

The Pelican

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Surgentes Simul Alis Fidei ac Rationis

The Monthly Newsletter of The Atonement Academy

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FROM THE HEADMASTER

Dear Parents,

I hope your family has settled into a good routine for the school year. It's a pleasure to see how many students have improved their study habits in the last few weeks. Of course, that's a struggle that remains with us throughout our lives—trying to improve our ability to focus, to put our hearts into whatever we're doing. I know of no other factor which is more important in improving one's scholastic ability.

One thing that I want to reemphasize: Being a good student means asking for help when you need it. Those students who are improving the fastest are precisely those students who have learned to ask good questions in class, and those who attend office hours. Office hours are an underutilized resource. Every teacher is available from about 3:50 p.m. (or whenever car line ends) until 4:30 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays to help students. If your student needs a little extra help, that's an excellent opportunity for him to get it.

Every teacher at The Atonement Academy has an email address; the addresses all follow the pattern *FirstInitialLastName@AtonementOnline.com*. This is usually the best way to reach a teacher. If you need an update on your student's grade, a replacement coursework sheet, etc., please do not hesitate to email your teacher.

Remember, becoming a good student takes years. The most important way to measure our progress is to see how productive our daily behavior is. If we can form productive habits, our effectiveness (measured, for example, by our report card) will improve over time.

As we do get settled into our routine, sometimes we need to pause a moment and remember how important it is to remember that safety must come first for our children. For their sakes, please be especially careful to obey all traffic laws, as well as our pick up and drop-off procedures.

While it is important not to be tardy, it is even more important to drive safely. If you find yourself late frequently, please leave earlier in the morning. If you

are late only occasionally, there is no discipline consequence for your child (see the handbook on our web site). In either case, please drive slowly in our neighborhood and watch carefully for children.

Every family should have received a packet of raffle tickets to sell prior to November 20. Please do your best to bring in at least our per-family goal of \$255. While we don't put this on your bill if you don't sell them, as many other schools do, it is up to you to ensure that the academy continues to make the great improvements we've been making in recent years.

Sales for the Fall Wine Dinner are going great guns—if we keep up this pace, we'll sell out next week. The dinner is at 6:30 p.m. on October 12. Call the academy office for details.

This October 5 at 7:00 p.m. in the St. Anthony Hall, there is a lecture on Parental Responsibilities in Sex Education, for adults only. This is a mandatory part of our curriculum, and attendance by at least one parent from each family is required. Babysitting is available in the Lower School building.

The Atonement Academy has joined the Private Schools Interscholastic Association (PSIA) this year. This will provide our students with the opportunity to compete in many different academic events. Our regional competition will be held in March at Our Lady of Perpetual Help School in Selma, Texas, and the State Meet will be held in April in Fort Worth, Texas, at Texas Christian University. See the letter insert photocopied on the back of this month's calendar, inside this issue of *The Pelican*.

As always, I encourage you to call me at 695-2240, or email me at Stephen@Hollingshead.com, or set an appointment to see me by calling Mrs. Adame, if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas about how we can continue to improve our wonderful school.

Thank you for the privilege of helping you educate your children,

Dr. Stephen Hollingshead

PRE-KINDERGARTEN

We would like to thank all of the parents for taking time out of their busy schedules to join us for the parent/teacher conferences. This month the children will learn their letters D, E, F, and G, including the how to write each letter and the sound it makes. The children will also learn numbers 4, 5, 6, and 7. They will be able to recognize the letters in their names. They will also to trace their names independently on their papers. We are continuing I Wonder with the Saxon program. In Religion, we will learn about forgiveness. In Social Studies, the children will practice learning their phone numbers. In Science, the children will continue learning about their five senses.

Mrs. Garcia and Miss Crawford

KINDERGARTEN

Wow, the school year is flying by! In Kindergarten this month we will be discovering the season of fall. We will create a wonderful scene using our handprints to make an autumn tree. We will also begin addition, which is very exciting when you are in Kindergarten. Please give your child many opportunities to “add” small groups of things at home. We will continue to learn our letters and be able to spell and read so many new words. Encourage your child to name letters and tell you the sounds they make whenever possible. We will move from our discussions about Community Helpers to Home and Community Safety. We will continue to learn about prayer, sin, forgiveness, and good Mass behavior. Please continue to read with your children, they are really benefiting from this. Thank you for your involvement in your child’s education.

Mmes. Elias and Phinizy

FIRST GRADE

The first month of school was a great start to the year for both first grade classes. In the second month of the school year the first graders will delve further into their subject areas. The students will continue to refine their handwriting skills, and develop a deeper understanding of their Catholic faith by learning about such great biblical figures as Noah and Moses. In the wonderful world of mathematics the students will cultivate a better understanding of time, fractions, and graphs. They will also be adding digraphs and more phonetic rules to their body of phonetic knowledge. Through their art the students are able to express their individual creativity. Both first grade teachers ask that you continue to donate any item that you may think can be used for arts and crafts. Your first grade teachers are pretty “crafty” so we will take anything that we get, and from there we will help your children turn it into a great work of art.

Mrs. Otten and Miss Deffenbaugh

SECOND GRADE

Fall has arrived and everything is falling right into place. The students have been working extra hard, and we can only hope that they continue to do so. We have completed the first section in our Science books, and we

will begin discussing animals and the life cycles of frogs and butterflies. We are continuing to practice our manuscript handwriting, and there has been great improvement in this area. Please, parents, make sure that they continue to write as legibly as possible.

We will be discussing rules and laws in our Social Studies class. We will be stressing the importance of following the rules at all times; this includes rules at home, school, and in the community. Along with rules we will also be covering safety. One of the main reasons for having rules is so that we can feel safe. Students should learn to see the correlation between the two.

In math, we will continue to work on measures of length and temperature. We will also count money and practice our addition facts. The students have made wonderful progress in their math work. Keep it up! As always, please make sure they continue reading library books and taking AR tests. The last day for the second grade to take an AR test for this quarter is October 13th.

It was wonderful meeting with every one of you for conferences. Thank you for your continued support, and the time you take each day going over your child's work.

Mmes. Garcia and Henriquez

THIRD GRADE

We have been reading some great stories in third grade and will continue this month with the all time favorite *The Ugly Duckling* and *The Monster Who Grew Small*. These third graders really ask wonderful questions and have a lot of enthusiasm responding to them as well. They are getting faster at their addition and subtraction facts and will soon be ready to tackle multiplication. It should be fun! We will be learning about geography in Social Studies this month, discussing things such as mountains, bodies of water, plains, and deserts. Our studies in English include sentence structure, synonyms, antonyms, and focusing on using strong verbs and adjectives in our paragraphs. I think we have some great writers in the making! In religion class we will be studying some exciting Old Testament figures like Abraham and Moses.

Miss Peacher

FOURTH GRADE

The next month should be very rewarding for the fourth grade. We are concentrating on nouns and improving our descriptive paragraphs in English. Science is taking us through the flow of energy in the food web and surviving in the environment. Our Junior Great Books readers will show us three good short stories that will increase our discussion and reading skills. During Texas History, we will learn about the first Texans and why they chose Texas to settle upon. The Saxon Math is moving very quickly. We will be going deeper into multiplying, dividing, and solving story problems. The end of each day gives us a brief stop in Religion, where we will be talking about how God is preparing His people for the Savior.

Mr. Kelly

FIFTH GRADE

Wow! The end of the first quarter is actually in sight. Our fifth graders are still earnestly working through their Saxon math text. In the future we will continue to advance towards problems of increasing difficulty, as the review portion of the text is quickly drawing to a close. This includes learning how to solve complex story problems and continued work with fractions and equations. In social studies we are learning the value of good note taking and organizational skills and it is paying off! We will soon move on to studying the establishment of our first colonies and the early development of our nation. In English, the fifth grade hopes to gain a fuller understanding and appreciation of grammar as well as the subtleties of creating a well polished paragraph. In reading, our students have completed a brief interval with the Junior Great Books program and should finish *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by the opening weeks of our second quarter. Although we have not received a reply from the message we sent into the atmosphere—via helium balloon—we have remained undaunted in our study of life science. By the second quarter we will have moved on to the physical sciences, whether we've received a reply to our message or not! All things considered, the fifth grade is off to an excellent start. We hope to approach the coming weeks with the same optimism, determination, and courage as we have thus far!

Mr. Kawulok

GEOGRAPHY

Having completed seven weeks whereby the students learned some interesting facts and history about Canada, as well as some basic Geography terms, the fourth grade students will be turning their attention to Mexico to complete our study of America's two neighbors. We are preparing for an ocean voyage soon – traveling to the Scandinavian nations of Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, Norway, and Finland – and returning to the birthplace of Erik the Red, the famous Viking explorer who once settled Greenland and the Northern Canadian islands above the Arctic Circle.

The fifth grade students are on safari in the Africa continent. We're visiting exotic places such as Morocco, (from where the Moors come), the Congo (the two nations and one river which bears this name), Liberia, (Africa's oldest republic, established by freed American slaves), and the Republic of South Africa – the only country in the world to have its three branches of government located in three capital cities. While in Africa, we're learning how to calculate mileage on regional maps, discussing the tribal situations which led to the genocide conflicts of the 1990's in Rwanda and Burundi, as well as post-colonial problems and slavery. We will also be learning how to read "land use" maps, as well as precipitation and population density graphs. Africa is a rich and varied continent; Christian, Islamic, tribal – home to a particular people worthy of our careful study.

Deacon Orr

MIDDLE & UPPER SCHOOL HISTORY, AND SIXTH GRADE MATHEMATICS AND RELIGION

Hello, History and Sixth-Grade Parents,

Your students have left the nether regions of Prehistory and have entered the Age of Writing. More specifically, the seventh and eighth graders are engrossed in the discovery and development of America, while the sixth and ninth graders are studying those marvelous Greeks. In Math and Religion, the sixth graders are continuing through the Ten Commandments and such good stuff as variables, fractions, exponents, and the like. I have had a wonderfully educational first month of school and am extremely pleased with the students' progress. And it's only going to get better. Keep up the good work, parents and students.

Mr. Howell

MIDDLE & UPPER SCHOOL SCIENCE AND SEVENTH GRADE MATHEMATICS

First let me say, parents, that it was wonderful to meet as many of you as I did recently. I was impressed by your level of involvement in your children's education.

In seventh grade Pre-algebra, we will be exploring such subjects as averages, areas of triangles, adding and subtracting fractions, graphs, and order of operations.

In each of the sciences, we are firmly entrenched in the thick of our respective disciplines. In your sixth grader's Physical Science class, we have finished our examination of the structure of the earth (*Billy, eat your crust!*), which has included such interesting themes as tectonic plate activity, earthquakes, and volcanoes. We are now moving into the study of minerals and rocks, which will include the concepts of the rock cycle, the hardness scale, geologic time, and everyone's favorite—fossils! We hope to have a great fossil hunter come for a visit in early November. Your seventh grade biologists recently had the opportunity to look at their own cells under the microscope! We have nearly completed our tour of the cell and are going to touch upon the role of cells in tissues, before launching into everyone's favorite subject—anatomy! We are going to compare organ systems in a variety of vertebrate and invertebrate organisms, noticing the unity in the diversity of life. We will be dissecting the fish as a primitive aquatic vertebrate, the frog as a primitive terrestrial vertebrate, and the fetal pig as an advanced terrestrial vertebrate. Following this, we will study embryonic development. In eighth grade, your chemist is about to plunge into the rules of chemical nomenclature, having taken a brief tour of the history of the atom and of chemistry as a whole. Nomenclature is an excellent example of how real scientists get together and organize their activities. November should find us in the beginnings of studying the various kinds of chemical reactions. Finally, our freshmen are about to complete our tour of the cell and are preparing to dig a little deeper into the processes that cells use for maintaining life—biochemistry and molecular biology. We will examine the various types of molecules that cells use to build themselves and to provide energy, as well as to explore the concept of what a gene is and how genes work. This will lead us into Brother Mendel's work in genetics and hopefully into a

close association with worms as a model of inheritance. Things are about to get just a little more interesting!

Dr. Vallor

MIDDLE & UPPER SCHOOL ENGLISH, AND EIGHTH GRADE RELIGION

Tell me, O Muse, of the progress the scholars have made through the passing weeks and the lessons that have hardened into memory; and sing, O' Muse, of their struggles and triumphs in my English classes. Papers they have begun. With persuasive reasoning and clear thinking, the scholars write and revise their compositions, hoping always to improve their skill of wielding the written word.

Into the underlying passages of grammar tread these young scholars, but with the aid of sentence diagramming, they illuminate the path before them: before their eyes the structures of language shine clearly. With their increased understanding of grammar, the reading and writing skills of the scholars improve. Keen insights into the literary works of their study are made.

Soon the first quarter will end, and I hope that you, O Muse, will not sing of any student's disappointment at failing to achieve his AR goal.

Mr. Cupp

MIDDLE & UPPER SCHOOL LATIN, FRESHMAN ALGEBRA II, AND SEVENTH GRADE RELIGION

Salvete,

Courage to the Latin scholars. Continue to study your vocabulary daily. I have a word of advice for all the Latin scholars and their parents. *Ut sementem feceris ita metes.* As you sow so will you reap. A daily habit of study is critical to learning any language. And for any new student trying to catch up, this is even more important. If you see your student struggle, please ask me for help. My help is likely to come in the form of encouraging daily memorization or a multitude of little exercises: *repetio mater memoriae* (or as I have also seen it – *repetio mater studiorum*). If your child is falling behind, the only way to catch up is to spend time on the weekends. Almost every student can memorize the few words I assign per week. If they fail in this regard, every task in Latin becomes two to three times as long. *Minima maxima sunt:* the littlest things are the greatest. Some things that seem most tedious can have the greatest reward.

In Algebra II the same principle is true. If there is something a student doesn't understand by the time of a test, he needs to spend extra time with me at that time before the test. For if you stumble on every problem, you will waste far more time than spending a little extra time right away. I am generally available for one to two hours before school each morning when minds are the freshest.

Valete,

Magister Ruplinger

FRESHMAN THEOLOGY

Having completed the reading of Genesis and Frank Sheed's *Theology for Beginners*, the freshmen will go on to read the book of Exodus.

Mr. Arndt

EIGHTH GRADE ALGEBRA I

I've been gratified to see the great lift in the class average with Test 5. But those with the greatest improvement are those who have made use of my office hours—do you think there might be a connection? Developing your daily habits of industry and concentration, and your willingness to use the help offered you, are the means to success in Algebra class and in life itself.

Dr. Hollingshead

ATHLETICS

There are two reasons why, on any given day, you may see our middle and upper scholars jumping for joy this month. First, their joy will be a manifestation of their love for the Virgin Mary, to whom we devote the month of October. Secondly, though, the students will likely have worked themselves into a frenzy about our second annual Presidential Physical Fitness Practice Test. . . .

Now that we've had over a month to get ourselves back into shape, it is time to test ourselves against the standards of the PPFT. This will allow the older kids to set useful weekly goals for the remainder of the year, and will provide Mrs. K and me with the opportunity to introduce the basic exercises – push-ups, sit-ups, shuttle run, v-sit, and the mile run – to the younger grades. We'll discuss why these exercises are important, and what muscle groups are worked by each one.

In regards to extra-curricular activities, it is time to start thinking about registering your student for basketball for the winter. It's not quite time to begin practicing yet, but the sooner we know who would like to be involved in winter sports, the more organized we can be in getting things started once the time is right. Please be on the lookout for registration information.

Coach Lyle

PTC Corner

The PTC would like to thank all of you who responded to our request for volunteers. There are many activities throughout the year which will require your assistance. Upcoming PTC activities for October include a Lecture on Parental Responsibilities with Sex Education, on October 5th at 7 p.m. in the St. Anthony Hall. As a reminder, one parent from each family is required to attend. Also, on Tuesday, October 12th our first annual Fall Wine Dinner will be held at the beautiful Grey Moss Inn in Helotes. The five course dinner will begin at 6:30 pm. Tickets cost \$100 per person. Seating is limited. Reservations are required. All proceeds will benefit The Atonement Academy. Please join us for a night of fine dining in the beautiful Hill Country.

Your PTC Officers