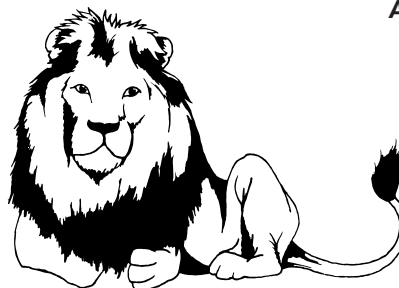


# The Crown Prints

March 15, 2024 Volume 63; Issue 3



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## Students celebrate Catholic Schools Week

*Aquinas participates in a variety of activities.*

By Kaleb Andel

Marshmallows, cornhole, and Mass. Catholic Schools Week celebrates schools like Aquinas with many activities to celebrate all aspects of a Catholic school.

The week kicked off with a celebration of the school's supporting 13 parishes. A student from each parish read a "thank you" at one of the weekend Masses, as organized by the Student Council.

The entire Aquinas student body and faculty attended Mass on Monday, celebrated by Most Reverent James D Conley. After Mass the student body and faculty lined the halls of the middle school and high school and had a Eucharistic procession. Then everyone met in the new gym to be blessed by the Most Reverent James D. Conley with the Eucharist.

On Tuesday, the students participated in a scavenger hunt around the school. At the end of the day, the students divided into their houses and had to complete challenges. If the students completed the challenge in the allotted amount of time, they were given a thousand points and a clue to point them towards the next classroom and the next challenge. St. Drago house won the scavenger hunt. The dress up for this day was red, white, and blue, to honor the United States and the right everyone has to worship freely.

The students had donuts before school on Wednesday morning. (Becky Romshek and Amanda Stutzman from the Home and School Association provided the donuts). In the afternoon, the high school had a volleyball tournament. The juniors won the competition between classes. The seniors then played the teachers for three sets. The Seniors won all three sets. Students also dressed as a favored teacher to honor teach-

ers during the day.

Thursday and Friday were both cornhole tournament days. Thursday was the corn hole tournament for the high school while the middle school was allowed to go into other classrooms for activities such as cards, movies, video games, board games, and chess. On Friday the tournament and activities switched for the middle and the high school. Students had a spirit dress code for both days.

Not all planning and responsibilities were left to the faculty members, the Student Council also had some of the responsibilities. "The different grades of Student Council representatives provided snacks or treats for the teachers. They organized the corn hole tournaments for both middle and high school and the different activities in teachers' classrooms," Zysset said.

Multiple challenges occur when it comes to organizing Catholic Schools' Week, but

they do not hard have to be hard challenges. Aquinas principal Mr. Spencer Zysset said, "Obviously there is a lot of work that goes into planning Catholic Schools Week, but I really don't think any of it was all that difficult. seems this year, the hardest part was the planning"

Catholic schools celebrate the week across the country. Aquinas Chief Administrative Assistant Fr. Michael Ventre staid," We are celebrating that Christ is part of our school, the things that our students do, and the parents who sacrifice a lot for our school."

Catholic schools face challenges outside of Catholic Schools' Week. "Our schools are totally based off tuition, and also the generosity of others. As the cost of living, teachers' salaries, and tuition goes up [that generously] continues to be a sacrifice and quite a burden to our parents, so trying to find a reasonable tuition, and the costs of teaching is a real challenge in our community," Ventre said.



LEFT: Sophomores Violet Schmid and Lauren Meister completes one of the tasks for the scavenger hunt challenge. Mrs. Sarah Miriovsky organized the scavenger hunt. Photo by J. Brown ABOVE: Bishop James D. Conley prepares for the Eucharistic procession on Monday of the Catholic Schools Week. Photo by N. Hain.



# Growing closer to God in forty days

By Cecilia Sisco

The Lenten Season is an important part of a Catholic's faith. Catholics all over the world take part in traditional rites and actions to remember Christ's sacrifice.

"Lent is essentially an act of prayer spread out over forty days. As we pray, we go on a journey, one that hopefully brings us closer to Christ and leaves us changed by the encounter with him," according to Bishop David L. Ricken of Green Bay, Wisconsin in 10 Things to Remember During Lent. This journey makes this season important for Catholics.

Aquinas spiritual director Mrs. Beth Nemeč's is working hard to make Lent valued at Aquinas. "[Spiritual directors] are forming small groups for prayer and faith sharing with faculty and staff. We had a special Mass for Ash Wednesday and stations of the cross every Friday. Some spiritual directors are preparing students individually as well." Nemeč added that Aquinas will also hold the traditional Super Stations. Super Stations is a living stations of the cross, guided by Mel Gibson's movie "The Passion of the Christ."

Senior Gianna Frasher said, "Lent forces us to reevaluate ourselves and not be lazy in

our journey towards God." Frasher believes not only understanding Lent is important, but making the season important in one's own lives is a must. Frasher added preparing for Lent beforehand helps her prioritize what she needs to do and not go in the season half-heartedly.

Traditionally many Catholics choose some aspect of their life to sacrifice for forty days. Making the decision on what sacrifices during Lent can be difficult. "The important thing when considering Lent is to put our hearts and minds on Christ, and to try in a greater way in these weeks to be more like him," Nemeč said. According to Nemeč, sacrifice is good, but at the same time we need to make sure to "put our focus on charity and being more kind to the less fortunate."

Frasher has her own words of advice on Lenten sacrifice. "Take time to look at how your time is spent and if that is leading you to God and take out what is not," Frasher said. She added one cannot take the easy route if one wants to truly grow in faith and as a person.

According to Bishop Ricken, Catholics

should not overdo sacrifice and change. "It's tempting to make Lent some ambitious period of personal reinvention, but it's best to keep it simple and focused. There's a reason the Church works on these mysteries year after year. We spend our entire lives growing closer to God. Don't try to cram it all in one Lent. That's a recipe for failure," Ricken explained.

According to both Nemeč and Frasher, Lent is all about trying to be more Christ-like. "We should strive for humility and a closer relationship with Jesus," Nemeč said. She added she always needs to do better, and she is far from perfect when it comes to Lent.

Making sure one does not beat themselves up and lose motivation is vital in the Lenten season. According to Nemeč, "The most important thing we can do for strength and keeping our promises is to pray in the morning and recommit every day, whether we've failed or done well. It helps get us on track or maintain the good we've done." Bishop Ricken also writes, "God is calling us to be patient and to see ourselves as he does, with unconditional love."

## Spring has sprung at Aquinas.

### What is your favorite part about the season?



**Senior Jakob Kavan**  
"I have all the time in the world. It's not too hot or cold, plus baseball starts soon. Also, it's getting to the end of the school year."



**Junior Brooklyn Stutzman**  
"[I look forward to spring because] the colors of the flowers start to pop."



**Mrs. Miriam Chermok**  
"[Spring is great because] 70 degrees and sunny!"



**Freshman Tristan Davis**  
"It is towards the end of the school year, and summer is almost here."



**Sophomore Maddie Vandenberg** "[I like spring because of] the warm weather and school's almost out."



**Sixth grader Carter Banholzer** "[I like] being outside since it isn't too hot or cold."





# Monarch boys fight but come up short

By Gus Yindrick

The boys' basketball team had high expectations for their year, but they came up just short in sub-district play. The team had a good season overall and finished the regular season with ten wins and twelve losses.

The Monarchs went into the sub-district tournament as a number three seed and were set to face off against Centennial. The Monarchs kept the game close in the first half going into halftime with a 25-28 score. In the second half, the Monarchs struggled to make their shots and fought well, but they ended up losing to the Broncos 46-65, concluding their season.

The team started their season well with a record of six wins and four losses going into January. The team won three more games before they lost their spark and ended up losing seven straight games mid-season. Though they lost the games,

the Monarchs kept five of the seven losing battles within two possessions.

The Monarchs showed good improvement from the previous year, but some players really took a step this season. Senior guard Dylan Andel said, "I think Kailer Pohl did a great job of improving his driving ability and getting to the paint to finish layups." Andel believes Pohl was one of the most improved players, and Andel also knows that the team needs to improve to help the team take another step for the 2024-25 season, "I think the team needs to get more physical on defense and get better at shooting free-throws because that hurt us late in the year."

The team did have strengths, but they also had weaknesses as all teams do. Junior forward Bryant Stouffer said, "The team played well together and had good chem-

istry, but we weren't very consistent, If we were cold, we would stay cold, but if we were hot, we would stay hot."

Stouffer also believes the team has very good potential for next season with so many upcoming seniors. "I think the team will benefit from having so many seniors because all of us have played together for a long time and we have good chemistry."



Head coach Mr. Trevor Weiss gives the plan to his team during a time-out. Photo by J. Brown.

# Bringing home golden trophies

By Bella Fontenot

**Go Big Black!** The Aquinas wrestlers had a very successful year. From winning duals to winning two Class D championships in two weeks, the wrestlers brought home the gold of the 2023-2024 season.

The Aquinas wrestlers won a duals state championship by winning dual match ups against Neligh Oakdale 59-17, Ravenna 34-29, and Sutherland 40-39. The championship created a "four-peat" for the Monarchs. Senior 285lb Josiah Brezina said, "[Having this success] was great to prove all the doubters wrong; it's a great feeling to win and the freshmen did a great job stepping it up."

Moving on to districts after the dual's championship, the Monarchs earned more gold. The wrestlers broke the set pin record for class D at districts, with 31 pins against last year's record of 27 pins, which was also set by Aquinas. Senior 165lb Wesely Miller said, "From the teams point we did really good. From personal standpoint, I feel like I could've done better." Miller finished his wrestling career in districts with a record of 23-20.

State individual wrestling tournament was also very successful this year. Aquinas

sent seven wrestlers to state: freshmen Tristan Davis (106lbs), Brayden Nuttelman (120lbs), sophomore Symon Kastl (113lbs), juniors Kelby Coufal (157lbs), Calib Svoboda (215lbs), and seniors Jakob Kavan (144lbs) and Josiah Brezina (285lbs). By the end of the state tournament, Aquinas had three gold medalists: Coufal, Svoboda, Kavan, and a runner-up in Brezina.

According to head coach Mr. Roy Emory much improvement happened this year for the Monarchs. Emory said that sophomore Symon Kastl was one of the top wrestlers who improved most this year. "Symon Kastl, from the first tournament to the last tournament, is very coachable and made a lot of the changes that we said to him. He was very close to being a state medalist," Emory said.

The Aquinas wrestlers set many personal goals and team goals this year. Kavan said, "I wanted to get a team state championship, a state duals championship and an individual type."

Kavan was one of several senior wrestlers on the 23-24 squad, ending with an overall record of 49-1. Senior Tyler Kastl "cut" 45 pounds for this season. He finished the season with a 22-12 record. Brezina ended the

season with a 39-7 record.

Emory believes the Aquinas wrestling team will continue to grow for the future. "I think next year we're going to have a really good team; I think we can be maybe even a deeper team than we were this year." Emory said.

The wrestlers made many memories throughout the season. Kavan's memory was the tight "bear hug" he gave Emory after winning his state individual title. Kastl's favorite memory was "kicking Calib's [Svoboda] butt at practice." Kastl concluded, "I feel like the freshman did phenomenal this year, I'm super proud of them." Kavan advised next year's wrestlers to "keep working and working hard and chase your dreams."



Monarchs won first at the Aquinas Invite. The wrestlers finished their season with an impressive 4-peat in the state dual championships, before winning districts and the state individual championship Photo by B. Fontenot.



# Monarchs show ferociousness on the court

By Rebecca Wacker

***She shoots, and that's three more points for the Monarchs!*** The varsity girls' basketball team finished out the season with a record of seven wins and sixteen losses.

Freshman guard Riley Campbell felt that the team got along well with each other and the new head coach Mr. Jason Campbell. Riley Campbell said, "Having my dad coach wasn't that different from previous years, as he's coached me since I was young."

According to Riley Campbell one important lesson learned this year is that getting excited and having positive attitudes helped the team to play better, for example in the game against the Concordia Bulldogs Aquinas won the match-up 71-33.

Riley Campbell feels that one thing to help the team to improve next year is to work on shooting. "Working on different moves and getting shots up in the off season is important." This year the Monarchs finished with a 7-13 record.

Senior guard Jordyn Bohuslavsky said the highlight of the season was the sub-

district game against the Clarkson Leigh Patriots. Bohuslavsky said the team may have lost, but they played well together and fought until the end. The final score was 57-66, and this game concluded Bohuslavsky's high school career. Bohuslavsky said, "[Having my high school basketball career over] is sad, but I was ready to be done."

Bohuslavsky said the team did well this season and improved a great deal. Bohuslavsky feels the team played well and got along with each other.

Assistant coach Mr. Tony Smith believes the girls improved as a team. Smith said he was impressed with this year's seniors, Bohuslavsky and guard Bianca Romshek and how their leadership helped the team. "[The seniors'] positive attitudes helped the whole team to improve."

Smith also believes the subdistrict game against Clarkson Leigh was the highlight of the season. "The girls played their best at the end of the season and never gave up."

Smith said the season went well. "First,

the girls hit the game win goal which was set by the seniors to be seven games. Second the girls reacted well to Coach Campbell, and third the girls played their best at the end of the season."



Senior guard Bianca Romshek advances down the court in a game against the Pierce Bluejays. Aquinas won the matchup with the final score 48-40. Photo by J. Brown

# Boys end a tough season on the court



Seventh grader Ben Zook prepares to shoot a free throw in a home game against the Schuyler Warriors. Coaches for the middle school boys were Mr. Eric Dewispelare and Mr. James Kobza. Photo by J. Brown

By Colby Miller

Middle school boys' basketball players recently finished their season. The young basketeers on the A, B, and C teams had unfortunate late season losses at the Seward games.

During the Seward contest some key moments happened when Aquinas players had started making points. "When we started making our shots we started to feel better about the game," Ben Zook seventh grader post player on B and C team said. With the new points being made, team confidence improved. Unfortunately, the outcome of the games were not in Aquinas' favor.

The Seward team provided a large hurdle for the Aquinas teams to overcome. "Seward kept hitting threes, and it was hard to keep up with. We were not playing terribly. Just Seward was really good compared to us," eighth grader point guard and forward player Brogan Semin said. Semin played on A team that lost 17-50. According to Semin the Seward team was taller than any other teams the middle school faced during the 2024 season.

Semin felt going into the later season games, the team had a more determined attitude toward their games' outcome. Semin believes their most challenging games were the Seward and Centennial games. "Seward and Centennial were tough games, since Centennial kept hitting big shots, and Seward was pretty good compared to us, and we let them get too many shots."

According to middle school coach Mr. Eric Dewispelare Aquinas had the most trouble on the court during the flip between offense and defense. Dewispelare also believes the season helped the young Monarchs grow as players. "Some of the favorite moments were at practice when we would see guys step up and do things they have not done before."

All three middle school teams won some and lost some games during the season, while being competitive and improving all the way. Semin believes growth as a team occurred during the season. "The team was in a normal joking, happy mood since they were happy just to be there as a team."



# Dreamworks' unexpected sequel

*Viewers will see old characters in a new way.*

By Nathaniel Hain

"Puss laughs in the face of death!" The 2022 film *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish*, which was released on December 21, 2022, comes out swinging with a large color palette, a fast-paced storyline and plenty of comedy in this hour and forty-minute film. Joel Crawford directed the out-of-nowhere sequel to *Puss in Boots*.

The film explores three villains and Puss' relationship with various characters. Death, Goldilocks with the Three Bears, and Jack Horner all pursue Puss in Boots until they either come to terms with Puss or meet their untimely demise. Puss runs, tricks, and fights his way through each of these threats. Puss experiences many diverse characters and strange interactions.

There are a couple characters, however, the movie could do without. Though they do add some good comedy and an extra storyline, Goldilocks and the Bears really are not necessary to the story. Goldilocks and the Bears are unacquainted and unrelated to Puss; their actions are avoidable

and do not add much to his story. These unnecessary characters take away screen time from Death and Jack Horner, who both provide more to the overall storyline, and Jack gives much greater comedic moments with his brutal humor.

This film is recommended for all ages, with solid jokes and comedic timing all throughout. The film is an enjoyable experience for the viewer, rated at 95% for Rotten Tomatoes, 7.8 on IMDb, and 73% from Metacritic. None of the film's characters are overly egregious, and each gives appreciated jokes that add to the film.

This reviewer personally loved this film for its color and art. Every scene is vibrant and colored according to what is happening in the story. The backgrounds are not too distracting, but tons of detail are put into the backgrounds. With the acting and comedy this film truly does homage to good storytelling.



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*Congratulations to the speech team on a great season!*

**District Results**

- Violet Schmid -- 6th Place POI
- Rebecca Wacker -- 6th PER
- Cecilia Sisco and Lizzie Roh -- 6th DUET
- Bella Fontenot -- 6th ENT
- Nathaniel Hain -- 5th HI
- Tate Hain -- 4th HI
- Cecilia Sisco -- 4th POI
- Bella Fontenot, Violet Schmid, Lauren Meister, Miranda Novacek, and Lilly Collins -- 4th OID
- Flora Dalton -- 4th INF

**State Qualifiers:**

- Lizzie Roh -- Bronze POE
- Luke Reiter -- Runner-up EXT
- Luke Reiter -- Runner-up PER
- Tate Hain -- Runner-up DI
- Tate Hain -- Champion POE

**Team District Runners-Up**

**State Qualifiers**

- Tate Hain -- Poetry & DI
- Lizzie DeWispelare -- Poetry
- Luke Reiter -- Extemporaneous & Persuasive





# “Kidfluencers” challenge morality

## States consider laws to prevent child exploitation

In a world more connected than ever by social media, a concerning trend has arisen: the excessive presence of children and their lives on social media. The lack of labor laws, financial protection, and disastrous mental health effects are ruining many children's lives, as their lives become content for family social media accounts.

A teenage girl (whose name is hidden to protect her privacy) gave an interview about her very public life to Fortesa Latif who authored the article *Influencer Parents and the Kids who had their Childhood made into Content*. The young girl discussed her discomfort with how public her life had become. She felt anxiety about money, as she has no legal guarantee that the money made using her image will ever be given to her.

Many young children are forced to become “stars” on family social media accounts. These young children starring on social media accounts are referred to as “child influencers.” Large amounts of controversy surround these child influencers and how moral or immoral it is to have most of a child's life be filmed for an audience.

Proponents of child influencing often cite monetary incentives to prove how child influencing can be beneficial. *Kidfluencers and Their Impact on Influencer Marketing, Brands, and Parents* written by Craig Nolden from *burreles.com* cites incentives for parents to make their children social media stars. Some of the incentives named are the ability to advertise to niche markets, such as for toys and children's clothing brands. Child influencers can work longer than other influencers because they are far younger.

Nolden's arguments have two problems. One problem is this line of thinking assumes that the negative effects of the practice of child influencing, such as lack of privacy and developmental issues, are equal to or outweigh the positive effects. The second

problem is while child influencers might be able to make a lot of money for companies, child influencers often have no way to know if they will get to keep any of the money they made.

Money made by child influencers is not legally guaranteed to go to the child in 49 of the 50 states. The only state protecting child influencer's money is Illinois, which guarantees a percentage of the money made will be placed in a trust fund and saved until the child influencers are 18. In every other state, however, child influencers simply must hope their parents will give them the money made with their image.

Researcher Amber Lynn conducted a study published by Research Gate, titled “Kidfluencing: The Mental Impacts of Posting on Social Media can have on Children and Parents: How Social Media Presence can have Mental Impacts on Children and Parents.” This research studied child influencers and their mental health. Lynn found the massive social media presence these children have can seriously impact the development of their personality. In the study, Psychologist Donna Rockwell said “Children influencers can also form these two identities, their authentic selves, and their online personas... the person develops a kind of character splitting between the ‘celebrity self’ and the ‘authentic self.’”

On top of the personality development issues, Lynn also raised some serious concerns for other facets of the child influencer's mental health, such as intense need for social approval, inability to properly regulate emotions, and even insomnia and depression.

The Chicago Journal of International Law also expressed concerns about the potential breaking of child labor laws. Because the practice of child influencing is so new, no legal definition for what working hours for child influencers exists. Many children can end up working more than would otherwise be allowed by this lack of legal defini-

tion. The children could miss out on many activities, such as after-school sports and clubs.

In the opinion of this writer, laws similar to those in Illinois should be instituted throughout the United States. Topping regulations should be laws protecting these children from being overworked. The reader should contact their state senator, petition for these laws to be created, and vote for representatives that support the creation of these laws.

### CrownPrints

The Crown Prints is published four times a year to inform, educate, and entertain the Aquinas community.

We urge letters to the editor. Letters should be given to Ms. Jean A. Brown in Room 16. Letters must be signed; however, anonymity, if requested, will be granted if deemed necessary.

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**33% OF AMERICAN ADULTS FEEL CHILD INFLUENCERS ARE OFTEN EXPLOITED.**

(statista.com)