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Saint Paul

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

St. Paul Catholic School Looking Forward to Another Great Year!

St. Paul Catholic School is ready for another great school year — and to celebrate its 50th anniversary! As our school welcomes both new and familiar faces, as well as implementing various new and improved programs, the faculty and staff look forward to continuing to serve the school's students and families.

This year, St. Paul welcomes several new teachers and staff members, including Fr. Kevin McQuone as the new campus chaplain.

“We are very excited to welcome them for the 2013-2014 school year,” says Principal Lorelei Darga. “Best wishes are given to the faculty who will not be returning to SPCS. While we are truly sorry to see them leave, we wish them all the best with their new positions.”

In the new academic year, technology will continue to be a focus, and the staff has worked to further integrate technology with classroom learning.

“We are extremely pleased and excited to announce that our Technology Program has taken a giant leap forward,” Ms. Darga says. “We have ordered Chromebooks [Google laptops] for the computer lab, for K - 5 classrooms, and one for each middle school student. Chromebooks use Google Apps, which has fundamentally changed how students are learning and how teachers are instructing.”

With the new Chromebooks, students will be able to access their work from school, home or any other places where they do their school work. The Chromebooks will also make group assignments easier — multiple users will be able to collaborate on the same document, in real time, even when they are not physically together. Students will also be able to save documents directly to “the cloud,” and will no longer need to rely on flash drives or network storage.

The school has also adopted several improvements for its academic programs, including the Singapore Math series for all students in kindergarten through fifth grade, as well as the Prentice Hall Mathematics Common Core, 2013 Edition for sixth through eighth grade.

“Singapore Math promotes a deeper understanding of numbers and math concepts,”



St. Paul School is now equipped with Chromebooks – in the computer lab as well as in the classrooms.

Parish School Year Preview *continued from front cover*

says Ms. Darga. “It emulates the math program taught in Singapore where students have repeatedly ranked at or near the top on international math exams since the mid-1990s. Prentice Hall’s program is a research-based program with a unique blend of print and digital components. Lessons include built-in homework video tutor help — narrated by real teachers — that cover key concepts of the day’s lesson, providing support for the students at home or at school. Each lesson engages the students through online active math activities. These activities give students the chance to review and practice important math concepts in an interactive environment.”

A new science series, the McGraw Hill/Glencoe Integrated iScience Series, has also been adopted for sixth through eighth grade students.

“The curriculum is designed around the 5E Learning Cycle, which is supported by research to ‘Engage’ the students, allow them to ‘Explore’ the topics of study while being able to ‘Explain’ what they have learned,” Ms. Darga says. “Each lesson is then ‘Extended’ further beyond the scope of basic knowledge, and finally the student is ‘Evaluated’ on the material in order to assess if the student successfully attained the

necessary concepts. Google Chromebooks are an added daily and innovative benefit in order to maximize the students’ experience.”

In addition to all these technological and academic improvements, the school building itself has received a bit of a facelift as well.

“Our maintenance staff has been hard at work getting the school ready for the first day of school,” Ms. Darga says. “New lighting and fresh paint have really brightened the rooms and hallways, floors have been stripped and waxed, and carpeting has been cleaned. With such a fresh new look, it’s hard to believe that this year we will be celebrating 50 years!”

Ms. Darga also notes that she and the entire school faculty are looking forward to providing the best educational experience for the students.

“Working together as a team of teachers, staff and parents, I know we can ensure and promote a strong Catholic identity while continuing to enhance strong academic standards,” she says. “I am truly looking forward to a fabulous 2013-2014 school year!”



Students arrive at St. Paul School excited to start a new year!

“Working together as a team of teachers, staff and parents, I know we can ensure and promote a strong Catholic identity while continuing to enhance strong academic standards. I am truly looking forward to a fabulous 2013-2014 school year!” — Principal Lorelei Darga

A Letter From Our Pastor

The Days May be Long, but the Years are Short

Dear Parishioners,

It is hard to believe that September is upon us. I have always heard that time seems to go faster when you get older, but I also feel that sometimes the days are long, but the years are short. Didn't summer just begin? Now we are looking at fall and, before we know it, Thanksgiving and Christmas will be here.

There is a common theory that time speeds up as you get older. But what about the children who are heading back to school? I'll bet most of them think the summer was way too short and flew by in a nanosecond. Perhaps time goes fast for all of us, regardless of our age, especially when we are enjoying ourselves. It fits with the adage, "Time flies when you're having fun."

Fun—what a great word! Fun was part of my childhood. It does not always seem to be part of my adult life. However, if I look at life from a stewardship perspective, "fun" does not seem to be out of reach. Stewardship is a very positive way of living because it focuses on gifts and thanksgiving. Stewardship asks us to look at life from what we have, not from what we do not have. Some of the happiest people I know are those who practice stewardship and live it out in their daily lives. Yes, they bear crosses, and yes, their lives are not perfect, nor are they perfect people. Nevertheless, they say "Thank you" often, and they say it especially to God.

We all recognize that January is when our new year starts, but in many ways, September seems like the beginning of the new year, doesn't it? Schools have restarted, vacations are over, and even our ministries seem to pick up and become more active. Perhaps now



is the time we should really make those resolutions.

I would ask you to think in terms of stewardship resolutions. Many of you are already very involved in parish life. I would invite you to resolve to find the time to pray, or perhaps to just listen. God does talk to us, but often we simply do not listen. If you already do set time aside for individual prayer, decide to also take part in some of our community prayer opportunities. If you are someone who does not attend Mass regularly, make your mind up to come to Mass more frequently. If you are someone who usually attends Mass, but you are not involved in one of our many parish ministries, give yourself in that way. I am not talking about a total change of life, but I am talking about dedicating yourself to something more in relation to your faith.

Throughout the Bible people encounter Jesus and walk away completely changed individuals. That is what my challenge to you is. Meet the Lord halfway; give Him a chance to lead and guide you; make an effort to take another step in your faith and stewardship journey. You, too, can have the happiness of the good and just steward. Now that could be fun! Blessed John Paul II said it very well: "The future starts today, not tomorrow."

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Doug Halsema
Pastor

Sharing God's Love with O



Erin Clark has always aspired to serve others; a long-time passion for her, she even planned to join the Peace Corps to help those in need around the world. However, as she continued to grow in faith throughout her life, she realized that the Peace Corps was missing just one key ingredient: God.

"I realized that you can't have betterment in your situation or in your soul without God, so I started to look into missions," she says. "After a lot of prayer, I came across an article in the Catholic Compass, and discovered that [Gulf Breeze parish] St. Anne has been doing a mission trip to Peru for the last 30 years."

Erin, who was previously a fourth grade teacher at St. Paul, was inspired. She contacted St. Anne for more information, but discovered that the cost to go was a bit more than she could afford.

"I went to my spiritual director at the time, Fr. Michael, and he encouraged me to go to Fr. Doug and the parish for help," she said. "I knew that if it was God's plan for me to go, He could make anything happen."

The parish was able to fund Erin's trip, and this past June 19 to June 26 Erin traveled to the rural village of Thimbote,

Peru, along with 14 others from St. Anne. She was immediately struck by the poverty in the area.

"The town is in a desert area, so there aren't really any trees and it's completely dry. There are tiny homes all sitting right next to each other—the material for the houses was like woven hay, and you were lucky if you had a roof on your home. The people don't even own the land, so the landowners could come in and take the homes and the people could do nothing about it," Erin recalls. "You hear about poverty, but it's so different when you see it firsthand."

During the week she was there, Erin and the other visitors primarily spent time with the people of Thimbote, and helped out with the already established mission's programs. These programs included helping to build homes, delivering blankets and cook stoves to different households, and visiting classrooms at the local school.

"A lot of it was about spending quality time with the people. Because of the language barrier, I didn't really have the ability to talk to them specifically about religion. "I was able to speak to them about their family, things they enjoyed, and also what they needed prayers for," says Erin, who took Spanish classes throughout high school and college, and also learned

thers through Mission Work



using Rosetta Stone software. “But I realized that when you’re there spending time with them, as long as you show genuine care for them, you are still a witness of God’s love.”

The group was also able to visit the Sisters of Charity orphanage in the area.

“There were children, but there were also a lot of mentally handicapped people and adults. There were five nuns and about 40 people that all needed constant care,” Erin says. “They have a lot of volunteers, and it’s incredible how clean the facility is and how loving and caring the people are. It brings tears to your eyes—that was probably my favorite experience.”

During the trip, Erin was truly impacted by the people’s outlook on life despite their extreme poverty.

“The fact that they had literally nothing, and they’re still so happy, really makes you take a look at your own life. They teach you how to be happy for what you have,” she says. “We went to Mass every day, and [during the offertory] there was a line from the front of the church to the very back, with everyone coming up and all giving money they so desperately needed. It was just incredible.”

When Erin returned from her trip, she felt compelled to do more.

“The trip reaffirmed that doing missions is my calling,” she says. “I want to share God’s love with others, and there’s such a huge need in the world.”

For the next two years, Erin plans to work as a missionary through the Louisiana-based Family Missions Company, which places individual missionaries as well as missionary families in 25 countries around the world, as well as the United States. Although she doesn’t yet know where she is headed, she can’t wait for what this new chapter of life will bring her.

“A lot of the time you look at life and think, ‘What’s next, what’s next?’ We don’t really have control and at times it can be frightening,” says Erin. “But it helps to know that God is at your back, fulfilling all your needs. We are all called to be saints, and we are called to holiness in any vocation we’re given. I think it’s going to be amazing.”

To follow Erin as she embarks on her missionary journey, check out her blog under the “Meet Our Missionaries” tab on the Family Missions Company website: www.fmcmisions.com.

2013 Steubenville Youth Conference

Over the summer, 10 adults and 43 high-school youth from our parish traveled to Atlanta for the 2013 Steubenville Youth Conference put on by LifeTeen, and even made a trip to Six Flags.



Parish Nursery Helps Parents to Enjoy the Celebration of the Mass

The experience of Mass changes throughout our lives. The real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist is a constant. Recalling childhood, we may remember fidgeting or falling asleep on our dad's shoulder. As a teen or young adult, you may have understood a reading on a deeper, spiritual level for the first time. As an adult, the reverent ritual of the Eucharistic feast becomes a part of you and can feel much like home. And then, you become a parent.

Many parents blog, talk, write and read about bringing their children to Mass at different phases. Mass suddenly involves diaper bags, sippy cups, Cheerios and books. Our youngest parish family members can get hungry, cranky, or a little rambunctious at unpredictable intervals, and parents of these bundles of joy may be unable to focus on the readings or engage as they are accustomed.

Our parish family members who are parents and their little ones are blessed at St. Paul's by the offering of the Parish Nursery during Sunday morning Mass.

"The Parish Nursery has been around as long as I've lived here," says Berdina Clarke, director of Religious Education for Children and coordinator of the nursery. "It definitely blesses the community by allowing the parents an hour a week to fully enjoy the celebration of Mass."

Open on Sunday mornings for the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Masses, the Parish Nursery is offered for children ages 18 months to 5 years old and is located in the Preschool Room. The nursery is run by staff and volunteers, while high school students may also volunteer for service hours.

"We provide a very safe environment for the children," say Berdina. "Volunteers are background checked,

fingerprinted, and take two safe environment courses. We put the safety of our children as our priority. Oftentimes the volunteers are people who are willing to help so it's available to their grandchildren or children."

The Preschool Room is a fun environment, as well — there are plenty of blocks, toys, books, and children's sized tables and chairs. Parents can drop off their little ones and know that their children will be safe while having a fun time.

"I think to be able to go to Mass and be able totally be able to give yourself at Mass and focus on the Mass is wonderful," says Berdina, who is a mother of three children. "You can walk away with that feeling of peace when you attend Mass and hear the message. It's an hour to yourself to pray and worship without having to stop or be distracted."

Parents interested in utilizing the Parish Nursery may fill out a registration form prior to their child's first visit, and may sign their child in and out of the nursery for every additional visit. There is no pre-registration — simply stop by on Sunday prior to the 9 a.m. or 11 a.m. Masses. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Berdina Clarke at 850-434-2551, ext. 112.



Address Service Requested

St. Paul Parish Picnic

The St. Paul Parish Picnic will be held on Sunday, Sept. 29, after the 11:00 a.m. Mass at St. Paul Catholic Church. The food will be served from 12:30 p.m. To 2:30 p.m., and there will be music, bingo and games until 4:00 p.m.

The theme for this year's picnic is "A Birthday Party for Our Church," and celebrates the 50th anniversary of our parish. For more information or to volunteer, email Louise Videau at picnic@stpaulcatholic.net.



Liturgy Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 4:30 p.m. | **Sunday:** 7:00, 9:00, 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m. | **Daily Mass:** Monday-Saturday, 8:30 a.m.

Confessions: Saturdays, 9:00 a.m., 3:30 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.,
most Sundays during 9:00, 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Mass, 1st Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m., and by appointment

Eucharistic Adoration: Thursday 9:00 a.m. until Friday 7:30 a.m.