



## Mother's Day Musings

May 14, 2017

It was great fun on Friday to see many Aquinas Mothers and Grandmothers in the building for the Pre-K and First Grade Mother's Day Teas. Those kinds of things bring back many happy memories for me. The timeframe of my Pre-K/Kindergarten/First Grade years were 1990 until about 1996. I also remember the First Confessions and First Communions like they were yesterday. As a matter of fact, our oldest – David – was to have made his First Confession in March of 1993. Those of you who have lived in Pittsburgh for some time may remember that particular March and what has been dubbed “The Blizzard of ‘93”! Mark went to work for a few hours that Saturday morning, vowing he would be back in time. As for the predictions of a massive storm, having lived in Pittsburgh three years at that time, he said, “They never get it right! I'll back in a couple hours!” Well... the snow started; the confessions were cancelled; and when Mark returned several hours later, he noted that on a scale of 1 to 10, the roads were a 9! Two weeks later, when the First Confessions were rescheduled, I still remember the wise words of our Pastor at that time – Fr. William Schroeder. He told the little ones, “We are all going to heaven together! So we all need to learn to get along now!”

Well, my own children have all grown up, and this is my once-in-a-blue-moon opportunity to share where they are in their lives!

David, an accountant who can be characterized by his pragmatic, yet fun-loving personality, is 32, married with two little ones, and recently moved back to Pittsburgh. They live nearby, and also belong to St. Alphonsus Parish. It is delightful to join them at 11:30 Mass on Sunday. Somehow, that little family of four arrives at Church before Mark and me. When we slide into the pew, we are met by hugs and “Grammy! Grampy!” Little Abigail will be in Kindergarten at Aquinas either in 2018 or 2019 (a late birthday that could go either way!). Madalyn is two years behind. I chuckled at the wording of the recent email (below) from David who is on the Parish Committee for the Golf Outing at St. Alphonsus:

Mom,

I drew the short straw to make the ask of Aquinas (we are asking all of the Catholic High Schools) to sponsor something at the St. Al's golf outing. Do you guys have room in the budget (\$100 for a hole sponsor)? Typically I have been writing a big long shpeal but since we have such a close relationship I didn't feel it was necessary for you?

Thanks – See ya tonight

(The “close relationship” part was a bit comical! So that you know, I figure I will make a donation to Aquinas, Aquinas sponsors a beverage station, and we promote Aquinas High School with the St. Alphonsus golfers!)

Lizzy is 30, works in Marketing in Cincinnati, and is the proud “mother” to Jenkins, the wonder-dog! Every now and then, Mark and I keep Jenkie to give her a break. A little yippee dog in an apartment in the city is rough! The following Facebook post this week characterizes her life, which seems to be one adventure (?) after another:

Left work, and was driving across the Roebling Bridge to see the two cars in front of me get smashed by a hit and run driver mid bridge. Proceeded to put blinkers on and call 911 until I saw that everyone was okay. Once I saw that everyone was okay, pulled off said bridge, got Jenkins, walked back and spoke with cops. I came to learn that the woman in the passenger’s seat of the car that was struck in front of me was literally on the car ride home from the hospital after having open heart surgery. Jenkins and I decided to walk off the nerves and apparently walked right through the set of a movie they are filming in the area. Not only did we walk onto a movie set. But apparently we walked right past an actor named Robert Redford, as the crowd of people standing behind barricades told me as I walked off the set. And now I'm home in time for class. You can't make this stuff up.

Peter, 28, is a mechanical engineer and lives in Silicon Valley. After five years in Detroit with Fiat/Chrysler, he was ready to stretch his wings and works for Lucid Motors, who is hoping to compete with Tesla! If you see an image of the car, he designed the cup-holder, among other things! Peter, my type-A engineer, can be characterized by the phrase, "I'm just a little concerned about..." He is analytical, has life-long friends, and speaks like an engineer. He has recently started dating a woman who is also an engineer. And when I last asked how that was going, the exact phrase was, “It seems that the relationship is progressing.” And that’s it! A man of few words!

Like each of you, we are parents to children who are each one-of-a-kind. They make us laugh; they make us cry; and even yet, there are times we worry about them! With every bit of that, however, we know how blessed we are to walk with them through this journey called life. Kindergarten, First Communion, MIDDLE SCHOOL, broken bones, graduations, college decisions, broken hearts, weddings, new jobs, NO jobs, and many adventures! It’s a noble thing being a parent, and it’s a life of love to be a mother!

May this weekend be full of love and surprises, and may each mother always turn to OUR Mother, who has walked on the mountains and in the valleys with her Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, and knows the joys and sufferings of motherhood right along with us!

Happy Mother’s Day!  
Leslie

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**<sup>1</sup> Representing Aquinas Academy at the state PJAS competition at Penn State University today through Tuesday are: Diego Garcia, Kate McLaughlin, Iby Tessier, Benjamin Stalder, and Macrina Vollmer. Catherine Spiller is joining the group as a technician.** These students earned first place in the regional competition for the PA Junior Academy of Science at Duquesne University in February. Mrs. Manolache and Mr. Burchill are travelling with the group. We pray for a safe journey to and from State College, and we wish them well in their competition!

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<sup>2</sup> **On Tuesday of this week, May 16<sup>th</sup>, we will celebrate May Crowning in the Chapel. This beautiful tradition will begin outdoors at 10:45 with the procession from the parking lot.**

Parents who are arriving to assist the second graders get ready should please follow the directions of the parking attendants so as to allow a clear path for the outdoor procession. Second graders will wear their First Communion clothing on Tuesday, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders may dress up as well. We honor these groups who have done their sacramental preparation this school year!

**Because of the traditional May Crowning luncheon for second graders and their families that follows the Mass, there is NO CAFETERIA SERVICE ON TUESDAY and ALL STUDENTS OTHER THAN SECOND GRADERS MUST PACK A LUNCH. Lunch will be in the classrooms to allow for the second grade luncheon. I will send another reminder on Monday evening!**

<sup>3</sup> **Thank you to those who have committed to some level of sponsorship for the Walk-a-thon – either as a Footprint or Footstep sponsor, or in covering the cost of an expense for the day! Please encourage your child to gather pledges.** With that financial backing, they feel that much more invested in the fundraiser. You will recall that our only other major fundraising event this year was the Annual Fund which closes for this year in June. We are grateful for the high level of participation in that Fund Drive; and now we need a successful Walk-a-thon to completely close the gap between tuition and expenses. You will recall that tuition covers 85% of the operating expenses for the year, and we count on ordinary fundraising to make up the difference. **We look forward to a great Walk-a-thon day on Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. Keep gathering those pledges!**

<sup>4</sup> May is a very busy month at Aquinas Academy! **Rather than list all of the upcoming dates, I am attaching the most current calendar for May, listing all of the events of the month.** In some cases, times are not listed. In those instances, please reference the Monthly Calendar on the website for more details.

**Important to note** at this time are the various “endings” of the school year for each Division of the School:

**Seniors:** Finals are May 22, 23, 24. Students are done after their last final exam. **Graduation is Saturday, May 27<sup>th</sup>.** Students should be at Aquinas NO LATER THAN 9:15.

**High School:** Finals are May 30, 31, June 1, and June 2. **Students are done after their last final exam. June 2<sup>nd</sup> has only a morning exam in Modern Language.**

**NOTE THAT THE HIGH SCHOOL AWARD CEREMONY FOR ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IS ON FRIDAY, MAY 26<sup>TH</sup>, AT 6:30.**

**Middle School:** **The last final exams are on June 1<sup>st</sup>, which is a full day. Middle School Awards and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Graduation is on Friday evening, June 2<sup>nd</sup>,** beginning with closing Mass at 6:00 P.M. in the Chapel, followed by award in the Rhodora.

**Lower School:** **Last Day for Lower School is Thursday, June 1<sup>st</sup>. Lower School Awards are at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, with the Closing Mass for Lower School following at 11:00.** After Mass, students are dismissed. For those who do not have transportation home, there will be supervision until regular middle and high school dismissal at 3:05.

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<sup>5</sup> **On Thursday of this week (May 18), all parent volunteers are invited to join us for our Volunteer Appreciation Day. Join us for the High School Band/Choir Concert, for the final AAPA meeting of the year, for a Mass of thanksgiving for your selfless efforts, and for a luncheon in the Media Room!** Come for all or part of that morning! **Please print the attached invitation, and don't forget to RSVP** so we can have an accurate count for the luncheon! As we wrap up our AAPA year and begin planning for next school year, Cindy Cresta will be completing her two-year term as lower school co-chair. Vanessa Harrison will continue as middle school co-chair; and Laurie Lynch and Carol Scherer will continue as upper school co-chairs. **If there is a parent (or a pair of parents!) who would enjoy serving as lower school co-chair for the next two-year term, please contact Leslie Mitros or Cindy Cresta.** It is a position that requires organizational skills, and is important to providing the "Aquinas Tradition" to the smooth functioning of the school. There is a staggered rotation of term so that some of the co-chairs provide continuity from one year to the next. We thank Cindy, as well as Vanessa, Laurie, and Carol for all of their efforts and hard work this year!

<sup>6</sup> **On Wednesday of this week, our Mass Celebrant is Fr. Alex Wroblicky, a priest in the Byzantine Catholic Rite. He will be offering Mass in our Chapel on Wednesday in the Byzantine Rite.** The Byzantine Mass is steeped in music, incense, and sacred images. It will be a new experience for most of our students. In that rite, Communion is received in a different manner with the bread immersed in the wine and "poured" onto the tongue of the Communicant. The students will hear more about this and the Byzantine Catholic Rite in class this week. All are welcome to join us. **Please note that Mass will begin at 10:45 on Wednesday** to allow a little extra time for Mass.

<sup>7</sup> **A reminder that there is no school on Thursday, May 25 (a week from Thursday) as it is Ascension Thursday.** There will be no after-day during the day that day (that's a lot of alliteration!) The After-Day program is closed on National Holidays and Holy Days during the school year. Ascension Thursday is a beautiful Holy Day of Obligation late in the Easter Season and leading up to Pentecost!

<sup>8</sup> **Current sophomores and juniors have the opportunity to attend the Stratford Festival in Canada next October. Reservations are now being taken for the trip.** The cost of this two-day-three-show extravaganza is \$350, with \$100 due at the time of the reservation. Please see the attachment for details and registration form!

<sup>9</sup> **Parents of seniors: Please be sure to return your graduation reservation.** As the reservations have come in, there are some very large family groups. We will have seating available for 350 attendees. **Please note that if your party is larger than 10, some of the members will need to sit on the bleachers.** We do not want to limit attendance; however, with a class of 38, floor seating can only be provided for ten or fewer family members. ALSO, Chuck Austin, Photographer for the Pittsburgh Catholic, will be at graduation taking photos of each graduate receiving their diploma, and will take family photos against the backdrop of the Aquinas crest after the commencement. These will be available for purchase after the graduation. More info will be coming soon. But families should know that each graduate will pause for the photo as the diploma is conferred, making a nice keepsake for the family!

<sup>10</sup> Some may remember a couple years ago when **Paul Kengor** was a speaker in our speaker series. Paul has a new book out about Pope John Paul II and Ronald Reagan. **He will be speaking at St. Catherine of Sweden on June 5<sup>th</sup>...**