February 2014

JOHN PAUL THE GREAT ACADEMY
Veritas Lecture & Gala Dinner

Special Guest Speaker
Dr. Alan Keyes
Catholic ♦ Ambassador
Statesman ♦ Pro-Life Champion

When Faith Turns Into Action ...

One of the greatest orators of our time, former UN Ambassador, Alan Keyes has long been recognized for his leadership within the conservative movement. His eloquent advocacy of our Constitutional Republic and championing of pro-life principles underscore Alan’s recognition and respect for the moral basis of liberty and self-government. For more information and insight on Dr. Keyes, visit loyaltoliberty.com.

Saturday, February 22, 2014
Cajundome Convention Center

Sponsor Reception 6:00pm
General Admission 7:00pm

Tickets: $89 before February 14th | $109 starting February 15th

Don’t miss this evening of... former

JPG GALA TO DO LIST:

1. BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW
   – Online or in the main office

2. HELP US INVITE FRIENDS
   – By participating in our envelope campaign

3. HELP US SECURE CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS
   – By contacting your company or others that may support education or our Catholic mission

* See Gala Parent Letter for Details
From the Headmaster

I have traveled to and from the March for Life in Washington, D.C. eight times with a total of more than 3,000 teens, seminarians, religious sisters, young priests, and many young-at-heart adult chaperones. In spite of my many years of experience with the March, I never cease to be surprised and moved by the graces that God provides through the experience of pilgrimage. This year was no exception.

We prayed and sacrificed through two 24-hour bus rides, frigid temperatures, and many miles of walking each day. We played in the snow, flash-mobbed with Dominican Sisters, and were reminded again and again of the importance of taking ourselves lightly. Just as importantly, we breathed in the graces of sacred shrines, stunning vistas, and some of the most beautiful liturgies I can remember.

For every participant, a different aspect of the trip became a grace. For some it was the joy of the Dominican sisters. For others it was the beauty of Eucharistic adoration. For still others, it was the opportunity to unplug from the busyness of the world and to think seriously about the future and the vocation to which God is calling them.

The March for Life, along with the entire JPG pilgrimage program, is an essential part of the mission and formation of John Paul the Great Academy. Whether they are taken to Rome, Washington, D.C., or the backwoods of North Carolina, these pilgrimages provide an opportunity for students to immerse themselves in the love of God and to deepen their sense of joy and gratitude for God’s gifts. At JPG, these pilgrimages also perfectly complement the strong academic and catechetical formation students receive in their theology classes.

Of course, a pilgrimage does not magically change the heart of an unwilling soul. Faith is an invitation. And each person must decide for himself how he will respond. But never forget what is being offered. It is nothing less than friendship with Christ! George Weigel calls this the cornerstone of “Evangelical Catholicism.” Pope John Paul the Great made it the theme of his first encyclical. Pope Benedict made it the centerpiece of his pontificate. And Pope Francis has not stopped talking about it since he was elected. Friendship with Christ is essential to the mission of our school, because it is essential to our Catholic Faith, which is expressed but never exhausted by intellectual propositions or definitions. Our Catholic faith is, first and last, a love relationship.

Perhaps we would all benefit from reflecting on this central question: what are we doing to engender in ourselves and in our children a deep and abiding personal friendship with Jesus Christ?
ACADEMICS

1. **Competitions** - The JPG Guardian Speech & Debate team has a big month in February, starting with the final tournaments of our regular season. We will be traveling to Kaplan High School on February 7 & 8, and attending the speech-only competition at Cecilia High School on February 15. Then, on February 28 and March 1, JPG Guardians will be competing in the Catholic National Forensics League qualifying competition to try and earn a spot at the CNFL Grand National tournament in Chicago, IL this May. Please pray for our Guardians as they prepare for this important event. If you are interested in assisting, please contact Mrs. Mahan at DMahan@JPGAcademy.org.

2. **Speech & Debate** - The JPG Speech & Debate team would like to extend a big thank you to all the parents, students, staff and volunteers who assisted with the JPG Tournament, hosted on our campus on January 11. The competition ran efficiently all day, we received very generous food donations, and the team raised a good amount of funds for our school. Without your prayerful support, this event would not have been possible. Thank you very much for all your assistance!

3. **Science Olympiad** - Students are getting ready for this year's Science Olympiad. The regional Olympiad will take place at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette on Saturday, March 8. The Science Olympiad gives students the opportunity to actively engage in challenges and events that bring them face-to-face with the joy of discovery that lies at the heart of the natural sciences. Our student teams will have the opportunity to compete in content areas such as geology, astronomy, biology, chemistry, and physics. Students also have the opportunity to compete in applied areas of science such as engineering, medicine, forensics, aeronautics, technology, and robotics. As we get ready for this year's Olympiad, please keep the following students in your prayers.

   **Division B Team** (Grades 6-9)
   - Briggs Fontenot
   - John Paul Cudihy
   - Paul Fletcher
   - Charles Duhon
   - Caleb Williams
   - Hope Lewis
   - Luke Lewis
   - Madeline Weber

   **Division C Team** (Grades 10-12)
   - Luke Kirk
   - Sydney Lancon
   - Joshua Fouche
   - Logan Habetz
   - Chelsea Allemond
   - Anthony Barras
   - Katy Gaspard
   - Elizabeth Louis
   - Michael Vidrine
   - Colten Wexler
   - Noah Delatte

4. **Standardized Testing** – Grades 4-8 will be taking standardized tests during the week of February 17. We will be using the ERB testing program, as we have in previous years. In addition, our 10th Grade students will be taking the PLAN test. Grades 1-3 will take their standardized tests at the end of the year, during the week of May 5.

   Our overall testing order for high school includes: Explore 9th, Plan 10th, ACT 11th, ACT 12th. In addition, in the Fall, 10th & 11th Grade students also take the PSAT as part of the National Merit Scholarship Program. Please contact Ms. Danielle Mahan with any questions about our testing program.

5. **St. Albert the Great Science Lab** - We are excited to welcome some new additions to our St. Albert the Great Science Lab. The sophomore biology class will be observing and studying the growth and development of reptiles and insects later this quarter. We will soon be receiving butterfly eggs and bullfrog tadpoles. Stop by and visit the lab to check out our new arrivals. The lab is available for students and parents to visit after school each day from 3:00 to 3:30pm.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

6. **MP3 Youth Rally** – Music, Prayer, Praise & Pizza. Students experienced MP3s on the March for Life, and are encouraged to attend a “March for Life Reunion” MP3 on Saturday, February 8. We will depart JPG at 3:30. The evening will include live music, and a keynote by Greg and Lisa O’Dwyer, followed by Eucharistic Adoration and Confession. The theme is Magnum Mysterium, a reflection on Ephesians Chapter 5. Please contact Angela Fontenot to sign up at 337-288-6075.

7. **Father/Daughter Dance** – The JPG Challenge club will have a “Pledge of Purity” dinner and dance on Friday, February 14. We will start the evening with Mass at 5:30 followed by an Italian dinner. Dr. Kim Hardy will speak with the Dads about the importance of a father’s role in their daughter’s life. Cost is $20 per couple and opened to girls in grades 5th through 10th. For more information, please contact Dawn Hubbell at dhubb70508@aol.com or 337-296-9707.

CAMPUS LIFE

8. **A Note on School Closures** – We are hopeful that serious cold weather will not be a problem during the duration of the school year. We certainly want to avoid having to extend the school year to make up further missed days. Also, if conditions warrant, we may at times initiate a “late start” wherein school would begin at 9:30am, allowing for early morning traffic to clear.
Cultivating a Community of Co-Educators
By Mr. Kyle Albarado – Dean of Math and Sciences

Reflections on the Partnership Between Parents and Educators

The faculty and staff of John Paul the Great Academy are among the most dedicated, compassionate, and hardworking people you’ll find in education today. It is a great privilege for me to be counted among them. Alongside the faculty and staff, the level of commitment and involvement I see constantly from our parents amazes me. This is fitting since you, as parents, are the primary educators of our students.

The partnership between parents and teachers is invaluable. Our school community would be nothing without it. Because of how essential you are to the life of our school, I would like to offer an invitation to you, our parents, and to our faculty and staff, to enter more deeply into this partnership through a series of reflections throughout the upcoming months featured here in the Guardian. My hope is that these reflections will spark a great conversation between parents and faculty about the nature of our roles as co-educators. Upcoming articles will feature topics such as our shared goals of education, approaching assessment through the lens of the Gospel, and helping our children to sanctify their study habits. For now, let us begin by reflecting on the role of parents in the education of their children.

Why focus on the role of parents as primary educators? As a teacher, I am concerned with doing my best to help form students to live excellently, and to grow deeper in their life with Christ through cultivating their intellect. However, I recognize that my efforts for any one student are second only to the efforts of his or her parents. Out of great love for each student, I want to deepen my commitment to work with you, the parents. Ultimately, these reflections are an invitation for us on the faculty and you as parents to strengthen our commitments to be co-educators so that our children may flourish in their education.

Two quotes are worth prayerful contemplation regarding the role of parents in the education of their children. In his Apostolic Exhortation on the family, Familiaris Consortio, Blessed John Paul the Great writes, “the right and duty of parents to give education is essential…it is original and primary with regard to the educational role of others…it is irreplaceable and inalienable and therefore incapable of being entirely delegated to others or usurped by others.” Here we see Blessed John Paul bringing us face to face with an important truth: parents have a more essential role than teachers when it comes to education. As parents, we must be actively involved in the intellectual development of our children.

This is an awesome responsibility and power that we have to profoundly impact the lives of our children. Exercising this power and responsibility not only benefits our children, it greatly benefits us by bringing us into greater unity with Christ. Christ is the model of what it means to be a great teacher. As savior and redeemer, he is also the means of fulfilling our roles as educators, empowering us with the graces we need. He is also the goal of education as the eternal Logos, the Word, the meaning with which our whole existence is directed and the very foundation on which we stand.

There is great joy in this perspective. We do not stand alone. Christ is with us and is the foundation of the partnership we have as co-educators. There must be a sense in which parents and teachers work together for the good of each child. This joyful perspective brings to light the darkness of the modern perspective on education that rejects this idea of parents and teachers being co-educators. On a national scale, parents are abandoning their duty as primary educators placing the entire burden on teachers. The modern temptation is to place the blame on teachers when the primary problem is the deterioration of family life (even though teachers often have their fair share of the blame, the role of the parent remains more essential).

While our community at John Paul the Great Academy rejects this view of education, let us be mindful of how easy it is to be influenced by it. There is nothing that can fill the void in a child’s education left from parents who do not embrace their responsibility as primary educators. The Declaration on Christian Education from the documents of Vatican II states “their (parents’) role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it.”

Are we doing enough as co-educators? Perhaps. Could we be doing more? Absolutely. With greater unity as co-educators comes greater sanctity in our school community. As a partner in educating your children, I invite you to take greater ownership of this bond we share as co-educators, and to do so in concrete ways. Christ is already sacramentally present on our campus. May He become more present in each of us as we work together to cultivate wisdom and virtue in our children.