

St. Cassian School

Weekly Newsletter - February 24, 2020



From the Principal's Desk...

Dear School Families,

During the month of February, we are celebrating Black History Month by learning about the wonderful accomplishments of black men and women, many of whom, despite adversity, have made the lives of others better through their actions. Throughout the month of February, it is our goal for our students to learn about the central role of black men and women in U.S. history by highlighting their achievements.

The following are a few examples of students' learning experiences during Black History Month:

- Our younger students are engaging in literature and project-based visual arts learning, recognizing heroes, such as Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, Ruby Bridges, Jackie Robinson, Ray Charles, Wilma Rudolph, and others.
- Third and fourth graders are exploring the art of step dancing and creating their own routines and performances.
- Fifth graders are exploring poetry written by African-American authors spanning three centuries, as well as researching authors and performing/reciting their favorites for other students.
- Sixth graders are researching different literary genres by African-American writers and will publish a literary magazine to highlight the great works of the numerous authors. The magazine will include students' reviews of the literature.
- Students in sixth through eighth grade are reading and holding seminars based on the NY Times "Overlooked" series. The series looks at important/interesting people that were not given Times profiles or obituaries because of their race or political beliefs.
- In addition, middle school students are engaging in civics lessons and projects about landmark Supreme Court cases such as Dred Scot v Sandford, Plessy v Ferguson, and Brown v Board of Education.

Although lessons this month are designed to celebrate the wonderful work of black men and women throughout our history, we realize that the accomplishments of African-Americans can not be justly presented in a few lessons; therefore, our school's curriculum seeks to highlight the positive impact of immigration and diversity on our great nation's history on an ongoing basis.

In closing, I want to thank our teachers for their creative implementation of lessons and activities that foster an appreciation of diverse cultures, ethnicity, and race. I would also like to thank you, the parents of our students, for your ongoing support.

Yours in education and faith,
Mrs. Llanes
Principal

School News

Ash Wednesday Mass: Students in Kindergarten through eighth grade will be attending Mass and receiving ashes on Wednesday, February 26th. We invite parents to join us for Mass at 8:15 AM.

About Ash Wednesday: *Ash Wednesday is one of the most popular and important holy days in the liturgical calendar. Ash Wednesday opens Lent, a season of fasting and prayer. Ash Wednesday takes place 46 days before Easter Sunday and is chiefly observed by Catholics, although many other Christians observe it too.*

Ash Wednesday comes from the ancient Jewish tradition of penance and fasting. The practice includes the wearing of ashes on the head. The ashes symbolize the dust from which God made us. As the priest applies the ashes to a person's forehead, he speaks the words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Alternatively, the priest may speak the words, "Repent and believe in the Gospel."

Ashes also symbolize grief, in this case, grief that we have sinned and caused division from God. Writings from the Second-century Church refer to the wearing of ashes as a sign of penance. Priests administer ashes during Mass and all are invited to accept the ashes as a visible symbol of penance. The ashes are made from the blessed palm branches, taken from the previous year's Palm Sunday Mass.

Priest Week was a great success! During the second week of February, Fr. Marc visited classes, engaged in classroom lessons, and shared memorable moments with our students. Some of the activities included creating art projects, reading stories, playing games, and sharing in the learning experiences. At the end of the week, there was a culminating event featuring photo memories of the Priest Week experience.

The celebration of Priest Week, which is unique to St. Cassian School, has become a tradition we look forward to every year. **Thank you, Fr. Marc, for spending special moments with us!**



Middle School STREAM Fair: The Middle School STREAM Fair, which was held on February 12th, showcased the creative talents and the high-level problem solving skills of our students. Within the framework of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, our students researched and identified regions of the world in need of help and specific challenges therein that they sought to address. With the utmost cultural empathy, they engaged in research and in the engineering design process over a 6-month time span to invent and innovate solutions to these challenges. The projects included an engineering prototype, an informational trifold brochure, an engineering notebook, and a poster display board.

As an introduction to our robust middle school STREAM Program, fifth graders also created math-based displays representing researched data. Their projects connected math to other academic areas through creative displays.

During the fair, experts in diverse areas of science, technology, and engineering judged the projects. The judges were very impressed by the students' high caliber work. Several projects will be selected based on the judges' recommendations for display at the Archdiocesan STEM Fair in May. The selected projects will be announced the week of February 24th.

Congratulations to all our students and to Mrs. Odierna, the STREAM Fair lead organizer, as well as Mrs. Jordan, Mrs. Wypasek, and Mr. Grube for the success of the fair.



Student Council Food Drive: We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the collection of non-perishable food items to be donated to the needy of St. Michael's Church in Newark. Special thanks to the Student Council members and to Mrs. Petrillo and Mrs. Yelovich for organizing the effort.

Transportation Reimbursement: To [apply for a transportation reimbursement from your hometown](#), please complete the attached form and return it to our school office no later than March 1, 2020.

Financial Aid: The application for the **Inner City Scholarship Fund (SFIC)** tuition assistance program is now open. Tuition assistance applications for the 2020-2021 school year are available online only at www.sficnj.org.

The deadline for submitting the on-line application with ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS is April 30, 2020. For more information, please see the attached document with [Facts and Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#).

Important: Please note that applying for the Inner City Scholarship tuition assistance program is a prerequisite to qualifying for any other form of financial aid available directly from St. Cassian School.

Confirmation Meeting: Confirmation candidates, please mark your calendar. There will be an important meeting for all Confirmation candidates on Sunday, March 1 at 7:00 PM.

Please be sure to visit the events calendar on our [website](#) to view the activities beyond this coming week.

HSA Happenings

Sign Up for the Annual 5K and Fun Run: We are now accepting registrations for this great family event at Brookdale Park on Saturday, April 4th. You don't have to be a runner to participate...walkers are welcome too! We hope to see you there.

- The 1K Fun Run for kids starts at 8:30 AM and includes one lap on the paved paths around the soccer fields. The early bird rate is \$15 if you register before March 11th. All finishers receive a ribbon!
- The 5K starts at 9:00 AM and includes three laps around the park on the paved paths of the Inner Loop. A map of the course can be found on the registration site. (This is a USATF certified course.) The early bird rate is \$25 if you register before March 11th. Medals will be awarded to the Top 3 male and female participants as well as by age range. More details are available online. <https://runsignup.com/Race/NJ/Bloomfield/SaintCassian5K>

Facebook: If you're on Facebook, be sure to join our "St. Cassian Parents" private page for more frequent updates about what's happening!

Please contact hsastcassian@gmail.com with any questions about HSA events.

The Arts

Creating a Documentary: During our next MIAD cycle, ten middle school students will have the unique opportunity to work with Mark Bozek, a professional filmmaker whose film, *The Times of Bill Cunningham*, premiered this month. The course will entail creating an original film project that will be showcased at the celebrations for the **125th anniversary of St. Cassian Church** beginning in the fall. Students will engage in research, the collection of historical data, writing a screenplay, filming, editing, creating visual animations and original music, interviewing, and directing scenes. The MIAD course will begin the first week of March.

We thank all students who submitted applications to participate in the project. Students can expect to receive notification of acceptance to the program next week.

Please see the attached flyer to [learn how you can help us gather information for the documentary project](#).

Cougar Sports

Spring Sports Program Registration: Registration for the Spring Sports Program opens this week. Please note that in-person registration, medical clearance, and the payment of all related sports fees (payable through SMART) is necessary before a student can participate in practices and sports events/games. Please find [the sports registration program](#) attached. Thank you.

In Person Registration Dates:

- Wednesday, February 26, 2020 from 6:00 PM to 7:15 PM
- Monday, March 2, 2020 from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM

Available Sports:

- Track and Field 1st-8th grade
- Girls Softball 5th-8th grade
- Boys Baseball 5th-8th grade
- Boys Volleyball 5th-8th grade

Please note that all of the above sports will be offered pending sufficient team enrollment.

Basketball News: The regular season ends on March 1st with playoffs to follow. The Varsity Girls Team, JV Girls Green Team, and JV Girls White Team will be seeded 2 or 3 in their divisions. We expect a total of 3 or 4 home games at the St. Cassian School gym. All other teams will play away. We need a big turn out to support our teams. Stay tuned for the playoff schedule! Go Cougar Nation!

Parish/Community Corner

Reflect with Bishop Barron this Lent: Have you ever wondered why the priest washes his hands at Mass? Do you know why we call it the "Sacrifice of the Mass"? Is Mass just an obligation for you and not an experience of Heaven on earth?

St. Cassian Church invites you to spend an hour each Wednesday of Lent, beginning March 4th at 7:00 PM in Larkin Hall, to view and discuss Bishop Robert Barron's series on The Mass!

ASH WEDNESDAY: On February 26th Masses will be celebrated at 8:15 AM and 7:30 PM. Distribution of Ashes will also occur at 12:05 PM and 4:00 PM.

Annual Appeal: March 7-8

Girl Scout Weekend: March 8th, 9:00 AM Mass

Save the Date Sunday, September 13, 2020! Join us as we celebrate 125 years as a parish. Solemn Mass will be celebrated at 11:30 AM by Cardinal Tobin, Archbishop of Newark. A special reception will be held after the Mass.

St. Cassian School

*National Blue Ribbon Exemplary High Performing School
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