

## Middle School Religion News

We are well into the season of Lent and are making use of this holy season to frame what is happening with in our middle school religion program. All 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> graders have been invited to make Lenten sacrifices and be faithful to daily prayer in addition the Sunday Mass commitment. In addition, several students have been gathering for an extra daily Mass at 7am Wednesdays followed by some social time in Mr. Tessier's room before school.

The 8<sup>th</sup> graders are focused on their final preparations for Confirmation. Each day during Lent they are completing a "work of mercy" at home or at school. We have focused our instructional time around the works of mercy, the virtues, and Gifts of the Holy Spirit. All 8<sup>th</sup> graders will be attending a weekend retreat this month in preparation for Confirmation.

The 7<sup>th</sup> graders are particularly focused on the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. This has been a focus instructionally as well as preparing to perform the Passion Play this month on Holy Thursday for the entire school. In addition, 7<sup>th</sup> graders have been studying the Gospel of St. Luke and keeping a recorded Gospel Journal of their discoveries.

I continue to urge families to make it a number one priority to never miss Sunday Mass (or Saturday Vigil) except in the case of sickness. When each family sets God as its foundation and priority, families grow stronger, and our community is better for it. I encourage you to stay strong in your resolve to make God the center point of your home. God bless you!

The 6th grade is deep in their study of Old Testament Major and Minor Prophets -- such as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah, Jonah and Malachi. We will soon cover the exile of Israel from their many enemies such as the Assyrians and Babylonians. We will discuss the "Ten Lost Tribes" and how the remaining two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) survived the exile.

The students constantly ask me why God chose so many imperfect people to be an example to the Israelites. Many of the Kings were corrupt and sinful, such as David, Solomon and Rehoboam. Many of the Prophets and Judges also did not always live up to expectations. God always chooses the right people for His work -- people like you and me.

## Math Memos

The countdown is quickly approaching! During the week of March 10<sup>th</sup> the students will be celebrating Pi day by participating in classroom activities. As a side challenge, they have been asked to memorize as many decimal digits in Pi as they possibly can. Competitions will be held in each class. In addition, we will understand how Pi is derived and measure edible, circular items. Last month, I asked for donations

of pie, however, families have been very generous and giving in so many other ways in our community this past month, that I will take care of the pies myself. If a child does want to bring in a special donation of their own, then please have them check with me for approval.

On another note, I must stress the importance of math Morning Work. Next month, the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders will be taking the Terra

Nova Standardized Test. The problems presented on the Morning Work assignments correlate with the curriculum and test items. It is important the students continue to make the completion of these assignments a priority. If you see that your child is having difficulty with any of the material on the assignment, then please encourage them to see me for additional help. Thank you for your continued support.

## Sensational Social Studies

"Beware of the Ides of March." Ask any 6<sup>th</sup> grader to give you a full account of the intrigue in Ancient Rome. Our studies of Rome have included the play, Julius Caesar, the feats of Hannibal and his elephants, the eruption of Pompeii and the engineering wonders of the Colosseum. As we approach the Easter season, we will approach the birth of Christianity in our social studies.

How did the USA get a small country like Tripoli, (all of the way on the other side of the world) to declare war on us? In the 7<sup>th</sup> grade we discovered that the United States "flexed its muscles" and sent in the marines, as early as 1801. We fight the British one more time in the War of 1812 and learn about the heroic efforts of first Lady Dolley Madison. During this quarter, we saw the size of the country double with our Louisiana Purchase. With this rapid expansion, we begin to see the seeds of sectionalism planted in our nation, which will later lead to our great divide.

In the eighth grade, we see that Americans rise above their darkest moments and that the human spirit prevails. As we begin March, we study the gathering storm of World War II. Less time will be spent on actual battles and more time will be devoted to taking a closer look at the people of World War II, - the Americans and rationing in the home front, the Japanese Relocation, the suffering in Europe and the Holocaust. As a Catholic educator and having studied at the Holocaust museum, I present the Holocaust not simply as an event in history but rather as lessons in morality with parallels to today's world. I look forward to our class discussions. The students never cease to amaze me with their thoughtful insight.

## Greetings From the Room Where the Great Authors Live!

Onomatopoeia, metaphor, simile, alliteration, are some of the buzz words in Literature Class these days. Students from all grade levels have been reading aloud and analyzing the poems of Walt Whitman, William Shakespeare, Alfred Noyes, and Nikki Giovanni, to name a few. Eighth graders wrote their own "Molly" poems based on the structure of "For My Sister Molly Who in the Fifties" by Alice Walker. Look for them in Middle School hall. Sixth Graders have also been reading a fantasy fiction novel called *"The Forgotten Door"*, while the Eighth Graders have been reading about two brothers battling the worst of The Depression years alone in a book called, *No Promises in the Wind. The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is warming up for Seventh Graders next week. Vocabulary work is ongoing. Students are working on review pages for their morning work during the first week of each month.

## P.E. News

Many middle school students have already become members of the All Saints School 50 Mile Club and several students have reached the 100 and 200 mile level! The club was established to encourage students to be physically active every day. Awards will be given at the end of the year, and pictures of members are on the gym bulletin board.

The Presidential Physical Fitness test was taken by students in October. Make-up tests will be conducted in April. The names of students earning the Presidential Award will be called out at the Awards Ceremony immediately after Mass on the last day of school.

*Renaissance Fair is  
coming in May!!!!*

## Spanish

In the eighth grade Spanish class, the students are practicing the preterite tense of all the verbs that they have learned throughout the year. They are also practicing vocabulary of the body parts and items of clothing. For Spanish culture the children are learning about the country Spain and its different customs.

The seventh grade classes are learning how to express feeling with the adjectives and nouns. The students are also practicing how to conjugate the present tense of the irregular verbs like "tener" (to have). The Spanish culture topic is about the country Costa Rica.

In the sixth grade classes, the students are learning to compute sentences using the regular verbs ending in AR, ER, and IR. Their Spanish culture topic is the country Paraguay.

## Middle School Language Arts

Middle School students have currently learned to spell 280 words. The next few lists will focus on frequently misspelled words, such as the word "misspell". Students have been tested in two formats all year: orally and multiple choice. The multiple choice test is especially important for preparation for standardized tests. Congratulations to Cassandra Leong the Spelling Bee winner. Cassandra went on to represent All Saints at the Diocesan Spelling Bee and finished Second Place Overall – Outstanding!

In grammar, Middle School students are excelling at sentence analysis and diagramming. These skills lead to stronger and clearer sentence structures. Students are able to identify the parts of a sentence and how they work with each other in a sentence. Furthermore, students are able to determine if, in fact, what they

are writing is a sentence at all, eliminating the sloppy sentence fragments.

In writing, students have written narrative essays, compare and contrast essays, creative short stories, and descriptive essays. Besides these formal essays, students write weekly in their journals where they can be as creative as possible and can enjoy writing without any pressure. Furthermore, students are able to apply the Modern Language Association (MLA) format to their formal writing in preparation for high school and college papers. The Eighth Grade students are trying out a new program in the computer lab. Every Wednesday, Eighth Graders write to a prompt on the computer through an exciting new program called Writing Roadmap. The program provides immediate feedback to their writing and scores their essays holistically.

## News from the Art Room

Grade 6 is putting the finishing touches on Chinese Dragon Puppets. This project complimented the student's study of Asia in Social Studies, although construction of the puppets took us past their unit. The puppets look Fabulous!

Grade 7 recently completed a plaster mask and is now beginning a large scale picture based on the work of contemporary artist Jim Dine. Look for colorful hammers, forks and screwdrivers on a bulletin board in the school.

Grade 8 finished their nature inspired batik – each one is a work of art. This is the most talented group of 8<sup>th</sup> graders I have ever taught (really.) We are now gearing-up to paint self portraits for the graduation reception – I can't wait to see how they turn out.

## Middle School Science

What do you feed your worms? Sixth grader, Stephen Bill knows the answer. On Thursday, February 28, after more than 100 days of feeding, weighing, caring for, and observing red wiggler worms, Stephen presented his research to the judges of the school science fair. Later in the day, at a standing-room only gathering of students and their families and friends, school principal, David Conroy, presented the coveted grand prize ribbon to the junior scientist. The fair culminated months of effort by students of the school who researched their topics, interviewed experts in their respective fields of interest, wrote term papers, conducted experiments, prepared backboards, and orally shared results with peers and judges. Other top science fair winners included Nicole Gonzalez, Gr. 8, first runner up, Holly Schwarzwalder, Gr. 8, second runner up, and Cassandra Leong, Grade 8, third runner up. Great work, middle school students!