

SAINT AUGUSTINE SAINTS NEWS

• VOLUME 15, NUMBER 4

• FALL 2023

SINCE 1858

Welcome to the
Home of the Saints

For Parents, Alumni, Parishioners and Friends of St. Augustine School in Washington D.C.

For Such a Time as This

Dear Parents, Faculty, Alumni, Parishioners and Friends,

As December quickly approaches and the days grow shorter, the natural light of the sun shrinks away making for longer nighttime hours. In the days before electricity (and flashlight apps on your cell phone!) fire, candles and lamps were the solution to illuminating the darkness when necessary.

From my earliest memories, nothing symbolized the imminent arrival of Christmas more than lights - lights on houses, windows, storefronts, trees, hedges, figurines on landscapes, and in malls. Of course, these lights were most noticeable and brilliant at night. This fact brings to mind one of the most insightful, convicting, sobering and simultaneously hopeful non-biblical quotes that I have ever come across: ***"If the world is filled with darkness, the problem is not the darkness; the problem is the light"***. These words challenge me to pause and reassess my ordinary way of thinking about, and perceiving, the world around me. ***"The problem is NOT the darkness?"*** How absurd! Or, is it? A famous quote by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. from his book The Strength to Love,

From the Pastor



similarly confronts my assumptions about the solution to overcoming evil in this world: ***"Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that"***. Maybe MY thinking and perception of things is absurd!

Darkness by definition is the absence of something; something essential is missing. And that something is light. Or, maybe that something is ME or you! Why? To blame is to assign responsibility. The problem with assigning blame for the darkness to

the forces of darkness themselves, is that it absolves you and me from the responsibility of being the SOLUTION. ***"Those bad people need to stop being bad", "Those lying politicians need to stop telling lies", "Those corrupt leaders need to stop being corrupt", "Those violent people need to stop perpetrating violence"***. Again, the insightful words of Dr. King: ***"The ultimate tragedy is not the vitriolic words and actions of the bad people but the appalling silence of the good people"***. The appalling silence, apathy, indifference, hopelessness and in-action of the GOOD people are the problem. It is precisely for this reason that Jesus himself said this to all of his would-be followers: ***"You are the light of the world"***. People don't ***"light a lamp and put it under a basket. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, you must let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven"*** (Matthew 5:14a-16).

As we prepare for the season of Christmas in 2023, a season intentionally celebrated in the darkest

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Happy Advent

From the President's Desk



Dear Parents, Alumni, Parishioners & Friends,

Happy Advent, to all our beloved parents, families, students, teachers, and friends.

This fall, I reflected on the Scriptures from the letter of Saint James 1:16. "Every good and perfect

gift is from above, coming down from the father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

November is the time to be thankful, a time to remember, and to embrace those who enrich our lives. I am thankful for each and every family of Saint Augustine Catholic School. You are the reason I wake up every morning renewed to give my best service. Thank you for your warm acceptance and love.

The first quarter had its challenges but thankfully we scaled through all difficulties and came out stronger, focusing on new ways to make the second quarter better.

The goal of our second quarter is to build up the academic standards that will make our test scores high enough.

Our goal is 80% in all MAP Growth test.

During the second quarter, we continue to work on positive ways to make our school maintain a safe environment, while staff, faculty, parents and students build mutual respect, develop a patient attitude. We encourage our staff to give students equal and timely praise and reward.

Our 2023-2024 Theme which is "As we walk in the spirit, let us keep in step with the spirit." (Galatians 5:25). This theme will permeate the school environment and make each and every one alive, awake, and enthusiastic!

Happy Advent, as we fall in love with God and await the coming of the Child Jesus at Christmas.

Sincerely,

Sister Emmanuella Ladipo, HHCJ
Interim Principal/President.

Eighth graders visit Nicaraguan Embassy

On Dec. 6, our eighth grade students visited the Nicaraguan Embassy, the guests of Ambassador Francisco Obadijah Campbell Hooker.

Ambassador Hooker, who began serving in his post in 2010, showed our students a map of Nicaragua, a Central American country. He explained that the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, celebrated on Dec. 8, is known as "Santissima," in Spanish and is a holiday in Nicaragua. The feast is in honor of the Virgin Mary, whom Catholics believe was conceived without original sin.

Sister Emmanuella Ladipo, HHCJ, president, Ms. Helene Cropper, our vice principal and social studies teacher, along Ms. Lisbeth May, Spanish teacher, who arranged for the visit through her contacts in DC's diplomatic community. Ms. Lynn Teran, tuition manager, also accompanied the students. The



Nicaraguan Embassy is a 10-minute walk from Saint Augustine, located on New Hampshire, Ave., N.W.

The group prayed and sang songs in honor of Mary during their visit. Ambassador Hooker treated the group to a lunch that included empanadas, rice with beans, and orchata, which is a milk-based drink popular in Central America.

Saint Augustine School appreciates Ambassador Hooker's hospitality and his call for his embassy to build relations with local groups such as ours. We also pray for and stand in solidarity with our Catholic brothers and sisters in Nicaragua, including Bishop Rolando Alvarez of Matagalpa, who was sentenced to 26 years in prison in February 2023 on a treason conviction, after refusing to be deported from his native land, to join a group of 200 political prisoners, including a deacon, priests, and seminarians, as well as Bishop Alvarez's two-member diocesan media team.

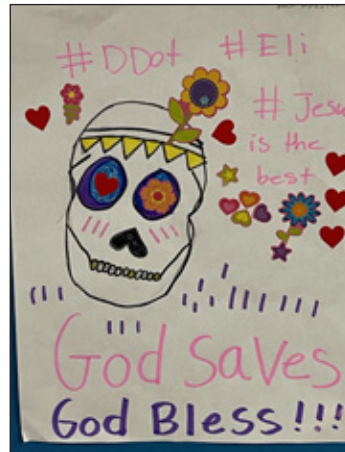
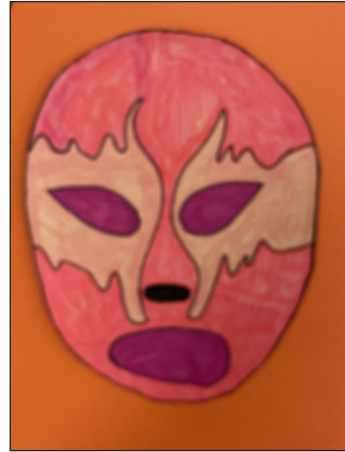
Art Class – Dia de los Muertos

In Art class during Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct. 15), under the direction of our second-year teacher, Ms. Malika Bryant, our seventh and eighth grade students learned about Dia de Los Muertos (Nov. 1-2), a holiday when many Mexicans

commemorate deceased members of their families, with some making visits to cemeteries to pay their respects to their loved ones.

Mexico is a predominantly Catholic country, with large scale conversions

occurring after in the 16th century, when the Spanish colonized the country, and Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to Saint Juan Diego, who was an Indian peasant who obeyed her directions to present her miraculous tilma to the Spanish bishop of Mexico



City, resulting in the latter building a church in honor of her.

Dia de Los Muertos coincides with both All Saints Day (Nov. 1), which commemorates all those who came before us who are in heaven, as well as All Souls Day (Nov. 2), when we pray for the repose of the souls of those who have come before us, particularly our family members. November marks the end of the liturgical year in the Catholic Church, before Advent begins the new year, and it is a month when we pray for those who have passed before us.

Art Class Rules

Step into Ms. Malika Bryant's Art classroom, next to the St. Augustine School cafeteria in the basement, and you can find the admonitions to her students. In her classes, "Artist" is an acronym that stands for:

- Act responsible
- Respect
- Try your best
- Imagination is key
- Stay seated!
- Talk quietly



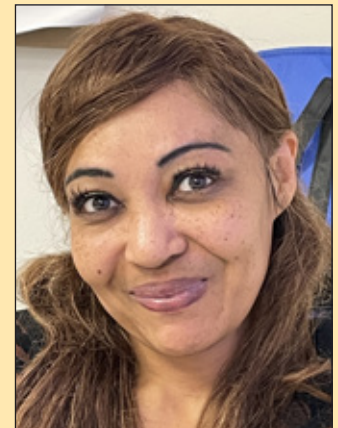
Mission Rosary

In honor of Wilton Cardinal Gregory of Washington's 50th anniversary of priestly ordination in October 2023, a group of Saint Augustine School students worked with Sister Emmanuella Ladipo, the school's president, to create mission Rosaries.



Science Class

Under the watchful eye of their substitute science teacher, Dr. Lorrain Lee, our sixth grade students in early November spent one Friday afternoon class selecting an article to read from a local newspaper, identifying the subject and main point of the article, as well as whether the scientific method was used as a part of the news being reported. We are grateful that Mrs. Lee, our retired social studies teacher and vice principal, came from her home in North Carolina to spend the fall with us and assist us during the 2023-2024 school year.



Ms. Maureen Frazier

Welcome to the newest member of our team, Title I teacher, Ms. Maureen Frazier, who is a DCPS contractor who started working at our school two weeks ago, working with students in English Language Arts and Math. She has more than 10 years experience as a teacher. Welcome, Ms. Frazier!

In Memoriam

Jean Makle '74

**John Pasteur, husband of Donna
Gaskins Pasteur '64**

May the souls of the faithfully departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Thanksgiving Food Drive

On Nov. 17, we completed our two-week, annual Thanksgiving Food Drive, with a visit from the Little Sisters of the Poor, who graciously accepted our donation and spoke with our students about their mission to serve elderly people and provide them comfort in the final stages of their lives. Our students and staff collected hundreds of non-perishable items.



New kindergarten teacher



A native Washingtonian with about 15 years of educational experience, Ms. Janine Nixon has

come to Saint Augustine Catholic School, where she is serving as our Kindergarten teacher.

Ms. Nixon's previous elementary level teaching experience has included working at Meridian Public Charter School and Roots Public Charter School, where she came to know Ms. Malika Bryant, who came last year to St. Augustine to serve as the school's Art teacher.

Welcome to the Home of the Saints, Ms. Nixon.



On Halloween, Oct. 31, we gathered in the St. Augustine Room to celebrate Fr. Patrick Smith's 60th birthday, which was two days before. Fr. Pat has served as our pastor since 2004.

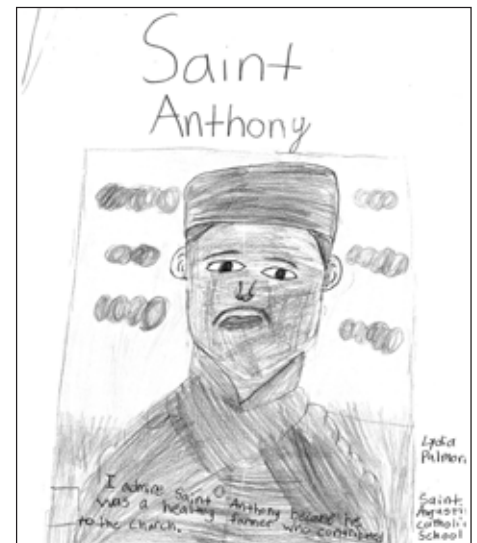
Junior Saints

We are the Saint Augustine School Saints. The Saints are those in heaven, which include average, ordinary people, as well as those officially canonized by the Catholic Church, judged to have lives of heroic virtue. In Religion class with Sister Bibiana Okoro, HHCJ, our students are learning about the saints

and how each saint's story is part of the tapestry of salvation, how God works through people at different times in history and through different cultures to bring us all back to Him, if we cooperate with his grace.

From archangels like St. Gabriel and St. Michael to church fathers,

such as St. Anthony of Padua and to Jesus' mother, the Virgin Mary, to great spiritual masters, including St. Anthony, St. Dominic, to St. Francis of Assisi, to modern saints, such as St. Kateri Tekakwitha, we can never exhaust the great wisdom in our saints nor fail to be inspired by them.



Diana Hellinger Education and Justice Fund reaches milestone

During 2023, the Diana Hellinger Education and Justice Fund, launched in 2015, reached a milestone in its support of Saint Augustine Catholic School, with more than \$100,000 in donations given in over eight years of support.

Doug Hellinger, the widower of Mrs. Diana Hellinger, established the Fund to memorialize his wife's work as a teacher at St. Michael the Archangel School in Silver Spring, which closed more than a dozen years ago.

"When I first visited St. Augustine," Doug Hellinger said. "It reminded me of St. Michael."

He noted that St. Michael's was a majority Black school where many students were first generation



Diana Hellinger

Americans, which is similar to St. Augustine's current constituency.

"Diana told her students that they would have to be better," than other students, in order to succeed, he said. He recalled that the couple's social life revolved around the school for many years, and that when his wife was

teaching middle school at St. Michael's, she helped many St. Michael's students gain admission at top rated local high schools, including many Catholic schools.

The Fund has supported the purchase of social justice textbooks for the St. Augustine School library, in addition to helping the school defray the cost of hiring a Reading Specialist, as well as providing tuition assistance for students in need. During this school year, nine students from Kindergarten through 8th grade are slated to receive tuition assistance through the Diana Hellinger Education and Justice Fund.

St. Augustine is very grateful for the support of Mr. Hellinger and his friends and family.



Mr. Andrew N. Lee, the son of Dr. Lorrain Lee, who taught in the St. Augustine School Middle School for decades and served as vice principal, has been assisting us this school year with the aftercare program and other activities. We are very grateful for his presence. Mr. Lee attended elementary school at St. Augustine and here stands before a plaque in the school lobby honoring the Oblate Sisters of Providence.



Our Thanksgiving Feast on Nov. 21 in the St. Augustine Room

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From the Pastor

time of the year, in a world of political corruption and upheaval, brutal wars, mass shootings, growing incidents of suicide, homicide, and widespread indifference toward the poor, religious practice, and even God – let us more than ever, break the appalling silence in imitation of, and in honor of, the God who broke His silence over 2,000 years ago and spoke the Message of Hope, Life, Peace and Joy! But THIS time, God let his spoken Word become flesh, born in a manger, and walking among us. We must go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere, that Hope springs eternal, and that no matter how deep the darkness and long the night, darkness cannot prevail when we let our lights shine in such a time as this.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Patrick A. Smith
Pastor

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On Oct. 26, our middle school students took a field trip to Butler Farms, to celebrate the fall harvest and to anticipate Halloween. Our seventh graders here pause for a photo.

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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.