

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,

Our preparation for the holy season of Easter continues apace. The more we put into our Lenten preparation, the more we'll enjoy our Easter. Is the Church proposing this to us, do you think, as a metaphor for the relationship between our earthly journey and our heavenly home?

Please help your children to keep making little sacrifices for the children of Ain Arik. We'll be collecting all of the alms for the children of our sister school on Holy Thursday, the day that every class will write letters to accompany our Easter gift to those children who live in the war-torn land of our Lord's birth and death.

Construction Update

At long last, a crane is scheduled to begin setting the huge concrete wall panels on March 7. This will enable the steel girders to be hung, beginning with the gymnasium. *Deo gratias!*

While it will be very exciting to see the building rise up, I ask you, parents, to join us in being especially vigilant about keeping children away from the construction site. Absolutely no one (even headmasters, now) should enter the construction site without being accompanied by the site foreman or another representative of the job site. Those wall panels weigh tons, and people have been killed by such things elsewhere. Mr. Arndt will be sending home a letter on the extra safety precautions prior to the first wall being stood on March 7. Please take special care to follow his instructions. And please ask St. Joseph to intercede to keep everyone safe on our construction site (while you're at it, ask him to get some dry weather for us, too).

Enrollment 2005-2006

Enrollment is going very well again this year. However, several of our families have not re-enrolled yet. Since new families are registering at a good pace, the time is coming, soon, when classes will begin to fill up and those who have not re-enrolled will lose their places. Please don't be like those folks last year who tried to re-enroll in the summer, only to find out that there was no more space for them in their class.

Please note again: In order to be registered, you must *both* pay the enrollment fee *and* fill out the online application. There are literally dozens of families who have paid but not filled out the forms, or filled out the forms but not paid. *These families are not considered registered.* Once you have completed both steps, you receive a confirmation email stating that your child's place has been secured for the fall. Please call the office if you have any questions about this process.

Also, while we will fill up in some grades for sure, it is important for the overall success of the academy that we try to fill up in all grades. Please encourage your friends to come tour the academy with me—this is your opportunity to choose your own student's schoolmates!

Calendar Notes

There is no school on March 4, when we're taking the day off to remember two important dates in Texas history—Texas Independence Day on March 2 and Alamo Day on March 6.

The PSIA regional academic competition is Saturday, March 5, in Selma, Texas. 79 of our lower and middle scholars will be competing in this event. There is a parents' meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 3, in the third grade room.

Thursday, March 3, is the last day of the third quarter. Report cards will go home on March 11; *the academic awards ceremony has been moved to 2:00 on March 11.*

This March 11 report card will be the last quarterly report card that you will get on paper. We have purchased internet grade reporting software, and Mr. Arndt is leading the charge to get that in place. This will enable you to check your child's progress any time, without waiting for a progress report.

Our children all wrote Archbishop José Gomez to welcome him to the See of San Antonio. Please join us in praying for him and for our ailing pontiff every day.

Thank you for the privilege of helping you educate your children. Please pray for me this month, as I begin my annual travels to interview teachers for our expanding school.

Dr. Stephen Hollingshead

PRE-KINDERGARTEN

As we move into March, the Pre-K students will be covering the theme "The World Around Me." In this unit, we will learn about many different topics, ranging from transportation to farm animals. We will talk about different ways to get around, including cars, buses, bikes, and boats. We will sing songs like "Over the River and through the Woods" and "The Wheels on the Bus." As the children gain an understanding of why it is very important to care for our world, they participate in activities that develop language skills and build an appreciation of music and art. Children also engage in activities that ask them to use their senses to explore the world. This month the students will also recognize and write letters *U, V, and W* and numbers *1-20*. In Religion, the focus will be on Lent, and cover the lesson "God Should Come First in Our Lives."

We are looking forward to the exciting learning ahead!
God Bless You,

Mrs. Garcia and Miss Crawford

KINDERGARTEN

Having completed a review of each letter of the alphabet, Kindergarten will now begin learning about digraphs and long vowel sound rules. The students have become quite comfortable with the Accelerated Reader (AR) testing format and are diligently trying to attain their AR goals.

Now that the children have learned to count by 5's, they are ready to begin counting nickels and adding nickels to dimes and pennies. They will also learn the terms dozen and half dozen, identify fractional parts of a whole, and measure using feet.

In Religion class, the students will learn the importance of developing good habits that will continue long after Lent, like prayer and almsgiving. They will also learn about Palm Sunday, the journey toward Calvary, and the promise and message of Easter. The children look forward to writing letters to the students at our sister school in Ain Arik. Many of the students have turned in money they earned doing chores at home to send to our sister school.

Mmes. Elias and Phinizy

FIRST GRADE

Spring is just around the corner, and the children are eagerly awaiting the sunshine that March will surely bring. While absorbing the sunrays of March, the first graders will also be absorbing more rules for simple multiplication and division. Generally, first graders are not introduced to multiplication or division; however, The Atonement Academy first graders are taking to these mathematical concepts like ducks to water. They already know the ones and tens multiplication tables, and soon will begin learning the twos and fives tables (wow!). In addition to multiplication and division, the children will also be learning about perimeter and geometric shapes. On the flip side of math, the first graders will continue to study parts of speech, but they will focus on the dying art of letter writing. In this electronic age it is very important for youngsters to understand and be able to

write a simple letter. (Parents, don't be surprised if you receive a letter from your child soon.) Lastly, all first grade students are continuing to study about the holy season of Lent. Please encourage your child to earn and save his money for The Atonement Academy's sister school in Ain Arik, Israel. All monies collected help these deserving children have a wonderful Catholic education, too. Thank you and have a very safe and hopefully sunny March.

Mrs. Otten and Miss Deffenbaugh

SECOND GRADE

We are reaching the home stretch! This month will mark the beginning of our final quarter. We still have much to continue learning and we can't stop now.

In our Math class we will continue to work on our division and multiplication facts and to learn how to add and subtract three digit numbers. It is imperative that the students know these facts so that they are well prepared for third grade.

We will continue to read from our Junior Great Books. They offer unique, yet traditional, stories that the students simply love! The students are learning how to use and find examples from the text in order to understand the story better. The students should continue to read their AR books at home. Encourage your child to work towards a higher reading level. Reading is a gift that never stops giving!

In our Religion class we continue to prepare for our First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion, which our students will receive in May. They are learning how to examine their consciences, and that they are speaking to God when they confess their sins. The students should practice the Act of Contrition and the steps of confession at home as well.

Even though we are entering the final nine weeks, the students should still continue to work as hard as they have been. It's easy to slack off because we are getting close to the end of the year, but there is still much work to be done. We expect the students to be 100% prepared for third grade. Thank you for your continued help! If you have any questions or ideas, please call or email us.

Mmes. Garcia and Ruplinger

THIRD GRADE

We will be learning all sorts of things in Math this month, such as multiplying two two-digit numbers, and decimal place value. I know Math can be a challenge sometimes. Thank you for your involvement and support at home! The stories in Reading class really awoken the third graders' reasoning. We've talked about some pretty profound topics already. This month we'll be discussing why self-absorption leads to unhappiness. This will tie in nicely with our Religion studies. We'll be starting Chapter 2 of Unit B in Science, exploring the topics of force, friction, gravity, and magnetism. In Social Studies we'll be learning about Native Americans, such as the Navajo and the Omahas. We continue with our grammar studies in English, learning about the possessive case and pronouns. Confirmation will be in

early June this year, and we will begin explicit preparation for this sacrament this month.

Miss Peacher

FOURTH GRADE

The fourth grade will be moving into March working on all cylinders. English will take us into writing letters. We will cover our last chapter in our unit on Earth Science, looking at movement in the solar system. Texas History will be showing us the struggles that Texas had in statehood and during the confederacy. During our Religion classes we will be focusing on the New Testament and loving others. In Reading and Math, we will be moving along with our textbooks.

Mr. Kelly

FIFTH GRADE

In the fifth grade we are still steadily working through our Saxon books. Now we are beginning to investigate using exponents and square roots as well as learning how to compute the area of circles. Soon we will be moving on to classifying triangles, finding the measurements of angles in triangles, and solving algebraic problems concerning the addition of integers. In history, we have completed studying the Civil War and Reconstruction, and will begin taking a closer look at westward expansion and industrialization. In English, we'll be focusing on learning to use more varied and creative sentences. For Reading, we are just beginning to read *Prince Caspian* and hope to start reading *The Magician's Nephew* by the middle of the fourth quarter. In Science, we are still looking into "earth science" and more specifically the study of climate. In Religion, we plan on finishing the section of our books on Christ the Redeemer and will move on to the final section about the Church. We all anticipate a great beginning to our fourth and final quarter. God Bless!

Mr. Kawulok

GEOGRAPHY

Our geographic adventure continues in fourth grade as our class moves eastward from Poland to the Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia—former Soviet Republics, now members of the European Union and the N.A.T.O. alliance. We'll explore each one's distinct language, culture, and heritage, which was maintained during the communist period of occupation. Leaving the Baltic States, we discover what Winston Churchill once described as "a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma"—the people of Russia. From its Christian formation by Prince Vladimir in the 10th century at Kiev-Rus, through Czarist imperialism, the communist period as the Soviet Union, and finally to the establishment of the Russian Federation of today, the people of Russia and the world's largest nation will captivate our imagination for the rest of the month.

Concluding our study of fourteen Pacific nations, the fifth grade students move to the damp and dark jungles of Southeast Asia. Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Myanmar (once known as Burma), will be our initial

destinations, and from there it's on to India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh—all once comprising "British India." At the end of the month, we'll move north to the central steppes of Asia, and explore Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan—where local clan law and Islam govern life in these brutal environments.

Deacon Orr

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

It's the fourth quarter, so we are nearing contemporary society more and more in our history courses. In ninth grade, we will finish the year studying the history of the English Church, which will most definitely connect to our lives today. In eighth grade, we will be studying the American Civil War, which ended many of the divisive debates of our young country which we have been studying. In seventh grade, we have just finished studying how the American Civil War affected Texas, and next, we will watch how Texas grew industrially along with the rest of the country in the late nineteenth century. And finally, the most cosmopolitan middle scholars (the sixth graders) will be traveling to Africa to learn about its rich history. In addition to this, the sixth graders will continue to fill their algebraic toolbox with skills for the upcoming years in Math, while at the same time we are investigating in Religion the prayers of the Mass amidst our Lenten devotions.

Mr. Howell

MIDDLE & UPPER SCHOOL SCIENCE AND SEVENTH GRADE MATHEMATICS

The year is three quarters done and there's still so much science to discuss. But time waits for no man, and we must consider where our paths go next.

The sixth grade has just completed a unit on the atmosphere and weather, and is moving on out into the solar system. We'll be discussing things like theories about the origins of the earth, and the possibility of life on other planets. Eventually, we will venture out into the galaxy and beyond (students should pack a lunch and some overnight clothes).

The seventh grade has completed their last dissection (*pobresitos puercos!*) and has just started a new unit on reproduction and development. We will chart the course from single cell to fully developed human—truly God's greatest miracle. They are also burning right through the Saxon ½ math book, on lesson 90 already. Please be aware, parents, that I will be doing a review for all remaining quizzes during office hours (M, W, or Th) immediately preceding each exam.

The eighth grade chemists have completed their review of atomic theory and, armed with the periodic table, have started venturing into the various types of chemical reactions that occur in the presence of water, such a precipitation reactions, oxidation/reduction reactions, and acid/base reactions.

Finally, the ninth graders have just entered into a whirlwind tour of anatomy (complete with pig

dissection) which will lead us eventually to a discussion of evolutionary theory. Sure to be fascinating stuff!

God's Grace and Peace,

Dr. Vallor

MIDDLE & UPPER SCHOOL ENGLISH, AND EIGHTH GRADE RELIGION

Atonement Newswire: Top Stories

The sixth grade scholars have each begun composing an allegory of a Biblical story or theme. Reports from the English classroom indicate that the spirit of creativity is rising higher and faster than Eustace riding on the breath of Aslan. More on this story to come.

Students in the seventh grade are working on a paper in which they must answer a question about an important action of a character allegedly named Frodo Baggins. Our correspondent was not allowed to reveal the question, as that would ruin the ending of the book the seventh graders are reading. However, we do know that the answer to the question is pertinent to the meaning of the whole book.

The eighth grade scholars are writing an essay comparing the fictional kings Henry V and Richard III. Henry took some time out from his royal duties to comment on the essays, but Richard declined an interview—he was busy frantically looking for his horse.

The scholars of the Upper School, immersed in their own writing project about myth, are also studying the outstanding operations of outlining. Yes, we at Atonement News are biased: we love outlining.

Mr. Cupp

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

Salvete,

In Religion this month we shall finish our review of the sacraments. Our sixth grade Latin students will begin the study of the other three Latin tenses, namely the perfect tenses, so called not because they are without defect but because they signify that something is done, completed, from the Latin word *perficere* meaning “to finish thoroughly.” The perfect tenses indicate actions which have been or will be completely done. Once we master these, we shall have rounded out our study of all the tenses. Then we can begin on the passive voice. Our seventh and eighth grade Latinists will finish this quarter and begin the next mastering the indirect statement. The freshmen will soon take the plunge into the subjunctive mood. At last, they will understand why we begin prayer with “*oremus*,” which means “let us pray,” instead of “*oramus*” which means “we are praying.”

Valete,

Magister Ruplinger

FRESHMAN THEOLOGY

After finishing our brief discussion of Church history from the 1st through the 16th centuries, we will finish the semester studying the catechism.

Mr. Arndt

EIGHTH GRADE ALGEBRA I

Our rush towards Easter will be punctuated by value problems, non-linear functions, and geometric theorems. Mortifications or joys? Both, of course.

Dr. Hollingshead

ATHLETICS

With Mrs. K's departure, and the season of Lent upon us, March will be a rather subdued month for the Athletics program. In much the same way that Lent is a penitential season that helps us to prepare our souls for the glorious resurrection of our Savior, March will be a solemn month of rigorous exercise to help us prepare for the Presidential Physical Fitness Test. OK, so the PPFT may not quite be on a par with Easter, but preparation is essential to any quest for excellence and the upcoming fitness test is a valuable way to communicate that lesson.

Aside from practicing our push-ups, sit-ups, and shuttle- and mile-runs, all students will spend a significant amount of time tuning up their volleyball skills. While the older students will use this tune-up to prepare to use these skills competitively, the younger students will tie volleyball in to a larger unit focusing on hand-eye coordination more generally, and use our newly acquired parachutes to learn more about the importance of cooperation. All of this was planned, of course, under the assumption that it would stop raining sometime in the next twenty-five days.

Coach Lyle

MUSIC

We are continually amazed by the beautiful voices of the children at The Atonement Academy. The lower school, especially, makes remarkable daily progress. The future will be outstanding if these young people continue on the path they are undertaking. The first and second graders learn each new piece in three stages: rhythm only, *solfege* (or “Do, Re, Mi” syllables), and then with text. They should begin to understand “intervals” soon. The Lower School Chorus, grades 3-5, sings with power and clarity of tone. They are making a beautiful sound and have enjoyed working on a few new pieces this month. The Middle School Chorus, while capable of the more challenging repertoire, has been struggling with the inevitable dilemma of “changing voices” amongst the young men. Mr. Murray has been working with them separately, hoping to create a new “chant schola” while helping them with their changing voices. Mrs. Murray has continued working with the treble voices as they begin working on new repertoire for Lent and Easter.

Special Event, March 20th: We have been asked to provide a treble choir to sing with the San Antonio Master Singers in a concert on Palm Sunday evening. The program will include John Rutter's “Mass for the Children,” and will be accompanied by full orchestra. Look for our letter going home with children in grades 4-8 to find out how your children may participate.

Mr. and Mrs. Murray
