

LENTEN FEBRUARY

Actually, February is really the perfect month for Lent. In the midst of our sense of hopelessness and despair, Lent challenges us to take a break, to put things on hold for a moment, to step back and look at ourselves and the lives we are leading. The season challenges us to confront those things and situations that make us less than what we – and God – want us to be.

The weather notwithstanding, our Lenten February speaks to us of hope: that we can be reborn and re-created in the life and love of God as sure as spring and summer will dawn. Let us enter the ‘wilderness’ this month with Christ that, in the quiet and peace of Lent, we may rediscover hope and purpose, and rekindle to light and warmth of God’s love in our lives.

+Dear St. Cecilia Families,

February 20, 2023

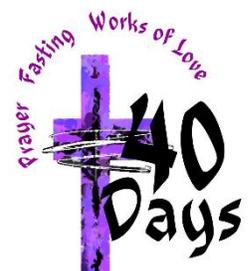
Ash Wednesday is this week and it marks the beginning of Lent. The reflection that I shared above was really written in 1994. Most of our teachers and some of our parents might remember a few of the winters in the mid-1990s. We had a lot of school. Schools were closed for a week one year. You could see what the author meant. February is often a tough month because we have become tired of the cold, the shorter amount of sunlight, and just the winter blahs. Now, we have to begin the season of Lent and we are asked to pray more, fast, and give alms.

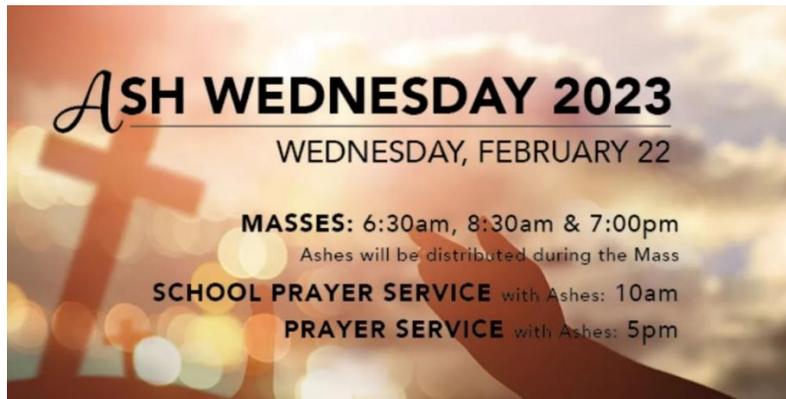
Let us take the attitude of the author, however. May our time to pray more help us to draw closer to God and to be open to his grace, mercy, and love. Let us be open to ask for forgiveness and mercy, to offer forgiveness and mercy, and to accept forgiveness and mercy, from God and from one another. Let us fast, not only from things like chocolate, but things that make us stretch our faith and openness to God. May I suggest that we fast from social media, or the negative things of social media. May I suggest we help our children fast in this area, too? Take their cell phones when they come home from school so that they can spend some quality time with their families. Let us give alms, not only by donating to charity but also by giving of our time in service to others.

Please check out the Weekly Update from Fr. Chris for some more ideas and programs that our parish is offering this Lent. You can find his update on the parish website at <https://stceciliafc.org/events-news> or <https://files.ecatholic.com/20797/documents/2023/2/Feb%2016%202023.pdf?t=1676654479000>

I have included the schedule for Ash Wednesday on the next page.

Have a great beginning to Lent! Have a great week!
God bless you,
Sister Catherine Irene, IHM





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Looking Ahead:

- February 20** **President's Day: School Holiday; NO SCHOOL**
- February 21 Mardi Gras!
- February 22** **Ash Wednesday: School PRAYER SERVICE – 10:00 a.m.**
- February 28 Grade 7 Trip
Sacrament Meeting for First Holy Communion and Confirmation
- March 3** **Terra Nova In-View Testing today**
- March 4 St. Cecilia Parish Celtic Night
- March 6** **Terra Nova NEXT Testing -READING**
- March 7** **Terra Nova NEXT Testing – LANGUAGE**
- March 8** **Terra Nova NEXT Testing – MATH**
- March 10** **FAMILY BINGO**
2ND TRIMESTER ENDS – MARCH 10
- March 13 Grade 6 Trip
- March 15 District Principals' Meeting
School Liturgy at 10:00 a.m.
- March 16 Grade 5 Class
- March 17** **St. Patrick's Day**



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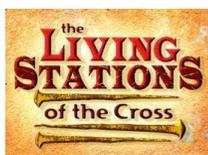
Sacrament Meeting for First Holy Communion and Confirmation – February 28, at 7:00 p.m. in Church



For our families with children in Grade 2 preparing to receive their First Holy Communion and for those with children in Grade 7 (and a couple in Grade 8), there will be a meeting about the reception of the sacraments on Tuesday, February 28, at 7:00 p.m. with Fr. Chris. The date has been on the calendar, and we hope at least one parent per child will attend. We are grateful to be preparing your children for the next phase of their sacramental life! We are privileged to partner with you on their journey of faith! God bless you!



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Planning Ahead: Living Stations of the Cross: On April 4 and Good Friday, students in Grades in 5, 6, and 7 will present the Living Stations to our school (April 4 after lunch) and to our parish in the evening of Good Friday (April 7). We will be sending home a letter this week to see if your child will be able to participate in one or both of the Living Stations.

We ask you to return the form as soon as possible. While we hope many will be able to participate, we know that some families have made plans to see family and friends over Easter. Thank you for returning the forms quickly so that we can practice and prepare for this inspiring and prayerful experience. Thank you!



Black History Month: Our Journey with African American Saints to Be!

Our saint from last week was **Venerable Augustus Tolton**. Fr. Tolton was the first Black Roman Catholic priest in the United States. It was not an easy path to the priesthood, however.

Fr. Tolton was born in 1854 in Missouri, a slave state, to Catholic parents who were both slaves. His father escaped and joined the Union Army during the Civil War. His mother fled with her children to Quincy Illinois, a free state. There was a large Catholic population in Quincy. Under the guidance of Fr. Peter McGirr, Augustus went to Catholic school. He had a strong desire to become a priest, but no American seminary would accept him. He eventually was accepted into the seminary in Rome and was ordained a priest in 1886. Fr. Tolton served in Quincy and then in Chicago. He died at the young age of 43 during a heat wave.

You can learn more about his life and his path to sainthood at <https://tolton.archchicago.org/>

As I looked for a quote from Fr. Tolton, I found this excerpt from a school named in his honor. The message is so true; I do not need to expand on it. Can we all try to live and practice this every day?

"This beautiful new school, Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School, is named in honor of Father Tolton. Tolton Catholic celebrates each of our differences because our differences make us unique individuals. We celebrate our divine likenesses, because our likenesses make us all God's children. We celebrate our common goal which is the same as was Augustus Tolton's: to profess our love of God and to thank Him for giving His Son, Jesus Christ, so that we may be saved. Hand in hand with each other, we will continue in the tradition of Father Augustus Tolton: "Follow not the well-worn path. Go instead where there is no path, and blaze a trail."

Retrieved from <https://toltoncatholic.org/biography-of-father-tolton/> on February 17, 2023

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Julia Greeley, Denver's Angel of Charity: Julia Greeley was born a slave. As a child, Julia lost her right eye when the whip being used to beat her mother, caught it and destroyed it. After she was freed, Julia worked for many white families, eventually settling in Denver, Colorado.

It was in Denver that Julia began to help those in need, often at night. She would beg for food and clothes for others when she no longer had her own materials or money to give away. Julia became a Catholic in 1880 and was a member of Sacred Heart Parish in Denver. She had a great devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. For our parents who are firefighters, police officers, EMTs, and other First Responders, you will find this fact very appealing. **"Every month she visited on foot every fire station in Denver and delivered**

literature of the Sacred Heart League to the firemen, Catholics and non-Catholics alike (Retrieved from <https://juliagreeley.org/> on February 17, 2023)."

You can learn more about Julia Greeley at <https://juliagreeley.org/> Let us imitate Julia's generosity as we serve those in need, especially those right in our families and neighborhoods!

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Reminder Message about Volunteers:

- If you want to volunteer for upcoming events, like field trip, the Fun Day and the Walkathon, please make sure that your clearances are all up-to-date!
- If you want to accompany your children on field trips, you will need your clearances as well.
- Go to <https://scsfoxchase.org/safe-environment-program> to see the required clearances. Please see the Clearances Checklist to see the complete list of requirements.
- If you have any questions, please email Lisa Hnat at lisa.hnat@stceciliafc.org

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Request: When children are picked up early, our receptionists in the front office might not know you. At times, a relative might pick up a child and we might know the person. Therefore, I ask that you bring I.D. when you or a relative pick up your children. Thank you for your assistance.

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TRAFFIC CONTROL: Right now, we have three major traffic problems going on at St. Cecilia School. My concern is that a child is going to get seriously hurt. I am also concerned that some families do not respond when our faculty and staff asked them to move or the like. The major problems that I see are:

- **DOUBLE PARKING ON STANWOOD:** Not only does it reduce safe travel, but it also encourages children to cross the street in the middle, away from the Crossing Guard.
- **STUDENTS AND PARENTS WALKING IN FROM JEANES STREET:** This is the way most of the faculty enters the property. The teachers are in by 7:45 and that is the way they enter the school yard to park. At dismissal, this is the way that the buses exit. We need to keep this path open to cars and buses only. No should use these this area for walking. Thank you!
- **ENTERING THE PARKING LOT:** When some of you are running late in the morning or afternoon, some parents speed through the parking lot. Please slow down. Thank you!

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Dress Code: Many of our students come to school every day and wear their school uniforms with pride. Their uniforms are neat, shirts or blouses are ironed, and the correct shoes are worn correctly. Many students, however, need to do a much better job in wearing their uniforms correctly and following the dress code. As we close the second trimester and move into the final trimester, I ask you to review the Uniform Policy and Dress Code with your children. You can find it at <https://scsfoxchase.org/student-dress-code>

We are going to begin something new for the third trimester. We are going to start rewarding the students who are wearing their uniforms correctly. We are going to give the reward that everyone values: a DRESS DOWN PASS. The third trimester begins on Monday, March 13. It will give everyone two weeks to get their uniforms (including haircuts, correct **knee** socks for girls and gym socks for all, and belts/ties for the boys) in order. I will speak to Uniform Exchange and perhaps we will be able to have a uniform exchange. You can also call our Uniform Exchange Coordinators. They have so many clothes that would love to give away. Their information is on the website or here: <https://scsfoxchase.org/uniform-exchange>

Look for more details next week! Thank you in advance for your support!

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Before you speak
THINK

- T** ~ Is it true?
- H** ~ Is it helpful?
- I** ~ Is it inspiring?
- N** ~ Is it necessary?
- K** ~ Is it kind?

Fr. Chris shared this quote with Grade 6 earlier in the year. There were some issues with social media. Fr. Chris told the students to use this acronym to help the students decide if they should post something on Social Media (at the time, it was primarily TikTok).

We must do the same in our spoken word. I am sure, as parents, that it is hard for you to distinguish what really happened. In a family, you want to know who is telling the truth or who might be trying to cover up past mistakes.

As a school community, let us all work together to help our young people (and ourselves at times) to THINK before they say, post, share, etc.

Thank you!



Saint Cecilia School Mission Statement

Saint Cecilia Parish School is a Christ-centered community committed to our Catholic identity and academic excellence. Our administrators, faculty, staff, families, and students collaborate in an environment of shared values. Inspired by the spirit of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, we empower our students to explore and develop their individual God-given talents. Animated by faith, hope, and love, we live Gospel values and respond to the needs of the global society.

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Belief Statements/Core Values

We believe...

A Christ-centered community embodies the ideals inherent in the Gospel.

The family is the primary educator of the faith.

The integration of Catholic values, ethics and morals defines our mission as Catholic educators.

We instill Christian values by nurturing an environment of mutual respect and understanding of all people.

Each child is a unique individual with God-given talents.

Daily dedication to the prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi strengthens our commitment to being instruments of peace.

All students have a right to a safe, positive, and engaging learning environment.

Self-esteem fosters positive character development, academic achievement and leadership qualities.

The collaboration among administrators, faculty, staff and families is vital to the faith formation and academic achievement of students.

A rigorous and relevant curriculum integrated with technology prepares students to be a productive member of our global society.

Ongoing professional development for faculty and staff facilitates best learning practices.

Tuition assistance, financial aid and scholarships provide families access to an affordable Catholic education.

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