# St. Augustine Academy

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October 29, 2026 *St. Narcissus*

Dear Families,

In my last Blue Letter, I shared an article with you from Steven Rummelsburg. I wanted to return to the virtue of prudence, which is understanding of first things, and the article brought us back to the principles of education. I told you I would spend some time this week commentating on the article.

To begin with, this past Monday, the teachers attended an in-service on the *Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools.* This is an excellent and very accessible work if you ever want to read it yourself. The first pillar laid out by the Church is that the school needs to be inspired by a supernatural vision. Everything in the school needs to begin with the correct end in mind. The presenter rightly chastised schools for continually pointing kids toward temporal pleasures, rather than eternal happiness. They do this by telling students that their focus should be on grades, college career, etc. rather than Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.

It is this turning away from Truth, Goodness, and Beauty that Rummelsburg is addressing. He begins by pointing to the term 'critical thinkers.' By adopting this term, modern educators have given themselves a kind of empty superiority. Anyone who criticized their philosophy of education is against 'critical thinking'. However, when you ask them to define 'critical thinking', most are incapable or point to a strawman definition. Rummelsburg shows how they do this with 'intelligence' as well.

Rummelsburg shows how the word 'intellect' means 'to read the interior.' In other words, we look past the visible signs and understand what something actually is. A common 'Philosophy 101' example of this is to show how man could be defined as a 'featherless bi-ped' if one was only looking toward the exterior. However, an interior definition would point to an embodied immortal soul with a rational nature. To read the interior is to conform your mind to reality.

When education removes the principle of intellect from teaching, the best that can happen is that intelligence becomes a skill. Modern middle-school classrooms have an obsession with the scientific method. They believe it is the high point of critical thinking. It is so misunderstood that it is often taken out of the material realm and used in social sciences or in place of philosophy. At St. Augustine Academy Geometry, Logic, and Theology classes work hard to show students the differences between scientific (material) studies and a universal argument. The thesis classes attempt to make the students create a principled philosophical argument.

Looking at intelligence as a skill is the best thing that can come from divorcing it from the truth. In that case, a student can still stab at the truth or stumble across it. Unfortunately, what sometimes happens is that education ends up becoming a system of checked boxes. Showing up and turning in homework that is checked for completion is often the standard, because intelligence in that case is looked upon as just going through a social dance. This is preparation for menial labor.

Rummelsburg describes a scene from Dante's *Inferno,* in which those in hell have 'lost the good of the intellect.' They can think and can rationalize, but they have lost the truth. He compares this to modern schools. Skills can be taught and data can be amassed, but without truth, it has lost its end.

God Bless, Timothy Moore

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES-** Conferences will be held tomorrow at the upper campus! If you requested a conference, you should have received a confirmation with a time.

**40 DAYS FOR LIFE-** From Mrs. Seeley: "Please join the pro-life club for a candlelight Rosary to wrap up 40 Days for Life's Fall campaign. WHERE: in front of Planned Parenthood, 5400 Ralston Ave in Ventura. WHEN: Sunday, Nov. 1, All Saints' Day, at 6:30 pm. WHY: To be a light in a dark place!"

**CALENDAR UPDATE-** The High School Winter Play- *The Importance of Being Earnest*- is now slated for Friday, December 4 at 5 pm at St. Thomas Aquinas Hall in Ojai. Note: This is not the college, but the parish in Ojai.

**UPCOMING PARENT NIGHT-** We are hosting our first parent lecture of the year on Thursday, November 12. We ask that all families try hard to send at least one parent to attend. These are important topics as well as good community builders. We will have wine and cheese beforehand for you to enjoy! Our first speaker this year is Alice Mellein, a good friend of the school and an expert on special education. Mrs. Mellein will be giving a talk entitled "Teaching Kids Self-Control: Tools for the Home." I have had the pleasure of hearing a version of this talk before, and the talk applied as much to my high schooler and middle schooler as it did to my younger children. See the flyer for more details!

**UPCOMING SPORTS GAMES**

**High School Baseball-**
Saturday, Nov 7 @ Nordhoff High School- 11am, Sunday, Nov 8 @ Oxnard High- 2pm
**Middle School Boy's Flag Football-**
Mon, Nov 2 vs Santa Clara- Time and Location TBD
**Middle School Girl's Volleyball-**
Tues, Nov 3 @ St. Anthony's- 3:30 pm, Thursday, Nov 5 @ Home vs. SMM- 3:30 pm

**UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER**

Oct 30- SAA All Saints Day Celebration! Early Dismissal @ 12 pm
Oct 30- 5-12 Parent Teacher Conferences
Nov 6- All School Mass/Early Dismissal
Nov 12- Parent Night
Nov 13- Picture Day
Nov 23-27- Thanksgiving Break
Nov 30- Golf-A-Thon (No School)

***ORA PRO NOBIS –*** *We continue to keep all our friends and family in our prayers! For the repose of the soul of Ed Wurts, Donna Steichen, David Schulz, Teresa Woodward, and Paul Scamperle. For a successful and joy-filled school year at St. Augustine Academy. For the health of Elizabeth Galloway, Sister Francis Mary, Fr. Paul Donlan, Kevin Kolbeck, and Linda Kern. For a special intention. We pray for our Pope, our Archbishop, all of our priests and religious,* ***and we pray especially for each other!***

