

March 15, 2019

Dear Parents,

So, have you found the way to happiness yet? Have you jumped into Lent with a renewed practice of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving? Are you ready to yell, “God wants me to be happy and here’s how I’m getting there!!!” Well, as with most holy topics, I’m glad God doesn’t have a set deadline in place. There is no fixed timeline for happiness or for improving our own individual holiness. I, at least, continue to be a work in progress. This week, the Best Lent Ever shifted from happiness to talk of holiness. Matthew Kelly claims the biggest lie told is that we are not capable of holiness. He asserts we are all called to be holy and can actually achieve it. If you recall, way back in August as the school year started, we focused on answering the call to holiness. Fr. John’s homilies have incorporated the topic at weekday masses and we even had a bulletin board in the main hallway saying we are all called to holiness.

I have a litany of directives I tell the children as they enter the school each morning. “Good morning! Have a great day! Be smart! Be kind! Make good choices. Answer the call to holiness!” Some look at me like I’m speaking Swahili. Others trudge in like zombies without the energy to even look up. Very, very few responded at all. As the months slunk by, I wanted to catch their attention again. We started with a simple conversation starter—my scarf. In the announcements, I thanked a student who commented that they liked my scarf and reminded everyone that simple conversations with people can change their entire day. Guess what? The next day 26 students liked my scarf. As the days went on, I upped the challenge—even opening the door WITH NO SCARF!!! Students were challenged to hone their conversational skills and improve simple interactions with eye contact and a smile. The numbers of zombies lessened even more as I added surprise twists like having a stuffed kitty cat hanging from the door handle or holding a stuffed chicken. Funny how we now have lots of things to talk about in the morning! Today we were joined by a giant panda bear (pictures on Facebook) that connected back to holiness in a silly yet memorable way.

If you came in the front carpool this morning, you may have noticed the panda sitting on the bench. My friendly chicken and a stuffed St. Aloysius Eagle were next to it. “You see,” I told the children who came running up to comment on my new friends, “the storm was so strong last night that it blew this panda bear here all the way from China! Of course our friendly chicken and Aloysius Eagle are welcoming him and making sure he’s taken care of in this new land!” No, I’m not (completely) nuts. Will children remember this silly story? Will they make a connection to be nice to new community members? Can we connect to Lenten Rice Bowl collections, Catholic Charities, and the good old Golden Rule? That’s the plan!

We are all called to holiness but that can’t happen in a vacuum. Talk to your children and set them on the path to holiness. Ask about the panda and the eagle...which one are they? Have they helped anyone recently? Reinforce the idea of almsgiving during our Rice Bowl collections next week to help people in foreign lands. I hope these interesting ‘hooks’ are remembered long after their days at St. Aloysius. May you continue with a blessed Lenten season.

Enjoy your weekend,

*Mrs. Hayslip*

*P.S. I also hope someone can help me figure out how to work a giraffe into the mix next week—there’s a conversation starter for you at dinner tonight. You’re welcome.*