



Sunday Sidelines

October 1, 2017

Dear Families,

October is a wonderful liturgical month. October 1st is the Memorial of St. Therese of Lisieux; October 4 is the Memorial of St. Francis of Assisi; October 7th is the Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary; October 13th is the 100th Anniversary of the last of the apparitions to the children of Fatima; October 15th is the Memorial of St. Teresa of Avila. And then there are the Angels!

On Thursday, I had the pleasure of joining Mrs. Blume's first grade religion class as they learned about the Guardian Angels, whose Feast we celebrate on October 2nd. Having celebrated the Feast of the Archangels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael on Friday, September 29th, the Memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels is tomorrow. It was a good reminder to me as I sat in on Mrs. Blume's class that God assigns a Guardian Angel to each of us to "keep our body safe, but more important, to keep our souls safe since our souls will live forever." Of course, most children grow up with the Guardian Angel prayer (and Mrs. Blume's class all recited it well, having learned it in Kindergarten). It was certainly part of the bedtime routine for my own children as they were growing up. But how many of us, as adults, rely on the help of our Guardian Angel to protect us? Of course, there are times that we narrowly escape harm, and at those moments, we are reminded that "My Guardian Angel must have been watching over me." But our Angels are at our service and, no doubt, just wait to be called upon by us to guide us through our days. When there is a difficult situation, we can call upon our Guardian Angel to go ahead of us to start to resolve the situation. Or we can send our Guardian Angel to someone else's Guardian Angel to pave the way for a difficult conversation. Or we can call on our children's Guardian Angels to keep watch over them – especially when they are far from us or in potential danger – either bodily danger or spiritual danger!

What Mrs. Blume's class learned on Thursday was that the Angels are pure spirit who are in the direct presence of God. They keep us safe and they keep our souls safe because our souls live even after our bodies die. Of course, the students are intrigued by the angels. May each of us, in this month where we celebrate our Guardian Angels, be reminded of the reality of just how much help God provides for us, in His Angels and in His Saints, to bring our souls safely to heaven with Him!

Grateful for the Blessing of Sharing the Faith with Little Ones,
Leslie Mitros

¹ **The Aquinas Family Fall Festival was a huge success!** Organizing a picnic for 500 people, we would like to thank so many families and all our sponsors. First, James Hite and Eugene Cresta, along with Peter Blume, who manned the grills in 90 degree heat. Next, the Vanguard and Liguori families and Rich Gubitosi, who moved and assembled all the tents, chairs, and tables. The Mercer family, Carlotta Bukowski, and all the Hites for helping set up all the games and activities. Jake Harrison for being our runner (I think he just liked being in the air conditioned car). A huge thank you to Eric Cerny for cleaning up the garbage, tables and the hay. Finally, our Middle School and High School students, who were in control of the fun games. Much appreciation to all our families and friends who helped in any way!

Sincerely,
Jennifer, Cindy and Vanessa

² **Aquinas Academy Speakers Series**

Fr. Rene J. Schatteman, Priest of the Opus Dei Prelature, will be presenting "Formation is Fundamental: Becoming what God intends you to be! Five Aspects of Formation in Christian Life according to St. Josemaria Escriva" on Thursday, October 19, 2017, from 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. in the Mross McGonigle Hall at Aquinas Academy of Pittsburgh. (See attached flyer)

St. Josemaria Escriva, the founder of Opus Dei, fully grasped the importance of education in every person's life. He saw his own role as helping to “form” each person to be what God created him/her to be. With penetrating insight he distinguished five areas for growth to attain the maturity proper to a daughter/son of God: 1) the human aspect, 2) expertise (competence) in a given area of life (work/profession), 3) a deep spiritual life, 4) concern for others, and 5) a fitting intellectual knowledge of the faith.

Each of us can continue to improve in all these ways and help our children, friends and others to pursue these ends. In his presentation, Fr. Rene will elaborate on these points.

A light reception will follow the talk. Lectures are free and open to the public.

³ **For the month of October, the virtue of the month is the cardinal virtue of Justice; and the Practice of the Faith is daily reading of Scripture.**

Justice:

Meaning

- Enables one to give to each, beginning with God, what is due to him. Justice towards men disposes one to respect human rights and promote equity.

Looks like

- Smiling and acknowledging the presence of others
- Speaking positively about family and friends
- Completing the tasks assigned to you
- Telling the truth

Sounds like

- “You can go first.”
- “Let’s work together”
- “Would you like to have one of my cookies?”

Please see the attachments this week on justice and suggestions on scripture quotes – one for each day of the month! Thank you to Fr. Rene for providing these resources, and to Mrs. Meland for the virtue calendar quotes as posted on the website this month for the virtue of Justice.

⁴ Our Lunch Service through Food First seems to be going very well. As we continue our conversation with them so that lunches best meet our need, there will be adjustments to the menu items offered. Please know that a student need not purchase a full lunch. There are wraps, salads, hoagies, and other items available as Grab-and-Go items for less than the cost of a full lunch.

⁵ The first Parents Association (AAPA) meeting of the year will be Tuesday morning, October 3rd, at 9:30. The meeting will be in room 523, on the 2nd floor of the high school. Please feel free to come to the meeting and then stay for 11:00 Mass!

⁶ A Reminder that College Night is this Thursday, October 5th, at 7:00. All high school families are invited to attend. The information presented on Thursday will be of particular importance to juniors and seniors. However, it is never too early to start lining up the steps of the college process. See the attached flyer for more information!

⁷ Please recall that Monday, October 9th is an in-service day for teachers and there is no school for students. After-Day will be open that day from 7:45 until 5:45. Please let Mrs. K know if you will be using after-day all day or part of the day on 10/9.

As mentioned at the Parent Night meeting, the faculty will be taking part in Active-Shooter training that day. **I am extremely grateful for the donations that we have received to cover the cost of the securing the classroom doors, as well as to cover the cost of this staff in-service.** There is little question that the staff takes quite seriously their role in providing for the health and safety of your children while they are at school. This full-day training and practice will be beneficial and help us to think through the logistics of various types of critical situations that we hope will never occur at school.

⁸ There is an Open House for interested students and families on Saturday, October 28th from 11:00 to 1:00. Please do take a yard sign from campus, and place it in your front yard. There is nothing like letting your neighbors know that your children attend Aquinas Academy to interest them in finding out more! If you have friends who are interested, perhaps you could invite them to the Open House and even come with them.

⁹ Parents of middle school students are invited to our High School Information Night on Tuesday, October 24th from 7:00 to 8:00. This evening is directed specifically toward our own families who may have an oldest child in middle school. We look forward to presenting

the high school curriculum (including AP classes), a little bit about the college preparation and application process, and what makes Aquinas Academy stand out in preparing high school students for college. Student leaders and young alumni will be available as well to offer their insights and experience.

¹⁰ **Students in grades 9 through 11 will be taking the PSAT 8/9 (9th grade), and the PSAT (10th and 11th grades) on Wednesday morning, October 11th.** Please be sure that your student is at school on time that day. For 11th graders, this is the qualifying exam for the National Merit Scholarship Program. Students received an information booklet, as well as the form to register, along with the nominal fee charged for both tests. Please ask your child for the booklet and form, and register by paying the fee. Students completed the pre-administration paperwork during the activities period on Friday. Students will miss Block 1 and Block 2 on the test day.

¹¹ **All Middle and High School students will have field trips on Friday, October 13th.** Juniors and seniors will be on their Stratford Trip, and all others will have local field trips. More information will be forthcoming. So that this does not cause a major disruption in our Odd/Even Day schedule, that Friday will not be a “Day” in our 10-day rotation. Rather, **Thursday, October 12th is a Day 1, and Monday, October 16th will be a Day 2.** The Activities Calendar has already been adjusted to reflect this change.

Lower school students will have their academic classes on Friday, October 13th in the morning, and will then have afternoon activities directed toward the Anniversary of Fatima.

¹² Following the great fun had at the Family Fall Festival, **the next big event is “Yinz All Come” on Friday, November 3rd. This is a new Adult Only Event with a Pittsburgh theme!** Exact details will be coming soon – but you will want to hold the date and line up a babysitter to join in the fun!

The AAPA could use some help for with the evening. If anyone could **donate any tickets for any Pittsburgh event, CLO, Pens or Steeler tickets, restaurant or hotel gift card,** that would be so generous and helpful for our adult social. If you would like to donate, please send to office Attention: AAPA, Yinzer Night. Also, we are going to have a **Pittsburgh cookie table. If you would like to bake some cookies for the event, please contact Xanessa'J arrison0** Thank you from AAPA and we hope to see you there!

¹³ Is daily Mass starting to feel like your morning workout from trying to keep your little ones quiet and in the pew? ;) Then **Little Crusaders Care** is for you!

What: Nursery for children up to age 5

Where: The gym (Back doors entrance) during school O ass

When: Tuesdays and Wednesdays [beginning October 17th](#)

Just show up any [Tues or Weds morning](#) as early as [10:55](#) to drop off your little one to play while you pray. You will pick them up immediately following Mass.

We all love to go to O ass as a family, and we encourage you to take advantage of those opportunities the rest of the week. But now there are a couple options for times to enjoy the

company of your older children at O ass while allowing the little ones extra time to run and play to their hearts content!

If you are interested in using the nursery, please click [HERE](#) to access the sign-up genius page to offer your time as a volunteer (only once/quarter). Please complete the attached registration form and bring it with you to the nursery. If you have any questions, please contact the committee chairs, Suzanne Kable or Aimee Engleka.

¹⁴ In preparation for the Celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the final apparition to the children at Fatima, and for Bishop Zubik's Consecration of the Diocese to Our Lady, **there will be Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at the Aquinas Chapel on Tuesday, October 10th, after Mass until 2:55 Benediction.** This is part of a bigger Diocesan effort to hold a **"Rosary Congress" in the days leading up to the Consecration.** Please join us for a time of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

¹⁵ **Sunday Night Basketball for Fathers, 7th-12th Sons, and Alumni** To any interested hoopsters, Aquinas has an Open Gym every Sunday night 7:30-9:00 pm. It is a great time of fellowship! Please contact Basketball Coach Joe Austin to be put on the weekly email list or with any questions at austin@aquinas.pvt.k12.pa.us.

¹⁶ **The "Uniform Swap" is now open year-round!** The sorted uniforms are located in the Girls Locker Room in labeled bins. We currently have a ton of items! All are welcome to drop off what you're no longer using (there's a bin for this) and take what you need. Remember! Only include acceptable uniform pieces in good condition (no holes, tears, stains, etc.). Also, as a courtesy to the next person, don't forget to keep the bins neat and tidy after you dig for your size. Questions? Contact Tina Rossi

¹⁷ **It's BOX TOPS time again!** The fall contest will run from **Monday, October 2nd to Friday, October 20th.** Collecting Box Tops is a fun and easy way to earn money for our school. For every Box Top collected, Aquinas earns \$0.10. Last year, we earned over \$1,200! Please see the attached flyer for details about the new TEAM collection competition! Red, Yellow, Green, and Blue teams will be competing at each building level to earn a Team Dress Down Day! Please contact Aimee Engleka with any questions.

¹⁸ **Giant Eagle Apples for the Students program can link your advantage card to Aquinas Academy,** allowing Aquinas to accumulate points that may be "spent" on items such as playground balls, printers, gym equipment, and other school items. See the attached flyer for our school code to link your card to Aquinas Academy!

¹⁹ **School pictures are on Wednesday, October 18th.** This will be a **DRESS UP DAY for students.** All students should have their picture taken, regardless of whether parents order a package. This photo is used for the yearbook. Students may dress up, following all rules of modesty. Please no short skirts; no jeans; and no low necklines for the girls.

²⁰ **Please print the attached letter from Amy Baxter, our Hampton Township School Nurse. There are several screenings during the year, the first of which is Hearing Screening for grades 1, 2, 3, 7, and 11.**