



# ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

*Nascantur in Admirazione*

"Let Them Be Born in Wonder."

## St. Thomas PreK-11 School Newsletter

April 14<sup>th</sup>, 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 Boniface Term: Religion

- Giving God His due in worship and service

### **Happy Holy Week!**

I pray you have a blessed Triduum and Easter Octave!



### ~ Upcoming Events ~

April 17<sup>th</sup>-April 27<sup>th</sup>

**Easter Break**

May 7<sup>th</sup>

**Dress-up Day/May Crowning and Celebration after Mass**

May 8<sup>th</sup>

**Choral Music Concert (attendance required), church, 6:30-7:30 p.m.**

May 16<sup>th</sup>

**Drama Club Performance, Arthur Miller Theatre, 2 & 7 p.m.**

May 26<sup>th</sup>

**Memorial Day - No school**

May 30<sup>th</sup>

**Dress-down day**

June 4<sup>th</sup>

**Last Day for Preschool**

June 6<sup>th</sup>

**Last Day for K-11: Morning at Island Park: 9-11 a.m.**

**Check out Flocknote for Parent Association Info:**

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



## **Art and Poetry Night**

The students did a fantastic job at last week's Art and Poetry night! Many thanks to both students and teachers for putting on a great show for the school community! Special thanks to Miss Gregor for the beautiful visual display of student artwork!













## Diaper and Food Drive Results

Our drive to support Guadalupe Workers was a great success! They were blown away by the number of items they had to pick up last Friday, which met desperate needs they are having. Many thanks to Mr. Votel for leading the drive, along with the 6<sup>th</sup> graders for helping to collect items and the middle school for helping to count and load items last Friday! Congratulations to the 7<sup>th</sup> grade for coming out on top. They will have a special picnic lunch when we get back from break (specific day TBD).



### **Totals:**

114 packs of baby wipes  
5233 individual diapers (50-60 packs)  
2545 food items

### **Top Three Classes (average number of points per student)**

1st: 7th Grade, 89.1  
2nd: 6th Grade, 75.92  
3rd: 4th Grade, 15

## **From the Headmaster**

Welcome to Holy Week! I pray that you and your family are able to take some time to set aside the demands of the daily grind and enter into the liturgy of this holiest time of year!

Thank you to everyone who filled out the parent survey. We had 56 responses, just two less than last year. Please see the attached document that shows the overall results for each of the agree/disagree questions, including a comparison with last year's scores.

The written feedback contained a wide range of responses. Regarding highlights from this school year, parents pointed to the faith formation, the various extra and special events (festivals, fundraisers, sports, drama, Art and Poetry Night), and the impact of individual teachers. No one issue predominated in among the issues that needed to be improved. Some parents (9 responders) pointed to the need for better communication regarding school events and the calendar. Small groups (of 3-6 each) of parents highlighted issues surrounding sports, discipline, the parent association, and community building, among other things. Parents were overwhelmingly positive on the school's classical identity and its impact on the quality of instruction and the faith formation of students. Parents understood classical education in a variety of ways, emphasizing the integration of the Faith, the formation of thinking, the use of classic literature, and/or the formation of the person in the pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty.

The last question perhaps generated the clearest patterns among the 56 parent responses. First, the largest grouping of parents (just over half of all responses) noted the developing nature of the upper school. Many of those parents expressed a positive view of the existence and/or impact of the upper school, joining a number

of others who expressed unqualified positive views. In all, 25 responses had explicitly positive perceptions of the existence and/or impact of the upper school, with most of the remainder of the 56 responses being neutral (often “wait-and-see”) or somewhat skeptical. A few took a decidedly negative stance towards the existence and impact of the upper school. Among those noting the upper school’s developing nature, around 9 responses highlighted various ways in which the upper school needed to (or was failing to) fit better with a typical high school experience, regarding such things as sports, college preparation, and size. Around the same number of responders noted the worry that the upper school was taking away energy, money, and focus from the grade school.

It was helpful to receive this feedback about the upper school, especially since the issues raised were precisely the ones we have been deeply considering as well. I also would like to see the upper school develop more as we add students, teachers, and grades. I have also been in close conversation with the parish, parents, and faculty about the overall financial and cultural impact on the school as a whole.

The upper school was formed in large part to “complete the picture” of the classical formation we were already giving in the grade school. It was envisioned as something small and distinct—not as a miniature version of a typical diocesan high school. Thus, in discerning its overall direction, we were seeking to embellish its classical Catholic identity, exactly the thing we have been seeking to do for the grade school. As we have grown, we have also worked to be more responsive to the students, families, and teachers that were part of the upper school and those coming into it, discerning their needs and desires so that our decision-making could be rooted in the reality of the people in front of us. These two things—a commitment to a distinct vision and to the people involved or committed—provide both an overall direction and a flexibility that is always needed in a growth project such as this.

In looking at the wonderful opportunity in front of us and discerning God’s will for it, first and foremost on our minds is the impact on the students themselves. I can attest, along with students, parents, and teachers, to the personal growth that had been cultivated in the upper schoolers, spiritually, academically, socially, and physically. I have also seen a new dynamism develop across grades, the gradual unfolding of a rich, communal culture that has given shape and direction to the middle school and, in turn, to the approach and trajectory of the lower school and preschool. I believe that this can continue to grow, particularly through liturgical festivity and drama and higher levels of performance and academic work.

I do think there is an ongoing need for a deepening commitment to and understanding of what constitutes a “classical Catholic” education at St. Thomas at all levels. It is striking to me that, on the one hand, I think there is a general

consensus among parents who are serious about Catholic education that there are a number of things deeply wrong with our current culture, and yet, on the other hand, there still seems to be a strong attachment among many of those parents to the way we have been running (for over 100 years) a major culture-forming institution in our country: our schools. It is tempting to point only to recent decades as the time when modern education (and culture) in America really went south, but I would submit that there are fundamental assumptions about education (and trends in our culture) that have been around for much longer and have never really fit well with a Catholic education truly rooted in a liberal-arts, integrated approach.

I believe the classical movement provides us with an opportunity to finally question long-held assumptions in modern education regarding what constitutes an excellent school. However, rather than approaching modern education first as question of what we need to cut, change, or keep, we should simply begin with what an education is really for, what are the “essentials” to which we ought to give priority, and grow the “vision-side” of our discernment organically from that. It was precisely this issue that I addressed in a multi-part series I ran in newsletters this past fall (“Why Do We Send Our Kids to School?”). I have collected that reflection in one document and attached it for your reading pleasure.

At the end of the day, I think that everyone wants a school that both provides a deep personal formation to students and that prepares them to do well in whatever next steps they want to pursue. We want to partner with you in helping to make that goal more of a reality.

Thank you again for your time in responding and your honesty, encouragement, and feedback. As always, I am more than happy to talk further in person to listen to parents.

## Gala Numbers

With Mrs. Boes out of town, we are a little delayed in confirming exact final figures. At present, we are looking at net receipts of around \$65,000 (on top of the \$50,000 match) for the paddle-raise section (targeting teacher salaries) and around \$25,000 for all other elements, which went towards our scholarship fund! Once again, my deepest thanks to your fantastic support for our school!

## *Two Orphans of Boston Performance—May 16<sup>th</sup>*

For the drama club performance at Arthur Miller Theater this year, we will once more have an early dismissal (at 2 p.m. for the K-11; preschool dismissing at 1:45 p.m.) to allow parents to shuttle students over to the theater for a free matinee

performance. We will have teachers present at the entrance to lead students in, seat them, and chaperone during the performance, which will begin at 2:30 and run until around 4 p.m. The evening, ticketed performance will follow at 7 p.m.

## Testing—ARK and NWEA

2<sup>nd</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grade classes are finishing up their ARK (diocesan religious knowledge) test this week. 2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students will complete their third round of NWEA testing in the first couple of weeks after we get back from break. As in years past, NWEA results will be sent home to parents at the end of the school year.