

## Founders' Day Blessings

From my vantage point in front, as I looked out at the room during Founders' Day, I saw a true community event. So many different parts of the day were the results of parents, students, and friends sharing their time and talents. It was truly a blessed day for us, to consecrate and commence our school and school year. The Archbishop and Bishop reported that they enjoyed the day, that they were impressed and pleased with the event and school. The same comments came back from our visitors. A special thank you to Mrs. Curry and Mrs. Musser for their efforts, and coordinating our families' participation in the event. There are far too many people to thank that I will not attempt it here. We share some images from the day.



## Mid-quarter and First Quarter

21 Sept was the reporting time for the first mid-quarter grading period. This time around, we did send home a printed version of the progress report. Realize that 'mid-quarter' is just a snapshot of this time in the academic year. The first quarter grade and progress report will continue to change through the next four weeks, as more grades, tests, and assignments are added. Eligibility is based on passing all classes, with a 70 or higher at each snapshot time (every four and a half weeks). Students can apply for an eligibility waiver once per semester if they are failing one class with a grade of 60 to 69. The semester grade consists of the first quarter grade, 40%; second quarter grade, 40%; and the final exam, 20%. The first quarter ends 14 October, with grades reported by the end of the day Monday, 19 October 2009.

## Volleyball 'fan bus' trips

We will be running volleyball fan bus trips on the following dates to close out their season:

Tuesday, 6 October – San Antonio Christian (5 p.m.)

Wednesday, 14 October – Christian Academy of SA (5 p.m.)

## H1N1 Flu and Schools

We would like to share with you recent news and information about the H1N1 Flu and how we have been counseled to respond to this issue. The San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (SAMHD) has communicated with schools that this year's flu outbreak is starting earlier than normal, and, as a result, it is likely the Novel H1N1 Virus ("novel" meaning new and different from other flu viruses). From what they have seen, though this flu virus is widespread, the severity has been mild. The health district and local health authorities are not tracking cases, nor reporting confirmed cases, and only in the most severe cases are hospitals notifying authorities. The SAMHD recommends that, similar to other influenza-like illnesses, students and staff members with flu symptoms (fever, sore throat, body aches, headaches, chills, fatigue) should stay home and away from others for 24 hours after the fever and other symptoms are gone. SAMHD and other health groups are not advocating the closure of schools or cancelling public gatherings. They are advocating frequent and consistent hand washing, covering mouths when sneezing or coughing, and use of alcohol-based hand cleaners. Should we know anything more, we will forward that information on to families.



## Family Night

*Two important dates for parents and families:*

Our first Family Night, a time to build community, to learn more about the school, and to learn more about our faith will be held on Tuesday, 3 November, starting at 6 p.m. All members of the family are welcome, with childcare provided for children 3 and above. We will provide pizza and drinks, but ask for volunteers to bring salads to share. We should conclude by 7:45 p.m.

We will be having a parent breakfast for Advent with our students after the final Mass of the calendar year, Wednesday, 9 December. That day, we will start Mass at 8:30 a.m., and have breakfast for students and parents in our wing to follow.

## Events for recruitment

As a part of future student and family recruitment, we will be hosting a series of Open House events here at the school in October. These evenings are for prospective students and families and will be held four times during October: Thursday, 8 October, Monday, 12 October, Wednesday, 21 October, and Thursday, 29 October. All of these will be held at our school campus and will begin at 6 p.m. with a social time, and a presentation and tour at 6:30. These events are open to the public and are designed for students and families who are interested in enrolling in the 2010-2011 school year. We are now accepting applications for freshmen and sophomores for 2010-11.

We will be asking some students and parents to attend those events to be able to talk with prospective Guardians. Realize that this is a vital time for our school; in order to be able to grow our programs, we need more students and families to be a part of our school. We hope that all can be involved in this effort as we talk about and share the good news of John Paul II! If you have a co-worker or peer who is interested in learning more about the school, these are the best times for them to come by.

## Parents Group

At our parent meeting on 31 August to plan for Founders' Day, our school council presented to all of us their hopes for a parents group that serves our school's mission and core virtues. They gave an open invitation to parents to be a part of the group that crafts, adapts, and presents that group's mission statement and direction. We are holding a planning session for this group on Wednesday, 7 October here at the school at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Iliff will work with the group at the start, but then will step back and ask the assembled group to talk and plan through this unique challenge. Please RSVP to Mr. Iliff if you plan to attend.

## PSAT Prep

The PSAT, or Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test, is given in mid-October by The College Board, the same group that designs and administers the SAT. This year, it will be given on Wednesday, 14 October. The PSAT is also entitled the NMSQT, or National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, again a program administered by The College Board, and recognized by universities nationwide. The last two Fridays we have devoted significant time toward preparing our students for the PSAT, and we wanted to share with you what we have done and what you can do next.

The official PSAT/NMSQT is administered in the Fall of the Junior Year of high school, and those results count for the National Merit Scholarship Competition and other similar scholastic recognition competitions. (NMS is a very high level competition and is something that many of our students should strive toward.) The PSAT is also very similar to the SAT, the differences being that SAT is longer and has junior-level math topics (Algebra II). As we know, colleges use the SAT to differentiate between students and any preparation for the PSAT or SAT is not wasted.

As practice and development, we will have our students take the PSAT this year and next year. We started our preparation by having a guest presenter come in to work with our students on 18 Sept; Mr. Iliff continued that work last week Friday. As a part of the workshop, each of our students received a workbook that has valuable guidance and practice. We suggest that students work consistently through the workbook that was presented on 17 Sept. Further, we have many sample PSAT tests here on site, in Mr. Iliff's office. We will scan some of them and post them on RenWeb. Though there are many strategies for these tests, the main ones we are pushing are familiarity with the format, with the types of questions, and with the speed of the test.

One suggestion we would give all students and parents who are nervous about college admissions and the process that surrounds it: use all the time you have in your hands. Right now is a great time to start working and preparing for admissions tests, especially to determine areas of weakness and working on those.

Note that the PSAT is 'normed' for sophomores and for juniors, but not for freshmen, which means placing students in percentile bands for their age group. As a result, our students and their results will be placed in with sophomores, which can skew their percentile results lower. Also, this is the first time our students are taking the test, so we will set real goals for years 2 and 3. The PSAT also 'releases' the test after it is given, so our school will keep and distribute back to students the copy of the PSAT that they take on 14 October.