



ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Nascantur in Admiratione

"Let Them Be Born in Wonder."

St. Thomas PreK-11 School Newsletter

September 23rd, 2024

School Mission Statement

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School exists to form disciples of Jesus Christ. Educated 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: Hope

- Having a firm trust that God will help us be with Him in heaven

Virtue for Margaret Mary Term: Magnanimity

- Pursuing what brings great honor



~ Upcoming Events ~

September 23rd – Today!

October Lunch Orders Due

September 27th

Dress-down Day, Michaelmas Festival (1-3, Wheeler Park)

Family Handbook Signatory Page Due

October 1st

No School Mass – Fr. Bill at priests' convocation

October 2nd

Dress-up Day

October 4th
Extraordinary Form School Mass

October 18th
Dress-down Day
End of Margaret Mary Term

October 24th-25th
No school: Teacher PD with ICLE

October 29th
Literature Discussion Night, school library 6:30-8:00 (details forthcoming!)

Check out Flocknote for Parent Association Info:

<https://sta2school.flocknote.com/dashboard>



Last Friday's Eucharistic Procession













All-Schools' Mass with Bishop Boyea – 8th Grade

Last Monday, the 8th graders went to the cathedral in Lansing to participate in the annual all-schools' Mass with the bishop. This was a great opportunity for our students to see themselves as part of the diocese, under the direction of Bishop Boyea, who is a great lover and supporter of Catholic schools!





From the Headmaster

Last week, I began a reflection on the question of why we send our kids to school, which led to the more fundamental question: What is education really for, anyway? What is its end, its excellence? We are, of course, talking about the education (the “drawing out” or “leading out”) of human persons; an excellent education is naturally one that would form excellent human persons. “Excellence” in a human person is another name for “virtue,” which is a disposition that resides in the soul, not merely in external products or high achievement marks. Furthermore, in

the Christian life, our natural life is taken up into the supernatural work of God. Without the workings of grace, education would miss accounting for our ultimate end in union with God.

Pope Pius XI, in his encyclical on education, “*Divini Illius Magistri*,” succinctly sums this up: “Education consists essentially in preparing man for what he must be and for what he must do here below, in order to attain the sublime end for which he was created.” Hence, as the same pope notes, an excellent education is one that “aims at securing the Supreme Good, that is, God, for the souls of those who are being educated, and the maximum of well-being possible here below for human society” (par. 7, 8).

This balance of the natural and supernatural levels is precisely the one we strive to achieve at St. Thomas. We pursue a classical Catholic education, one that roots itself in the sources of the Western tradition, with the goal of pursuing an integrated vision of reality by way of the 7 liberal arts. We want to pass on a vision of what is true, good, and beautiful that has come to us from a tradition deeply marked by the Catholic Faith and hence something that can draw the minds and hearts of our students to God. Our work, as a school, is primarily academic and intellectual, but truth – both natural and supernatural – is also transformative; it implicates the will, the heart, our very life in its “call.” Truth makes demands on us at all levels, and we want to open students to its call, to ascend to a vision of reality and way of living that is truly salvific.

That would seem to be a high end indeed! In the complexities and imperfections of human affairs, we know full well that no human institution is perfect. The “on-the-ground” level is often a much muddier affair. Further, we must live in the world and be responsive to its demands; that also is part of so many of our vocations. This last fact is precisely what Pope Pius XI recognized in his formulations on education. But how do we keep the high ideals and the Faith itself from being relegated to a separate “bubble” from the practical business of homework, tests, and grades?

What truly makes an education *integrated* is when what we hand on allows students to “see” all of this – natural and supernatural, ideal and concrete, sublime and mundane – as part of a whole, an entire way of perceiving reality and living a Catholic life. For example, in calling students to the high standards of logical thinking in discussion, we want them to really enter deeply into the truth and beauty of a text or an idea. We want them to learn how to dwell in what is worthwhile for its own sake. But in this we also pursue a habit of mind that will develop them as *persons*, as people who can patiently consider and reason about practical problems, or who can listen attentively to what is being said, and not allow the passions to dominate their ability to truly *listen*. These are critically important attributes of success in many different careers in life; they are, in a way, even more critical than the specific training or know-how needed to perform the tasks of most any job.

However, these and other intellectual and moral habits take time to develop, often in a meandering and haphazard fashion! So we definitely need a sensible realism in education. How, then, do we avoid excessive idealism and ensure that an education will give students “what they need” to get to the next level? How do we properly weigh all of the various aspects of a school and their relative merit for our children and their success in life? These issues will be our topics to tackle next week!

Earlier Re-Enrollment

This school year, we will begin our re-enrollment process for the 2025-2026 school year on December 2nd. Your enrollment packets will auto-fill from the previous year, and you will be asked to review them, fill in any further information required, pay the registration fee, and submit. We will also be opening up enrollment to new families at that time as well. This earlier date will allow us to keep better pace with the typical enrollment cycle for high schools, as well as a growing number of grade schools that are moving to an earlier re-enrollment period. We will send out plenty of reminders in the weeks leading up!

Michaelmas Festival

This year, in place of a “fall festival,” we will be celebrating Michaelmas this Friday, September 27th from 1-3 in the afternoon. “Michaelmas” is a name that derives from “St. Michael’s Mass,” which falls on September 29th and which is on a Sunday this year. In England, this would mark the end of the harvest season and the beginning of the fall term (if only!). In the current liturgical calendar, this solemnity honors the three archangels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, providing us a perfect day to highlight our households. Our teachers are working to organize household games and competitions for grades K-8, and a group of parents has been working to help organize the festivity of the event. This is an all-school event, and we would love to have parents join us and be part of the fun, whether or not you are volunteering for something specific. Please also pray for good weather!

Literature Discussion Night (Oct. 29)

Miss Benz and Miss Schoenle, our upper- and middle-school literature teachers, will be leading a reading and discussion of a short piece of literature (selection TBD) the evening of Tuesday, October 29th, from 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the school library. You may recall our wine, cheese, and poetry night last fall. This will be another installment in the series, complete with wine and cheese! I will be sending out more details closer to the event, but I want to put out the date now, in hopes of seeing many of you there!

Updated Tutors List

Please see the attached tutors list, which has been updated. As usual, these are individuals that are confirmed as volunteers at the school. Parents are free to reach out using the contact information provided to set up mutually agreeable times and compensation.