



St. Francis of Assisi

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

MUSTANG CONNECTION

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Summer 2014

In This Issue:

Page 1:

Built of Hopes and Dreams ...

Page 2:

The Pastor's Perspective
From the Principal's Pen

Page 3:

Father James Rolph
A Letter to the Community

Page 4

Our Newest Alumni Families
Important Dates

Built of Hopes and Dreams ...

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School received a wonderful challenge from a very generous, and anonymous, benefactor earlier this year. To help strengthen enrollment at the school, the benefactor pledged a dollar for dollar match, up to \$40,000 per year, for 8 consecutive years, on behalf of tuition assistance for new school families. This extraordinary challenge - *Built of Hopes and Dreams ...* - has the capacity to raise \$640,000, if fully met over time, and is to provide a strong academic and Catholic education for the children of the greater Ann Arbor community.

The *Built of Hopes and Dreams ...* challenge will help strengthen and build up enrollment at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School by increasing the number of new students and families in the school through an additional tuition assistance program – the **Hopes and Dreams Fund**. It will complement the school's existing tuition assistance program which is for current school families. St. Francis of Assisi parish maintains its commitment to a Catholic school education for anyone who seeks it; hence, this innovative and ambitious endeavor is being implemented to proactively manage enrollment.

As declared by Father James, St. Francis School Sunday took place in the parish on Saturday, May 3 and Sunday, May 4 during all of the Masses. It was an opportunity to share publicly the tuition assistance challenge. It was also a weekend dedicated to honoring and celebrating the school and the important part it plays in the parish's faith community. Students participated in the weekend liturgies as ushers, servers, readers, gift bearers, cantors and musicians, showcasing their many gifts and talents.

In his homily to the congregation, Father James explained the importance of St. Francis School Sunday and the school's significance to the entire parish community. He said, *"Teaching is an integral part of the mission of the church. When Jesus was leaving this earth, He commissioned the disciples to go out and teach, to baptize, to proclaim, to witness. Over the last two-thousand years, the church has faithfully sought to fulfill that great mission. Teaching is one of the ways we do that."* (Visit www.stfrancisa2.com/schoolsunday to hear Father James' entire homily.)

The *Built of Hopes and Dreams ...* challenge will provide additional resources to St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School so its good work can continue and budget friendly educational opportunities can be offered to new families in need of tuition assistance. In its inaugural year, what started as a pledge of up to \$40,000 has now grown to over \$85,000 in gifts and pledges!

Contributions to the **Hopes and Dreams Fund** can be made in any amount and for any period of time. For more information on the *Built of Hopes and Dreams ...* challenge and how you can help, contact Colleen Pierce, Director of Stewardship and Development, at [734-821-2208](tel:734-821-2208) or at cpierce@stfrancisa2.org. You can also make a gift online at www.stfrancisa2.com/hopesanddreams/. Like the lyrics in the opening and closing hymn on St. Francis School Sunday - "All Are Welcome" - St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School is built of hopes and dreams, and all are indeed welcome!



Philosophy and Mission Statement

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School is a family-oriented mission of the St. Francis of Assisi Parish community where each student is valued, respected and nurtured as a unique creation of God. We challenge our students spiritually, academically and physically to learn, care and lead as they work to discover the plan that God intends for them. As followers of Christ, we strive always to instill in our students the words of St. Francis of Assisi ... "Preach the Gospel always, and when necessary, use words."

The Pastor's Perspective



Dear Friends,

Summertime is upon us, as is my one year anniversary as Pastor at St. Francis of Assisi. During the past 12 months, we have observed many unforgettable times. I remember fondly the first day of school, Grandparents and Special Friends Day, and *Fiddler on the Roof*, to name a few. Countless other highlights took place too!

I am blessed to be part of this vibrant and holy community, and grateful to be ministering in a parish with a school. Our school is one of many in the rich tapestry of educational opportunities in the Ann Arbor area. Parents in this community have several choices for their children. That said, unlike most others, our school is an integral part of the mission of a parish - our parish - and it is alive and growing with God's presence and grace!

Through our new **Hopes and Dreams Fund** we have a unique opportunity to help families afford a full Catholic education at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School. I invite you to share this wonderful possibility with your family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances! Go forth and spread the good news! "***No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house.***" ~ Matthew 5:15. A dynamic, growing school is to the benefit of our entire community, and our faith as well. Let us all have a vested interest in our parish school and share in the pride that it is flourishing! Anyone interested in this special program - our **Hopes and Dreams Fund** - can contact the school office at 734.821.2200, or me directly at 734.769.2550.

Please join me in welcoming **Father Tom Wasilewski** to our St. Francis of Assisi community. He comes to us following Father Bosco's appointment to St. Mary Parish in Manchester. Father Tom was most recently the Parochial Vicar at St. Joseph in Adrian and St. Joseph Shrine in Irish Hills. We celebrate his arrival in Ann Arbor and pray that God will bless his time with us abundantly.

Once again, our parish is looking ahead to the future. Every ministry, including the school, is beginning the pastoral planning process for the next 5 years. Our current plan - our strategic road map - ends this year. Please pray that the Holy Spirit will guide all involved in this important endeavor and watch for updates on our progress in the months ahead.

As I reflect back on the past year, I feel profound gratitude for having the opportunity to serve as your Pastor, and the gifts you so willingly share. Going forward, I am confident that God will help us move mountains together ... if we believe in our hearts, it will be done!

Fr. James Conlon

From the Principal's Pen



St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School had a wonderful spring full of excitement and traditions. As part of our Mary Lou Daby Fine Arts festival, our fourth grade students performed Peter Pan. The play was filled with talented singing, acting, and dancing. Mrs. Maura Dalian, Mrs. Linda Opaleski, and Ms. Sarah Stern helped coach a stellar performance.

The end of May and beginning of June was a time when we celebrated the many successes of our students from throughout the year. Several of our students received special awards as part of their achievement. We are proud of their accomplishments.

Throughout the year, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School had the highest scores in the Diocese of Lansing on the NWEA Assessment. We also scored above the national average on the Math, Language Arts, Science, and Reading components of the assessment. While we always look to continually improve, these achievements show the good work of our students.

Enrollment held steady with 381 students at the end of this school year (2013-2014). We are already ahead for next year from what we budgeted in the planning process and from where we were a year ago. St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School is holding strong and offering exceptional opportunities for its students.

Next year we are excited to add Mandarin as a world language for 7th and 8th graders. This will be in addition to the Spanish language offered for 7th and 8th graders. Additionally, we will be offering a programming class for our 7th and 8th grade students. Students will design webpages and applications they can use as part of their curriculum. Lastly, Father James and I are excited to offer 5th-8th grade students a periodic lunch discussion forum. Discussions will include current events, life choices, and ways our faith integrates into our world as we live as Catholics. Father James will make guest appearances.

In regards to curriculum, we are extending our First Steps and FAST Reading Curriculum through 2nd grade for the 2014-2015 school year. 3rd grade Language Arts curriculum will be formatted around a Guided Reading approach with direct instruction for decoding and fluency building. 4th and 5th grade teachers will be taking a workshop on Project Read Comprehension.

There are constantly changes and modifications happening at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School. While we move forward in our STREAM (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) education goals, our faith and traditions maintain our strong foundation.

May you have a blessed and safe summer season.

Julie Fantone Pritzel

Father James Rolph



Father James Rolph

Father James Rolph was ordained into the priesthood by Bishop Earl Boyea on Saturday, June 14, 2014 at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in East Lansing. His sister, Kathryn Dhitirojana, teaches third grade at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School. Here is a reflection from him on his years as a student in our school. Congratulations and God's blessings to **Father James** as he serves in Jesus' name.

I look back on my years at St. Francis of Assisi fondly, and feel that the school helped lay a foundation for the calling that God has placed on my life: the Catholic Priesthood.

I attended St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School from first to sixth grade. It was during this time that I first began to discover my faith and enter into it more deeply. I had teachers that helped me focus on what was really important, teach me the truths of the faith, and set me back on track when I began to wander. They prepared me intellectually for what God had in store for me. But it wasn't just the teachers' words that made a difference, it was their actions and example.

When I was in fifth grade my mom was diagnosed with breast cancer and began going through treatment. During this time, my brothers and sister and I experienced the truth that the Catholic Church is so much more than just a list of beliefs and truths, it's a family. While my mom went through treatment we had teachers making lunches for us and asking us how the family was doing. We were cared for in a personal and loving way. It was evident that our teachers and the whole community really cared about us as people, not just as students.

No school or parish is perfect, but I am so grateful for my time at St. Francis of Assisi. Please pray for me and all priests, and for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

O Jesus, our great High Priest, hear our humble prayers on behalf of your priest, Father James Rolph. Give him a deep faith, a bright and firm hope and a burning love which will ever increase in the course of his priestly life. In his loneliness, comfort him. In his sorrows, strengthen him. In his frustrations, point out to him that it is through suffering that the soul is purified, and show him that he is needed by the Church, he is needed by souls, he is needed for the work of redemption.

O loving Mother Mary, Mother of Priests, take to your heart your son who is close to you because of his priestly ordination, and because of the power which he has received to carry on the work of Christ in a world which needs him so much. Be his comfort, be his joy, be his strength, and especially help him to live and to defend the ideals of consecrated celibacy. ~Amen.

A Letter to the St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School Community



Tom Butman with students during the 2014 Car Raffle drawing.

Greetings friends! My name is **Tom Butman** and my family has been in the Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor area since 1957. Gene Butman (the patriarch of our family) moved us here because of an opportunity Ford Motor Company gave him. When the Butman's arrived, Grandpa Gene wasted no time establishing the family in the local Catholic community.

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church was not only a parish it was also a grade school and high school. My aunt Mary Jane, my father Kenneth, and my aunt Nancy all attended these schools. St. John Catholic Schools unfortunately closed their doors in 1970. Grandpa Gene understood that parochial schools give children the basis for morals and ethics. He was a strong believer of the greatest commandments as spoken by Jesus Christ in Mark 12:31, "Love your neighbor as yourself." This is the reason why my parents chose to send me and my siblings to St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School.

The St. Francis of Assisi parish community is a special place for families. The administration and the teachers care about the students. They work hard to help the kids grow in their spiritual and academic lives. The staff creates a family atmosphere, which makes St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School a comfortable place to learn and thrive.

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School not only helps prepare children for extending their education, it also trains them to be great people. Through the theological curriculum, kids learn what it means to be a good person. I know how much it helped me and I thank my parents and God everyday for the opportunities they gave me.

Tom Butman, Class of 2001
VP Gene Butman Ford Sales
2105 Washtenaw Avenue
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

In 1996, the Butman Family started what has now become an annual tradition at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School - the Car Raffle. This signature fundraiser has raised over \$1,320,000 since its inception, making countless school improvements possible. We are blessed!

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Parish
2150 Frieze Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(734) 821-2200
<http://www.stfrancisa2.com/school>

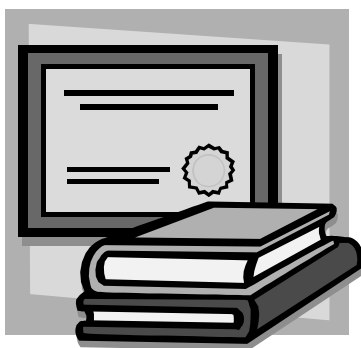
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Our Newest Alumni Families

Congratulations to our newest alumni families! They graduated their last or only student in the 2013-2014 school year. May the Lord bless and keep these families in the years ahead.

Bogits Family (11 years)
Carvill Family (2 years)
Falcone Family (4 years)
Flores Family (5 1/2 years)
Gawronski Family (11 years)
Hermann Family (11 years)
Hinshaw Family (9 years)
Lawrence Family (17 years)
Morris Family (8 years)
Norton Family (6 years)
Palkowski Family (9 years)
Patton Family (25 years)
Reyes Family (3 1/2 years)
Rhodes Family (11 years)
Scherer Family (12 years)
Sesi Family (1 year)
Shane-McDonald Family (3 years)
Vergollo Family (10 years)
Vogel Family (11 years)
Walsh Family (13 years)
Young Family (2 years)
Zakerski Family (10 years)



Important Dates

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|-------------------------|--|
| September 1: | Labor Day
(No School) |
| September 3: | School Begins! |
| September 10-12: | Seventh-grade Ship Trip |
| September 22: | Teeing It Up for Tuition Golf Outing
(Travis Pointe Country Club) |
| October 31: | Halloween Carnival |
| November 26-28: | Thanksgiving Vacation
(No School) |
| December 16: | Christmas Program
(In Church at 7:00pm) |
| December 17-31: | Christmas Vacation
(No School) |
| January 1: | Happy New Year!
(No School) |
| January 2-4: | Christmas Vacation
(No School) |
| February 28: | ETF Benefit
"Goin' To Graceland"
(Sheraton Ann Arbor Hotel) |

