



The Standard

A publication of St. Andrew's Academy

Holiday Busy-ness

The Holiday Season is upon us, and for most of us, that means that things get busier instead of quieter and more contemplative. This is a problem, I think, with our society. The civil holiday, Thanksgiving, followed by the season of Advent and then Christmastide ought to be a period in our busy-enough-lives that gives us space to be with our families, to consider the many blessings we have, to give God thanks for those blessings, to reflect upon the "best things in life."

I mentioned man's search for the "best things in life" in my convocation address this year, which is printed on page two of this issue of *The Standard*. Also in this issue is a peek into a field trip to Lassen Park, with pictures scattered throughout.

If we do not have a society that encourages us to stop, especially during the holidays, and to meditate and think and reflect, then we need to make that happen despite our society. We do this at St. Andrew's Academy every morning in Chapel and in a short time of prayer and reflection right before we head home for the day. These times are important to a balanced life—especially during the busy times before us. It is a chance for us, as a school, to do as we are instructed in the 46th Psalm: "Be still and know that I am God."

We have an opportunity for such a time of quiet, reflection, singing and rejoicing coming up, and I want to make sure that everyone knows about it. Coming up on December 11th, the last day of Michaelmas Term for St. Andrew's Academy, is our annual Advent Lessons and Carols. This is a wonderful service full of traditional carols and the reading of God's Word, telling of the Messiah to come. It is followed by coffee and dessert. The St. Andrew's Choir leads the service and traditionally sings an anthem or two.



St. Andrew's Academy grammar school students with Mr. Baender in front of a steam vent at Lassen Volcanic National Park.

I encourage you to invite friends and family to this service at the Methodist Church in Chester at 7:00. It has always been a wonderful evening to gather together and be quiet for a moment or two in what has become a very busy season.

There is always much more happening at the school than can ever go into a newsletter, so if you are curious about the school, please drop by for a visit and

see what the students are up to.

Happy Holy Days!


Fr. Brian Foos+

Truth-Telling

Following is the Address, by Fr. Brian Foos, at the St. Andrew's Convocation, Fall, 2003.

Welcome to St. Andrew's Academy Convocation for 2003. The Peace of Christ be with you all. This evening, I have taken for my theme a simple, yet profound character trait that we must hold dear. My goal this evening is simply to remind us all that the Truth matters.

We are called to be truth-tellers. Here at St. Andrew's Academy, we desire to be truth-tellers and to train up our students to be truth tellers. This is part of the spiritual formation that a classical education has always been about since the time of St. Augustine, some 1600 years ago. Christ said that our yes should be yes and our no should be no. We are not to equivocate on the Truth—we are to speak it and live it. All too often, we want to fudge the truth. In the Academic world, this is often called cheating—or more specifically, if you fudge the truth on a paper, you are plagiarizing.

Our world seems to turn a blind eye to such things—allowing people to get away with all sorts of lying, thieving, cheating, etc. We have the great financial fiascoes of recent years where CEO's apparently thought it was okay to lie about the finances of a company. All too often, even the church turns a blind eye to such things. In our world, with terrorists threatening our country from without and revisionists with a postmodern or relativistic worldview threatening our culture from within, we need people; we need leaders that tell the truth.

All of us here, in this room, need to not only tell the truth, but also to raise up the next generation to be truth tellers! Of course, you've probably noticed that people don't like to hear the truth. All too often I don't like to hear the truth; I imagine, at times, you don't either. Why? Because the truth convicts us. The truth shows us where we err, where we have gone astray. The truth often causes us to look into the mirror and not like what we see. Yet, we are still drawn to the Truth. We are drawn, as humans to the truth about the world and about ourselves—we are naturally curious and want to know. All of philosophy throughout the ages has been a search for the truth. Religion is always an attempt to know and to live the truth about the world and about ourselves—at least to a certain extent.

In the high school philosophy class, we are reading a book by Peter Kreeft called *The Best Things In Life*. It is an enlightening look at the world around us and the questions we must ask if we are to be truly human at all. Who made me? Why am I here? Why should I read good books? Why do I need to learn math? Why go to college? These are some of the High-

est Things, the most important of questions to answer. St. Andrew's Academy exists as an institution, a ministry of Christ's Church, that seeks after Truth. In all our classes, we want to seek, lay hold of, encounter, deal with, struggle with and ultimately be shaped by the Truth. Anything short of that is not fulfilling our calling. We as a staff have a long way to go in our own trek down this road. We are, hopefully, a bit ahead on the road, and that's why we teach. We bring others along with us and learn ourselves as we go.

Part of truth telling is being shaped by truth and then being honest about it. The characteristics we want to see in our students are things like honor, loyalty, courage, kindness, generosity. These character traits each revolve around honesty. If we are honest and truthful, searching out the Truth, living

by it and speaking it, we will have the foundation for all the other noble character traits we desire. The classical authors all dealt with the Truth—they were all honest about the truth and sought it. They didn't always agree on what the truth was, but they knew where they wanted to get. Today, unfortunately, we as a culture do not know where we are trying to get. We say, as a culture, that truth is relative. When I hear that, I ask: "Are you absolutely positive about that? Are you absolutely sure that absolute truth does not exist?" Relativism is a self-defeating philosophy—it doesn't make any sense. That, however, does not stop most of the people in our culture

from believing it and applying it to their lives as often as possible.

We must be about reclaiming truth, and we must reclaim truth for Christ, for, indeed, All Truth is God's Truth! As part of the Church, we must, of course, be about living and speaking the Truth of the Word of God. Much of the answer to our questions about Truth is found in the pages of Holy Writ, and we are called to handle accurately the Word of Truth. Those of us in teaching positions dealing with the Word are, of course, held to an even higher standard, but that is not to say that we aren't all to be truth tellers, especially regarding God's Word. My students know the tough work of hammering out opinions from the Scriptures. They are challenged and then I am challenged back by them to read the Truth from the Scripture rather than read *My Truth* into the scripture. The first is called exegesis, the second is eisegesis.

My challenge to all of us here tonight is to be truth seekers and truth tellers. May we succeed by the grace of God and live a life of truth that others may see the light of Truth.



Grammar School students hiking the trail at Lassen Park

Grammar School Students Take a Trip to a Volcano

A group of grammar school students from St. Andrew's Academy travelled to Lassen Volcanic National Park recently to do some hiking, have some fun, and learn about volcanoes and geo-thermal activity.

The students had been studying volcanoes and were excited that they had one in their backyard. Perfect opportunity for a field trip! Mr. Baender, along with two aides, Mrs. Marlo Jensen and Mrs. Alicia Carmichael, took the students to the park and spent the day exploring. They hiked into what is known as "Bumpass Hell."

We first started walking, and we saw lots of mountains and halfway through, we came to this one point, and where we were was once a volcano that had exploded thousands of years ago—all that is left of that volcano is Mt. Lassen. We saw the "big boiler! It's a pond of water that was bubbling and coming up. To the left, steam





Virginia and JoAnna enjoy a break from the hike and the bubbling mudpits of Lassen Volcanic National Park to eat their lunch.

was coming out of the mountains, with yellow rocks next to it. The hike was a mile in and a mile out.

—Lucas Carmichael, Second Form Student

After a full day, the students and weary staff made it back to school just about the time the rest of the St. Andrew's students were done for the day. Volcanoes have continued to be discussed on campus both in the classroom and during breaks as students share their experience with their friends. The Volcano climbers are looking forward to more field trips.

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