



ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Nascantur in Admiratione

"Let Them Be Born in Wonder."

St. Thomas PreK-11 School Newsletter

February 24th, 2025

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 Scholastica Term: Obedience

- Promptly fulfilling the just will of a legitimate superior



~ Upcoming Events ~

February 28th

Dress-down day

March 1st

Financial Aid Deadline

March 3rd-31st

March Reading Month/Food Drive (details next week!)

March 5th

Ash Wednesday (no dress-up day due to Reading Month)

March 14th

End of Scholastica Term

March 19th

Solemnity of St. Joseph – EF School Mass

March 20th

Dale Ahlquist Talk – gym, 6:30-8 p.m.

March 21st

Half day, 11:50 dismissal

Optional Parent-Teacher Conferences: 1-5 p.m.

March 25th

Solemnity of the Annunciation – No School

March 28th

(No dress-down day due to Reading Month)

April 5th

School Gala – doors open at 5:30

Check out Flocknote for Parent Association Info:

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



Trivia Night Recap

This past Saturday, we had another great trivia event to support the school's chemistry lab supplies and library decor. Final numbers are still being tallied, but I want to extend thanks to the event organizers, Ruth Atzinger, Sarah Meinhart, and Caroline Biskner, as well as our student servers, Ella Meinhart, Teresa Deemer, Serena Jeyaraj, and Sophia Jeyaraj.



Many thanks also to our generous sponsors:

Boundless Vision Home and Property Design - Michael & Patricia Lengyel, school parents

Butzel Long - Paul Mersino, school parent

Cornerstone Real Estate - Laura Fisher, realtor & school parent

Masstimes.org - Parents of Becky Caldwell, school parent

McComb & Company - Bryan Dunn, school parent

Mitzel Law Group - Paul Schultz, school parent

Pizza Bobs – Mr. Pietryga's parents

State Street Title

TCM Development - Nicholas & Melissa Canzano, school parents

U.S. Turbine & Accessory

From the Headmaster

At assembly today, I reminded the students about the season of Lent, starting next Wednesday. This is a perfect time to reorient our life and seek deeper conversion. As I told the students, our Lenten efforts are rooted in prayer. I encouraged them to make time for personal prayer as a lead-up to Lent, asking God to help them know what He is calling them to do to draw closer to Him.

“Making time for prayer” – that will be our school’s “theme” for this Lent. It’s something I am asking each family to do in a way that makes sense for its context. As a school community, it is critical that we constantly call ourselves back to what is fundamentally important – prayer, the work of grace, the love and worship of God. All the many good things we can pursue and the events and activities we can organize and participate in are all well and good, but, in the midst of our activity, are we too busy for God? I know that, for me personally, if I am not dedicating time to pray, my entire perspective on life becomes skewed and unbalanced. Prayer is in fact a central means by which our entire school’s life can be rightly ordered in service to Our Lord.

Believe it or not, Scholastica Term is ending in a few weeks! On March 21st, we will have an early dismissal to allow for teachers and parents to meet for (optional) parent-teacher conferences between 1 and 5 p.m. We will relay instructions in the next week or two on setting up a conference.

March Reading Month

Household Reading Competitions: March 3rd-28th

- Angel House Competition: Each house will compete to earn the most points from reading. Each K-4 classroom teacher will be, based on their own points system, be determining on a weekly basis which house within their respective class is 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. A first-place finishing house from a given class will earn 5 points for their house, with 2nd place earning 3 points and 3rd place earning 1 point. These points will be tallied across classes at the end of each week and added to the grand total as we progress through March. The house with the most points on March 28th will win a prize, TBD.
- The 5th graders will hold a competition among their own households. Details will be sent out later this week by Miss Cullen to the 5th-grade parents. Prize TBD.

- The middle-school competition will be among the four households. Mrs. Votel will be giving the students an approved list, which will specify a point value for each book based on length and difficulty. When a student finishes a book on the list, he should bring the physical copy of the book he read to Mrs. Votel, whereupon they will have a chat about it! If the student demonstrates that they read the book, they will earn points for their household. Households may also receive bonus points for full group participation in themed dress days! Mrs. Votel will keep the tally herself and periodically announce the rankings. The winning household will receive a field trip to Pizza Pazza in Kerrytown for a pizza party!
- For the upper school, Miss Benz is still finalizing details for their special reading endeavor in March. More details to come!

Special Events in March

- MON, MARCH 3
 - Dress up as a character from a book which your class read this year.
- THURS. MARCH 6-FRI, MARCH 7
 - Book fair in the library (see 2/19 email from Mrs. Deemer for more details)
- MON, MARCH 10
 - Dress up from the historic era your class is learning about right now.
- MON, MARCH 17
 - Special jeans day with spirit wear or green for St. Patrick and our Irish athletics
- WED, MARCH 19
 - The Feast of St. Joseph- Normal dress code, only the students can wear something red- a shirt, tie, vest, sweater, socks, hairbow, pin, etc. Mrs. Deemer will set up a St. Joseph Table in the school office hallway, and the students can come by before their lunch period to visit the table and receive a St. Joseph cream puff and/or bread.
- FRI, MARCH 28
 - Last day to earn points for the reading competitions
- GRAND FINALE: MON, MARCH 31
 - During morning assembly, we will have our second annual game of Literary Trivia. Two representatives from each of grades 1st-11th will be selected to compete in trivia competitions (broken up by grade

bands) with questions composed by their teachers about literary subjects. Winners of the reading competitions will also be announced.

Diaper/Food Drive Supporting Guadalupe Workers

Mr. Votel is coordinating, with his 6th-grade class, a Lenten diaper/food drive for Guadalupe Workers, an organization dedicated to supporting mothers with unplanned pregnancies who need help. This drive will begin on March 3rd and finish on April 4th. Each K-11 class will be competing to earn the most average points per student.

In view of their mission, the Guadalupe Workers are always especially in need of diapers and wipes. Generally, the following points will be awarded (subject to Mr. Votel's discretionary judgment):

- 5 points for a pack of diapers
- 1 point for a single pack of wipes
- 1 point for each food item

Food items should be non-perishable, healthy foods that can readily contribute to providing a needy expecting mother with a meal. Good items include rice, beans, pasta and pasta sauce, cereal, canned soup, canned tuna, cooking oils, and peanut butter.

One new element for this year's drive is that we would like students to "earn" the items they bring in to donate so as to make their participation a little more meaningful than merely asking mom to go to the store. Each classroom teacher will send home a parent sign-off form for parents to fill out and return with each set of items donated. This form will verify that the student performed some chore or service at home to "earn" the set of items being brought to school at a given time. What chore or service is to be done is entirely at the parents' discretion. If a student brings in items without a corresponding signature, we will of course still accept the donation, but it will not count towards the class total for the competition.

Teachers will track and report items brought in, verifying which items "count" (with a parent signature) towards the class total. The 6th graders will be collecting, 1-2 times per week, items from the classrooms. They will also arrange the delivery of items to Guadalupe Workers. Mr. Votel will oversee the whole operation and verify numbers using the teacher reports.

Please note that, first and foremost, this is about helping those in need, not winning a competition. Certainly, any food items that fit the criteria of the above guidelines

are welcome, but a hundred cans of tomato paste (as an example) would perhaps not be the best contribution. Also, please do not open packages of bulk items.

JV Girls' Basketball Update

The JV girls' basketball team began the week with a nail-biting win over the reigning champion from last year, Washtenaw Christian! The game came down to the last minute with both teams tied at 19. Two free throws from Mia Arambula-Chavez put the Lady Irish up by two, and then shutdown defense for the last twenty seconds brought the win! The girls followed that up with another win versus SSA Ann Arbor on Thursday. The team is undefeated and looks to keep it that way versus Huron Valley, SSA Plymouth, and AACS this week. GO IRISH!

Diocesan Safe Environment Resource

The Diocese of Lansing uses "The kNOw Program" to equip children, parents, and parishes with the tools to "kNOw" how to identify, thwart, and report harmful behavior. It asks its parishes and schools to offer this to parents as a resource.

According to Bishop Boyea, "This program relies on the fundamental truth that each child is created and loved by God and deserves to be safe. As adults, we must protect all of our children."

Using methods developed by the revered children's educator Fred Rogers and endorsed by physicians at the University of Michigan, "The kNOw Program" delivers lessons about safety, respect, and empowerment in an accessible and trustworthy way to both children and adults.

Unlike other safe-environment programs, this one involves the key adults in children's lives. Training sessions based on grade level (K-2, 3-5, 6-8 [male], and 6-8 [female]) are available for parents and children to view together at

<https://www.dioceseoflansing.org/human-resources/know-program#:~:text=The%20kNOw%20Program%20has%20FOUR,situations%20that%20are%20not%20safe.>

Updated Tutors List

Please see the attached updated list of tutors available for St. Thomas students.

Gala Reminder

Tickets are now on sale! Please see <https://sta2.org/school/featured-events/greengoldgala2025/> for more gala information and links.

Bake Sale Supporting Our Robotics Team

A bake sale will be held after masses on Sunday March 30th to support our 4th-6th grade robotics team and their trip to the invitational in Boston this June. Parents can donate baked goods for purchase. Also, we have a general donation link if anyone would like to donate to Robotics directly: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/st-thomas-robotics-team>

Dale Ahlquist Talk, March 20th

Dale Ahlquist, celebrated author and speaker and, in Joseph Pearce's estimation, "the greatest living authority" on G.K. Chesterton's life and work, will be giving a talk at 7 p.m. in the school gym on Thursday, March 20th. Mr. Ahlquist co-founded the first Chesterton Academy, a classical high school in Minnesota, which is the flagship school of the Chesterton Schools Network. He will be speaking on "How to Create Complete Thinkers" at 7 p.m., followed by Q & A. Admission is free. Light refreshments will be provided. Attendees are welcome beginning at 6:30 to explore a selection of Mr. Ahlquist's books for sale. This will be another great opportunity for our parish community to deepen its knowledge of classical education.