

The Pelican

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The Monthly Newsletter of The Atonement Academy

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FROM THE HEADMASTER

Dear Academy Parents,

Greetings from the academy! I hope your summer has been interesting and fun.

What a privilege and honor it is finally to be able to use the new building! We are truly blessed to be able to attend classes and to work in such a beautiful... well... castle.

I would like to start the new academic year by sharing last year's Stanford-10 results. As many of you know, the Archdiocesan decision to offer the tests in April meant that the results did not arrive until the last week of school. Thus, there was little time to analyze the reports in time to comment on them until the summer.

I am pleased to report that the academy tradition of exceptional standardized test scores continued last year, with every single grade posting mathematics scores in the top 10% in the nation! Our reading scores were similarly outstanding, with 6 out of 10 grades posting class average scores in the top 10% in the nation (K-2nd, 7th-9th). Although Harcourt does not publish top 10% cutoff scores for any other subject, it stands to reason that one would expect similar cutoff scores. Thus, although we do not want to brag too loudly (standardized test scores are not the most important indicator of excellence, after all), it is reasonable to conclude that The Atonement Academy ranks in the top 10% of schools nationwide, especially in the middle and upper schools.

The most impressive news, however, is that our skill scores are above our aptitude scores. Allow me to explain. Academy students in 2nd, 6th, and 9th grades take the OLSAT (a test of verbal and non-verbal aptitude or ability) in addition to the Stanford (a test of skills and performance). In general, one would expect a student with average aptitude (compared to his or her peer group) to post average skill scores (compared to that same peer group). Academy students, however, post skill scores higher than their aptitude scores. In other words, despite the fact that academy students generally fall into the average range in terms of ability, they consistently post above average scores in terms of skills, outperforming their peers in every category.

As is always the case, our dedicated teachers deserve a great deal of credit for this outcome. Of course, our hardworking students and dedicated parents deserve a significant amount of credit as well. As a result of this tradition of outstanding scores, I am also pleased to report that the academy was one of 50 private schools in the nation that were nominated last spring to receive the Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Award. We expect the announcement of award winners to be made in September.

Please join me in giving thanks to Almighty God and in congratulating the entire academy community for these outstanding achievements. We have been truly blessed.

Very best regards,

Mr. Richard S. Arndt

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, Love Others as God Loves You and God's House - The Church. Also, we will practice the Sign of the Cross and prayers. We are off to a great start!

God Bless You,
Mmes. Garcia and Henriquez.

KINDERGARTEN

We are so excited to see how much the Kindergartners have grown this summer and how eager they are to learn! We will begin right away learning the letters L, O, G, H, and will be off to a fast start reading. The children will also practice beginning sounds and rhyming. In Math, the children will review shapes, practice sorting by attributes, and graphing. We will have our daily Math Meeting where we will discuss the calendar, weather, and time. We will be practicing our best behavior at Mass and learning prayers in Religion. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns. We are eager to get to know all of you.

Mmes. Elias and Phinizy

FIRST GRADE

We do not have to search very long to hear little children sighing and boo-hooing about going back to school. Oh, those poor little dears! They do not have to mourn the loss of summer because the new school year is sure to be an exciting and challenging time. In September, the first graders will begin studying the very basics of geometry and bar graphing in Math.

Moreover, addition and subtraction properties will be reviewed and expanded to include double digits. In language arts, the students will explore various phonetic clusters, proper sentence structure, and sequential story order. While Language Arts and Math are interesting subjects, the children will probably be most excited by the new Art classes taught by Mrs. Morales, a gifted artist and second grade teacher. She will teach the first graders about the fundamentals of arts, as well as several new artistic techniques (Wow, if only adults could take her art classes!). The new school year will be busy and at times difficult, but we truly look forward to shaping those wonderful little minds, and we are certain not to hear any sobbing about the loss of summer. God Bless.

Mmes. Otten and Wiessing

SECOND GRADE

We would like to welcome new and returning students and their parents to Second grade. We are looking forward to meeting all of you if we have not already done so. We have a wonderful year planned consisting of our core classes Reading, Mathematics, History, Religion, and Science along with Art, Music and Physical Education.

Our Junior Great Books series for Reading starts off with *The Happy Lion*. This program of higher literacy will give your children many opportunities to interact with thought-provoking stories as they develop reading, writing, oral communication, and critical-thinking skill. Our year in Math begins first with an overview of patterns, then story problems, time, temperature, and money amounts, continuing with naming the days of the week, months and counting by 10's to 100.

In Science we'll start learning about plants and animals. We will learn about different kinds of plants, seeds, parts of a plant, and how plants grow and change. Our second grade text, *Jesus Our Life*, is a beautiful but simple introduction to Bible stories and teachings of the faith. Second graders have an active imagination; therefore, teaching with the use of creative presentations, plus reinforcing through repetition and personal good example will help build on-going formation and spiritual growth

throughout the year. In addition, students will continue developing their phonemic awareness. Review of consonants, vowels, and short and long vowels will get students back on track. Handwriting and our Spelling will keep students continuing their awareness of their penmanship and growing vocabulary.

Besides, the importance of all our core subjects, our classroom will be practicing good manners and respect of others daily as a way of good life and healthy routine.

Mmes. Castillo and Morales

THIRD GRADE

The third grade teachers are anxious to start the new school year. Since we are new to the parish we are excited to meet our students and their parents.

We will begin the year in Math by reviewing addition, addition stories and addends and before you know it we will be adding money and working on number lines.

Reading will be full of exciting new stories including Stuart Little, Little House in the Big Woods, and many more from our Junior Great Books. We will be following the Vocabulary In Action for our spelling and for penmanship, "Writing our Catholic Faith." This year our penmanship concentration will be on cursive handwriting. The text for Religion will be "Our Life with Jesus" and we will also be studying scriptures from the Bible.

Science is going to be full of new information and many exciting labs. We will begin by planting our own bean seed and venture out to many more. In Social Studies the 3rd graders will begin to learn about communities and laws. With proper guidance, they will use their imagination and create their own community with laws and maps.

The 3rd graders are going to be able to show off their writing skills in many ways. They will keep a journal that they will write in daily. We will begin the school year reviewing parts of a paper, editing for errors and learning to proofread.

Miss. Chenevert & Mrs. Vance

FOURTH GRADE

On your mark, get set, GO! The start of a new school year has begun. The fourth graders will be adding new skills to their Saxon Math as they learn sequences, practice addition, subtraction, and writing numbers. The students will investigate right and wrong through the behavior of Roger and Mrs. Jones in Langston Hughes' "Thank you, M'am." The Old Testament will come alive as we explore our Faith and learn about Creation, Adam, the Fall, Noah, Abraham, and begin to look at the theme of covenant. Plant life will show us God's special design in His wonderful creation in Science.

Mr. Tomanek

FIFTH GRADE

The fifth grade will have plenty of variety in their courses of study in this, their final year in the Lower School. The religion text provides them with an extended study of the creed, and how it is to be lived by young Catholics. Their study of History will focus on the United States. In Mathematics the students will work on multi-step problem solving, negative numbers, mixed numbers, fractions, simple algebraic expressions, and will use several standard formulas to solve geometric problems of increasing complexity.

Students will continue to develop their memorization skills by mastering the basic facts, as well as a short table of squared numbers. The spelling words will be challenging, as they complete the final level of Loyola's vocabulary series. The young scholars will review all grammar learned previously, and continue to hone their diagramming skills. The application of these skills will be useful in their writing assignments.

Finally, the reading series contains a number of outstanding stories which lend themselves to discussion and analysis which, in turn, aid comprehension.

In Jesus and Mary,
Sister Mary Margaret

GEOGRAPHY

Geography is the study of the earth, encompassing the nations which form the political sphere, the people who inhabit those lands, 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. It is with this understanding of Geography we begin.

The Fourth Grade students start their adventure by learning basic geographic terms, and how the earth is mapped by latitudes and longitudes. Then they are introduced to their first foreign country – our Northern neighbor: Canada. Our common British colonial history is the backdrop for an understanding of the development of the North American continent. 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.

This year, all homework assignments will be done online – a first for the Academy. The students (and parents) will have the ability to see their grades immediately, and to have instant access to the course syllabus. My email is: DnJames@AtonementOnline.com

Deacon Orr

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

Welcome Back Middle and Upper School.

I had a nice, long and relaxing summer once I got my air conditioner at home fixed. I hope your summer was nice and look forward to working with you all again.

In all of my classes, we will begin school by laying foundations on which to build the rest of our learning this year.

In sixth grade, we're going to review basic mathematical terminology and practice. We will discuss the customs of the Anglican-Use liturgy and study prehistory to find out what the word "history" means in the first place. In seventh and eighth grades, we'll study the geography and earliest histories of Texas and the United States so that we may understand how these lands came to be what they are today. Finally, the tenth graders will practice perfecting their ability to articulate words in front of an audience before moving on to larger messages.

Mr. Howell

MIDDLE & UPPER SCHOOL SCIENCE AND SEVENTH GRADE MATHEMATICS

Welcome back to the 2005-2006 academic year. Although there are many changes afoot, I am sure that we will all survive, and indeed have a great time doing it!

This year I will be teaching science for the 6th Grade (Physical and Earth Sciences), for the 7th Grade (Life Sciences), for the 9th Grade (Biology), and for the 10th Grade (Honors Chemistry), as well as 7th grade Math (Pre-Algebra). I will also serve as homeroom for the 7th graders.

This year, 8th Grade Science (Chemistry) is being taught by Mrs. Tricia Crossey. I especially look forward to opening our new laboratory facilities! It is my intent to make every 5th class a "lab" class, during which we will perform interesting experiments and learn how to write about them in a scientifically correct way. We will also get a head start on this year's Science Fair by choosing our project topics in the first quarter and doing some research about them before the actual "benchwork" gets started.

As always, please feel free to contact me by e-mail at: mvallor@atonementonline.com if you have any questions or concerns.

Thanks and God bless you,

Michael Vallor, Ph.D.

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

Welcome to a new year at the Atonement Academy. I am honored and grateful to be teaching middle and upper school English and 8th grade Religion. It is my aim to assist the young scholars in becoming focused readers and effective writers by teaching them to be clear, accurate, and precise thinkers. This goal will be achieved by a thorough study of great literature, concise writing styles, and the trivium: grammar, logic, and rhetoric.

The 6th grade scholars will be studying *The Chronicles of Narnia* and short stories from the Junior Great Books. They will work to understand the parts of speech and various components of grammar, even noun clauses and participial phrases. By the end of the year, they should be able to diagram any sentence in the English language.

The 7th grade scholars, in addition to reading *The Lord of the Rings*, will seek to master the elements of basic grammar. The 8th Grade scholars will be expected to apply their understanding of grammar to their writing. They will be studying the logic and reasoning of The Declaration of Independence and the eloquence and genius of Shakespeare.

The 10th grade scholars will be reading works from British Literature and beginning a study of logic; the art of clear thinking. Works studied will include novels, short stories, political philosophy, poetry, and literary criticism, and, of course, Shakespeare.

Mr. Cupp

**MIDDLE & UPPER SCHOOL LATIN,
ADVANCED MATHEMATICS I,
AND SEVENTH GRADE RELIGION**

Salvete,

A hearty welcome to all! This year I shall still guide our sophomores in their mastery of algebra, geometry and trigonometry, to balance which diet we shall study Euclid, by whom all geometers are measured. I am also eager to

initiate our newest students in the art of the lingua Franca. Meanwhile, with my help the eighth grade scholar will continue training his tongue in Latin. The rest have the pleasure and honor of studying with Dr. Thigpen! Finally, the Freshmen and I shall read and savor a few wonderful histories, one written by the father of historians himself. While we survey our civilization up to the Renaissance, our focus will be upon a few worthwhile men to see what men once were, and that we may gain surer footholds for our understanding in epochs, which together comprise more time than eight whole histories of our own country.

Valeatis,

Magister Ruplinger

**MIDDLE AND UPPER SCHOOL LATIN
II, LATIN III, RELIGION, ENGLISH**

I extend an enthusiastic welcome to all of my students, whether you are as new here as I am, or are returning to this magnificent new building. The upcoming year promises to be an exciting time for all of us.

The Seventh grade will start the term by learning our responses at Holy Mass (both English and Latin) and exploring the theological depths of the Sacrament of Confession. Thereafter we will begin our journey through the Old Testament, beginning with the Creation Narrative in Genesis. This journey will also include an introduction to the great influence the Bible has had over art, music and the text of the Mass. I shall also take the seventh grade through Latin II. This class will be a colorful and exciting encounter with language in the context of Roman culture. We will spend our first month reviewing the principles of translation by reading various Greco-Roman myths as well as portions of the Latin Mass. During this time, we shall review grammar by reading through the opening chapters of Henle's Latin Grammar.

The ninth grade will see a good deal of me. Freshman English will start its exploration of ancient epic poetry by reading through the *Iliad* by the end of first quarter. The class will learn how this great classic both illustrated and shaped the culture of ancient Greece. We shall supplement reading and discussion with slides

and video clips illustrating Homeric culture through art and archeology.

Freshman Theology will gain a foundation in Biblical Theology as they follow Salvation History through the Book of Genesis. We shall begin to learn and practice the principles of Catholic Biblical exegesis as we read through Holy Scripture. I shall supplement reading and discussion by an introduction to Biblical archeology and the influence of Biblical typology upon the history of art. I shall teach the Freshman/Sophomore section of Latin III. This class will review translation skills by reading through a series of Greek myths, culminating in the story of Cupid and Psyche—the ancient model for the fairytale of Beauty and the Beast. We shall review grammar through these stories as well as a series of games and exercises. Students must, however, review Wheelock vocabulary while we enjoy these myths. This vocabulary provides a crucial base for subsequent readings in the course. Vocabulary will be tested daily.

I look forward to meeting all of you.

Dr. Thigpen

ALGEBRA I

Nothing marks the start of the school year better than the sweet sound of #2 pencils scratching out a quick 30 Algebra problems first thing in the morning. When you complete your assigned work in class, there's no Algebra to take home! The first few weeks will be a review of the concepts mastered in Algebra 1/2 taught last year, followed by laying the groundwork for the rest of the year. By our fourth week we'll begin evaluating algebraic expressions. We'll work hard; have a lot of fun and master Algebra one lesson at a time!

Mr. Dempsey

ALGEBRA II

The Freshmen will begin Algebra 2 with a review of Geometry fundamentals such as perimeter, area, and volume, and proceed to an exploration of circles, polygons, triangles, and transversals. In short order, we will also solidify Algebra concepts such as exponents, polynomials, graphing, fractions, and word

problems. Before the year is out we will also be beginning trigonometry!

Mrs. Johnston

CHEMISTRY

8th Grade Chemistry – I'm looking forward to teaching your children the basics of Chemistry and teaching them good laboratory skills and how to put together a complete lab notebook. This month's lecture will cover an introduction to chemistry, matter and change, scientific measurement and atomic structure.

Mrs. Crossey

ATHLETICS

Welcome back. We are looking forward to a new and exciting year in the physical education department. We are Coach David Garcia and Coach Dolores Zapata, the new athletic directors for the school. We are very excited about taking possession of the huge new gymnasium which will greatly enhance our athletics program. In the fall, this year's sports include Pre-K through 5th soccer (ACSYO), 6th – 8th boy's flag football & cross-country (AIAL), 6th – 8th girl's volleyball & cross-country (AIAL), 9th – 10th boy's cross-country (TAPPS) and 9th – 10th girl's volleyball (TAPPS).

Extracurricular activities are not mandatory, but they are strongly recommended for a well-balanced life. Our mission is to teach each student the importance of respecting and caring for the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Coach Garcia & Coach Zapata

MUSIC

There is much to be excited about as we begin our first full year teaching at The Atonement Academy. We look forward to the completion of the music rehearsal room where all of the music classes will take place. Choirs for the daily Mass will be on a rotating schedule, thus giving more students an opportunity to sing on a regular basis. On occasion, there may even be a choir composed of faculty and staff! A fall concert has been added to the calendar, thus we will begin preparing right away. A

representative from the Music Department at UTSA will visit the school to discuss a program of string instruction which provides group and private lessons to students in third grade and up. More information will be sent home in the students' weekly folders. We welcome more students to participate in the choirs that sing for the Sunday Masses. We are currently restructuring the children's choir so as to give more opportunity to students in grades 4-6. Plans are underway for a select choir for girls in grades 7-10. Boys with changed voices (grade 8 and above) are encouraged to sing in the chant schola which provides music for the Latin Mass on Sunday evenings.

Cantate Domino canticum novum!
Mr. and Mrs. Murray

COLLEGE COUNSELING

This fall we begin our college counseling program, introducing our Academy to university admissions officers, and supporting our upper scholars in their college planning. The planning approach will be individualized, with the focus on students' interests, but with plenty of opportunity for parent participation. Bring your hopes, dreams, and several sharpened No. 2 pencils.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Also new this year is the first in a sequence of two half-credit courses in Information Technology. This class is an Archdiocesan graduation requirement. Our freshmen and sophomores will begin with a technology skills assessment, and then move on to some background learning and practical applications. The class will generally meet for two 45-minute sessions weekly, and our hard-working upper scholars will be pleased to learn that all coursework will be done during class time.

Mr. Johnston

Reminders from the Business Office

Tuition is due on the 1st of the month, unless the 1st falls on a Saturday or Sunday. A late fee is applied after 4:15 p.m. on the 1st.

Tuition Rates

The Atonement Academy operates on a 12-month payment plan, which began June. 1st, 2005. Those registered during the summer are placed on a 10-month plan for this year only. The tuition rates per child are:

- Pre-Kindergarten: \$310 per month.
- Kindergarten and 1st Grade: \$260 per month.
- 2nd-8th Grades: \$250 per month.
- 9th-10th Grades: \$450 per month.

The family maximum is \$620 per month, and \$830 per month with a student in high school.

If you are unsure about your monthly obligation, or have a question, please email JoAnn at: Jphillips@AtonementOnline.com.

Methods of Payment

We encourage you to sign up for our automatic credit card payment plan. Please come in and sign our authorization form. You won't have to think about deadlines for payments again! If your bank provides automatic recurring web payment options, set up The Atonement Academy as one of your regular payments. Cash payments are accepted during normal business hours.

The importance of keeping up-to-date

This is the first year the Academy began an online registration procedure, and it has been a great blessing to us in the office! There are some things we still need to work out, such as "what happens when information changes?" It is critical that your information stays current, especially your email address! Most office communications to parents will now be coming only in email form. Not having your correct email in the registration information will mean that you will not be getting our important notices.

In the near future, you will be able to go online again, and correct your own information which will update our records. For now, if you have an email change, please send it to Mrs. Dolan at Tdolan@AtonementOnline.com and we will keep you current.

The registration page can be accessed at:
www.AtonementOnline.com/school/index.php

Thank you!

2005-2006 CALENDAR

August

29 August (Mon)	1:15 pm	First day of School (Half Day)
30 August (Tue)	7:00 pm	Lower School Parents' Night (PTC)
31 August (Wed)	7:00 pm	Middle and Upper School Parents' Night (PTC)

September

2 September (Fri)	2:00 pm	Upper School Tea
5 September (Mon)	No school	Labor Day
10 September (Sat)	7:00 pm	Spaghetti Dinner & Bingo Night
12 September (Mon)	7:00 pm	School Council Meeting
29-30 September (Thu-Fri)	1:15 pm	Parent-Teacher Conferences (Half Days)

October

10 October (Mon)	7:00 pm	School Council Meeting
11 October (Tue)	7:00 pm	Parental Responsibilities Night (PTC)
18 October (Tue)	7:00 pm	Fall Choir Concert
25 October (Tue)	7:00 pm	Fall Wine Dinner
28 October (Fri)	1:15 pm	Last day of First Quarter—Half Day
31 October (Tues)		First day of Second Quarter

November

1 November (Tue)		All Saints' Day Celebration
4 November (Fri)	10:00 am	Award Ceremony
6-14 November		Student Trip to Italy
19 November (Sat)	10:00 am	King's Fair
21 November (Mon)	7:00 pm	School Council Meeting
23 November (Wed)	1:15 pm	Half Day (Wednesday before Thanksgiving)
24-25 November (Thu-Fri)	No School	Thanksgiving Holiday

December

8 December (Thu)		Solemnity (Holy Day of Obligation)
12 December (Mon)	7:00 pm	School Council Meeting
20 December (Tue)	7:00 pm	Academy/Parish Lessons & Carols
23 December (Fri)	1:15 pm	Half Day
26 December-2 January	No School	Christmas Holiday

January

3 January (Tue)		Classes Resume and Current Student Re-Enrollment Begins
9 January (Mon)	7:00 pm	School Council Meeting
13 January (Fri)	1:15 pm	Last day of Second Quarter—Half Day
16 January (Mon)	No School	Federal Holiday
17 January (Tue)		First day of Third Quarter
20 January (Fri)	10:00 am	Award Ceremony
31 January (Tue)	7:00 pm	International Festival (PTC)

February

11 February (Sat)	7:00 pm	Stampede Dinner-Dance & Auction
13 February (Mon)	7:00 pm	School Council Meeting and Open Enrollment Begins
16-17 February (Thu-Fri)	1:15 pm	Parent-Teacher Conferences (Half Days)
20 February (Mon)	No School	Presidents' Day
24-26 February (Fri-Sun)	7:00 pm	Upper School Play

March

1 March (Wed)		Ash Wednesday
4 March (Sat)	TBA	<i>PSIA District Meet (@ OLPH—Selma). State Meet 29 April.</i>
13 March (Mon)	7:00 pm	School Council Meeting
17 March (Fri)	1:15 pm	Last day of Third Quarter—Half Day
20 March (Mon)		First day of Fourth Quarter
24 March (Fri)	10:00 am	Award Ceremony

April

3-5 April (Mon-Wed)		Stanford-10 Testing
5 April (Wed)		ACRE Testing (5 th & 8 th)
14 April (Fri)	No School	Good Friday
17-21 April	No School	Easter Holiday
28 April (Fri)	No School	Battle of Flowers
29 April (Sat)	10:00 am	Brunch/Fashion Show

May

2 May (Tue)	7:00 pm	Spring Choir Concert
6 May (Sat)	10:00 am	Parish Picnic
8 May (Mon)	7:00 pm	School Council Meeting
26 May (Fri)		Last day for 8 th grade
29 May (Mon)	No School	Memorial Day

June

1 June (Thur)	1:15 pm	Last day of school (Half Day)
1 June (Thur)	10:30 am	Kindergarten Graduation
2 June (Fri)	TBA	8 th Grade Graduation Exercises

Student Eucharistic Adoration will take place on the following dates: Sept. 1, Oct. 6, Nov. 3, Dec. 1, Jan. 5, Feb. 9, Mar. 2, Apr. 6, and May 4.

Sacramental Confession for students will be scheduled monthly during the school day.