

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely
because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven."

St. Ann Family,

November 4, 2017

Our Sunday and Wednesday Gospel passages over the past week have essentially laid out for us how we ought to live as shared with us directly from Christ. Last Sunday we heard the greatest of commandments, to love God and to love our neighbor. If we weren't sure what that should look like, Jesus gave us more detail on Wednesday with The Beatitudes. Not surprisingly, most of these blessed qualities take the shape of virtues, the holy habits our staff and students are working toward each day at St. Ann. Meekness, righteousness, mercy, honesty, peace, fortitude, and forbearance, are all included in The Beatitudes.

As we continue, as parents and teachers, to coach and encourage and model lives of virtue for our students, one dynamic that seems to develop is the delayed satisfaction, reward, or recognition for living with virtue. The Beatitudes illustrate this dynamic as well. We're reminded that living virtuously in our day-to-day Earthly lives can sometimes result in discomfort, delayed gratification, and even persecution from others. Our reward is in heaven, the Kingdom of God. We 'will be satisfied'. We 'will see God'. Our 'reward will be great in heaven'. We should live virtuously and treat one another with the dignity and love that Jesus describes and models, but it may not always be clear to us when that reward or satisfaction will be reached. After all, the 'reward and satisfaction' is something that can be shared here on Earth among one another through our own love and compassion.

Our second quarter virtue of focus is Gratitude. With the Thanksgiving and Advent seasons occurring during the second quarter, a disposition of thankfulness toward God and toward one another is quite appropriate. Expressing 'Thanks' to one another is a very healthy way of achieving a community in which we're looking for the good rather than expecting or investigating the bad. Constantly seeking to fix problems and improve ourselves and our world is very worthwhile. At the same time, reflecting and examining the good things in our lives and in each other can make us approach situations with more understanding, more perspective, and more wisdom.

This week our 3rd grade class led us in our All Saints Day Mass, a holy day of obligation and a very special St. Ann tradition in which our 3rd grade students not only prepared and led the Mass with readings, petitions, and presentation of the gifts, but also represented saints of

their choosing complete with costumes, props and presentations on the lives of their respective saints. The choir did an excellent job of enhancing the celebration with saint specific music like our introductory 'When The Saints Go Marching In' and a beautifully done Litany of the Saints during Communion. Ms. Valenti and her class had a very busy day leading both the Mass and an afternoon 'Saints Wax Museum' in the gym. The 3rd graders positioned themselves throughout the gym as parents and students made their way around to check out poster boards, costumes, and brief speeches about the saints to learn more about the lives of those holy women and men.

Tuesday's Halloween parties were a fun and festive afternoon for our students. Special thanks to all of our room parents who stopped by with special party plans for our students. It means a lot to our students and school community when they have special events like that to celebrate with friends.

On November 9th we will be hosting an informational Confirmation Meeting for 7th and 8th grade parents. Please make yourself available to come and learn more about the preparation students, sponsors, and staff will be engaging in before the sacrament is completed in April. The meeting will begin at 6:30pm.

There is NO SCHOOL on November 10th. The calendar initially listed this day as a noon dismissal day but it is, in fact, a NO SCHOOL day. Teachers will meet in the morning for planning and will then join other Federation schools in the afternoon for professional development.

The St. Ann Talent Show is scheduled for Saturday, November 18th. It's just two weeks away! Practices will be held every Wednesday after school until 5pm. We're also bringing back a chili cook-off competition in conjunction with the Talent Show. We're calling all student, parent, teacher, and parishioner chefs to submit an entry! Dust off that old cookbook, jump on Pinterest, or utilize that old family recipe passed on for generations. Bring in a 5-meat chili, a vegan chili, the spiciest chili in the world. Whip up some Coney dogs, a Chili 5 way, Chili Mac, whatever you like! There will be prizes and we'll have the book fair open before the show and during intermission.

Many families have returned their Economic Deprivation Survey. Many others filled theirs in at the Parent Teacher Conference night. This survey is used by St. Ann to communicate to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education about the number of students attending our school, in which school districts our students live, and whether or not they may qualify as 'economically deprived' based on the criteria explained by the form. This survey is only seen by me and only used to help us report information to DESE. That information is filtered to our students' respective school districts which will result in determination of St. Ann's state funding for things like Title I funds (additional teaching/instruction services) and Title II funds (staff professional development opportunities). Please fill this brief form in for your family

to the best of your knowledge and return to school ASAP. Your cooperation will help St. Ann students and teachers in the 2018-2019 school year.

On Thursday, November 16th, our Marketing Committee is hosting the New Family Wine and Cheese Social from 6:30-8:00pm in the Parish Center. This event is designed to welcome new families to the St. Ann school and parish community. This year, that is an especially large group so we're expecting a really nice gathering. Invites are going out to all of our Kindergarten and 1st grade families, and any family who was new to St. Ann at the start of this year or last year. Some flyers went out yesterday, the rest will go out Monday, and I'll be sending the flyer out to those new families via email as well. We will have wine, soda, cheese, fruit, and other snacks as well as attendance prizes and raffles including some ticket packages to the dinner dance and auction and trivia night! Please RSVP so we know how many people to expect. We wouldn't want to run out of cheese!

Wednesday, November 22nd, is Family Day, a St. Ann tradition held each year on the day before Thanksgiving. It's a noon dismissal day that includes an all-school Mass and activities for family members to enjoy with their students. We invite parents, grandparents, siblings, and all family members to join us for a special morning of gratitude and love. Family Day is likely our most well attended school event of the year! Last year's Family Day festivities included information about our school's adoption of Virtue Based Restorative Discipline. This year we will continue to learn about VBRD and focus on the home-to-school connection that can make this relationship based, restorative approach to problem solving a comprehensive experience for our students, staff, and families.

•If you still need to complete a Protecting God's Children Workshop, more sessions are available around town. The schedule can be found through this link:
http://www.virtusonline.org/virtus/reg_list2.cfm?theOrgID=14498&theme=0

Mark Your Calendar

November 9th-Confirmation Meeting (7th and 8th grade families)

November 10th-NO SCHOOL

November 16th-Wine and Cheese Social (new families)

November 18th-Talent Show

November 22nd-Family Day

November 23rd-Thanksgiving NO SCHOOL

November 24th-NO SCHOOL

December 1st-NOON DISMISSAL-Faculty Meeting

December 3rd-First Sunday of Advent

Blessings,
Jacob Reft

Scroll down for another close-up picture challenge

These beautiful red leaves have been featured in a number of St. Ann publications. Can you guess where they're located? Bonus points if you can identify what kind of tree this is!



