

The Rhodora Report

Welcome to the start of our 3rd year! Now out of our infancy, we are growing and developing quickly on many fronts. We are grateful to our many families and supporters and awed by the grace of God for all the good He is accomplishing in our midst!



First Quarter 2009-2010

The Academy Grows by Almost 25%

The Donahue Academy of Ave Maria began its 3rd year of operations with 199 students. The Academy welcomed 39 new students this fall, representing close to a 25% growth in the student body. This is in stark contrast to private schools statewide in Florida which are anticipating an average 4% decline in enrollment this year. It's not the increasing numbers, but the great quality of the students and families joining us, that is so encouraging. It remains both gratifying and humbling to meet so many new families from around the country moving to the Ave Maria community and in particular who have been attracted to this school.

There are families who are leaving all to come join us, families who are split apart or juggling homes in different parts of the country to join us, and high school students who have left mom and dad behind to live with relatives all to gain access to this wonderful school and community. We continue to strive hard to be worthy of the trust and sacrifice of so many. We are not perfect and still struggle with some growing pains, but our spirit and vision are strong!



New second graders have it all figured out!
(Above) Upper graders are still working on figuring it all out—especially physics (below)



Sister Teresa Benedicta— takes her Freshman theology students through part of the Catechism.

New Faculty Join RJDA

Several new faculty members have been added to meet the needs of the expanding program, including 4th grade teacher Miss Jen Klucinec, 7th grade humanities teacher Mrs. Janet DeLiso, PE teacher Mr. Jim Carletta, Choir teacher Miss Carrie Nolan, Physics teacher Mrs. Denise Chmielowski, new office manager Mary Beane, and Sister Joseph Maria and Sister Teresa Benedicta who replaced sisters who were moved to other assignments. The new faculty members have been warmly received by the veterans, and the whole team is working together closely as it adjusts and refines the curriculum in light of the school's mission to assist the students to encounter Christ and pursue excellence in all things.

Donahue Academy Unveils Its Official Seal

After two years of discussion and reflection, the Donahue Academy unveiled its official seal. The words around the seal are the school's motto:

Christum Novisse-Virtutem Contendere

which translated from the Latin is

Encountering Christ and Pursuing Excellence in All Things.

How and where we encounter Christ in our school is represented in the symbols of the seal. First up top is a **monstrance** representing the prayer and the **sacraments**, and especially in our daily Mass and in our devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Next is the stylized **sacred heart** (the top petal of the shamrock) representing our encounter with Christ in or **service** to each other and the broader community, and finally an open **book** with the words (in Latin) Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. This highlights one of our core spiritual and pedagogical elements: that we can and do encounter Christ in our **studies** of all subjects. It is Him in whom we live, move and have our being. It is in Him that all things hold together. We can encounter Him in all that is true, good and beautiful, if we have eyes to see and a discriminating intellect. In the background of the seal is the outline of the **oratory**, reflecting our presence in the heart of the **Ave Maria** community. Also central is a golden **shamrock**, representing our **school's symbol** as selected by the Donahue Family, and the Shamrock is also, of course, indicative of the Holy Trinity.

Our seal is a valuable teaching tool that lays out our mission. It also expresses our educational philosophy which seeks to assist students to encounter Christ and to learn to see truths in relation to each other. In appreciating they way truths from various academic disciplines illuminate each other and reality, the students will gain a deeper appreciation for the unity of all truth.



A picture of the large mural of our seal present in our main

Full Contact Varsity Football Begins With a Shamrock Victory



The Donahue Academy varsity football program got off to a ripping start with a 46-6 victory over Island Christian School from the Florida Keys. Our 6 on 6 program was only just over a month old when the team took the field for the first time. We played our first game ever with just 4 days in full pads. Our young men exemplified the virtues of hope and courage in stepping out into the unknown, and brought back a victory and a great foundation for our growing sports program. We never imagined having a football program this quickly, but while presenting and in-service at a Classical school in Texas this past summer, Headmaster Guernsey was introduced to a small school practicing for 6-on-6 full contact football, Texas style. The game is quicker than 11 man and typically higher scoring, as all players are eligible receivers. The field is also on 80 yards long, but it takes 15 yards to make a first down. A quick internet search revealed that Florida had started its own 6 on 6 league just 2 years ago. Upon his return Dr. Guernsey contacted parent Dennis Longley whose immediate response was: "Consider it done!" Coach Longley got to work immediately and when the kids arrived for classes Aug 17, he was ready to present the program to an excited and energized student body. 75% of the high school boys are on the team— a total of 40 young men are now playing on the gridiron at the varsity or junior varsity level. The support of the community has been as outstanding as student engagement! Parents and local businesses have responded to the challenge of funding the new program and quickly put together initial plans to help raise money for pads and equipment. Several thousand dollars have been raised— but several thousand are still needed to pay off all the startup costs. Please consider a gift to the program. The kids' drive and optimism are contagious.

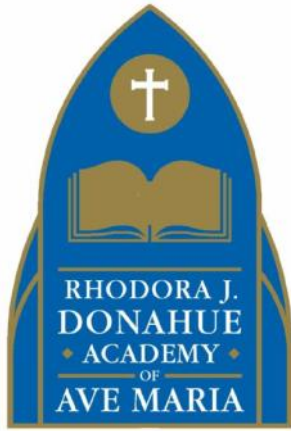


**Your day for football
will come someday
AMU Gyrenes,
but for now
football in Ave Maria
belongs to
the Donahue
Shamrocks!**

Rhodora J. Donahue Academy

Rhodora J. Donahue Academy
4955 Seton Way
Ave Maria, Florida 34142

Phone: 239-280-2450
Fax: 239-304-7033



On the web at:

DonahueAcademy.org



Mass in Latin Now Offered Once a Week

We celebrate more than athletics and school spirit of course! The best celebration we have is the celebration of the Holy Eucharist! We are building on our strong sacramental and classical culture by adding something new this year. Specifically, the addition of the Novus Ordo Mass in Latin on Wednesdays. While the daily all-school Masses continue, the addition of Latin will help strengthen the classical identity of the Academy. Students begin the study of Latin in 7th grade and continue for 4 years. As Juniors the students have the option of pursuing a modern language. Academy sophomore Andrew Guernsey worked with Latin instructor Clay Tucker and AMU professor Andrew Dinan to develop an impressive interlinear translation of the Latin to assist the students in following along. Grab a translation and join us for Latin on Wednesday or English every other day for Mass at the Academy at 8am.

Capital Campaign Secures its First Major Donation!

The Donahue Family Foundation has offered a \$200,000 matching grant to assist in our 1.1 million upstairs build out. We are very grateful for the significant ongoing support of the Donahue family! We are truly blessed! The designers are on site and assisting with final design elements— but we still need your help. We cannot build without raising the funds. We are actively looking for other donors and foundations to assist us. Please contact us if you or anyone you know can be of any assistance. A new capital campaign committee is working hard and coordinating efforts with parents on grant writing committees to help this serious need for new space to become a reality! Can you help as well?



Can You Put Us In Contact
With Someone to Assist Us?