

SNAPSHOT

January 2021 Issue 19

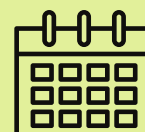
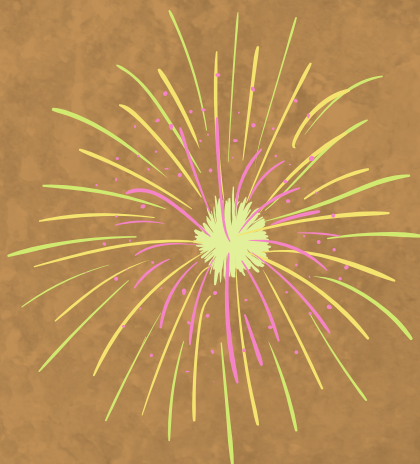


St. Thomas Aquinas School

SAINTS

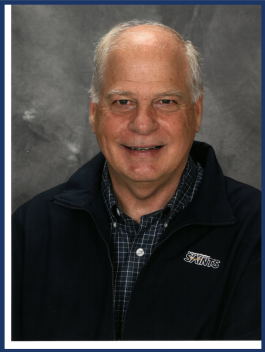
810 Fifth Street
International Falls, MN
56649

HAPPY
new year



DATES TO REMEMBER

- January 5 Picture Day-Class Photos
- January 7-29 NWEA Winter Testing
- January 18 Advisory Committee Meeting - 5:00pm
- January 22 End of First Semester
- January 25 Teacher In-service Day - NO SCHOOL
- January 27 Report Cards Go Home
- Jan 31-Feb 5 Catholic Schools Week



From the Principal's Desk

Happy New Year 2021 Welcomes You!

Each year at this time we take a moment to reflect on the past 12 months and to anticipate the next 12. This helps us keep a perspective on what is important and what is fleeting. For many, 2020 was a year like no other. But in the grand scheme of history it's just one more year. The following New Year Quotes can serve as a reminder that others throughout the ages reflected on their times and endured.

"Life is change. Growth is optional. Choose wisely." **Karen Kaiser Clark**

"It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are." **e. e. cummings**

"Life's not about expecting, hoping and wishing, it's about doing, being and becoming." **Mike Dooley**

"This year, be structured enough for success and achievement and flexible enough for creativity and fun." **Taylor Duval**

"Be always at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let each year find you a better person." **Ben Franklin**

"I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past." **Thomas Jefferson**

"To the old, long life and treasure; to the young, all health and pleasure." **Ben Jonson**

"You'll never get bored when you try something new. There's really no limit to what you can do."
Dr. Seuss

*"Ring out the old, ring in the new.
Ring, happy bells, across the snow.
The year is going, let him go.
Ring out the false, ring in the true."*

Alfred Lord Tennyson

2020 will remain very memorable for me, one that could not end too soon. I trust that 2021 will bring us relief, good health, and a sense of normalcy. **Happy New Year!**

**CELEBRATE CATHOLIC
SCHOOLS WEEK 2021**
January 31 - February 6



Catholic Schools Week

National Catholic Schools Week is the annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. It starts the last Sunday in January and runs all week, which in 2021 is January 31 – February 5. The theme for the National Catholic Schools Week 2021 is Catholic Schools: Faith. Excellence. Service.

We all work hard throughout the year to make St. Thomas School a special place of learning and faith. I'm thankful for the teachers, staff, advisory committee members, parents and benefactors who work to make our school successful. National Catholic Schools Week is the time we take to celebrate these efforts. A list of detailed activities for the week will be sent home with students in the next couple of weeks.

COVID-19 Up-Date

We were doing so well. Everyone was careful and we were following proper protocols. I was starting to feel confident that we could weather the storm and keep COVID out of St. Thomas for the remainder of the school year. Then two of our students became infected.

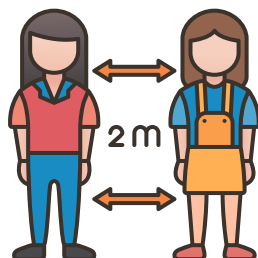
All of our students had been exposed for a short amount of time during the filming of our Christmas program. We were forced to quarantine ourselves. All but one of the quarantine days were during our holiday break. We missed only one day of school, the day before vacation, but it was party day. Bummer.

Monday, December 21, was a stressful and hectic day. Reports were filed with MDH, parent notification letters were quickly written, School Messenger all-calls were sent out, students and staff were informed. This triggered an array of questions and concerns from parents, staff and students. Our phone was ringing off the hook. Each classroom was visited to address student questions and alleviate fears. There were some tears and much anxiety, like our days in August as parents decided on the safest option for their child for the upcoming school year.

One student question was, “Are we going to receive learning packets like we did last spring?” Oh, we don’t want to go there. Our goal is to conduct classes on-site, face-to-face with our students. To that end we need to rededicate ourselves to maintaining and following the protocols for maintaining our health and safety as identified in our COVID Preparedness Plan. We will be vigilant in seeing to it that students and staff wear face coverings, maintain proper social distancing, properly wash hands, and clean and disinfect work areas.

We apologize for any inconvenience the quarantine may have caused you and your family during the holiday break. Thank you, everyone, for your cooperation and understanding.

43 students and 7 staff members have been quarantined 198.5 school days since the beginning of the school year. St. Thomas School averages 3.97 days absent per person because of COVID.



2020-2021 Fundraising

With the start of the New Year, we begin our fund raising season. Traditionally we begin the New Year with the Catholic United Raffle and end the school year with our Spring Gala. This year, because of COVID, the Spring Gala has been cancelled and changes have been made to the Catholic United Raffle student prizes.

- Our Total Fund Raising Goal for the year is \$103,000.
- The Walk-a-Thon, Grocery Bagging, and Reading Legacy Campaigns have generated \$38,000.
- Our goal for the Advisory Committee Fundraising Activities is \$4,300.
- Goal for our Catholic United Raffle is \$30,000.
- Goal for the Spring Gala Replacement is \$31,000.

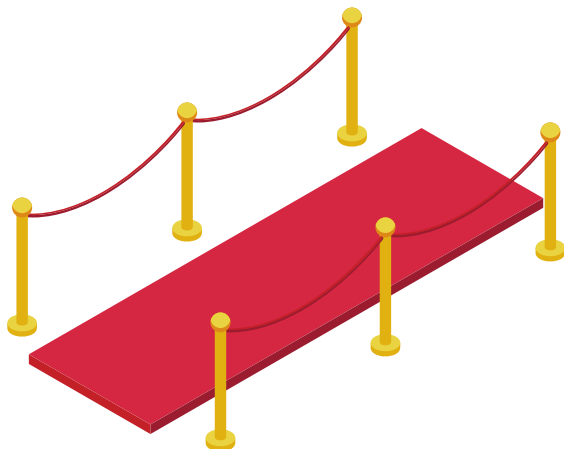
As you can see, we have our work cut out for us. This is the part of my job that causes me to lose the most sleep. Our school budget is always on my mind.

Families are expected to participate in our efforts, however, a family may opt out of an event with a buy out fee of \$425 for the Catholic United Raffle and \$480 for the Spring Gala Replacement. Because of COVID-19, some may choose this option.

Spring Gala Replacement Efforts

Sabrina and I will take charge of the Spring Gala Replacement efforts. We will be in contact with our major supporters from years past. These are the people who believe in what we do here at St. Thomas School and want to see us continue. Hopefully they will step forward again with generous donations.

Our Advisory Committee has identified four additional fundraising activities they hope will generate funds. Details and dates still need to be worked out. They will be looking for parent volunteers to help with these projects. Please be generous with your time and talents as we work to make these ideas into successful fundraising events.



Catholic United Raffle

This raffle is again sponsored by Catholic United Financial. Ticket sales will take place January 15 – February 28. Ticket prices are \$5 each. Catholic United Financial has some new promotions to help maximize or success.

- **New Tuition Grant Program.** For PreK-12th grade families who have children attending Catholic Schools.
- **New Prize Drawing for Top Sellers.** Top sellers at each school will be entered into a drawing for \$10,000 intuition grants. Top sellers drawn who are members of Catholic United will receive a \$500 tuition grant; non-members will receive a \$200 tuition grant.
- **\$3,000 New Member Grants.** The top three schools that generate new members to Catholic United during the Jan. 18 thru March 11 timeframe will win a \$3,000 grant. To qualify, a school must generate at least ten or more new members. The three schools with the most new members (10 or more) in this timeframe win the grants.

Promotional materials with specific details will be distributed at a later date.

With a goal of \$30,000, we will all have to step up our game to make up for the absence of *our #1 supporter and fundraiser, Fr. Ben.* **Our student goal is 50 ticket per child.** Each student who sells 50 or more tickets will receive a treat from Mr. Hilfer.

Help
St. Thomas Aquinas School
raise our goal:

\$30,000

\$5
each

ON SALE
Jan 15-Feb 28

Every dollar we raise stays
with our school!



TEACHERS CORNER

Preschool News – Ms Brittany

Hello families, the winter and cold is finally here and I think it's here today stay. Remember to bring warm clothes every day for your preschoolers including insulated gloves and hats.

December theme Holiday Hoopla: Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and Christmas activities fill this holiday theme. The children will be invited to explore familiar holiday traditions as well as those from around the world. Sensory exploration is prominent in this theme as children explore spicy scents, bright lights, and jingling tunes!

December Focus

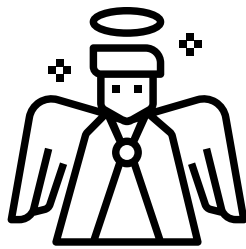
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Color: Green

Shape: Star

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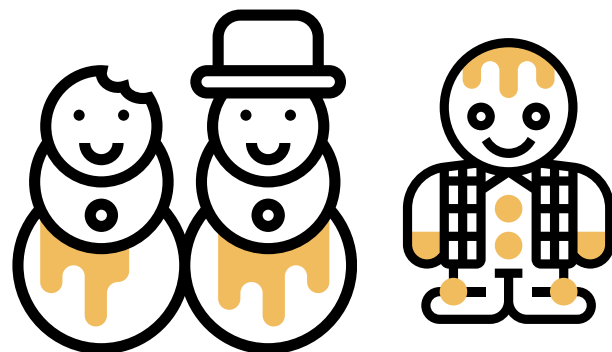


Activities to try at home: Discuss the upcoming holidays with your child. Which holidays do you recognize or celebrate? Talk about your family traditions and what you will be doing to celebrate as a family this month.

Gingerbread Playdough: 1 cup flour; 3 T ground cloves; 1/2 cup salt; 3 T ground allspice; 2 tsp. cream of tartar; 3 T ground cinnamon; 3 T ground ginger; 1 cup water; 1 tsp vegetable oil

Mix dry ingredients together in a large bowl. Add the oil and water to the dry ingredients and mix. Dump the mixture into a large pot. Stir for two to three minutes, while cooking over medium heat. Let cool. Enjoy!

The preschoolers enjoyed being part of the Christmas play as Angels. I hope everyone got to enjoy it virtually. Merry Christmas and have a happy New Year. Stay safe.



First and Second Grade News – Miss Pierce

I hope you all had a safe and restful Christmas break. We wish all good things in 2021 for our school, community and the world at large.

A busy January awaits us as we return. NWEA testing will be January 11, 12, and 13 for our grade one and two students. Teachers will be planning fun events as we prepare for Catholic Schools Week January 31 – February 5.

The students in both classes continue to progress well through all areas of study. Continued thanks for homework help! We have begun coin counting in both grades as part of our morning meeting. Please count various coin combinations with your child. First grade can work on dimes, nickels and pennies. Grade two students can work on these coins also and add quarters as well. Thank you in advance!

Winter Blessings,

Miss Pierce



'TIS THE
SEASON





Third and Fourth Grade News – Mrs Ecklund

Our classrooms are still in the middle of a whirlwind of activity getting ready for our Christmas holiday season, but I'm sure they will calm down quickly as the New Year begins. This is a quiet time for us to worship the newborn King who came to love us all.

We will also get more serious about our studies; buckling down in math and reading as well as English. The beginning of January also brings more NWEA testing for our classes. This is when we look for improvement in each of our students. Towards the end of January, we will trade in social studies for science and hopefully have a little bit of fun with some experiments. Also, the end of January brings with it Catholic Schools Week which has always proven to be a lot of fun for all of us.

Thanks to those of you who have been participating in Revved for Reading. It brings about improvement in Reading skills as well as many other areas. As you know from your children, we all miss Father Ben very much, however we are fortunate enough to have Father Thomas joining us for the New Year. We welcome him and are excited to meet him! Please keep Father Ben and Father Thomas in your prayers.

We look to this New Year with hope for a more healthy and happy time!

Mrs. Ecklund



Fifth and Sixth Grade News – Miss Raboin

Both fifth and sixth grade students put in a lot of time and effort on their essays for the Diocese of Duluth essay contest. They wrote about “Living a Gospel Life” and how they can follow in Jesus’ footsteps. With the essays that they have done in class this year, they have learned how to separate information into paragraphs, as well as use correct indentation, proper spacing, grammar, and capitalization. They also are getting used to using different sources for information or including quotes in their writing, while remembering to give credit to the source they found it from.

In math, fifth grade students are working with decimals and sixth graders are working on area and perimeter. Students are continually practicing comprehension exercises, analyzing text, and taking notes.

St. Thomas hallways are always decorated with student artwork of all ages, bringing a joyful and homey feeling to our special school!

Happy New Year to all!

Sending prayers and positivity your way.
Ms. Raboin

Let
It
Snow



Virtues in Practice

Faith– Hope – Charity

January Virtue of the Month – Fidelity: being faithful to promises and commitments

What is a commitment? We see our parents and grandparents live the commitment of marriage. In baptism we become the adopted children of God and are consecrated to Him. In these commitments, we make promises to God or another person. Sometimes promises can be very difficult to keep, especially when we no longer feel like keeping the promise, or when another person does not seem to be keeping their part of the promise! Every day gives us the opportunity to practice the virtue of fidelity by choosing anew to remain faithful to our promises.

Pre-K – 2nd Grade

Saints of the Month: **Saint Cecilia**, died 177 A.D., Italy
(Feast Days: November 22)

Saint Cecilia loved God very much and gave her life to God. She could see her guardian angel every day. Saint Cecilia is the patron saint of music because she always sang to God in her heart.

Prayer: "Saint Cecilia, please help me to always keep God first in my life. Teach me to sing songs to Him in my heart. Amen. Saint Cecilia, pray for us."



What is a Virtue?

A good habit is called a virtue. A bad habit is called a vice. Habits grow by practice. God always gives us the grace to choose and do what is good. If we think about what is right and open our hearts to God, we will make good choices and grow in virtue. Virtues make us free, happy, and holy.

Virtues in Practice

Faith– Hope – Charity

3rd Grade – 5th Grade

Saint of the Month: Blesseds Luigi and Maria Beltrame Quattrocchi, 1880-1951 and 1884-1965, Italy (Feast Day: November 25)



Blessed Luigi and Maria Beltrame Quattrocchi met and were married in 1905 in Rome. This couple was known for their openness to life, their hope in the midst of difficult family situations, and their loving commitment to one another.

Luigi and Maria were blessed with four children. The oldest became a Benedictine nun, and the next two children were called to the priesthood. Luigi and Maria received a unique gift in their fourth child, a girl named Enrichetta. From the start Maria experienced great difficulties in her pregnancy, and doctors warned that she had less than a five-percent chance of living if she give birth to her baby, and that the baby had even less of a chance of surviving. Enrichetta was born a healthy child, and both Luigi and Maria grew in their love for one another and their love for God by trusting in His promises.

Throughout their lives, Maria and Luigi served the Church by faithfully living the vows of their marriage and through their many charitable works. The family was consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and prayed the Rosary together each evening. Because of the holiness of their lives and their particular witness to the virtue of fidelity in their marriage, in 2001 Luigi and Maria became the first married couple to be beatified together. November 25, the date of their wedding anniversary, is now celebrated as their feast day.

Prayer: "Blesseds Luigi and Maria, please help me to practice the virtue of fidelity. Help me to remember that in all things, whether big or small, the Lord is pleased by my fidelity to what I have promised. Like you, may I put all my trust in the Lord in moments of great difficulty and remain faithful to what I know to be true and good. Finally, help me to hope in His promise to bring me to heaven by living faithfully the vows of my baptism here on earth. Amen. Blessed Luigi and Maria, pray for us!"

Virtues in Practice

Faith– Hope – Charity

6th Grade

Saint of the Month: **Saint Gianna Molla**, October 4, 1922-April 28, 1962, Italy (Feast Day: April 28)

In 2004, Pope John Paul II canonized Gianna Beretta Molla, a wife, mother, and pediatrician. Gianna's story is rather extraordinary, especially since her husband and children were still living at the time of her canonization.

Gianna Beretta Molla was born in Magenta (Milan), Italy, on October 4, 1922, the tenth of 13 children. After earning degrees in medicine and surgery from the University of Pavia in 1949, she opened a medical clinic in Mesero in 1950. She was a pediatrician, but gave special attention to mothers, babies, the elderly, and the poor. She considered her work a mission from God and exercised great care in fulfilling her responsibilities.

Gianna became engaged to businessman Pietro Molla, and they were married on September 24, 1955. In November 1956, to her great joy, Gianna became the mother of Pierluigi, followed by the birth of Mariolina the next year and Laura in 1959. She met the demands of mother, wife, doctor, and her passion for life with simplicity and great balance.

In September 1961, towards the end of the second month of pregnancy with her fourth child, Gianna had to make a heroic decision. Physicians diagnosed a serious condition that required surgery. The surgeon suggested that Gianna undergo an abortion in order to save her own life. Gianna replied, "If you must decide between me and the child, do not hesitate. Choose the child – I insist on it. Save the baby."



On the morning of April 21, 1962, her daughter Gianna Emanuela was born. Despite all efforts and treatments to save both of them, on the morning of April 28 Saint Gianna died. She was 39 years old. Her husband Pietro had described Gianna's life as "an act and a perennial action of faith and charity; it was a non-stop search for the will of God for every decision and for every work, with prayer and meditation, Holy Mass and the Eucharist."

On April 24, 1994, Pope John Paul II beatified Gianna Beretta Molla. At the beatification ceremony, the Holy Father said that Gianna's act of self-sacrifice was possible only after a lifetime of preparation. Saint Gianna Molla continues to remind the Church and the world of the virtue of fidelity, because of her faithful commitment to her family and to God. We are being called to heroism by our choice of life. Let us ask Saint Gianna to intercede for us that we might be faithful.

Prayer: "Dear Saint Gianna, you were faithful to your family even to the point of death. Intercede for us, asking God for the grace and courage to make lifelong commitments and the strength to keep them. Help us to trust in the grace He provides for us to fulfill vows made to Him. Amen.
Saint Gianna Molla, pray for us."

Virtues in Practice

Faith– Hope – Charity

Monthly Home Project Suggestions - Fidelity

Pre-K – 2nd:

Review: What is fidelity? Who is Saint Cecilia?

Why is it important for us to keep promises? Have you ever made a promise?

Was it hard to keep the promise? What can you do to help you keep promises?

As a family, choose a promise to make and keep together. You need to make your promise very specific so that all will know how to keep it. You need to make a promise that all can keep. At the end of the day/week/month (varies according to the promise made), you can check with one another to see if you were able to keep the promise.

What did you do this month to grow in fidelity? Draw a picture.

3rd Grade – 5th Grade:

Review: What is the virtue of fidelity? Who are Blesseds Luigi and Maria Beltrame Quattrocch?

Do you know priests, religious, or married people who have been faithful for a lifetime? Do you think fidelity was always easy for them? How do you think they remained faithful?

Think about the difference between a commitment and a duty. Create a chart listing several commitments you have made in your life, or which you see in the lives of your family members, and several duties for which you or they are responsible. Choose one commitment listed. Who is it made to? What does it ask one to do? How can someone remain faithful to this commitment?

6th Grade:

Review: What is fidelity? Who is Saint Gianna?

What do you think of Saint Gianna's determination to save the baby, even at the risk of her own life?

Does our society today value commitment? Give examples to support your answer.

Saint Gianna knew her commitment to being a mother demanded greater fidelity than her commitment to her medical profession. On your own, write a list of roles that you fill on a daily basis. What is the most important role? What is the least? Rank them.

Fidelity: being faithful to promises and commitments