Students Retreat Materially to Advance Spiritually

Before the retreat you can feel a large inner conflict of fear and sorrow, knowing you are going to God. What surprised me the most, which I think everyone can agree on, is the inner peace and joy after confession. That joy almost makes you want to burst into talking and tears of joy.

Victor Ramos, SMA 2015

The retreat put us back on track for our purpose in life, to follow Christ. I felt it was as if we were sheep that had strayed off into the forest, in danger of being devoured by the beasts lurking within. In time we were guided by the shepherd and brought to safety once more.

Aldries Tompkins, SMA 2016

Sometimes, in order to see things clearly, it is necessary to take a step back, to retreat. As Fr. Daniel Themann told the tenth and eleventh grade girls, the aim of the retreat was not to be filled with “pious thoughts” but to re-enter the world with the ability to “face reality without flinching.”

Maisy Goulart, SMA 2016

It is normal to fall, but it is noble to get back up again: were the words of Fr. Gerard Beck to the eighth grade and ninth grade girls on retreat. The retreat gave us girls an ample chance to “step away from the battlefield,” to “look at the big picture.” Silence prevailed, and reached deep into the minds and the hearts of the girls, bringing peace and dispelling fear.

Julia Goulart, SMA 2018

It’s the silence that really strikes one the most. The quiet solitude: alone with one’s thoughts and with one’s God. It gives you time to contemplate Him, especially His goodness.

Maggie O’Leary, SMA 2018

The thing which struck me the most about the retreat was the attitude to strive to God, given us by the priests at the conferences and used by my fellow classmates during the general confessions and the resolutions.

Boniface van Wamel, SMA 2018

In order to show how horrible the Crucifixion was, Fr. Sick had us imagine ourselves being the soldiers hammering in the nails, but instead of it being Christ on the cross, it was our own mother or someone we love a lot. After imagining this, we were to see how much worse it is crucifying God.

Ignatius Peters, SMA 2015

An Ignatian retreat is difficult. You look at hell, you look at sin and death. You look at yourself. And that can be a pretty ugly picture. But then you talk about God’s mercy and love, and His grace floods your bleak and sorrowful soul. It is beautiful. It is the most beautiful experience, which lifts your gaze and draws you back to the loving forgiveness of God.

Sophia Armesto, SMA 2015

Love is so great, and we hardly know how to use it. But retreat points us in the right direction, reminding us how much God loves us, and what He is expecting from us.

Victoria Hill, 8th Grade

Students made resolutions to follow the path of the cross, to live as better Catholics.
Words from the Rector

The world before the birth of Christ was a world in darkness. Mankind had lost its way, and in the aimless wanderings of thousands of years, had grown cold and heartless. Only the Mercy of God could rescue the situation, but for thousands of years, hearts were not ready.

In the little village of Nazareth, God found a heart after His own Heart’s desire: that of the Blessed Virgin Mary. From the beginning she loved Him, and loved Him as no creature has before or since. Completely given, her wholeheartedness drew the Divine Word from heaven to earth. The Star of David was thus born into this world; a Beacon of Light shone in the darkness, and souls rediscovered Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.

Centuries have passed since that fateful and beautiful moment in history. Christendom grew and blossomed over the course of hundreds of years, but we are long past the pinnacle of her glory. Gradually the Light has faded, blocked out by the selfishness in the hearts of men; the shadow has lengthened, little by little, and the world of today is darker than the one that preceded the birth of the Savior. Men have grown increasingly blind to the reality of God and, worse, increasingly indifferent.

It is through Our Lady that God yet wills to work. Queen of Heaven, Queen of Saints, Queen of Martyrs – she calls on souls willing to give themselves wholeheartedly to the Cause of her Son. That generosity is crucial. “We are trying to fight the whole world,” Chesterton warns, “[trying] to turn the tide of the whole time we live in, to resist everything that seems irresistible.” Such a task is impossible without complete commitment, regardless of rewards or even the reasonable expectation of victory.

Our Lady herself, in Chesterton’s Ballad of the White Horse, promises us nothing by way of human triumph:

I tell you naught for your comfort
Yea naught for your desire,
Save that the sky grows darker yet
And the sea rises higher.

We have her word, nevertheless, that the battle cannot, and will not, be in vain. “In the end my Immaculate Heart will triumph.”

Ad astra per aspera then! Our one desire is to prove ourselves worthy of the honor bestowed on us by the Queen of Armies. Whether or not we will indeed prove so in the long run depends, in large part, on the generosity of our efforts today. Homework, chores, prayers – whatever is asked of us, we are hers, and we want to give of ourselves accordingly. The wholeheartedness of our efforts with the Blessed Virgin will draw the Savior Jesus to be born anew in our world, and in our own hearts.

Let us make it a good Advent.

Rev. Fr. Gerard Beck
Rector, St. Mary’s Academy and College
Knights and Honor Guard Play Knuckle Down with the Elements of the North

David Goldade, SMA 2015

I would not miss it, even if it meant there was no Christmas day at home: these were the sentiments of the boys of St. Mary’s as it came time for the 2015 Winter Wilderness Survival Trip - the camp that says good-bye to the current year and brings forth the new on a frozen lake in the great state of Minnesota. Yes, Minnesota, “where men are men and fish are fried.”

In the winters months, Minnesota does not cater to the fainhearted. It likes the young adventurous, fiery spirit that could not be put out in five feet of snow. And that is what we were. As the poet Robert Service said, “There, where the fire burning in one’s eyes is as important as the one burning on the stove!” and this is as true as could be. We had six stoves in the army tent, and we could not afford for one to go out on us because if it did... suddenly fifteen people were cold. It was the same with all eighty boys on the camp: if one started to go a little yellow on us, more than just he would suffer.

This brings us to the question: how did we survive out there? The answer is, camaraderie! “Camaraderie,” Fr. John Bourbeau continually reminded the campers, “is what brought us here and is going to bring us back.” Camaraderie, as in all eighty people working towards a common goal and looking out for each other’s needs. It is not just about skiing, broom-ball, and fishing in cozy ice-houses. It is about giving ourselves for the common good and learning what reality has in store for us.

All the boys, as far as I know, look forward to going on these camps because not only is it a break from the monotony of normal everyday-life but because we grow stronger, physically and spiritually, by battling the obstacles nature throws at us. It is the little conflicts with nature that prepares a man for the rough terrain of life.
The first grade boys celebrated the Feast of the Three Kings with the coming of the kings and the appearance of Fr. Kenneth Novak, who explained the meaning of $20 + C + M + B + 15$.

Mrs. Karen Gresham took her students to the Kansas City Union Station to study the collected wonders of nature. Here the logic of math seems odd: $2 \text{ girls} + 3 \text{ girls} = 4 \frac{1}{2} \text{ girls}$.

Some students go to nature to see nature. For other students nature comes to see them. The kindergarten girls inspect an iguana brought to the class by sixth grader Olivia Armesto.

Agnes Moats, 7th grade, and Emma Bryan, 8th grade, claimed the alternate and championship, respectively, at the 2014 SMA spelling bee. Both participated in the Pottawatomie County Spelling Bee. Emma Bryan won the alternate at the county bee, and will join about 50 other students at the Topeka Capital Journal Bee in March.

There are several sodalities of knights, and then there are the Knights of the Three Hearts. These boys strive to practice virtue in the classroom and at home. With parental and teacher confirmation, the boys rise in the ranks of these new knights. This class has three main levels: the page, the squire, and the knight, but after each rank is another rank. The page is followed by the standard-bearer, the squire by the companion at arms, and the knight, who is dubbed by Fr. John Bourbeau, are four classes of knights, two degrees of Honorable Knight, and the highest two degrees of Noble Knights. At end of the year, one Noble Knight will become the Knight Commander.
Arriving at Starkenburg
By Phillip Hatty, Eighth Grade

Knowing that the end was just ahead was an exhilarating feeling, as the steeple of Starkenburg became visible over the tree-tops. It was the final half-mile of the 40-mile pilgrimage. All the aches and bruises of the previous days seemed to disappear as the end came in sight. As we recited the Glorious Mysteries, the walked seemed effortless. In the radiant sunset, long shadows were cast on the remains of 36 catfish on the posts of a nearby fence. It was as though they were the remains of those pilgrims who had collapsed from complete exhaustion, lending an eerie air to the scene. But the final appearance of the end gave us all a new energy and a sense of determination. Satisfaction mixed with relief was the general feeling. All the trials of the previous days had been for the moments waiting ahead. We were already there in heart; our tired, sore bodies were just following up.

On January 24, the ranks of the St. Mary’s Eucharistic Crusade grew as Fr. Joseph Haynos and Fr. Isaac Delmanowski, the chaplains for the Crusade at SMA, received new pages and elevated other crusaders to new ranks.
Student Achievements

I wish on a cold winter day I could go sledding on the soft wet snow, and when I am sledding, the snow would go flying in every direction like pure white doves. I wish that the snow was smooth. It would look magnificent. I would whiz through the air and when I fall, I would make a snow angel. When I get frostbitten, I would walk slowly through the snow to the house for hot chocolate.

Snow and Fun

I would be on a war field--war about to begin, and war starts! A cannon shoots flying snowballs across the field. It misses and hits a rock that I am hiding behind. It is piercing cold, but we are sweating. I, the captain, will not show mercy! I strike back, and...score! An army of angry children attack. It is fun right now, but later, it will be a matter of who wins and who loses. We all giggle with delight and pat each other and say, “good game,” although we all know that war is not over yet!

War is Declared!

As part of a Odyssey project, Anne Serafin and Veronice Steele, both ninth graders, mapped out the route of Odysseus. Neptune and Athena oversee the scene in the top corners. And Neptune upholds the Mediterranean world.

An old sailing ship, drawn by Anne Marie Harpe, SMA 2016, will be one of the several drawing representing the Academy at the Cair Paravel Fine Arts Festival in March. The wolf below, also heading towards the festival, was drawn by James Franzen, SMA 2016.
O

n the weekends of
the eleventh and twenty-first of December
the Saint Mary’s Girl’s
School Drama Club,
Troupe d’Arc performed
George MacDonald’s The
Light Princess, adapted
for SMAC stage by Misses
Abigaël Quain and Cara
Thomet.

At first glance the story
seems to be a light hearted
tale of a silly, perhaps
annoying princess, who is
cursed by lack of gravity
and is, per the usual fairy
tale, saved by the
handsome prince. Look deeper. You
will find that not
only is there more
meaning to the
story but more
beauty.

The story
begins when King
Tellus (Maisy
Goulart, Elizabeth
Mioni) and his
wife, Desia (Rachel
Schroeder, Mariel
Archer) have a baby
girl. When writing
the christening
invitations Tellus
accidentally
omits his sister,
Princess Syrma
(Danielle Summers,
Alicia Fassbender), who
unfortunately happens
to be something of a
witch and a philosopher.
Aggravated, Syrma attends
the event anyway and
curses the child. We begin
to see the depth
of meaning as we
realize that Syrma
is quite devilish,
for was not Lucifer
close to God but
fallen into sin?

The girl, Effera
(Cara Mioni,
Theresa Thibeault)
grows up deprived
of gravitation,
both physical
and spiritual: she
never cries, is
incredibly silly and cares
extremely little for those
around her. The king and
queen beg their relation
to reverse the damage, but
she merely tells them that
she has nothing to do with
it and that in order for
gravitation to be restored
they must mend their
ways. Many wise doctors
are summoned, but no
natural means can remedy
her defect.

When the princess,
now a young lady,
discovers swimming, she is
enraptured. Every possible
moment is spent in the lake
by the castle. The water
seems to be linked with the
Princess’s soul, as is seen as
the plot develops. It is in

Second Quarter House Results

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but also quite beautiful. His falling utterly in love with her is but the work of a moment.

On hearing the news that not only has Effera found a place where she is happy (the water), but that a prince has come into her life, Syrma is enraged. She summons a White Snake of Darkness and, with the use of black magic, empties the lake thus symbolizing a loss of life in the soul, sanctifying grace. The princess falls gravely ill as the lake diminishes in depth. A golden platter is found in the muddy remains which says if a man does not stop the hole in the lake, then it will become dry as will all the streams of the land. Prince Eregrin, who has been in the palace disguised as a shoe black, decides that he would rather die than live without his love, as loss of the lake will surely kill her. He offers himself on one condition: that Princess Effera be with him in her little boat so as to maintain his strength. For did not Christ, of whom the prince is a shadow, have his dearest mother with Him on Calvary?

As the water rises and Eregrin, standing in the hole, disappears beneath the wave, Effera panics, diving in to save him. Without heeding the rapidly-sinking lake, she rushes him back to the palace where she and her old nanny try to revive him. Outside it begins to pour rain. As the day breaks the prince revives to find the curse broken and gravitation restored to the Effera. For the first time in her life the princess begins to cry, spending all the pent up tears of her life.

The curse is vanquished when the house of Syrma is destroyed by the lake’s complete refilling. As always, Grace yet again conquers Evil. After teaching her to walk, the prince and princess are married and live happily ever after, allegorizing that learning from Christ leads to an everlasting happily-ever-after with the truest of Princes.

Princess, continued from page 7.

the lake that Prince Eregrin (Alexandria Wurm, Eileen Novelly) discovers her.

Forced out of his own kingdom as a child by an evil tyrant, Eregrin is wandering the land seeking his fortune. From one and all he hears report of the strange, bewitched princess and becomes quite interested. On seeing a lady in the water, he does what any self-respecting prince would do and jumps in to save her. To his surprise, on being removed from the water, the lady floats! Effera is incredibly angry at him.