

THE GUARDIAN GAZETTE

The Newsletter of St. Michael Academy

October 16, 2019

GUARDIAN GREETINGS!

With September in the rear-view and mid-quarter grades posted, the tempo at SMA has shifted into high gear. Since my last writing, our classes have taken their instruction to a new level, challenging our students in a whole host of ways.

When I listen in on the Socratic discussions, scientific demonstrations, Latin recitations, hands-on practicums, and athletic practices, I am blown-away by both the high quality of teaching and the active engagement of our students.

You can forget where you are when you hear the likes of St. Paul, Aristotle, Aquinas, Dante, Montesquieu, Faust, Shakespeare, Homer, Einstein, Euclid, and Beethoven under discussion inside and outside of our classrooms.

And that's exactly the point: classical education takes our teachers and students on an amazing journey every day into the moral imagination of our Catholic and Western civilization, which can't but help all of us to be the salt and leaven that Christ calls us to be, outside the schoolhouse in the wider world.

But with that said, there is an increasing joyfulness that has also come to characterize SMA that speaks to our pursuit of happiness on our intellectual and moral journeys. As you'll see below, we like to enjoy life and have fun. Our new student clubs are busy planning and executing activities designed to build upon the energetic spirit of our school, and to engage and serve the greater community.

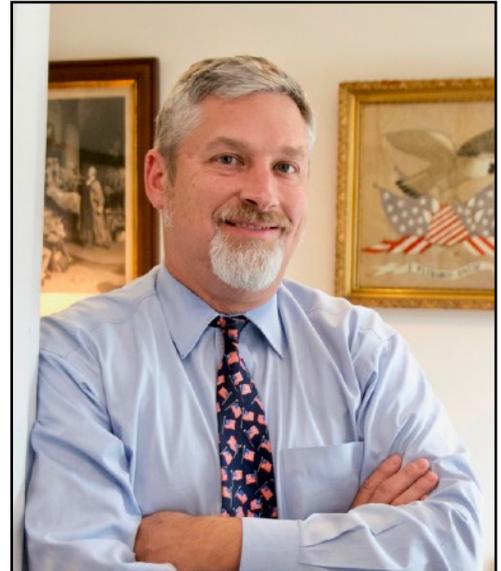
I invite all of you to stop-by anytime to sit-in on a class, attend Mass, have lunch, observe Forum, and just take part of the tremendous learning and formation that is happening every day at our school. By doing so, you can be an even better advocate and spokesperson for "St. Mike's" as we continue to work to expand student enrollment for next year and beyond.

St. Michael, pray for us! Dr. Richard Brake, Headmaster

St. Michael Happenings

More slices of life at SMA from the last few weeks!...

- We celebrated our second annual Michaelmas Day on September 27! We began with student council speeches and elections; then proceeded with recitation competitions between Athenian and Spartan contestants; celebrated Mass with Fr. James; heard a beautiful talk on Angels by Mr.



Spinneweber; enjoyed a magnificent English-inspired feast, with Roast Goose and all the fixings; and we concluded with more competitions, again pitting Athenians against Spartans!

- Our college and career counseling program has ramped up with several college reps visiting our school, College Night at NCMC, and preparations for the upcoming PSAT on October 16.
- Our Quiz Bowl Team competed in its first local competition on October 11 at NCMC. SMA fields two 4-person squads, and despite losing several veteran seniors from last year, our first performance was solid, with Team A earning 3rd place, losing a close one to Petoskey. Our Quiz Bowlers next travel to Central Michigan University on October 30 for the State Championships.
- Our newly-elected Student Council put on its first event of the year: a Barn Dance at the Oden Community Center on October 12. The Council raised more than \$300 to pay event costs, and a big turnout assured a wonderful time for everyone!



SMA's Heavenly Hosts

Thanks to all who helped with our Michaelmas celebration! The food was delicious, and it was great to have you participate in the activities of the day. We have a new tradition on our hands!



Another big thanks for all who helped with set-up and chaperoning our inaugural Barn Dance on October 12. What great fun!

Our first parent-teacher book club meeting of the school year is scheduled for Wednesday, October 23. We will be reading [The Four Loves](#) by C. S. Lewis. You should have received a sign-up genius and invite from Jean Musilek, who will be hosting. Thanks, Jean!

Athletic Annex

Our Boys Cross Country (XC) team continues to exceed expectations, winning the Small School Division (and taking a close 2nd place overall, losing only to Division-3 powerhouse Harbor Springs) at the Mackinaw Club Invitational on September 26, as well as the Northern Lower Peninsula Invitational on October 12. We've now won three invitationals this season!



In between those recent victories, the team traveled to the massive Portage Invitational (near Kalamazoo) to compete with the best Division-4 teams in the state. The Guardians placed 5th (of 30 schools) in the Division-4 race, losing only to schools ranked above them.

The team is focused on the upcoming Regional Finals at East Jordan on Saturday, October 26 at 10:50 a.m. where it will seek to become the first State-qualifying athletic team in school history!

In other Athletic news, we (along with Boyne City HS) are in the process of joining forces with Petoskey HS to form a

“co-op” for Boys Lacrosse, for which our students would be eligible to join for the spring season.

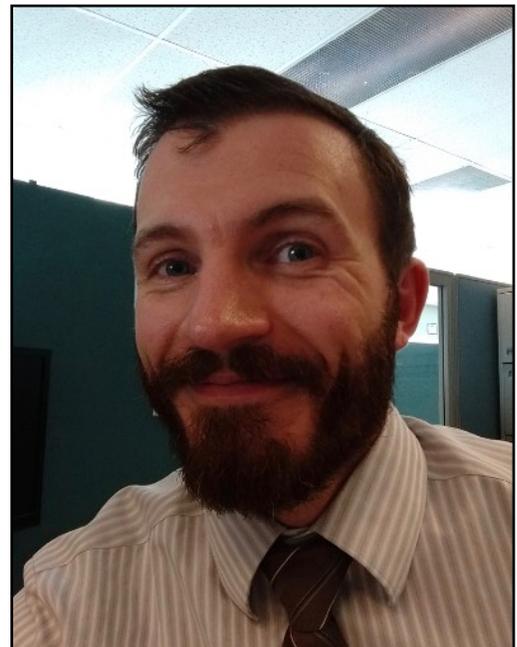
The Boys XC team is having a blessed season and maintains an 8th-place ranking in the Division-4 poll. Please pray for their health and success as we wrap up the season! Blessings, Mr. Rudnicki

Focus on the Faculty

When Mr. Andy Moe moved to northern Michigan in 2011, it was the farthest he'd ever lived from home - or any place he'd yet called “home.” He's lived in New Mexico, Montana, and California, and studied in Ohio and Colorado. He now lives with his wife of four years, Katie, and son of one year, John, about ten minutes outside of Petoskey in Joy Valley. The Moes are expecting another son in early-2020.

The 2019-2020 academic year will be Mr. Moe's third full year with SMA. He's previously taught Latin, English Literature, Introduction to Catholicism, Old Testament, New Testament, Apologetics, and Morality and Bioethics.

This academic year, the cross-curricular integration is easy to spot. In the junior-level literature course, Mr. Moe stands in for Virgil as the students make their way through the *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso* of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. It's a unique work not only because it's a colorful allegorical trip



through hell, heaven, and purgatory, but also because it presents a level of theological sophistication that has earned it the title, “Aquinas in verse.” The juniors are themselves becoming theologically sophisticated in their theology course, “Advanced Catechism I,” in which they study the first two pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, The Creed and The Sacraments (with the help of some Aquinas that’s *not* in verse!).

Seniors take “Advanced Catechism II” with Mr. Moe, where their study of the *Catechism’s* last two pillars have so far guided them through the universal desire for happiness, the criteria of a moral act, and now the moral society. Later in the year they’ll tackle the sticky issues and hot-button topics of our times, then mine the riches of the *Catechism’s* short but dense section on Christian Prayer. This capstone theology course is designed to help students become what Dr. Brake calls “Smart Saints”!

Students in the Scola

The following students won their respective races for SMA Student Council. Congratulations to all candidates who had the courage to put themselves into “The Arena.”

Student Body President - Charles Keefe

Grade 12 - Colleen Cesario

Grade 11 - Hammond Law

Grade 10 - Rosemary Hoffman

Grade 9 - Mac Moore

Grade 7/8 - Daniel Keefe

Our new Robotics Team is hard at work on its underwater vehicles. Kudos to these resourceful students who have the work ethic and intelligence to get up early and work together on a common technical goal: Hammond Law, Vinny Miranda, Andrew Bondy, Grace Broz, and Patrick Kargol.



Our high schoolers submitted their *Abolition of Man* essays on Monday, October 7. SMA Faculty will forward the five best essays to the C.S. Lewis Society of Petoskey which will determine the top entry, the writer of which will read at a special convocation later this fall.

Faith Matters

We were unable to have Mass at SMA during the first week of October due to a diocesan meeting. This unusual circumstance provided an opportunity to explore other ways to celebrate our faith, with a Living Rosary on Tuesday; and a Chaplet of Divine Mercy on Thursday. It was wonderful to place our petitions at the feet of Our Lady, and to understand more fully the depths of Mercy at our disposal that were made manifest through the holiness of St. Faustina.

Representatives from the SMA Pro-Life Club met with the President of the Petoskey Pregnancy Care Center, Laura Boss, to begin work on its annual baby bottle fundraising drive.

We re-instituted the tradition of attending St. Francis Xavier Church together as a school, with a “First Friday” Mass on October 4. It was wonderful to be there together in such a beautiful space. We will return to SFX for our next First Friday Mass on November 1, which also happens to be All Saints Day.

As always, we encourage you to join us for Mass, Tuesdays and Thursdays at 11:30 a.m. at SMA.

Counselor’s Corner

With the PSAT coming up on Wednesday, we invited the 10th and 11th graders in for some preparation to help them get into the standardized testing mindset. Mrs. Maartje Nolan led them through some reminders that apply to all tests - basics that are often forgotten in the stress of standardized testing.

We also had college representatives from Hillsdale College, Aquinas College, and St. Mary’s College visit our campus recently. Many of our students attended the sessions, and all of the representatives afterwards went out of their way to comment upon the maturity and poise of our students.

Outside of testing, the students have continued their reflection on their interests, strengths, and goals. They are completing the Amherst College Self Assessment, which asks about interests, skills, values, family, cultural influences, and personality. When they complete these surveys, they are asked to compose a reflection paper that asks them to detail what they learned and how they will apply these insights in their future decision making.

Please check out the [SMA College Updates Google Doc](#), which is updated every Friday - and feel free to leave a comment or question to improve the page!

Headmaster Musings

On Sunday, October 13, John Henry Newman, the great 19th century English theologian and convert to Catholicism during the “Ox-Bridge” Movement, was canonized by Pope Francis. In the lead-up to his canonization, much was written about the miracles attributed to the prayerful intercessions in his

name; his remarkable faith journey; and his profound sense of evangelical mission.



Less has been said, surprisingly, about his fierce support for true liberal education, especially at the collegiate level, where he toiled for many years. His classic work in this field, *The Idea of a University*, remains perhaps the most cogent and powerful defense of the benefits of pursuing knowledge for its own sake since Plato’s many dialogues on the same subject. I mention all this because in Newman’s writings, we ought to find inspiration and vindication for our mission here at SMA.

Writing in the mid-19th century, when “schooling” looked a lot different (and more traditional) than it does now, one would be surprised to discover that, from Newman’s perspective, powerful new trends were emerging, particularly from the more practically-minded and state-oriented German universities, that threatened to undo the progress that had been made for centuries in producing scholars dedicated to the pursuit

of “Capital-T Truth.” Rather than a “liberal” education (which teaches man the arts of living free), much of the “new” education had more utilitarian goals, whether commercial, informational, technological, or ideological. Those goals may be useful, and they may be pursued through some form of collective action, but to call them “education” was a colossal error, according to Newman.

So what was the ultimate aim of a liberal education, which, by the way, is the kind of education we provide here at SMA? Here is what Newman would say it is NOT... “Recreations are not education; accomplishments are not education; stuffing birds or playing stringed instruments is an elegant pastime . . . but it is not education.” Rather, liberal education, according to Newman, “is simply the cultivation of the intellect, and its object is nothing more or less than intellectual excellence.”

What that means in practical terms is that, even at a Catholic school, liberal education has less to do with a particular faith orientation than it does with forming LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. As Newman explains, “it is well to be a [lady and] gentleman, it is well to have a cultivated intellect, a delicate taste, a candid, equitable, dispassionate mind, a noble and courteous bearing in the conduct of life.”

Ladies and gentlemen, consequently, are not just throw-away lines from a bygone era, but the fundamental by-product of an educational model that disciplines the mind while edifying the soul. And its presence is demonstrated less by grades and SAT scores than the way our students treat each other and those they interact with on a daily basis.

These are the first steps in a lifelong process of living the Golden Rule which Christ made clear is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. Here we find, in the end, the reconciliation of learning and love that is the hallmark of a liberal education, which Saint John Henry Newman dedicated his life to advance. Let us pray that we be worthy of that same mission here at St. Michael Academy.

God bless, Dr. Brake



***“Do not say the people must be educated, when, after all, you only mean amused, refreshed, soothed, put into good spirits and good humor, or kept from vicious excesses . . . Liberal education makes not the Christian, not the Catholic, but the gentleman.”
- Saint John Henry Newman***

Prayer Intentions

Please pray for our beloved board member, benefactor, and “Mr. St. Michael” – Jim Hatch, who is recovering from a recent surgery. Also keep the victims of the recent Turkish-Kurdish conflict in your prayers, and for a cessation of hostilities in that war-torn region.

Upcoming Events

- 10/16 PSAT at Pellston HS
- 10/23 School Photos
- 10/23 Parent-Teacher Book Club
- 10/26 Cross Country Regional Finals at East Jordan
- 10/30 Quiz Bowl State Finals at Central Michigan U.
- 11/01 All Saints Day Mass at SFX
- 11/01 End of First Quarter
- 11/01 SMA Lecture Series with Rusty Reno
- 11/02 Cross Country State Finals at Brooklyn
- 11/07 Student-Faculty Delegation to Chesterton Academy
- 11/12 Veterans Day Mass
- 11/12 Half Day for Parent-Teacher Conferences
- 11/18 Boys Basketball Begins



Reminders

- Don't forget to send in money (\$3.50 per week) for Pizza Fridays.
- Questions about RenWeb? Contact Mrs. De Agostino or Mrs. Kendziorski.
- Spirit Wear orders? Contact Mrs. De Agostino.
- Interested in coaching Ping-Pong, Bowling, or Chess? Contact Dr. Brake.
- Interested in serving on the SMA Recruitment Committee? Contact Dr. Brake.
- Interested in helping SMA with fundraising? Contact Mr. Hatch or Mrs. Law.



St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.