March 11, 2020

Dear Guardian Family,

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Happy Lent!

I’m writing this on the last class day before Spring Break. I know the students, faculty and staff are all looking forward to a little break after the hectic months of January and February.

On the sports and activities front, our boys and girls basketball teams had a great season with the girls winning district and the boys losing from a “buzzerbeater hail mary” shot from midcourt by University Academy. We also want to congratulate Anna Glen from our Girl’s Swimming Team and our Archers for qualifying for state competition this year. And now, Spring Sports is in full swing.

The Guardian Gears, our Robotics team had a fantastic showing at the Greater KC Regional competition last week. Competing with some teams with five times more members than SMA, the Guardian Gears finished 15th out of 36 schools. While this top 50% finish positioned them to be a sought after alliance team to advance in competition, their team eventually was beaten in the quarter finals by an alliance of Lee’s Summit West, Ray-Pec and Smith-Cotton.

At SMA, we are talking a lot about the coronavirus, just like everyone else these days, making sure that precautions we need to take in our building are in place. Our sanitizing stations are getting a good workout and hand-washing is being even more strongly emphasized. In accordance with the directives of the bishop regarding this situation, we are more regularly changing out the holy water in our fonts at the door. We are keeping a daily watch on the situation.

Speaking of the coronavirus, our student pilgrimage to Italy, which was to leave on March 12, has been scrapped. The tour company unilaterally rescheduled the tour for the summer and offered a partial credit voucher for later travel to those who cannot go then. This is far from what we requested. We worked hard over the past week to seek a more equitable solution with the company, but this is where it has ended up. I am so sorry that we were not able to have this experience together.

Our 8th Grade Enrollment Night was a great time for meeting our new incoming students and their families. Some of them were familiar faces as younger brothers or sisters are joining the ranks of the Guardians. The Class of 2024 is going to be a wonderful addition to our school community!

Our students heard a very important message last week at an assembly presented by the “Be Alert - Stop Trafficking Project” regarding human trafficking. Our speaker, Russ Tuttle, reminded us that this is not just an international problem, but a local one that affects our community. It is an issue that involves both young men and women, destroying their lives in the process. There was a parent meeting the night before, also with Russ again as our speaker. I wish more of our families had been there to take advantage of this most powerful presentation.

As we continue our Lenten journey at the school, we will be offering the Sacrament of Reconciliation as well as the Stations of the Cross after our break. Last week we had something new for our All School Mass, we had a
contemporary music Mass with a worship team made up of students along with Sr. Jude Andrew and lead by John O’Connor, father of Emma and Zoe. I am hoping this will be a monthly event. It is good for all of us to realize that there are many expressions of music in worship that can be a part of the Mass. This week we had a non-instrumental Mass, which is a common occurrence in some parishes during Lent. With only our voices, we again were able to offer worship and praise as a school community.

I don’t think I have mentioned that, beginning this semester, Mass planning is being done by our community houses. Each house is assigned an All School Mass for which they are to prepare a number of things. They get together, read and pray over the readings from Holy Scripture to get a theme for the day, they write the prayer intentions and suggest songs for consideration. At Mass, one of the students does an introduction before we begin, sharing the theme that they wanted to emphasize for that particular service. We have also added a few minutes of “Mass Prep” before the Mass to give students an opportunity to align their hearts and minds with the readings and what is about to take place. This has been a really wonderful new development in our spiritual life together.

Have a blessed Lent!

In Christ,

Fr. Randy