



ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Nascantur in Admirazione

"Let Them Be Born in Wonder."

St. Thomas PreK-10 School Newsletter April 8th, 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 Boniface Term: Prudence

- Applying right reason to action in pursuit of the good



~ Upcoming Events ~

April 10th

Dress-up Day

April 11th

Gabriel House Award Day (see below)

April 19th

St. Thomas Gala - Weber's Inn

April 25th

Art and Poetry Night, 6:30-8:00 p.m., parish hall

CALENDAR UPDATE: May 10th Early Dismissal

**2:00 Early Dismissal for Drama Production at Arthur Miller Theatre, 2:30 p.m.;
7:00 p.m. Evening Performance (see below)**

May 16th

K-10 Choral Music Meditation, 6:30-7:30 p.m., church



Scholastica Term Honor Roll

Congratulations to the following students for their great work this past term!

5th-8th Grades

Cum Laude (3-4 B's and 2-3 A's in Academic Subjects)

Oliver Derderian, Isidore Rutherford, Sebastian Jeyaraj, Alex Wood,
Francis Pearson, Jonathan Sauter

Magna Cum Laude (1-2 B's and 4-5 A's in Academic Subjects)

Max Sproule, Clare Moilanen, Theresa Deemer, John Lee,
Amelia Eustice, Gabriela Martire

Summa Cum Laude (All A's in Academic Subjects)

Mia Chavez, Lola Fisher, Henry Sauter, Madeleine Hanley,
Ella Meinhart, Ellie Dauw, Charlotte Hanley

9th-10th Grades

Cum Laude (3.33-3.66 GPA)

Fulton Deemer, James Hiester

Magna Cum Laude (3.67-3.99 GPA)

Paul Restuccia

From the Headmaster

I hope you all had a blessed Easter break! I think teachers and students alike needed the rest and time away. My family was particularly blessed to be able to attend the Triduum and to spend time with both sides of our family.

Thank you to all those that participated in the survey. We had 58 responses. I am attaching a summary of the “scores” to the multiple-choice questions, with a “5” representing “strongly agree” and a “1” representing “strongly disagree.” According to the responses, we continue to rate highly in our commitment to the Faith, our support of student spiritual and academic growth, and our ability to provide a quality education.

Thank you also for your comments and written feedback. They reveal a great love for the school’s rich sacramental and academic life, as well as its small, family-like feel, with a definite overall “match” between home and school.

One feature of our schedule that I have not talked about much, but which was highlighted in many – mostly positive – comments, is our commitment to an all-school daily Mass. It can seem to be burdensome, especially for the younger ones, to require almost daily attendance. Mass, after all, is not the easiest prayer to comprehend. There is, I believe, something of fundamental importance here, even more fundamental, perhaps, than the particular attachment that a young person may or may not feel for the Mass. The Eucharist is the heart of our school, and we want to find every opportunity to bring the children, as Jesus Himself requested, to Him. The encounter with His perfect Sacrifice, with His supreme gift of Himself and perfect worship of the Father, forms the entire orientation and purpose of our education.

Heaven forbid that this become a dead routine or empty ritual! If we can’t, as a school and as teachers, draw out the great beauty and meaning of the Mass, even for the youngest in the grade school, we have failed at what is most important in handing on the Faith. More than that, I am firmly convinced that, if we are faithful in bringing the children to Jesus, He will take care of the rest. The Mass is His work, and its power to transform souls vastly exceeds the efforts we put into it.

This year has been a year of transition for communication, another theme among parent comments. We have realized that FACTS does not provide an adequate platform for classroom-specific communication. This year, I have been actively

working with teachers to find a consistent and workable means of linking home and school. For the older kids, we are seeking to develop personal responsibility by focusing on planner use, purposely backing away from an online interface. For the lower-school students, teachers and I are in discussion about what would make the most sense for an online platform. Either way, teachers and I are committed to continuing our trend of improved communication.

The hope is that we can strike a balance between providing necessary information and feedback in a timely way, while also guarding against the need to be constantly “plugged in.” I think it’s also worth pointing out that the online interface doesn’t always create strong connections. For example – and I speak here as a parent! –, it is one thing to have grades instantly updated through FACTS; it’s another thing for a parent to actually log into FACTS to look at the grades. In other words, having information “available” isn’t necessarily the same thing as creating a communication bond, where both sides feel “together” on whatever needed to be said.

I do believe there are further areas of improvement, and your feedback plays an important role in our work as a school to better serve you!

Staffing Announcements

I am very pleased to announce the hiring of Miss Therese Benz as an upper-school Theology and Literature teacher. Therese grew up in the Ann Arbor area, attending local Catholic schools. She received a bachelor’s degree from the University of Notre Dame, with a major in English, and minor in Theology, and a supplementary major in Pre-Health. She continued at Notre Dame to earn her master’s in Theology, which, through the Echo Program, incorporated two years of teaching at a Catholic school. After graduating, she has taught 3 years at Fr. Gabriel Richard. Therese is passionate about the Catholic Faith and forming students in its tradition and beauty. She also has a deep love for literature as an integral part of a student’s formation. Therese is very excited to join our faculty at St. Thomas and help us continue to develop our classical Catholic identity!



I am also excited to announce that Miss Deirdre Cullen, our current 3rd-grade teacher, has been hired as our new 5th-grade teacher. Miss Schoenle will be moving into the middle school to teach literature and history. Miss Cullen is thrilled to continue to serve the school with her gifts and dive more deeply into a classical Catholic formation with the older students in the lower school! We are continuing to explore leads for a new 3rd-grade teacher.

Unfortunately, we also have some goodbyes to add. Mr. Dan Massett, our middle and upper-school literature teacher, will be moving to Pennsylvania with his son and wife, who is pursuing her medical residency. We will greatly miss Mr. Massett's deep knowledge and love of literature, along with his good cheer!

Mr. Joseph Mileski, our middle and upper-school theology teacher, has decided to accept a position at Divine Child, which is much closer to home. Mr. Mileski has been a great support to our school, both in his teaching and in his behind-the-scenes work to organize our middle-school households and liturgies. He will be very much missed!

We also have to say goodbye to Mrs. Monica Raney and Mr. Patrick Lennon. Mrs. Raney graciously stayed on a year after the birth of her daughter to help out with teaching upper-school Math and with girls' households. She has also stepped up in Mrs. Jackowski's absence as a long-term substitute. We are deeply thankful for her service to and sacrifices for the school. Mr. Lennon, our middle and upper-school Latin teacher will be moving on in pursuit of other things. His work with the older students and his help with the upper-school missions have been great gifts for the culture of the middle and upper schools! I am currently working to finalize replacements for both of these part-time roles.

Last, but certainly not least, we will be saying farewell to Mrs. Susan Mangan, who has decided to "retire" from the position. She leaves behind her a very large hole to fill. Her work with the students never ceases to amaze me. Her talents as a teacher and artist have been a vital part of our classical curriculum, and we will be sorry to lose her!

Update on May 10th Early Dismissal/Drama Performances

We have been working with the Arthur Miller Theatre (also called Walgreen Drama Center) to clarify the logistics of the day. Before break, I announced that we would be dismissing at 1:30 to allow students and teachers to attend a 2 p.m. showing. **We will need to revise that time to a 2:00 dismissal for a 2:30 showing. This is not a required event, but I highly encourage students to come!** This is in lieu of having, as we did last year, a school-day performance for the student body.

Especially during the daytime, parking around the theater is very difficult to come by. For the 2:30 performance, parents can drop off students at the theater. We will arrange for teachers to chaperone students for the afternoon performance, which is free. Parents are also more than welcome to come, if they are able to find parking at a nearby location (see the attached map). **The run-time is approximately 1 hour, 15 minutes, so if you are simply dropping off, please plan to be back for pick-up outside the theater at 3:50 p.m.**

For the 7 p.m. performance, we will be able to “reserve” the lot next to the theater (NC27). Attendants will be on hand to collect a \$6 fee to park anywhere in the lot. The evening performance will be ticketed at the door, \$5 per person.

I do apologize for the unforeseen logistical hurdles! I hope that many can make it out to see our middle and upper schoolers put on what I anticipate to be a great show of “The Lost Hat”!

Addendums to Award Announcements Last Newsletter

I would like to correct a mistake in the previous newsletter, which neglected to list Alex Wood as the recipient of the 6th-grade friendliness award (though he was pictured!).

Also, I forgot to announce that Gabriel House won the Scholastica Term House competition! They will be receiving a dress-down day, treat, and extra recess time this Thursday, April 11th.

Reminders – Upcoming Events

Don't forget, if you haven't already, to purchase your gala tickets! I look forward to seeing you there!

Please note that our Art and Poetry night, which is a required event for all teachers and students, is a little earlier this year to help reduce the craziness of May. We will have a choral performance in the church in May, which will have a sacred/religious focus in keeping with the sacred space of the church. This also is a required event for all students and teachers. Both of these events are wonderful opportunities for you to see the great things that are happening in our classrooms!

