

- 5800 Ouray Rd NW, Albuquerque, NM 87120
- On the web: www.nslca.org
- laconquistadoraacademy@gmail.com

Vox Spei

A Voice of Hope



Nuestra Señora la Conquistadora Academy Newsletter

JOY OF LEARNING: A PRIEST'S SPECIAL VISIT

In October, the students were visited by Father Hervé de la Tour, SSPX, who traveled from his assignment in St. Mary's to spend a week in Albuquerque. Students, staff, and parents all benefited from his visit. Combining elements of both study and recreation, Father spent the days intriguing the students with his wealth of knowledge and love of learning.



On two mornings, he took them for walks to investigate the beauty of nature. During one walk they paused before an oak tree, observing the turning colors of the leaves as Father explained the Latin meaning "strength", correlating a story of St. Philippine Duchesne whose name *du chene* means "of the oak." The children drew pictures of a cactus plant while Father explained

how the cactus wren builds her nest among its needles. They described for him the patterns of tree bark and noted the differences in the leaves. As all paused to remove the goat-head burrs from their socks and shoes, Father took the opportunity to explain how seeds travel in different ways: through the air, by birds and animals, and "...even attached to us." After the nature walks, the children settled into their chairs while he told them stories encouraging them to become apostles by example.

At the academy's Open House, parents and visitors enjoyed Father's vast experience and interesting stories. Sharing his many years of education experience, the staff greatly appreciated his words of advice, encouragement and supplementary materials to aid in their work.

The week left a lasting impression: learning is a joy when prayer, hard work, and recreation are in good balance. The students and staff are grateful to Father and to the generous benefactor who made this visit possible.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

LIVING THE LITURGICAL YEAR IN THE CLASSROOM

Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi

Whether celebrating the month of the Holy Rosary, Christmastide or making daily visits to the Blessed Sacrament, the Academy students learn by living each day of the Liturgical year.

In October, the month of the Holy Rosary, the students counted the number of decades they had prayed and earned a bead for each. At the end of the month, they made their very own rosaries with the beads.



During Advent, the students began preparations for the coming of the Redeemer by building a Nativity scene, which was on display in the parish hall. The students also drew a name of another student for whom they offered their prayers and sacrifices.

During Lent, names were again drawn, but this time it was a priest for whom they offered their sacrifices and prayers. Making use of their writing skills, the students wrote personal letters to the priests. Class instructions, resolutions, and Stations of the Cross were also a part of this penitential season.

Among other special devotions like praying for the Holy Souls in November and beseeching St. Joseph's particular assistance in March, the students attend Mass twice each week, and make daily afternoon visits to the Blessed Sacrament. During these visits, they remember especially the intentions of the Academy's benefactors. It is not enough to merely acknowledge the feasts as they pass; La Conquistadora Academy immerses her students in Catholic culture and fosters a life in harmony with the liturgical year.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS FEAST DAY

The Academy solemnized the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, Patron Saint of Schools and Students, on Friday, March 6, with special instruction and games. Following Mass and breakfast, the students received instruction on the day's events, with an emphasis to take careful notice of information mentioned about St. Thomas for there would be a special test at day's end.

Soon the students readied themselves for the big game - a scavenger hunt with riddles to unravel. Upon the word to begin, off they raced in all directions to find clues! Newly discovered clues led to challenges which included solving a word puzzle, advancing through an obstacle course blindfolded, playing telephone and moving noodles into a bowl by the suction from a straw. All the students scrambled to complete their various timed tasks which earned them points in the overall big game.

One challenge of the day provided the opportunity to perform acts of mercy. For this, the Academy walked across the street to the nursing home to sing and visit with the residents. Afterwards, the school returned to the campus and heartily sang "Happy Birthday" to Father Bibeau and presented him a birthday card and cake.

Then, the game resumed. At the end of one more hour, Team St. Christopher claimed victory by successfully completing their test and reciting their newly memorized prayer of St. Thomas. As it was a Friday in Lent, the festivities ended with the Stations of the Cross.



BUILDING UPDATE

Planning work continues for the construction of dedicated school buildings for the Academy. The SSPX, Orcutt Winslow Architectural Firm, and the local project manager have combined their efforts to design a three-phase plan, to meet present and future needs of the growing Academy. This 20 year plan outlines the details of three buildings which will potentially serve 200 students in grades K-12. In February, representatives of the building project met with the city's Environmental Planning Committee, which granted approval for the first phase of the project. The first building will have four classrooms and a total footprint of about 4,000 square feet. The added space will be greatly appreciated and will enable the Academy to continue providing excellent Catholic education to the youth of Sts. Peter and Paul church.

COLORS ALL OUR OWN

Have you wondered why the colors of the school uniforms are different this year than last? There's a good reason for the change.

Last year, the Academy borrowed the well-known blue and white plaid of St. Mary's Academy in Kansas, the Alma Mater of many of our teachers. This year, the Academy put away the old St. Mary's uniforms and officially adopted her own. The significance of school colors is great and choosing the official scheme was difficult. The final choice was based on the colors of Don Diego de Vargas's Coat of Arms. History tells us that he led the successful campaign to reconquer Santa Fe, attributing his victory to Our Lady.

The predominate colors on

de Vargas' Coat of Arms are the Spanish red and yellow and the Marian blue and white. It was fitting to honor de Vargas in this way since his spirit of humility, duty, and devotion to Our Lady embodies the spirit of the Academy.

A generous benefactor, filled with the same spirit, acquired the fabric and produced the initial girls' uniform orders. Impressed by the girls' new uniforms, another benefactor followed suit donating matching striped ties for the boys and even for the school dads.

Students and parents are pleased with the new uniforms and all are grateful to our benefactors.

To see color photographs of the uniforms, please visit www.nslca.org.

BOLD SISTER TAKES ON EDUCATION AND BILLY THE KID

When she was only 22 years old, Sister Blandina Segale, of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, OH was sent to Trinidad, Colorado to bring Catholic education to poor children. Imagine, traveling alone in 1872 on dusty trails and on the rails through the wild west. When she finally reached the frontier mining town of Trinidad, her first evangelical action was a fight against the then common practice of lynching.

She was later sent to Santa Fe and then to Albuquerque, where along the way, she wrote letters to her sister Justine, also a Sister of Charity. These letters were published in the book [At the End of the Santa Fe Trail](#).

In one of her letters, she writes of receiving a tip that the notorious outlaw, Billy The Kid was coming to her town to scalp the four doctors who had refused to treat his friend's gunshot wound. Sister Blandina had nursed the friend to health, and when Billy arrived, she asked him to abandon his violent plan. Stunned, but moved by her charity, he agreed. Another letter later tells of The Kid and his gang attempting to rob a covered wagon traveling on the frontier. But when the famous outlaw looked inside, he saw Sister Blandina. He tipped his hat in deference to the debt he owed her and left.

When Sister Blandina and a group of sisters from Santa Fe

ST. JOSEPH'S DAY FIELD TRIP

On March 19th, the feast of St. Joseph, the Academy staff led the children on a field trip. After line-up and a few words from the principal, the students collected their lunches, notebooks and pencils for a short drive to the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park. There the students observed and sketched native plants and fowl of the Bosque region. They also explored the exhibits provided in the Visitor Center which explained more about the area. With so much to see and do, the allotted time vanished quickly!

Mid-day hunger was satisfied by a picnic at the Coronado State Monument in Bernalillo, NM. Afterwards, the students reflected on the tough winters when the Spanish Explorer Vasquez de Coronado rested there. Strolling through the area, they viewed the ruins of the Kuaua Pueblo. The children especially enjoyed viewing the displays and guessing the uses of the mystery artifacts.



ACADEMY STUDENTS PERFORM IN EPIPHANY SKIT

The 2015 parish Epiphany celebration featured a skit performed by Academy students, along with several other performances. Conveniently held directly after Mass on the Sunday within the Octave of Epiphany, and commencing with a potluck brunch, the festivities included piano pieces, a cappella singing, and acting. The Academy's skit in particular recounted the Nativity and Epiphany stories, and involved all of the students. The parish's extra-liturgical chorus Opus Canonum provided the final performance of the day.

Fr. Bibeau hosted several members of the parish at the head table during the celebration, and recognized those parishioners for their extensive assistance to Sts. Peter and Paul's. Indeed, falling in the season when the Church expresses her gratitude for the birth of the Redeemer, the traditional Epiphany celebration was an opportunity to thank Our Lord, and His servants at the parish.



arrived in Albuquerque in 1881 to teach school, they took one look around the dusty plaza and decided to build a convent. It was the first two story adobe building in Albuquerque and while the face of it has changed over the years, the old school house still stands attached to San Felipe Church in Old Town.

Despite the constant scarcity of funds and resources, Sister Blandina built several schools and orphanages, a hospital and the social service agency, *St. Joseph's Children* in Albuquerque that is still operating today. By her example of charity, she converted many souls and brought Catholic education to the Southwest.

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