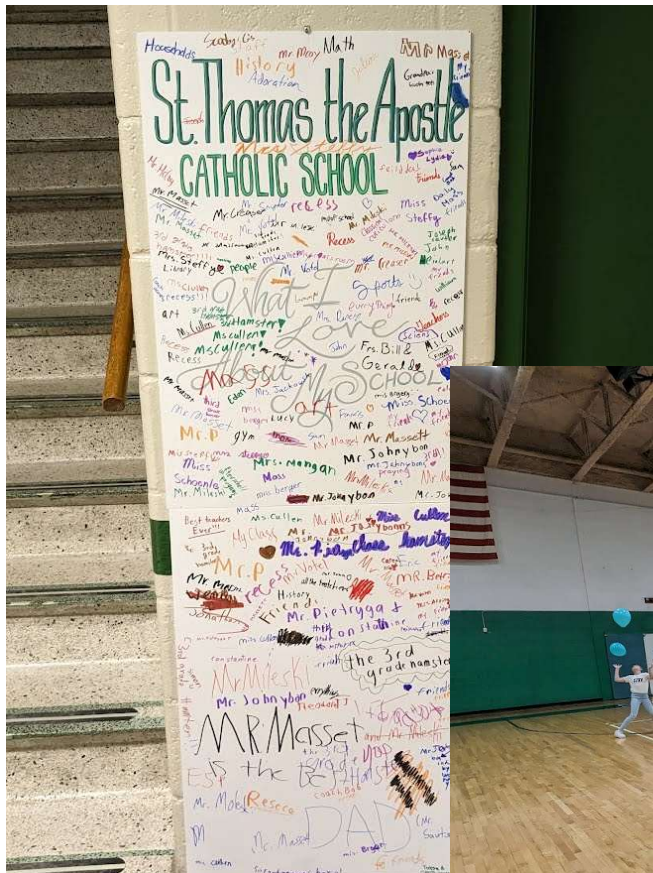
March 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Financial Aid Application Deadline**  
**Next School EF Mass**

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

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



## Catholic Schools Week



"What I Love About My School" –  
Thank you, Laura Johnson, for the  
special signs!



Household competition –  
balloon juggling!



“Three-legged race” with more than three legs!



Pass along the marshmallow – don't eat it!



Pass along the hula-hoop without letting go!



Candlemas Procession



Kindergarten 100<sup>th</sup> Day Party!

Students vs. Faculty  
Basketball game



## From the Headmaster

We had a full week last week, kicking off the week with a rosary at assembly, followed by lovely thank-you cards and baskets for teachers on Tuesday, parent thank-you's on Wednesday, and all-school events in the gym on Thursday and Friday. It's always good to have a chance to break up dreary winter days!

Today at assembly, we talked more in depth about the meaning of "friendliness." I encouraged all classes to think together on how they could better practice showing honor and respect towards one another, something our society doesn't always do a great job of passing on. I also asked students to begin thinking about Lent, especially if the thing they choose to give up will help them to pray more and attend more to the most important things in life. I encouraged them to consider if there was something in their life that sucked their time, energy, and focus, such as screen time. Giving this up or severely limiting it could be an excellent way to gain back time and focus for prayer, family, and schoolwork!

As we come to the due date for registration (today!), I want to thank you once again for entrusting your children to St. Thomas. We have a great opportunity to continue to build something special in the Ann Arbor area, and your commitment, prayer, and support are vital to the work we pursue. In our community effort to bring young souls to Jesus Christ and His truth, we elevate the classical model in the service of a salvific purpose, and *that* combination, we think, will be an enduring source of distinction for our school and of the depth in character that students can develop over time at St. Thomas.

This week, even as grade-school students finish up the winter session of the NWEA, our 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders will be taking the Classical Learning Test for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders, the CLT-10. This will not only give us a measure of their progress so far, but also prepare them for taking the full CLT in 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

## Technology Discussion Night – March 5<sup>th</sup>, 7-8:30

Last October, Mike Hanley, drawing both from his professional expertise in security and his personal experience as a father of 8, gave a presentation to parents on tools they could use to help monitor and limit screentime and media access at home. We would like to follow up that presentation with an evening discussion about screentime and media use at home. In the handbook, I emphasize the importance of having a "match" between what happens at home and what happens at school. Both for their spiritual and intellectual development, we want students to be able to have a sustained focus, to dive deeply into texts and discussion, to hold things in memory and reflect on them, and to love what is truly worthwhile and beautiful. These goals require a supporting context, where we are partnering to establish sensible limits so as to help them to thrive as human persons. This is the thinking behind having a "disciplined and limited" approach to screen and technology use at and for school.

In our discussion in March, we hope to be able to collaborate on ways to support parents in their efforts to develop a healthy “culture” at home with regard to technology use. We want students to have the required knowledge and skills to navigate a technological society, but, given that our education is not merely for teaching how to become a productive member of a given society, this goal is subordinated to the effort to bring about a true flourishing of the mind and heart. First place is given to developing virtue and to instilling a taste and love for wisdom. Given the addictive character of online media and the particularly powerful impact that media has on young minds, I think it is worthwhile to be seriously reflecting, in an ongoing way, about how to help our children at home and at school. This is not so much about “sheltering” young minds from what is “bad,” but, again, establishing the sorts of conditions and boundaries that will help them to truly pursue excellence, which entails a pacing, self-mastery, and silence not often supported by extensive screen use.

Mike and I plan to give a short presentation to begin and frame the conversation. This will be followed by small-group discussions among parents, with a time for sharing with the whole group at the end. We recognize setting limits can be hard; it is an ongoing challenge for all of us! Rather than trying to guilt-trip parents into “doing better,” we hope that parents themselves can begin to provide each other mutual support and insights as they seek to navigate this tricky and vitally important issue.

## Lunch Duty Update

This year, we have been “experimenting” with relying entirely on parent volunteers to serve hot lunch in the cafeteria and help me in overseeing lunch. There has been a drop-off in volunteers and an increase in “no-shows” over the course of the school year. I will be assessing how well this approach can work over the remainder of the year. If it becomes clear that this approach isn’t sustainable, we will have to consider eliminating hot lunch for all or most days per week, since we are now entirely reliant on parents to run hot lunches. Thanks again for whatever help you are able to give!