

"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.
May it be done to me according to your word."

St. Ann Family,

December 9th, 2017

This past week was a very busy one for our students. We took part in two different community service opportunities and also celebrated two All-School Masses. Add in our Advent festivities and all of our regular schoolwork preparing for the end of the semester and we had a jam-packed week!

Our Wednesday and Friday Masses were led by 1st grade and Kindergarten respectively. I'm always impressed (but not surprised) with the courage and grace our youngest students exhibit when reading at the ambo to the entire school community. It's a special treat to see our 8th grade students helping our Kindergarteners as they navigate the Mass. We're blessed to be able to develop those relationships and experiences for our oldest and youngest students.

Wednesday's Mass celebrated the feast day of St. Nicholas, a day that is close to our pastor's heart. We heard about the different acts of bravery and service that St. Nicholas accomplished in his lifetime. In the afternoon, St. Nicholas stopped by the school to visit our Pre-K-8th grade students to deliver some tasty treats and Advent cheer.

On Friday we celebrated the solemnity of The Immaculate Conception of The Blessed Virgin Mary. The Kindergarten class, along with 8th grade buddies, did a nice job and the choir provided some special musical themes to recognize Mary's conception without original sin. Fr. Nick explained to us that all of the qualities, gifts, and even virtues that we are pursuing were a part of Mary for her entire existence.

On Tuesday the 8th graders collected over \$250 for the St. Vincent Home for Children. Students were able to show off their silliest, tackiest, and most festive Christmas apparel, along with some very ugly sweaters. The 8th grade class also sold donuts, a sweet treat for a very chilly morning. Our 8th graders have been invited to help deliver and decorate at St. Vincent Home on Wednesday, December 20th. More info to come on this opportunity.

On Thursday, the entire school teamed up to deliver roughly 220 bags of food and household goods to the Caritas food pantry next to our campus. Of course, it was a bitter cold morning, but our students and staff bundled up and braved the elements to make the delivery. Students handled the experience with fortitude and positivity, working hard to move the bags and singing Christmas carols along the way. A number of our Confirmandi stayed at the food pantry to help Mr. Lackland pack away the collection while another group came back to school to help decorate the halls for Advent. With a full size Christmas tree in the lobby and Nativity scenes and Advent wreaths on every floor, the school is looking very festive. Special thanks go to Mrs. Garrett who has been working hard all week to add lights to the trees outside our

school/church, brightening up the campus and giving our students another reminder of the coming of Jesus into our lives at Christmas!

We're down to 7.5 days of school before the semester ends and quarter 2 grades will have their final calculation. I've managed to meet, in one-on-one conferences, with almost every 6th-8th grade students and have written out a gameplan for how they can improve their grades and get all of their work submitted on time. I've been very pleased to be receiving countless notifications from our Google Classrooms to let me know that students have submitted or resubmitted assignments in hopes of improving their grades. I've spoken to a few students who have straight A's. I asked them why they think they have such stellar outcomes. None of them told me it was because they were smart. None of them said they thought the work was easy. They all told me things like, "I pay attention", "I turn in all my work" and "I study for tests".

Each afternoon the entire school pauses for a brief moment of prayer, reflection, and examination of self. We call this our daily Examen. It has its roots in Ignatian spirituality. St. Ignatius was the founder of the Jesuits and one of his main approaches to prayer was the practice of examining our lives and the habit of finding God in all things. The Examen helps us think about our successes and shortcomings and encourages us to thank God for each moment of each day. The Examen is read to the entire school over the intercom. Sometimes students lead it. Sometimes adults lead it. If your student would like to read the Examen over the intercom, they can volunteer. If you are a parent who would like to stop by and read the Examen, you can volunteer as well.

December 12th is The Feast of Our Lady Of Guadalupe. We'll be sending our 8th grade class to St. Cecelia in south St. Louis for another Faith In Action Mass. This is the second of four Masses in which the 8th grade will participate. Our 3rd-5th graders will celebrate with a tasting of some special hot chocolate.

•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

FAITH Alive in the Home Program

St. Ann Parish and School and Holy Trinity School are working to develop a pilot program to support parents of young children to grow in their awesome role as first teachers of the faith. At this time, this pilot home visitor program (similar in structure to the PAT program, but focused on faith) is ready to begin inviting families to participate. We are starting with parents of two year olds for the pilot, which will begin in late January or early February and run through May, 2018. Sr. Maureen Martin, Program Coordinator, is also looking for parents, grandparents or educators who may want information on serving as home facilitators (or visitors).

For more about this exciting faith-filled program, or to register your family be a part of the pilot, please contact Sr. Maureen at St. Ann: 314-450-4873 or email stannfaith@gmail.com.

Tuition payments and morning care & aftercare current status is being communicated to each family. Statements are being emailed. If this is not how you want to receive your statements please contact Eileen at 314-385-5090 ext. 852. With the end of the 2nd quarter coming to an end on December 20th, be sure to pay your balance or contact Eileen. We will be withholding report cards this time around and Educonnect will be disabled.

Mark Your Calendar

December 11th-School Board 6:30pm

December 12th-Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe-Faith in Action Mass-8th grade

December 20th-Noon Dismissal-Final day of 2nd quarter

Blessings,
Jacob Reft

Scroll Down for the Close Up Photo Guessing Game

What is this??



