



Monthly Messenger - March 2021

Monthly Newsletter from the Secretary of Elementary Education



Message from Dr. Andrew McLaughlin

Dear Teachers,

During these past few weeks we have seen a great deal of media coverage focused on education. Much has been said about students who have not seen the inside of a classroom for almost a year, teachers refusing to return to school, and parents begging to have their children return to a learning environment. In all of this, YOU have been the unsung heroes of American education.

You have worked with administrators, parents, community members and health agencies to insure that your students would be learning in a safe environment. You have taken up the call to learn and utilize new forms of instruction as your students embraced new ways of learning. You came to school day after day, when possible, and reverted to virtual learning when asked to quarantine or when weather conditions necessitated it. It was not easy but you did it. Again, YOU are the unsung heroes of education in America and especially in the Philadelphia area.

March 13 will mark the anniversary of the day we abruptly ended the 2019-2020 school year. This date always falls during Lent which is a time of self-sacrifice and penitential offerings. For so many of us, this season of sacrifice continued well beyond the celebration of Easter and we pray that Easter 2021 will bring us the hope and New Life that the Redemption promises. Self-giving heroes, such as you, deserve that hope because YOU are, indeed, people of HOPE.

As we move onward and begin to plan for the next school year, we feel it is important to us that we get your input on how things have gone for you and on what your perspectives are toward future instruction. For this reason we are

asking you to help us by completing the survey that will be coming soon. It will help us greatly as we continue our planning.

Hercules was known to have said, “A true hero isn’t measured by the size of his strength, but by the strength of his heart.” Thank you for being strong-hearted people!

God bless you.

Dr. Andrew McLaughlin
Secretary of Elementary Education

Upcoming Events

- March 2 - Phila South & Delaware District Mtgs.
- March 3 - Phila North & Montgomery District Mtgs.
- March 4 - Bucks & Chester District Mtgs.
- March 9 - Early Childhood District Mtgs.
- March 10 - End of Second Trimester
- March 11 - Third Trimester Begins
- March 12 - Live Streamed Stations of the Cross
- March 11-16 - Terra Nova Testing
- March 18-19 - Terra Nova Testing



MARCH

"MARCH"ing Forward - A Lot to Consider

There was a popular movie back in the 1950's titled *The Quiet Man*. With beautiful scenery of Ireland's countryside, it would probably be a good film to watch this month as we

celebrate St. Patrick's Day. The film's title, however, reminds us of another saint whose feast we celebrate during the month of March - St. Joseph, the "quiet man" of the Gospels.

Pope Francis has dedicated this year as the Year of St. Joseph in honor of the 150th anniversary of the saint's proclamation as patron of the Universal Church. In his apostolic letter, *Patris corde*, Our Holy Father wrote against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic which, he says, has helped us see more clearly the importance of "ordinary" people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day.

In this, they resemble Saint Joseph, “the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence,” who nonetheless played “an incomparable role in the history of salvation.” How can you model the virtues of this quiet man? How can you increase your students’ understanding of the role of St. Joseph in Salvation History?

Pray the special prayers to St. Joseph on the 19th of each month. Remember in prayer all of the “ordinary” people Pope Francis referred to in his apostolic letter. Continue to be people who exercise patience and offer hope to others every day.

Both Saint Patrick and Saint Joseph—are special to the people of specific cultures. Which of us hasn’t enjoyed an Irish potato or a St. Joseph’s cake in celebration of their feasts? It’s a good time to help all students to reflect on their own cultural roots as well as their faith backgrounds. Pray with them that one day we will all be ONE as people of patience, faith and hope.

Credit: [Sister Edward Quinn](#), Assistant Superintendent Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment



Wonderful Things to Experience!

LOOKING AHEAD. . .check the <https://aopelementary.org> web site for announcements about the following opportunities coming soon:

- Virtual field trips to Independence Hall
- Free Zoom lessons from the Insectarium and Butterfly Museum
- After-school virtual Math workshops (Act 48 provided).
- STREAM lesson plans for every grade level.
- Webinars for Middle School students from the National Constitution Center

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