

SAINT AUGUSTINE SAINTS NEWS

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SINCE 1858

Welcome to the
Home of the Saints

God's Response to Church Scandal



From the Pastor

As I pen this first newsletter column at the kick off a new school year, I do so very mindful of the sad, tragic and infuriating news "burning up" the headlines; news of predatory priests and bishops who covered up their horrific crimes. I've chosen not to ignore the elephant in the room, but even more importantly, I also want to point out that God is in the room as well!

Yes, despite the bad news, **there is a word of encouragement that God has for each of us in the face of the current crisis!** First, it is vitally important that we always look at the news of the day or the difficult circumstances of our lives through

the lens of our Faith and in light of God's promise to never leave or forsake us. In other words, we are not alone to deal with this or to heal from this.

So, how do we respond to scandal proactively, constructively, and decisively? **God's response to scandal throughout history**— because sadly, this stuff is not new - **has not only been remarkable but remarkably consistent!** God's responds to scandal by raising up saints! That is, in the face of shocking and extraordinary vice, God raises up men and woman – old and young – of extraordinary virtue. When things seem worse than ever, God calls his children to shine more brilliantly than ever! We must shine the light of truth on the scourge of abuse and cover-up and the light of hope, healing and acceptance on those who have suffered in isolation and abandonment. What we must

NOT do is cower in fear or throw up our hands in despair. St. Francis de Sales bluntly said it this way: "**While those who give scandal are guilty of the spiritual equivalent of homicide; those who receive scandal must not commit the spiritual equivalent of suicide!**" This is no time to shrink back from the mission, but a time to spring into action!

Saint Augustine Catholic School students boldly announce to every visitor who enters their classroom: "Welcome to the Home of the Saints!" Saints throughout history were God's headline-stealing response to the scandals of the day. May all of our extraordinary efforts as parents, staff, faculty, alumni, benefactors and friends of Saint Augustine prepare our children to steal the dark headlines of sin and injustice in this and future generations, by their extraordinary lives of faith, hope, justice and love.

Rev. Patrick A. Smith
Pastor

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The new school year and recapturing the past



Dear Parents, Alumni, Parishioners and Friends,

I hope that you have had a good summer.

As we start a new school year, I think we as a school need to recapture the past and the values that we have held that we can sometimes lose. If you read the profile in this issue of *Jeffery Clay '90*, you can see that he appreciates the traditional Catholic education he received in our building.

In 2018, as we seek to further the

core values of the child – which we can achieve through structure, love, and upholding the dignity of each child – we need to be vigilant about ourselves and others. We are not just a school that has stronger academics than many public and public charter schools, but we are seeking to build an academic, moral, and spiritual foundation for our students in PreK-3 through 8th grade.

For example, attending Mass on Friday mornings, praying five times

a day, and taking Religion class is mandatory for all, not just Catholic students. These religious practices, however, are part of our core values, and everyone who becomes part of our community should understand them and participate.

Catholic education is not just information but transformation for our students.

I welcome our wonderful parents, staff and students, new and returning. May Saint Augustine our patron Saint, who loved to learn and learned to love, be our guide and protector.

Catholic education is not just information but transformation for our students.

Thank you for your support of our school through the gifts of time, talent, and treasure.

Sincerely,

Sister Gloria Mary Agumagu, HHCJ

Holy Name Society Breakfast May 20



Qawe Wilson '18



Fr. Patrick Smith



Kristian Meredith '18



Br. Etolla Etuge, OFM Cap.



Lawrence H. Parks II '75



Michael S. Riley '64

New Teacher Roundup

There are six new teachers in the 2018-2019 staff at Saint Augustine Catholic School. They come to us from three states and the District of Columbia, and three of our new instructors have Master's degrees. Cumulatively, they have more than 69 years of teaching experience, and all but one of our new teachers is Catholic.



Mrs. Michele Browne (Third Grade) has taught for more than 20 years and comes to Saint Augustine after teaching Theology at two Catholic high school for 15 years in New Jersey. A native of Trinidad and Tobago, she and her husband moved to the Washington, D.C., to be close to two of their four grandchildren. She holds a bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in Education from Brooklyn College.

Mrs. Browne feels that it is important to establish a relationship with each parent, and toward that end, she hosted an annual dinner at her previous school that was well attended by both parents and students and helped them to connect with each other.



Ms. Innah Mansaray (PreK-3 and 4) holds a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Coppin State University, with a minor in Psychology. She moved back to the D.C. area after teaching for two years in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and worked at a Catholic STEM camp this past summer. She has found the Saint Augustine staff to be "welcoming" and is eager to begin the process of becoming a certified teacher.



Ms. Claudia Barrios (First Grade) is a District native of attended Oyster-Adams Bilingual School. She has taught for 14 years in public schools, including six in District of Columbia Public Schools and two in DC charter schools. "I wanted to try a Catholic school," she said, adding that being Catholic played a role in her decision to come to Saint Augustine. She holds a bachelor's in Business Administration from

American University (AU) and a Master's in Teaching English to speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).



Ms. Natalie Foersch-Connolly (Middle School Social Studies/7th Grade Homeroom) moved to the District with her husband from California. After attending Catholic schools growing up and graduating from two Catholic universities, she decided she wanted to teach at a Catholic school. She holds a bachelor's in Political Science from Loyola Marymount University and a Master's in Education from St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia.



Ms. Barbara Greyson (Fourth Grade) moved this summer to the District from New York, where she had taught at a Catholic school, with previous experience teaching in Christian schools. After Sister Gloria Agumagu, HHCJ, found Ms.

Greyson's resume on Indeed in December, Ms. Greyson was won over by her future boss. "There's something special about this lady," she recalled thinking. "There must be something special about this school." She believes that every child is unique, and one of the keys to being an effective teacher is to build a relationship with each child.



Ms. Greyson's parents are Jamaican, and she holds a bachelor's degree in Education from the University of the West Indies.

Mr. Charles Miller (Music/Performing Arts) is a District native with 23 years experience teaching Music, much of it with District of Columbia and Prince George's County public schools at the middle school

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Mrs. Delores McDonald retires

Mrs. Delores McDonald completed eight years of teaching at Saint Augustine Catholic School when she retired in June 2018.

“An excellent teacher,” is how Sister Gloria Agumagu, HHCJ, principal at Saint Augustine, described Mrs. McDonald, who retires after more than 30 years as a teacher. Mrs. McDonald taught Kindergarten during the 2017-2018 school year and Pre-Kindergarten the previous seven years.

Sister Gloria praised Mrs. McDonald for maintaining strong relations with her students’ parents and also with fostering a strong learning environment. Assisted by her longtime teacher’s aide, Ms. Dolores Grymes, Mrs. McDonald could quickly pivot from one learning objective to another to keep her young students engaged.

“She went beyond the call of duty,” said Sister Gloria, who has served as principal of Saint Augustine Catholic School for 10 years. “The children’s learning was her priority. She wanted the children to read fluently.” Like an outstanding player on a sports team, Mrs. McDonald’s work raised expectations for other Saint Augustine School teachers.

Many parents responded to Mrs. McDonald’s work with their children. As one parent wrote in a 2012 online review of Saint Augustine Catholic School, “Mrs. McDonald’s incredible talent nurtures confident babies who become literary, mathematical and scientific blue ribbon geniuses. Yes, the babies can read, manipulate



numbers and conduct experiments when they leave her nurturing class!”

“I believe that a very young child can learn without stress,” Mrs. McDonald said in a 2015 school video. “I believe in differentiated instruction, so that wherever a child is, I will meet them there.”

Before she came to Saint Augustine, Mrs. McDonald taught Kindergarten at Holy Redeemer School, N.W., which closed in 2010.

Like Saint Augustine School, Holy Redeemer was founded to serve African-Americans during a time when many found limited opportunities. Sister Gloria hired Mrs. McDonald in part on her strong reputation, as well as the possibility that she could help attract some Holy Redeemer families to Saint Augustine.

At Holy Redeemer, Mrs. McDonald was particularly endeared to longtime pastor Rev. David A. Bava, a leader who was so dedicated to his parish’s social justice mission that he would get

up on a ladder to do repairs with his own hands for the school and hand out paychecks to his teachers. He has refused to take a salary. At Saint Augustine, Mrs. McDonald found a pastor in Fr. Patrick Smith who had a much larger congregation and more resources but an equal amount of grit and determination to Fr. Bava’s.

Mrs. McDonald recalled with a smile the unusual figure that Sister Gloria cut with her gray habit and determined gait at Holy Redeemer when Mrs. McDonald first saw her: she was a woman on a mission. At the time, Mrs. McDonald did not know that Sister is a member of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus, a Nigerian-based missionary order, from a country with seminaries, convents and novitiates that are full.

During her final year at Saint Augustine, Mrs. McDonald’s grandchildren Jahlil and Tallyn were enrolled at the school.

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New Teacher Roundup

and high school levels. He holds a bachelor’s degree in Music from Hampton University, where he focused on voice and saxophone. Mr. Miller can play every wind instrument, and he describes his string playing as “passable.” He plans to start a band at Saint Augustine, focusing initially on fourth through sixth grade students, depending on the interest and experience level of the students and their families. Mr. Miller is also purchasing a doctorate in Musical Arts and Vocal Pedagogy at the University of Maryland.



Eighth Grade graduates pay tribute

Dressed in blue and white cap and gowns and surrounded by excited parents, family, school staff, and friends, the 20 members of the Saint Augustine Catholic School eighth grade graduated from the school at the 10:00 a.m. Baccalaureate Mass at St. Augustine Catholic Church on Sunday, June 10.

Fr. Patrick A. Smith, pastor, appeared at the graduation while in the middle of his recuperation from medical procedures and concelebrated Mass with Bishop-elect Michael W. Fisher of the Archdiocese of Washington, named an Ordinary two days before by Pope Francis. The pastor since 2004, Fr. Smith established the tradition of graduation during a Mass to reinforce the idea that Saint Augustine's graduates have an entire congregation behind them, supporting their progress.

Maurice Hall, the valedictorian, encouraged his classmates to be true to themselves when they begin ninth grade at their new schools.

“Cherish your mistakes and learn from them, because Lord knows we’ve made a lot of them,” said Maurice, who will attend Bishop McNamara High School in the fall. “Also, don’t let your failures bring you down, because there are going to be a lot more of them.” In addition to McNamara, members of the Class of 2018 received admissions offers from Academy of Holy Cross, Archbishop Carroll, DeMatha, Duke Ellington School for the Performing Arts, Elizabeth Seton, Georgetown Day School, Georgetown Visitation, Gonzaga, St. John’s, and St. Vincent Pallotti,

Olivia Williams, co-salutatorian, paid tribute to her middle school Math teacher and middle school

English Language Arts instructor. “Mr. Respers spent countless hours at school just to make sure we understood his material, and every Monday, Ms. Ross would inspire us with motivation designed to challenge us to reach our God-given potential,” Olivia said. Olivia came to Saint Augustine in second grade.

Tsion Tessema, co-salutarian, in her speech said that she and many of her classmates were counting down the days until graduation, only to feel some “consternation and dread” as they leave their friends and classmates behind. Tsion, who spent six year at Saint Augustine, encouraged her classmates to think of graduating from St. Augustine as the end of a chapter in their lives.

“St. Augustine has encouraged me to be passionate and courageous about anything I desire to do,” Tsion said.



Fr. Patrick A. Smith



Msgr. Michael Fisher



Sister Gloria Mary Agumagu, HHCJ

Alumnus Applies the Lessons of Football and the Classroom to Life

When it came time for young *Jeffery Clay, Jr.* '90 to begin third grade in 1984, there was no discussion about which city school he would attend. His father, *Jeffery Clay, Sr.*, in the middle of a 28-year careers as a patrolman in the Metropolitan Police Department, decided his son would attend Saint Augustine Catholic School, the older Clay's alma mater.

So the younger Clay would take two buses from the family home in Southeast Washington to Saint Augustine. "Demanding teachers," is how he describes his instructors, who included Ms. Cheryl (Foster) Hanton, Mrs. Lorrain Lee, and Sister Gabriel O.S.P., while Sister Ricardo Maddox, O.S.P., served as principal.

Bro. Wilford Graham, who taught Science and Math, was a Jamaican-born instructor who did not tolerate any foolishness from students, as Clay recalls. As a layman, Mr. Graham later became principal of St. Thomas More Academy, S.E. Disciplined reigned through the school, as students had to line up in the hallway and were permitted just two breaks a day, for recess on a blocked-off V Street, and lunch.

Ms. Cookie Taylor, eighth grade homeroom and Language Arts teacher, helped her students learn sentence structure and how to write effective thesis statements. Competing against other District of Columbia Catholic schools, Saint Augustine won "Blackacademics," a Black History quiz show designed after WRC-4's "It's Academic," under the direction of Ms. Taylor,



who would drill students three times a week in preparation.

The late Mr. Leon Roberts served as the school's Music teacher. In response to a request for more male students to sing in the student choir, Clay tried out but did not make the cut, he recalls. "Why did they ask for us to try out, and then they told me I wasn't good enough?" he asked, staring down the school hallway, his smile belying the fact that any sense of injustice has long been forgiven.

Fr. John Mudd served as pastor, while Fr. Michael Kelley served as associate pastor at Saint Augustine Parish.

Clay played CYO basketball at Saint Augustine with Mr. Steve Benefield and Mr. Larry Jones. "We were a power, totally respected," Clay said of the blue-and-white team. If the Saints Varsity basketball team was not playing for the city title, it was making deep runs in the year-end Wintertournament.

After graduating as eighth grade Salutatorian, Clay made an effective transition to Gonzaga

College High School, and he graduated in 1994. Although his class of 175 boys had a much different demographic than Saint Augustine with only about 10 percent Black students, Clay has felt a strong bond with his classmates and fellow Gonzaga alumni. Clay is glad he went to an all-boys school. At Gonzaga, Clay played varsity football under the legendary Maus Collins.

"Football taught me how to overcome hard times, share, and work with others," Clay said. These skills have come in handy in his work as a police officer during this age of smartphones and Black Lives Matter, when contempt for officers among many seems to have grown. Clay does feel that homicide detectives receive more respect, perhaps in part because they don't wear police uniforms.

From the age of 13 to 37, each Fall was spoken for, between playing and coaching football. This journey included playing wide receiver for the Catholic University of America (CUA) Cardinals, where Clay formed an effective partnership with Kevin Ricca, quarterback, leading to Clay's 2015 induction in the CUA Athletics Hall of Fame. While at CUA, Clay set school records that included the number of receptions (112) and touchdowns (20) in a season. He also caught 269 passes during his CUA career and scored 48 touchdowns, a school record.

After graduating from CUA with a Communications degree, Clay earned a Master's degree in Public

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Annual Giving Update

Thank you to the more than 400 individuals and foundations who gave to Saint Augustine Catholic School during our 2018 school year, which ended on June 30, 2018. We raised more than \$395,000 as a result of your generosity.

Fundraising accounts for about 20 percent of our school's \$2.2 million budget, and we thank all those who have given of their time, talent, and treasure to support our parish school.

We are particularly grateful for the efforts of our former pastor, Fr. Raymond Kemp, through his Fr. Kemp STEM Chair Fund, which has raised more than \$100,000 since January 2017 in support of our school, and Mr. Doug Hellinger, who has raised more than \$35,000 to support Saint Augustine through the Diana Hellinger Education and Justice Fund in memory of his late wife, who was a middle school teacher at St. Michael the Archangel School in Silver Spring. Much of the support through these two initiatives has come from first-time donors to our school.

For information about the school and how you can support it, please contact Bill Murray, development director, at bmurray@saintaugustine-dc.org or 240-418-5427.

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Alumnus Applies the Lessons...

Policy and Management from Johns Hopkins University, commuting to Baltimore for 18 months. He began working for the Metropolitan Police Department 15 years ago and became a homicide detective nine years ago. His father was initially underwhelmed with his career choice, given how much education the younger Clay had received.

Our of the tragedy of the 2011 Caribbean Festival in DC, where three innocent bystanders who were shot during a street battle between rival gangs, including one who died, Clay takes particular pride in his investigation of the shootings, which led to three convictions. He also made an arrest that led to a conviction in a 2011 slaying that took place in a Northwest DC Boys & Girls Club.

From his education, Clay learned how to effectively communicate with youth on the street, families, judges, prosecutors, and fellow officers. "It's not just about going out and arresting people," Clay said of being a police officer. He tries to keep in touch with young people who could be susceptible to negative peer pressure and criminal activities. Arrests are sometimes a necessary part of the job, in order to remove suspects who have a pernicious effect on the city. For those who would like to watch a television show that most accurately depicts urban police work, he suggests HBO's *The Wire*.

"It's almost a miracle," he said of young people who are able to escape the grip of a negative environment.

Circling back to 14th and V Streets and Saint Augustine, Clay said that he's proud of what his classmates have accomplished since they graduated.

School Year 2018-2019 Admissions

Do you want your child to earn an admissions offer at top local high school such as Academy of Holy Cross, Archbishop Carroll, Bishop McNamara, DeMatha, Duke Ellington School for the Performing Arts, Elizabeth Seton, Georgetown Day School, Georgetown Visitation, Gonzaga, and St. Vincent Pallotti? These are schools our graduating eighth grade class of 2018 received admissions offers to attend!

St. Augustine Catholic School has openings in PreK-3 through 8th Grade for the 2018-2019 school year. Tuition starts at \$6,000 a student, making Saint Augustine on of the most affordable schools in the Archdiocese of Washington. The first day of school is Sept. 4.

Visit our school's website at www.staug-dc.org for more information, including watching our 2018 school video.

Please contact Mr. Raven Wilkins, vice principal and director of admissions, at 202-667-2608 or rwilkins@saintaugustine-dc.org, to schedule a tour and receive more information.

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Story ideas for the newsletter? Please contact **Bill Murray** at bmurray@saintaugustine-dc.org.

Would you like to update your address for our records?
Please complete an alumni contact form at www.staug-dc.org/alumni.html.

We welcome inquiries from alumni, former students and anyone interested in our school.