

Saint Mary's School of Sagada
PRINCIPAL'S BULLETIN, 2009-2010 SERIES # 10
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Dear Students, Parents, Guardians, Alumni, and Friends:

The first quarter of the school year is finally over. And what a quarter it has been! In yesterday's faculty meeting, the faculty and I shared reflections – concerns, triumphs, frustrations, and improvements. A veteran teacher expressed her frustrations over her failure to motivate students in the subject that she loves. Another marveled at our kid's ability to naturally integrate the topic at hand with other disciplines. The new teachers had a sigh of relief that they survived a quarter of adjustments, in curriculum, teaching style, deportment of students, and the general ways the school operates. For me, it has been a quarter of disruptions beyond our control—the death of a student, the outbreak of the flu, the tragic rape/homicide on school grounds, and of course, the typhoons. We also had our share of good news, albeit, some are results from our hard work from last school year, such as the NAT results, the popcom essay awards, the completion of the Ambasing computer lab project, and the adoption of Sagada as a recipient of the BayaniJuan program of the ABS-CBN Foundation.

I personally underwent an epiphany, spurred by the events of the past three months: what we have accomplished in such a short time (four years) can easily be destroyed in a much shorter time, if we are not vigilant. Thanks to lessons in history, empires that have taken centuries to build have been toppled during one man's lifetime. So what do we do? Another lesson can be taken from observing life. When a child stumbles and falls, we pick up the child and coax him to stand up and go on. When we make a mistake, we learn and move on. When something goes wrong, we learn and fix it. Hopefully we become the wiser. And we go on forward.

Vancouver SMSSAFF Conference: From all indications by the participants who attended the alumni reunion in Vancouver last August 6-9, the event was a smashing success. Congratulations to the organizers and hosts, especially to Cesar & Elisa Castro and Lambert & Leona Sagalla. I hear rumors that the next one will be held in Chicago in August 2011. Meanwhile, I would like to call our Philippine-based alumni to start thinking about plans for the Grand Alumni Homecoming in 2012, during which we will celebrate the centennial anniversary of the school.

2nd Strategic Plan: During the conference, our BOT chairman, Rufino Bomasang, presented the first draft of the SMSS Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 which outlines the goals and objectives, focus, and infrastructure development for the next five years. The plan is posted on the school website, and your comments and suggestions are welcome before we do the final document. Please note that, similar to the 1st strategic plan, this document will become the basic framework which directs the school's developmental directions. I hope to finalize the plans for adoption by the Board of Trustees by the November meeting.

Congratulations to Kim Antonette Lopez, and Aileen Bangsoy (with the collaboration of Calde Ambucay) for garnering 5th and 7th place in the PopCom essay writing competitions for the entire division. 57 schools with two entries each participated in this annual event. Both SMS entries made it to the top ten, with Bangaan NHS placing 9th. Schools in Sagada, Sabangan, and Bontoc had three winners each in the top ten.

FUTURE EVENTS:

The 2nd Quarter will start on Monday, August 17. Regular classes will be held at SMS on Friday, August 21, which has been usually slated as a holiday (Ninoy Aquino Day). On August 22-23, SMS will host an elementary school teachers' workshop in English to be conducted by DepEd English Coordinator Annie Wallang, Dr. Agnes Kollin, and myself. I will focus on teaching strategies to enhance vocabulary expansion across all subject areas, particularly on the effective use of the dictionary. On August 29, the culmination of the North-South Lakbay Aral conference sponsored by the Commission on Cultural Minorities will be held in the school quadrangle. Our SMS Cultural Troupe has been invited to perform.

More next week,

Dennis Gomowad Faustino
Principal