

Saint Mary's School of Sagada
PRINCIPAL'S BULLETIN, 2009-2010 SERIES # 15
September 26, 2009

Dear Parents, Students, Alumni, and Friends

It is now the end of the 6th week of the 2nd Quarter, and three weeks to go before the 2nd Quarter Exam. For this reason, it is important for parents and guardians to attend the forthcoming Parent-Teacher-Student conferences which start this afternoon (for parents who are from out of town) and will continue Monday to Thursday next week. It is an opportunity to gauge how your child is faring academically, and perhaps adopt the necessary measures by which your child's grades can improve.

The format of the conferences is as follows: The teacher will have a copy of the child's plan of action which was done during the first PTS conference. Your child's 1st Quarter predicted grade (written on the action plan), plus the child's actual 1st Quarter grade, and a predicted 2nd Quarter grade will be available with each core subject area teacher. Teachers will be at their teaching stations (please consult the quadrangle white board for room designations. Since today, Saturday, is a school day (and the second day of school intramurals), students will be made available to attend the conferences with their parents. Conferences should not last more than 5-8 minutes, unless there is a major problem. Conferences will be held starting at 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. The following schedule is also set for the following week: Monday for 4th Year students, Tuesday for 3rd Year, Wednesday for 2nd Year, and Thursday for 4th Year. Those who cannot attend may of course come to school anytime during school hours, but please be aware that you may have to wait until the time the teachers are not holding classes.

During the 3rd and 4th Quarter, the school will primarily deal with parents of students who are at risk academically. This type of conference may also involve the principal or assistant principal in addition to specific teachers in subjects where the student is experiencing problems. Others are welcome to consult teachers at any time. The 4th Quarter conferences are designated for the school to talk about careers, electives, and general academic performance.

The highlight of the week is the two-day intramural competition among school dap-ays: Malingeb, Matoba, Losban, and Bilig, named after the four largest and oldest dap-ays in Sagada. For the information of newcomers, the entire student body is divided into four houses vertically (composed of a mixture of lower and underclassmen), as contrasted to the traditional horizontal division of the student body by year level. The system is patterned after the British model of dividing the student body into houses, similar to the way these are depicted in Harry Potter movies. The dap-ays compete in four categories throughout the school year: athletic (as in intramural competitions), academic (through quiz bees in spelling, speed math, science and social studies trivia), cultural (as in variety shows and cultural presentations during Cordillera Day celebrations), and spirit and service. Each category is given equal weight, though there may be more activities or events in some compared to others. The overall winner will be feted at a special dinner at the end of the school year. The faculty and staff are also given membership in specific dap-ays. Likewise, as new people come into the school, they are assigned to specific dap-ays. The system has proven effective because the values, knowledge, and spirit of the dap-ays are passed on to the younger members by their *manongs* and *manangs*, similar to the traditional Cordillera dap-ay system.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

September 28	PTS Conferences for 4 th Year students and parents (4:30 p.m. – 6 p.m.)
September 29	PTS Conferences for 3 rd Year
September 30	PTS Conferences for 2 nd Year
October 1	PTS Conferences for 1st Year
October 15-16	2 nd Quarter Exams
October 25 (Sunday)	Proposed Date for the Greco-Roman Festival (PTA Fundraiser)
October 28 (Wednesday)	Start of Semester Break
November 4 (Wednesday)	Classes Resume

Faculty Corner: *This week's article is written by Racquel Domanog Killy, an SMS alumna (Class '98). She had taught at SMS during the first year of the school's incorporation, and returned to us after a stint in University of Baguio and Pines City Colleges, teaching English at the collegiate level. Racquel is proud mother of Samantha who is in Grade 1 at Ambasing ES. She is a pure Igorot, and a native Sagadan at that!*

As a literature teacher, I found out that a particular literary piece would have a different impact to different kinds of students. Change in time and change in the society are contributing factors that affect how students understand and interpret a particular piece of literature. I had finished discussing with my fourth year students a poem that is about decision making by Robert Frost, “**The Road Not Taken**”. Some of the lines go this way:

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both....
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back...
Two roads diverged in a wood and I
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

After discussing the message of the poem and its relevance to their lives, I asked my students what road they will take if they were in the “poet’s shoes.” I was surprised to learn that almost all of them would choose the less traveled road. When I asked their reasons, they said: “they are curious and they want adventure. The most important thing is that they want change from a common way or path. They want to take the less traveled road; but can they stand up and be responsible to whatever road they choose?”

Four years ago, I discussed the same poem with another group of fourth year students at SMS; but for these groups of students, they preferred to choose the more traveled road. Their reasons were: “they don’t want to go against what society wanted them to be; they must follow what is told to be followed; they must not walk a path they do not know what lies ahead of it. For them they want to take a familiar road,—one that had been taken.”

With these kinds of students whom we have now, I, as a teacher and as one who had taken the less traveled road, face a great challenge in fulfilling what they want or maybe even need—that is to bring change to what is typically common to them. How will I do it? I believe that the first step is teaching these kids to be responsible and to stand up to whatever decisions they will make in any aspect of their lives. They should be leaders of their own. . . leaders of change. With these, they will be transformed.

In the real world, people enthusiastically follow a person who greatly inspires them. With vision and passion, a person inspired can achieve great things. How could we inspire the kinds of students whom we have now? We can do this by making ourselves leaders---what differentiates a leader from other people is one’s ability to innovate, face risks and take the road less traveled. A leader does this by infusing enthusiasm and energy in whatever one does. According to the dictionary the word *enthusiasm* came from two Latin words, “enthous” and “theous”. The former means “inspired” while the latter means “god”. This is change in which I believe is needed by us, **mentors**. As leaders who transform, it is what transformational leaders do. Such kind of leadership facilitates the modification in the status quo to introduce change in parts of the whole and their rapport to one another.

All of us are leaders in our own ways. We become one if we start leading our own selves. Hence, to be able to change and to transform the kinds of students in the present generation, I strongly believe that each individual must change to exude a great transformation to the group and this group will give an impact to the school, from the school to the community and to the larger whole. If we can do this, we can say that we made a difference---**a great difference** . . . by choosing a less traveled road.

Racquel Domanog-Killy
English IV-V Teacher

Until next week,

Dennis Gomowad Faustino
Principal