

THE GOOD NEWS IN OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



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SPRING 2015

NOTRE DAME CATHOLIC SCHOOL

It's a little more than 500 miles -- about a nine-hour car ride from Wichita Falls, TX to Cleveland, MS. It will never be known exactly how long it took a balloon released from Fr. Abstetar Field at **Notre Dame Catholic School** to reach a farmer's land just about 20 minutes east of the mighty Mississippi River. But one thing's for sure. This year's celebration of National Catholic Schools Week became Notre Dame's most memorable to date.

"We tried to go all out this year in the hopes of starting some new traditions," said Notre Dame director of enrollment, Matt Ledesma. "It's easy for things to get overwhelming when you're trying to squeeze in all these great ideas into just a few days. But I think our events went well and helped make this annual celebration something special."

The most anticipated event capped off the school's celebration with all 245 students gathering on the football field for a special presentation. The students, along with faculty and staff, were placed to form a giant "ND!" across the Knights' gridiron. Each person was given either a blue or gold balloon with an attached message printed on small cards.

"We put some of our favorite bible verses on one side about spreading the good news," said Ledesma. "And on the other we put our school's contact info for people to contact us if they later found one of the balloons."

All together the balloons were released into a beautiful blue sky, gently sailing away into the vast unknown. All that was left to do was wait.

It didn't take long before the first call came in. Just a couple of days later, a farmer from Wilson, OK, contacted the school to say a balloon had landed on his farm. Ledesma said he was excited and surprised to learn the balloon had made the roughly 75 mile trip north, and thought that would likely be the benchmark.

But God's message of love knows no boundaries.

"That next week I was going through our school Twitter account and saw someone had Tweeted us about finding another balloon.



"The first time I read it, I don't think it totally sunk in. I did kind of a double take."

Another farmer had come across a balloon. This time just a hop, skip and a jump longer than 510 miles in Cleveland, MS, population about 12,000 and home to the Fightin' Wildcats and Trojans.

"He said he checked out our web site and thought our school looked great. Then he thanked us for the message," Ledesma said. "I wrote him back thanking him so much for letting us know. I think the Holy Spirit really had a hand in something as incredible as that."

The balloon release was just the cap to a memorable week of festivities.

Wichita Falls Mayor Glenn Barham kicked off the celebration by delivering a special proclamation in honor of Notre Dame's 110-year service to the community. A school-wide assembly was held where Barham presented the proclamation to Notre Dame principal, Doug Jones.

Later, the school dedicated its weekly Mass to all NDCS alumni. Former students Christina Feldman ('95) and Jina Fairchild ('02) participated as readers during the celebration.

NDCS Lower Campus hospitality coordinator Cathy McElroy was honored in Fort Worth at the Dioceses' annual banquet. It was McElroy's second honoring of the week, as she took a special spot as the exclamation point on the giant "ND!"



CASSATA HIGH SCHOOL

Article contributed by Brianna Kessler, interning at Cassata High School from Texas Wesleyan University.

After taking a class on human trafficking awareness at **Cassata High School** last fall, senior Carrie Flynn volunteered to reach out to victims of sexual exploitation with a Fort Worth nonprofit organization, The NET.

The class helped students gain a deeper understanding of modern day slavery and become more aware of human trafficking.

Carrie was inspired by the class and decided to start volunteering with the organization. The experience has been eye-opening for her.

"I learned that you can get involved, no matter what it is," Carrie said. "You can make a difference."

As a jail advocate, Carrie visits women and young girls who are incarcerated in the Tarrant County jail for prostitution in order to intervene in their lives and infuse hope and value in them.

The advocates meet weekly to pray for and visit the incarcerated women at the jail. Carrie joins this group twice a month, spending about an hour each time with

the women to provide spiritual and social support. She said this has really helped make her more aware of what is going on around her.

"It has helped me mature," she said. "I am learning so much from their experiences."

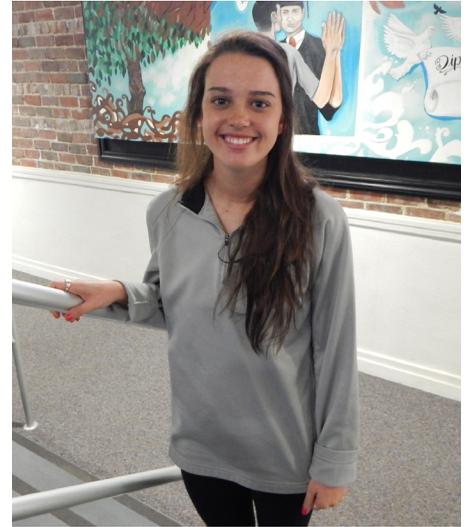
"What impressed me about Carrie is that she took information from the class at Cassata, and she wanted to do something about it," said Sarah Adams, assistant director of the NET. "She pursued our volunteer training on her own, and she's been so consistent and faithful about her involvement. That's the biggest thing we require from our volunteers."

Since participating in the minilab and volunteer program, Carrie has changed her rhetoric and way of thinking.

"Some words can be offensive," Carrie said. "I really watch what I say."

Cassata counselor, Angela Fowler, said everything Carrie is learning has made her really want to help others.

"I've seen her inner strength just build and build," Mrs. Fowler said. "It is truly a beautiful journey. She is sharing herself with others and becoming an extraordinary



young woman."

The experience has helped Carrie decide what she wants to do career-wise. Before, she had no idea, but now she has a focus.

"I am really interested in psychology, law, and nonprofit organizations like the NET," Carrie said. After graduation, she plans to attend Texas Tech University.

NOLAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

On January 22, members of the **Nolan Catholic Pro-Life Club** traveled to Washington, D.C. for the annual March For Life. More than 750,000 people attended this year's rally making it the largest pro-life event in history. Club members attended the opening Mass at the National Shrine the night before the March, and attended the Youth Mass on the morning of the March.

Students were able to tour the Washington D.C. area and attend a session of the United States Senate while they were voting on a bill. Adrienne Conley met Texas Senator, and recently announced presidential hopeful, Ted Cruz. "It was an honor to meet such a strong and active advocate for life," she said. Catherine said that being part of a congregation of hundreds of thousands of people

was amazing. The visit had a profound effect on Katie: "It was amazing getting to see all these people, especially all the young people, so passionate about this cause! It was life changing, and experiencing this with my friends and classmates made it even more special!" Madi also felt it was life changing: "I felt empowered by being with such a large group defending the innocent with me."

Jordan said the March was a great experience. "It's amazing to see so many young people like myself marching for the end of abortion in this culture of death that we live in." Sean, president of Nolan's Pro-Life Club, was impressed with the amount of people from across the country who were all there for the same reason and driven by the Holy Spirit. "It was an environment of love. The culture of death has no chance!"

On March 24, Sean and Adrienne again traveled, this time to Austin, with Bishop Olson's advocacy team and addressed state representatives on the Catholic point of view on several issues. Sean and Adrienne focused on pro-life and end-of-life related bills going through the legislature this session.



ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON CATHOLIC SCHOOL

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School is always looking for ways to celebrate the seasons and feast days of the church in meaningful ways. Often the school builds on time honored traditions, but tailor them to its community.

Students and staff were excited to shake up the annual Mardi Gras festivities this year. Each class, Pre-kindergarten three year olds through third grade, was paired with a mentor class of older students from fourth through eighth grade on Mardi Gras to create masks, floats and banners for the event. In previous years, only younger students participated in the parade. What a great opportunity it was for all of the older students to be leaders, while the younger students enjoyed the extra guidance. Another new addition included the band students who played music to add to the party atmosphere. The big hurrah before the reflective season of Lent made the meaning behind the celebration more powerful than ever before. The joy and merry making were the perfect contrast to the solemn, prayerful school-wide Ash Wednesday Mass the next morning giving that precious tradition ever deeper meaning.



A long standing Friday tradition during Lent is Stations of the Cross led by different grades. Third grade students provide beautiful music for this quiet and prayerful tradition. A favorite is the stations interpreted from Mary's perspective.

A new addition this year involved placing St. Joseph Altars – a tradition begun in Italy – in the teacher's lounge. The altars

included a statue of St. Joseph, candles and contributions of delicious foods from the teachers assembled on tables in honor of the Feast day of St. Joseph. The school hopes to include the entire student body next year when the new Activity Center is completed.

Putting a new twist on, sticking with favorites and adding new traditions each school year helps keep the fires of faith kindled at the school.

ST. GEORGE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Wearing togas and leaf crowns, the sixth graders at **St. George Catholic School** walked around the school in celebration of its annual Greek Festival. Eating Greek foods and playing Greek music, the students shared their knowledge of ancient Greece with students from all grade levels, as they visited various classrooms. "After studying ancient Greece and its culture, as part of their Social Studies curriculum, the sixth grade class did research covering a specific topic pertaining to ancient Greece, and then presented the information in a fun and educational way, culminating activity of the Greek Festival," states Felicia Gehrig, Social Studies teacher. "It is so cool being able to dress as an ancient Greek," exclaimed student, Domingo Rodriguez, "It gave me a new perspective on ancient history."



HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

Congratulations to the 2015 valedictorians and salutatorians for their academic achievement

Nolan Catholic High School
Fort Worth, TX



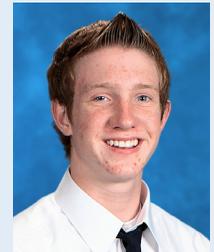
Reese Eller
Valedictorian

Sacred Heart Catholic School
Muenster, TX



Madison Nicole Hesse
Valedictorian

Notre Dame Catholic School
Wichita Falls, TX



Patrick Brady
Valedictorian



Mary Rose Sy
Salutatorian



Aaron Paul Davis
Salutatorian



Jarrod Harper
Salutatorian

ST. RITA CATHOLIC SCHOOL

The PK4 class at **St. Rita Catholic School** celebrated the birthday of Dr. Seuss during March. The day's activities were many and are noted below in a way sure to make Dr. Seuss himself proud!



We will say it with a mule,
And we will say it in our school.
We will say it with a moose,
Happy Birthday, Dr. Seuss!

One fish, two fish,
Three fish, four.
Our handprints made fish,
Many more.

The sun did not shine.
It was too wet to play,
So we made yummy hat snacks
That cold, cold, wet day.

Green eggs and ham,
Green eggs and ham,
We made them and liked them,
Sam-I-Am!

We had our crazy socks to wear, sir,
But the weather was not hot, sir.
Instead of coming here to school, sir,
We had to wear our socks at home, sir.

Those trees! Those trees!
Those truffula trees!
We made beautiful trees
Which everyone needs!

Oh, the things that he taught us.
Oh the things that we know.
With Dr. Seuss there to lead us,
Oh, the places we'll go!

ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Monday, March 2, 2015 was a very special day at **All Saints Catholic School** as students from Cassata High School and local community members were invited to visit for the day as guest readers. The readers were part of a Read-In that was planned to heighten literacy and celebrate the birthday and legacy of Dr. Seuss. At the Read-In, readers and teachers donned their best Seussian garments to set the festive mood for the love of reading and traveled to classes throughout the day sharing their favorite children's book. Students also joined in the festivities by wearing crazy hats. Visiting reader, Leah Wingard from Camp Fire stated, "This was a fun event and I enjoyed getting to know the youth in our community. I cannot wait until next year!" Principal, Arica Prado, also noted, "This was also a great partnership with the students from Cassata High School. The students were so engaged and I saw some potential future teachers. I am very glad that Nancy Martin, principal of Cassata, supported this event with her staff and students."



Nolan Catholic High School Ecology Teacher Rick Garnett, Alumnus Matt Jarzombek '14, and a group of Nolan students have constructed a greenhouse on campus. The greenhouse will make possible a student-run farmers' market for parents; plant genetic studies; and provide means for independent studies. Perhaps even a Lenten Fish Fry using the fish raised for use in the aquaponics system. Currently, Senior Henri Chung is comparing plant growth in soil versus in aquaponics systems. In addition, students are in the process of building a mini aquaponics system in the school's library.



A joint project between **Immaculate Conception Catholic Parish and School** has resulted in the upgrading of security for the education building at the school with a keyless entry system. The school's Fund-A-Project at the recent auction was dedicated to funding half of the Phase 1 school building project which includes a programmable scan-card system for employees. The security also features an identification procedure where those who wish to enter the school push a button engaging a live camera so office personnel can identify the person before entry.



"It's looking really good! I'm really happy and excited to see real progress," said Rev. Khoi Tran, Immaculate Conception Parochial Vicar, who oversaw the project along with facilities assistant coordinator Joe Montoya and business manager Mark Lindsey.

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Faith – Family – Future is the tagline for **Holy Cross Catholic School**. A primary goal for our third year as a school was to build our sense of family and community. “Being a new school, small in size, with many families recent arrivals to the Frisco area, we wanted to be able to provide an atmosphere of “home,” said principal, Nancy Kirkpatrick.

During the fall, school administration and staff worked to lay the groundwork for the creation of a Home and School Association. They recruited parents to help organize a “Deck the Halls” night

where families gathered and made Christmas ornaments—complete with a visit from St. Nick. It was a huge success. Officer elections were held in February. “Parent participation in HASA offers a great opportunity to meet other parents, to stay informed with what is happening in our school, and to provide the volunteer help our school heavily relies on,” said Leonard Powell, HASA president. “Most recently, we hosted an Easter egg hunt and school picnic, and it was great to see all of the students playing together and parents socializing. We look forward to more opportunities to bring Holy Cross families together.”

Holy Cross Catholic School will become **St. Martin de Porres Catholic School** July 1, 2015, blending with the newly created St. Martin de Porres Parish in Prosper. The involvement of the HASA during this transition will help tremendously as a line of communication and connection for current and incoming families. Mrs. Kirkpatrick says she is pleased to have such dedicated parents and faculty working together to support the school. “We have been through many changes since our beginning. I have faith that a strong Home and School Association will be a key factor in our future success.”



OUR MOTHER OF MERCY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Our **Mother of Mercy Catholic School** initiated a Career Day Series this year comprised of three separate sessions. In January, retired postal worker, Willie Roy Hargis, gave a presentation on his job as an EEOC officer in the United States Post Office. The second session, which was held in March, included newly appointed Cedar Hills City Fire Chief and Naval Reserves Captain Reginald Alexander, retired biologist Lorenzo Wilborn and 97.9 The Beat disc jockey, Jamie Goodspeed (a proud graduate of the school). The session also included a fire truck from the City of Fort Worth and the 97.9 The Beat Music Truck, which the OMM Vikings greatly enjoyed. On the experience, Goodspeed stated, “I have come full circle ... as a student of Our Mother of Mercy School to meeting with you ... this is great.” The third session was held in April.



Diocesan fifth grade students met at **Holy Family Catholic Parish and School** recently to take part in the annual Fifth Grade Vocation Day. The day began with Mass celebrated by Bishop Michael Olson, after which Fr. James Wilcox, director of vocations, fielded questions from the eager and curious students. Father Wilcox reminded the students that a vocation is about being a good man or a good woman in whatever way God calls us into His service, not only through the priesthood or religious life. The rest of the day’s activities focused on the personal experiences of current seminarians, priests and women religious and their response to God’s call. Fifth Grade Vocation Day is a collaborative project of the Vocation Office and Catholic Schools.

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

The eighth grade students at **St. Mary's Catholic School** in Gainesville recently completed a unit about future careers. They attended a Course Fair at Gainesville High School and explored websites to some of which had skills testing to help determine potential career paths based on the students' personalities. Once a specific career path was chosen to research, they looked at earning potential, job outlook, education requirements, hours worked, and what they could do in high school to ready themselves for a career in that specific field.

At the culmination of their research and presentations, the students explored jobs and careers in the surrounding community.



Language Arts teacher, Tisha Green, collaborated with members of the Chamber of Commerce and planned a field trip to several local businesses so the students could experience a variety of careers that they may not have thought about researching or may not have realized were available. These were also positions that a student might do while in high school to gain the skills necessary to succeed in their chosen professions.

The students were able to learn about graphic design and screen printing at Texas Star Embroidery. Jackie Zimmerman, the Catholic business owner of Texas Star Embroidery said, "They were an absolute joy to have. They paid attention and were very interested.



It makes me so proud of the kids at St. Mary's Catholic School." The class also learned about fingerprinting with the local police department; inspections with the fire department; banking with Landmark Bank; and visited with a flight instructor at Gainesville Municipal Airport. It was a rewarding experience for all involved, and several additional local businesses have already expressed interest for next year.

ST. MARIA GORETTI CATHOLIC SCHOOL

St. Maria Goretti Catholic School started a special one year program to encourage good nutrition, especially the drinking of milk as an off shoot of our U.S. Government Special Milk Program. Teachers were encouraged to bring special attention to good nutrition and milk during health classes. Fun activities were added to encourage students to drink milk.

Each month, during lunch, the students can participate in an "Empty Your Carton" day. On these days students who drink all of their milk are entered in a drawing for a variety of crazy straws and other prizes. For example, February's straws sported red lips with fish designs imprinted on the straws for Lent.

Each month also has an activity which allows students that are lactose intolerant to participate. In December, students took part in a poster contest promoting milk and good nutrition. Winners received mugs and had their posters displayed in the school's cafetorium. In January, teachers and staff participated in a "milk mustache" contest. Students were given a chance to vote for their favorite mustache. The grand prize winner was the pastor, Fr. Jim Gigliotti,

TOR. The six classes with the most students voting won a mustache piñata filled with "mustache" prizes. Strawberry milk was added in February and April. March brought green milk and a "mooring in March" contest for students. The month of May will have a "Make Mine Milk" photo contest.

"It is fun seeing the students get excited about the activities. They often ask when the next "empty your carton" day will be and the

milk consumption does increase considerably on those days," said Deborah Schump, staff member.

While Hien Nguyen, fourth grade, noted, "It is fun and it helped me learn that milk was healthy for me." Tabi Patterson, also a fourth grader, commented, "We do so many activities to help us realize that milk is good for your body. I never bought milk until this happened. It is all really fun."



OUR LADY OF VICTORY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Our Lady of Victory Catholic School is proud of its new exploratory program offered to students grades five through eight. The curriculum, developed by the middle school teachers, allows students to “explore” different areas each quarter including Fine Arts, Science, Reading/Book Club, and strategies for test taking.

Participation in the Drama Club, for example, allowed students to learn stage

direction and acting, while technicians learned how to work “behind the scenes”. In Basic Survival Skills class, students enjoyed eating MRE (Meals Ready to Eat) and watched survival videos. Alex Castro said, “I liked to learn about the environment and how to survive in an emergency. Most of all, I liked learning about it in a fun way!”

Book Club and Pin It were also courses recently offered. During Book Club, the

students selected the book, *The Maze Runner*. “I enjoyed reading and talking about the book,” said sixth grader, Brian Castro. Students also learned to use Pinterest as a resource during Pin It. They researched craft project ideas and then implemented the idea in class. “This is something different from normal classes. I like learning different things,” said Alex Alvarado. Silly Sloppy Science was another course offered this past semester and gave the students the opportunity to create simple machines, constructed electrical circuits and take part in an egg drop challenge.

Other offerings included Strategy Games and Movie Club. Strategy Games helped students understand how to use test strategies. Reese Herberger said, “I liked the interaction and learning. It taught me to be patient and really use my mind. I liked the challenge!” The Movie Club allowed students to connect to religious inspirational movies like *Heaven is For Real*, *The Book of Daniel*, and *God is Not Dead*.

Students are looking forward to the last quarter to explore new topics.



ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Ever wonder if there was a measurable difference in the permeability of store-bought eggs versus free range eggs?

St. Joseph Catholic School sixth grader, Harry Black, did. He went so far as to construct an experiment and that science project earned second place in the University of Texas at Arlington Science Fair in February. The judging occurred during the ice storm in the latter part of the month, but he was still able to present his findings.

“The reason I chose this topic is that I wondered what processing could do to food,” the 12-year-old said. “I was really nervous wondering if the judges would like my project.”

Harry’s experiment compared store bought eggs with some received from a neighbor’s Rhode Island Reds chickens.

Harry researched and documented what the free range chickens were fed, the chickens’ ages and how long the eggs were harvested after they were laid. “We do not know the exact diet of the chickens, but it was probably high in protein,” Harry wrote in his report of the local grocery store

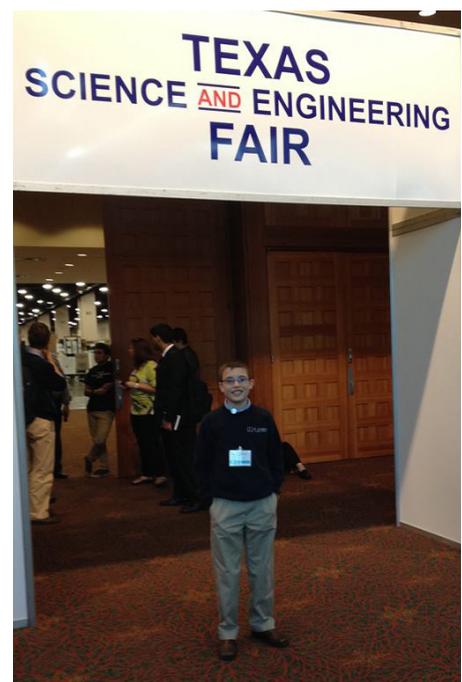
eggs that typically during the laying phase, lysine, methionine, calcium and phosphorus are precisely monitored to support maximum egg production.

During the experiment, the eggs were placed in vinegar for 34 hours to dissolve the calcium shell. The eggs were dried and then placed in corn syrup for 24 hours. Harry recorded the mass of each egg and the percentage change was calculated between each step. The eggs also sat in tap water for an addition 24 hours.

The results? After each step, the store bought eggs showed more significant change in size versus their farm fresh counterparts. In other words, processing does affect food.

The judges’ results earned Harry second place, Biochemistry / Cellular & Molecular, which meant he would advance to the Texas Science & Engineering Fair in San Antonio. (He participated in the event March 28, but did not place.)

“I am so proud of Harry’s work and dedication to this project! He did an outstanding job of representing SJCS. Harry’s love of science is very apparent in



class and I am so glad he was able to share his enthusiasm with students from all over the state,” said Mrs. Valerie Fell, SJS upper school science teacher.

HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Holy Family Catholic School is proud to honor Grace Terrell, an eighth grader, for the remarkable success she has experienced with her science project. Grace began her journey by winning the Holy Family Science Fair. She then took her project to the Fort Worth Regional Science Fair, where she competed against hundreds of students in Ft. Worth, Arlington and the surrounding areas. Grace won her Biochemistry category—first place, she was also awarded two additional awards: second place from the Lockheed Martin Leadership Association and first place from the Tarrant County Veterinary Medical Association. Grace then advanced to the Texas State Science Fair where she

placed first in the Cellular and Molecular Biology division. Her project title was Computational Exploration of Protein Function. She used computers to analyze different protein sequences in a variety of plants and animals.

Besides always achieving highest honors each quarter at Holy Family, Grace also is a Duke Scholar, member of National Junior Honor Society, treasurer of Student Council, plays both the flute and piano, as well as being an avid dancer. As a seventh grader, she was the overall winner of the Holy Family Science Fair and was the overall winner of the Fort Worth Regional Science Fair with a project that examined the behavior of light.



ST. PETER THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL



St. Peter the Apostle Catholic School was represented by sixth grade student David Castro at the Texas State Science and Engineering Fair in San Antonio. David was the winner of the local St. Peter School Science Fair and was eligible to compete at the regional science fair held at University of Texas at Arlington in February. At the regional fair, David placed third in his division, qualifying to compete in the state science fair. David also received an additional recognition, the second place ribbon, from the Institute of Electronic and Electrical Engineers.

“I am so proud of all of his efforts,” said Mrs. Lisa Giardino, science teacher at St. Peter the Apostle Catholic School. “David is a great student and his parents are so supportive of all of his hard work.”

David’s project, entitled, “Hot or Cold?” was a study on the effects of varying temperatures on battery life.

“I really enjoyed the experience,” said David. “I want to work hard and go back to state competition next year.”



Holy Family Catholic School Running Club was treated to a special guest speaker as they trained for 5k events like the Fort Worth Zoo Run and the Cowtown Cook Children’s 5k. HFCS Alum Mrs. Elizabeth Eder Northern paid a visit to share her running experiences including warm-up exercises and stretching techniques with the HFCS runners. Elizabeth has been running since 2004 and was a collegiate runner at Trinity University. In 2013, she won the Cowtown Marathon and in 2014 she won the Cowtown 10k and Half-Marathon. Elizabeth also qualified for the Olympic Trials in the Marathon distance in both 2013 and 2014. The presentation helped the students in the running club as they train to participate in 5k events like the Fort Worth Zoo Run and the Cowtown Cook Children’s 5k.

Life is a mystery! Would you like to go on a *Mystery Trip*? What if you knew not your destination? Would you go? Would you trust those leading you? **St. John the Apostle Catholic School** middle school students and parents did!

Normally, we don't go on a trip without knowing our destination, but in terms of our vocation we don't always know God's will for us. We begin this journey without always knowing the path by which we will arrive. After watching a film produced by DumbOx Ministries which was the actual experience of a youth who participated in a real *Mystery Trip*, students and parents went to the chapel to discuss, reflect and pray about what they saw and heard.

The program begins with the question, "Do you trust God to lead you even if you don't know where you are going?" Then beginning to trust God more fully we realize that the trip is not about a destination but a person; the Son of God, Jesus Christ. This is the mystery of walking in relationship with Jesus Christ, a life where prayer becomes a "covenant drama" (CCC 2567), and Christ's love is the only certainty in a world of constant change. Kayla, a sixth grader said, "The retreat taught me that trusting in God and listening to God can help me overcome any fear. Even though I don't know much about Him, I know I can trust Him. I also learned that when I trust in God, I have fun along the way!"

Besides discerning one's vocation, one of the goals of the *Mystery Trip* is to facilitate communication between parents and their children especially about their faith and the most profound questions of life such as: Who are we? Why are we here? What is our purpose and end? How do we get there? Such questions are shrouded in great mysteries yet when explored and discerned provide immense clarity and purpose to our very existence.

Hillarie, who attended with her son, Jack, commented, "Jack and I really enjoyed the movie and spending the time together to reflect on what we took away from the video. I thought the kids in the video were easy to identify with. The kids gave Jack a sense that it is okay to sometimes feel lost and not sure of things but that as long as his faith is strong and he knows he has somewhere to turn, things will turn out. As a parent of a pre-teen I struggle with knowing the right things to say to keep the lines of communication open. Our family meals have always been a way to communicate daily. During these meals we share our day -- good, bad or indifferent."

The *Mystery Trip* confirms in an open, trustful and informative manner what the Catechism teaches, "The fruitfulness of conjugal love extends to the fruits of the moral, spiritual and supernatural life that parents hand on to their children by education. Parents are the principal and first educators of their children. In this sense the fundamental task of marriage and family is to be at the service of life." (CCC 1653)



The Bucket Brigade came to town and appeared at the North-east Tarrant County Chamber of Commerce meeting in March. **St. John the Apostle Catholic School** fifth graders performed a stunning percussion piece on large plastic buckets. The students led by Mr. Valenzuela performed for a packed house at the monthly Chamber meeting. The pounding rhythms of the drums/buckets had some members on their feet and tapping their toes. St. John the Apostle School was the "highlighted" school for the month of March. Mr. Dean, president, introduced the "Brigade" and presented a few facts about the school.



HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Each year **Holy Trinity Catholic School** students participate in three parish pantry collections. In January, the school hosted a food and blanket drive for Good Shepherd Catholic Church. The drive for St. Francis of Assisi will be held in April and the St. Michael drive will be in May. Each grade level presents their donations at Mass.

In addition to the parish donations, this year students and staff began enhanced service learning initiatives in the middle school program focused on three populations served by Catholic



Charities. The seventh grade students learned about Catholic Charities' Street Outreach Services (SOS). Our students took a field trip to Catholic Charities recently to learn more about how Catholic Charities helps with the homeless population in Fort Worth. They then hosted a school-wide hygiene kits donation drive to raise awareness for this population in March. A parent commented, "What better way is there, for our kids to learn about their faith than by actually living out the Gospel, and helping those less fortunate?"

Eighth grade students participated in a refugee simulation to experience what is involved when a refugee comes to the United States. After celebrating Mass together, a former refugee, who now works for Catholic Charities, shared his story with the students. Upon returning to school, the students wrote letters of encouragement to young refugees from Syria and Afghanistan. Jessica wrote, "I think it is amazing how you have made this journey and I think you are strong." Another student, Christian wrote, "I can empathize with you by coming into a new place. But, it must be very difficult coming into a new country with new sights, a new language and different cultures. I can assure you that Texas and America will treat you with hospitality and a lot of care."

With the integration of these real life experiences, through Catholic Charities and its parish outreach programs, HTCS middle school students grasp the essence of Catholic social teaching and corporal works of mercy by living out their faith.

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC SCHOOL

The **Sacred Heart Catholic School** family is delighted to have "Jesus and the Children", a beautiful new statue adorning the entrance to the school's sports complex. Generously donated by the Muenster Knights of Columbus, it arrived in early December. In seeking an appropriate way to welcome people to the complex, the facilities committee included space for a statue in its plans for the complex. Darell Walterscheid, '76, suggested this particular statue, believing it would also serve as a reminder of what Sacred Heart Catholic School about. The solid granite statue is five foot tall and weighs 3,100 pounds. It is enhanced with lighting and surrounded by red lava rock. Bishop Michael Olson is scheduled to dedicate the statue at a later date. "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom belongs to such as these." Mt 19:14



BISHOP'S SCHOLARS FUND

How can you help a child succeed? Our Catholic schools form the future of our Church. Sustaining the long tradition of excellence in our 20 elementary and high schools remains a high priority for Bishop Michael Olson. The Bishop's Scholars Fund was established to increase available tuition assistance for families who demonstrate financial need. The goal is to offer affordable Catholic school education to as many families as wish to send their children to a Catholic School. To learn more about the Bishop's Scholars Fund, please call us at 817-945-9374 or visit our website at www.advancementfoundation.org.

ST. ANDREW CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Eighth grade students at **St. Andrew Catholic School** went on a spiritual retreat to The Pines Catholic Camp in March. The trip took place during Holy Week to highlight the importance of the week to the students and bring focus to the power of the Holy Spirit. Students were challenged with physical tasks that required them to work as a team, encourage one another and find solutions together to achieve success. Many students felt a great sense of accomplishment when they faced tasks that are not natural to their daily routines. “It was great to see the students push themselves and encourage one another to complete challenges,” said Charles Llewellyn, school president. Each challenge was followed up by a discussion among the student groups and their camp facilitator of how their trial was an example of the daily challenges they face and how Christ works in their lives to help them along the way. “The counselors helped us understand how these obstacles could be applied in our daily lives and how we can become better people by helping each other,” said eighth grade student Nana Osafo-Mensah. The field trip closed with Adoration and was a great way to bring focus to the importance of Christ in our lives.



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHOLIC SCHOOL



Spring brings lots of energy to **Immaculate Conception Catholic School** as it forms the hub for schools throughout North Central Texas to compete in academic meets representing two different districts as part of the Private School Interscholastic Association (PSIA).

This year, due to a snow cancellation, the school hosted both district meets on the same day with hundreds of participants and their families spending the day at ICCS competing in 59 academic contests ranging from speech to science to on-site drawing. At the end of the day, two champions were crowned. St. Mary’s Catholic School in Gainesville was District 2A Champion compiling more than 1000 points while ICCS garnered its 13th consecutive District 1A Championship amassing more than 1600 points. Top placing students will advance to the state level at Texas Christian University May 2. Last year ICCS placed second in the state among 1A schools from among the 108 that participated.

In April, **Our Lady of Victory Catholic School** was blessed to have an alum return to speak to the students on nuclear energy. Bill Lyons graduated from OLV and Nolan Catholic High School. With a BS and MS from Texas A&M University in nuclear engineering, Bill is a senior consultant in the Nuclear Fuel Technology Division with ANATECH/SI Corporation in San Diego, California. Bill spoke to the OLV students on the importance of nuclear energy for the future. He focused on the importance of how technology plays a role with the use of coding. Bill explained how nuclear energy is one of the best sources of energy for the environment. The students were very engaged to hear Bill and know he is helping the environment by supporting nuclear energy. OLV also welcomed Bill’s mom and OLV alum— Emma Benavides Lyon.



OUR SCHOOLS

All Saints Catholic School (PreK-8)
2006 N. Houston St., Fort Worth, TX 76164
817-624-2670 • www.ascsfw.org

Cassata High School
1400 Hemphill St., Fort Worth, TX 76104
817-926-1745 • www.cassatahs.org

Holy Cross Catholic School (PreK3-4)
303 King St., Frisco TX 75035
469-362-2400 • www.hccsf.org

Holy Family Catholic School (PreK-8)
6146 Pershing Ave., Fort Worth, TX 76107
817-737-4201 • www.hfsfw.org

Holy Trinity Catholic School (PreK-8)
3750 William D. Tate Ave., Grapevine, TX 76051
817-421-8000 • www.holytcs.org

Immaculate Conception Catholic School (PreK-8)
2301 N. Bonnie Brae St., Denton, TX 76207
940-381-1155 • www.catholicsschooldenton.org

Nolan Catholic High School
4501 Bridge St., Fort Worth, TX 76103
817-457-2920 • www.nolancatholichs.org

Notre Dame Catholic School (PreK-12)
2821 Lansing Blvd., Wichita Falls, TX 76309
940-692-6041 • www.notredamecatholic.org

Our Lady of Victory Catholic School (PreK-8)
3320 Hemphill Ave., Fort Worth, TX 76110
817-924-5123 • www.olvfw.com

Our Mother of Mercy Catholic School (PreK-8)
1007 E. Terrell St., Fort Worth, TX 76104
817-923-0058 • www.omom.org

Sacred Heart Catholic School (PreK-12)
153 East Sixth St., Muenster, TX 76252
940-759-2511 • www.shmuenster.com

St. Andrew Catholic School (PreK-8)
3304 Dryden Rd., Fort Worth, TX 76109
817-924-8917 • www.standrewsch.org

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School (PreK-8)
2016 Willis Lane, Keller, TX 76248
817-431-4845 • www.seasc.net

St. George Catholic School (PreK-8)
824 Hudgins Ave., Fort Worth, TX 76111
817-222-1221 • www.sgctx.org

St. John the Apostle Catholic School (PreK-8)
7421 Glenview Dr., North Richland Hills, TX 76180
817-284-2228 • www.stjs.org

St. Joseph Catholic School (PreK-8)
2015 SW Green Oaks Blvd., Arlington, TX 76017
817-419-6800 • www.stjosephstx.com

St. Maria Goretti Catholic School (PreK-8)
1200 S. Davis Dr., Arlington, TX 76013
817-275-5081 • www.smsgschool.org

St. Mary's Catholic School (PreK-8)
931 N. Weaver St., Gainesville, TX 76240
940-665-5395, ext. 3 • www.smsmustangs.com

St. Peter the Apostle Catholic School (PreK-8)
1201 South Cherry Lane, Fort Worth, TX 76108
817-246-2032 • www.spsfw.org

St. Rita Catholic School (PreK-8)
712 Weiler Blvd., Fort Worth, TX 76112
817-451-9383 • www.saintritaschool.net

Visit the Fort Worth Catholic Schools
web site www.fwdioc.org

JENNIFER PELLETIER, SUPERINTENDENT



With much anticipation, we approached the Easter season and with much joy, we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. During Lent, through sacrifice and prayer, we were called to a deeper understanding of the suffering of Christ for our redemption. Additionally, with the celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday, we experience the beauty of the traditions and richness of the Catholic Church. St. John Paul II, at the Beatification of St. Faustina declared, “Like a band of light this psalm of thanksgiving passes through the octave of Easter. It is the choral ‘thank you’ of the Church which adores God for the gift of Christ’s resurrection: for the gift of new and eternal life revealed in the risen Lord. With one heart the Church adores and thanks Him for the infinite love which has been communicated to every person and to the whole universe in Him”. What joy and comfort the Church offers to us as we traverse a world too easily fraught with sin. As we struggle with the difficulties of our lives, there is greater meaning to our existence as seen through the lens of Christ’s humanity, His suffering, death and resurrection. Our joys, our sufferings, all of our actions become an extension of our creation by God; they are for God and must be done with the intention of glorifying His name. Again, as St. John Paul II opined, “(f)or God and before God, the human being is always unique and unrepeatable, somebody thought of and chosen from eternity, someone called and identified by his own name.” Our responsibility, therefore, is to act in accordance with that calling, so that our actions are worthy of being “identified by his own name”. That is our truest and most ardent hope for our Catholic Schools; that we are a place where our students understand their uniqueness and dignity granted to them by God so that they may, in turn, elevate others to that same understanding. Without the help and prayers of parents, faculty, staff, and administration this goal would be unobtainable. It is with the deepest respect and sincerest of intentions that I thank you for being a part of the Diocese of Fort Worth Catholic Schools. We are so thankful for all the support and prayers continually offered for the success of our schools spiritually, academically, and athletically. We have many blessings for which to be thankful, but it is the strength of our community that is our greatest asset.

AMERICAN WAY AWARD WINNERS

For the past 55 years, the General Worth Assembly, Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Daughters of America, have honored exemplary conduct for “love of God and country” through the American Way Award. This year’s awards were given to the following eighth grade students:

All Saints – Jorge Hernandez and Adrienne Molina

Holy Family – Julian Lopez and Susie Theisen

Holy Trinity – Gavin Tamer and Emily Alexander

Our Lady of Victory – Juan Dorado and Alexandra Castro

Our Mother of Mercy – Miguel Salazar and Aryanna Stafford

St. Andrew – Coleman Meadows and Peyton Hisel

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton – Benjamin Geiser and Nicole Oropeza

St. George – Jose Arriaga and Arlett Plasencia

St. John the Apostle – Lavang Vu and Karina deLeon

St. Joseph – Harley De Loera and Nolan Parker

St. Maria Goretti – John Nguyen and Tara Hennessy

St. Peter the Apostle – Logan Colvin and Rachel Redding

St. Rita – Alex Esparza and Fatima Garcia