

# 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,

Welcome to the new academy year!

Notice above that the name of our newsletter has changed from *The Archer* to *The Pelican*. This is because—*Deo gratias!*—our expansion into high school now means we have three mascots at the academy, not just the Archer.

The pelican is the symbol of our parish, and is found in our parish seal above. Since medieval times, the pelican has been considered a type of the Christ, since it is the only animal known to feed its own flesh to its young when they are in danger of starvation.

The three mascots are: Pages, for the Lower School; Archers, for the Middle School; and Crusaders, for the Upper School. You can read about this maturation from service, to defense of the Faith, to conquering the world for Christ in our *Handbook for Parents and Students*.

Speaking of the handbook, every parent and every student in Middle or Upper School should read the handbook. You'll find it on the academy web site. Go to [www.atonementonline.com](http://www.atonementonline.com), click on the academy, and then on the student handbook link. This is a source of much important information for you and your students.

Since we are all settling into the new school year, it's a good idea for families to examine their daily routines, to make sure that their schedules are arranged in such a way as to help all members of the family live happily—to improve their spiritual, intellectual, and physical virtues.

While extra-curricular activities can be wonderful for students, it's important to remember—especially in our fast paced culture—that our ordinary curricular and family activities are much more important to our growth and happiness. Students—and parents—these days often are over-scheduled. It is much better to do few things well than to do many things poorly.

Naturally, for a student, study deserves pride of place in the daily routine. That means that homework should have its own definite time every day. It also means that the things that prepare us to do well in school, like a

good diet and plenty of sleep in a regular pattern, need special priority as well.

A regular daily routine is a sure help to us in doing the things we ought to do. If we have to decide anew each day when we are going to do our homework, have a family dinner, or pray together, these things will often go undone. But if we have a set time each day when these things happen, it will be much easier for us to do them well.

One virtue of note for us to help our students with especially at the beginning of the year is the ability to work intensively. Working intensively gets that homework done more quickly, yes, and that speed is important, but it also gets that same homework done *better*. Starting with Kindergarten, your student should be spending about 10 minutes per night for each year he has advanced in school (so a fourth grader should spend roughly 50 minutes per night on homework; but middle scholars need to do a little more, about 100, 110, and 120 minutes for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders, respectively; and two hours per night in Upper School).

Early in the year, most students find it difficult to get all their homework done in this allotted time. It is quite usual for students to have lost some effectiveness in their study habits over the summer. But they need to practice working quickly and well, so that they can get everything done on time. This will allow them to have free time each day after their homework has been completed. Like learning any virtue, learning to work intensively is a little painful—it takes frequent practice. But the rewards of this virtue are manifold.

***Fall parent conferences are September 16-17. Please note that these are HALF DAYS, with dismissal at 1:15 p.m.*** (after second lunch). You will receive a note letting you know when your appointment is. If you cannot make this time, please call or email Mr. Arndt at [rarndt@atonementonline.com](mailto:rarndt@atonementonline.com) to make other arrangements. Conferences are essential if we really mean to work together to educate your children.

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

Dr. Stephen Hollingshead

**PRE-KINDERGARTEN**

In the month of September the Pre-K students will be covering the theme "I Take Good Care of Myself." We will be learning about respect; respect for our health and safety, and respect for others. We will talk about daily hygiene, safety around containers and medicine, and eating healthy food.

With the help of our puppet Max the bear, the students will be hunting for letters and numbers. They will recognize and practice writing letters A, B, and C and numbers 1, 2, and 3. Also, we will recognize and work with different colors and shapes. Our religious studies for the month of September will be: I am Special to God, The Ten Commandments, Love Others as God Loves You, and God's House - The Church. The students are doing an excellent job in learning their prayers. Keep up the good work!

We would like to thank all of the Pre-K parents for all their help in preparing their children for a wonderful school year. Your children's education is very important to us. God Bless You,

Mrs. Garcia and Miss Crawford

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**KINDERGARTEN**

The Kindergarten students have been as busy as bees learning to share and cooperate with one another. All of the students are very eager to learn. In phonics, we are learning about beginning sounds, rhyming words, and the letters L, O, G, and H. Some of the highlights in Math include shapes, sorting by attributes, and graphing. The students actively participate in their "morning meeting" where they discuss the calendar, weather, time, etc. Our religious studies include practicing prayers, genuflection, and appropriate Mass behavior. We will also be learning about creation.

Our scientific study focuses on living things. We have planted their very own seeds (tomatoes & beans) and will nurture them and eagerly wait for them to sprout. The Kindergarteners have also taken out their magnifying glasses and explored living things on a nature walk on our lovely school grounds. What an adventure!

Thank you, parents, for preparing your children for a successful Kindergarten year. We are off to a great start.

Mmes. Elias and Phinizy

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**FIRST GRADE**

The first graders have been very busy during August. Catching up on reading and math skills was an important part of the first weeks of school; however, the most exciting subject studied in August was science. In science, the children used a moistened lima bean to understand how tiny plants sprout inside seeds. All of the first graders are looking forward to many more interesting science experiments during September. In addition to fascinating science topics, the first graders will study proper sentence structure, alphabetical order, repeating patterns, geometric shapes, and bar graphs. Have a safe and cool September.

Mrs. Otten and Miss Deffenbaugh

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**SECOND GRADE**

The Second graders are off to a great start. We have many new students and they all seem to adjusting very well. The first couple of weeks have been very busy, and we want to thank all the parents for their help and cooperation with the hustle and bustle of the new year.

September will be just as busy. There is so much for the students to learn. Math is off to a great start. This next month the students will be working with money and learning how to make change. We will also be discussing fractions and learning more fact families. In our Science class we will continue to watch the seeds we have planted continue to grow, and then begin discussing animals.

The students have enjoyed our new Junior Great Books in our reading class. We are going to be reading Beatrix Potter's, *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin*. Along with our Junior Great Books, students should be reading their AR books at home. Students should be taking AR tests in order to reach their required goals which are part of their reading grade. Please continue to work with your children on their homework each night. Thank you for your help and have a great month!

God Bless,

Mmes. Garcia and Henriquez

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**THIRD GRADE**

We have gotten off to a great start to school already! In English we will be preparing to write our own personal narratives and collecting them into a class book. In science the third graders will continue to study life cycles, including the life cycle of a flower and the structure of an egg. We will also be watching our bean plants grow! As we get used to our new school community we'll be learning what exactly makes up a community and exploring different types of them. In Math class, we will be working on finding missing addends in addition and subtraction word problems. They will also be adding and subtracting three-digit numbers. Finally, we are going to begin thinking analytically by reading carefully through stories and gratifying our curiosity by asking carefully considered questions.

Miss Peacher

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**FOURTH GRADE**

Looking ahead to the month of September is very exciting for the fourth grade. We, as a class, will continue to work hard. In science we will be discussing animal structure and ecosystems. Math will hit a variety of areas such as: lines, angles, fractions, division, and story problems. In religion we will study the people of Israel, their journey to Egypt, and their deliverance from slavery. English is going to help us review and develop some grammatical skills and apply them to our writing. Of course we will be talking about the great state of Texas in our Texas History class. We plan to talk about the journeys made by the first people to settle Texas.

Mr. Kelly

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## **FIFTH GRADE**

Now that the dawn of the new school year has arrived the fifth graders are beginning to become accustomed to their new freedoms as well as their new responsibilities. In mathematics the students are working on solving algebraic expressions and learning a variety of geometric rules. From there they will swiftly move on to solving problems of increasing difficulty, including multi-step problems, negative numbers, fractions, and mixed numbers. In history, the students have completed a brief review of maps, and will proceed by investigating US geography, pre-civilized North America, and the exploration of the "New World." In English, the class has been concentrating on descriptive writing, mechanics, and the art of essay construction. Additionally, the fifth grade is working on employing its new skills and vocabulary in order to become more effective readers of literature. After recovering from an up close and personal investigation of food mold, the fifth grade is finally prepared to consider some subtle distinctions within the life sciences pertaining to the classification of plants and animals. In religion, the fifth grade will take an extended look at the Creed and what it means to Catholic Christians. Overall, the fifth grade has a great deal of material to cover; nevertheless, their naturally inquisitive minds and fecund spirits assure a successful first quarter.

Mr. Kawulok

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## **GEOGRAPHY**

Geography is the study of the earth, encompassing the nations which form the political sphere, the people who inhabit those nations, their national and ethnic cultures, their languages and customs, as well as the formal societies and governments which they form.

Geography is also the study of the earth's natural features, resources, and the economic systems which flow from national and international commerce.

The fourth grade students begin their adventure by learning basic geographic terms, and how the earth is divided by latitudes and longitudes. Then they are introduced to their first foreign country – our neighbor to the North, Canada. Our common British colonial history is the backdrop for understanding the development of North America. During this month, the students will be writing a paper on some aspect of Canadian life using selected references in the library.

The Fifth Grade students are delving into the mysteries of the Middle East, learning the culture, religion, and politics of 15 nations. The students will have to learn the physical location of all the nations of the Middle East, and be able to identify them on a map.

Deacon Orr

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

The history courses are off and running. The freshmen are formulating a concept of what history is while completing a brief overview of prehistory before we begin reading what is considered to be one of the first historical writings, *The Histories*, by Herodotus. In

eighth grade, we are studying the earliest visitors to the American continents and entering upon the European conquest of the land. In seventh grade, we are in the midst of establishing a firm basis of Texan knowledge before delving into the history of our great State.

And for you sixth grade parents, we are putting language to numbers and their operations in mathematics. In religion, we have begun a study of the Ten Commandments and the Anglican Use. And in world history, we will be venturing into the obscure land of prehistory and afterwards investigating a culture and people too often neglected in education: the Jewish people.

Mr. Howell

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## **MIDDLE & UPPER SCHOOL SCIENCE AND SEVENTH GRADE MATHEMATICS**

Hello from the science lab and homeroom of the seventh grade!

In seventh grade Pre-Algebra, we have begun what for many will be a year of review in preparation for Algebra. Using the Saxon Math system, we have already cruised through the basics of whole numbers, place value, and the primary mathematical functions. In the coming month we will be re-visiting such mathematical concepts as lines, rays, and angles; fractions, exponents, and English and metric systems of measurement; order of operations, areas, and averages. We are also learning the fundamentals of scientific notation, which is sure to be of use in science class!

Speaking of science (and who doesn't), we are all close to learning the fundamentals of the scientific method, the metric/SI unit systems, and scientific notation. We are on the verge of sinking our teeth into the meat of our subjects—hardcore physical science, chemistry, and biology!

In the sixth grade, we will be learning about the planet we call home. The earth's physical structure, dimensions, motions, and composition will all be examined, topping off with a discussion about earthquakes, volcanoes, and similar disturbances in the Earth's crust.

Coming back to seventh grade, we are moving into the realms of the small, learning how to use a microscope and using it to observe cells in the lab as we dissect them intellectually in class. By the end of the month, we will be starting to dissect whole organisms, and exploring how organs and systems emerge from their many different cell types.

Your eighth grade chemist has just learned how to use a chemical balance. Together, we will use it to explore the concepts of matter and energy, mixtures, pure substances, elements and compounds, before we explode into the myriad rules of chemical nomenclature.

Finally, the Upper School Biology students will also be studying the cell, its structures, functions, and livelihood, but then digressing backwards to explore the chemical constituents that are the building blocks of physical life.

Dr. Vallor

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**MIDDLE & UPPER SCHOOL ENGLISH, AND EIGHTH GRADE RELIGION**

Wonder begins the pursuit of truth, and it is with wonder that the Middle and Upper scholars begin their imaginative journey into the marvels and mysteries of literature. The sixth grade scholars have walked through the wardrobe and entered the fantastic and allegorical world of Narnia. The seventh grade scholars have embarked on a quest with hobbits into the splendors and dangers of Middle-earth. The eighth grade students have begun a slow and detailed study of the short story, and the ninth grade scholars have been thrown into the turmoil of the Trojan War, in which virtue and vice contend for each man's heart.

As the young scholars travel, they keep a record of their discoveries, questions, and their experience of dramatic mystery; and together they discuss through shared inquiry the meaning of the narratives. Each scholar works to arrive at an appreciation of literary truth and beauty, and studies grammar so as to understand truth expressed through the word.

This year I also have the privilege of guiding the eighth graders in their understanding of the truths of the Catholic Faith. We will focus during these first few weeks on the Church's origin, purpose, and authority.

Mr. Cupp

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

*Salvete parentes et discipuli,*

For the remainder of September we shall continue our rapid review of the fundamentals of Latin, an excellent opportunity for fortifying weaknesses and memorizing vocabulary. For those who have studied less Latin, this is the opportunity to catch up: *Carpe diem! tempus enim fugit.* The first year Latin students will be working on the basic syntax of the Latin tongue. We are memorizing the first couple of sets of endings for nouns and will slowly learn all their uses over the next four years. I have the same advice for your children as the older ones. *Encourage your children to practice their flashcards daily.* The freshman algebraists are also vigorously training by review and practice. In addition they are learning a few fundamental propositions in geometry. Thereafter, we will begin the more difficult tasks with fit minds. Finally, in religion, having completed a review of the Sacrament of Sacraments, we will study the first book of the Bible.

*Valete,*

*Magister* Ruplinger

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**FRESHMAN THEOLOGY**

The freshmen will continue studying Frank Sheed's classic *Theology for Beginners*, a theological text covering the basic concepts and distinctions in systematic theology. In conjunction with this theological text we will finish reading the book of Genesis and will continue on to Exodus.

Mr. Arndt

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**EIGHTH GRADE ALGEBRA I**

After the usual jarring return from summer rest to the realm of mathematical thinking, we're ready to explore the really amazing power of arithmetic to calculate perimeter, area, volume, and surface area. Then hold on to your hats while we learn to use the distributive property of multiplication to factor complex algebraic expressions into their constituent parts.

Dr. Hollingshead

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**ATHLETICS**

Dear parents, I have a prediction. I predict that the weather in San Antonio this September will be hot. Since we will be focusing primarily on practicing for the Presidential Physical Fitness Test and on drilling on the fundamentals of soccer – two units that require a great deal of physical exertion – it would be very beneficial for each student to have his own (clearly marked) water bottle for Athletics class. This will help each student to stay hydrated, to maintain his energy throughout the day, to resist the spread of germs by sharing with another student, and most importantly to keep cool.

Coach Lyle

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<p><b><i>PTC Corner</i></b></p> <p>Well, we are off to a wonderful start to a new school year and the PTC is busy planning lots of fun events. We would like to thank those of you who have already volunteered to assist with our upcoming PTC activities. However, we are still in need of more volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact our PTC President Susana Treviño at 545-4687. Upcoming events in September are a Book Fair on Sunday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, and our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bingo night on Saturday September 25<sup>th</sup>. Please mark your calendars and join us for a night of fun!</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Your PTC Officers</p>
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