

Words of Thanks

Every once in a while we get more than just our standard evaluation in the mail. Here are excerpts from some letters Bob received from students at Copley Fairlawn Middle School, where he appeared as part of their cultural arts day.

Dear Mr. Kloos,

Thank you for coming to tell us your wonderful stories. You were my favorite station. I liked your first story the best. I already knew that even if you do more work you will probably get paid the same.

Sincerely,

Chris Fallon, grade 5

Dear Mr. Kloos,

Thank you for coming but I was sick. I really appreciated it because it gave my sisters something else to talk about but fashion. It sounded cool, and thank you for coming.

Sincerely,

Jarrold K. Clemens, grade 5



Last month Bob lead students from St. William Parish in their Confirmation retreat at the St. Joseph Christian Life Center in Cleveland. Above, a group kicks back on break. To the left, students discover that the gift of balance is right in the palm of their hands. Photos courtesy of L.E. Shenk of St William.

Editors note: the Spotlight feature, which usually appears on this page will reappear in the next issue.

Akhi, the beggar sage, sits at the city gates, instructing all in the dance of life.



Ask Akhi...

Dear Readers,

Usually Akhi responds to a question that comes to him. This time, no one has asked Akhi a question. Does that mean they no longer want an answer from Akhi? Maybe so. We all need a holiday. But I must continue to do what I must do. I cry out. I try to capture the ear of passers-by. It is my path.

It is pilgrimage time, so my gate is especially busy, with travelers

and families, and, of course, the usual merchants. Everyone is crying out. Merchants with goods in hand, pilgrims with their prayers, and anxious parents trying to keep track of their children in the congestion that always happens at my gate. Above all this Akhi is trying to be heard, too!

It is amazing. Those who come looking for things to buy hear the merchants. Children hear their parent's call as clearly as the parents hear the cry of their own children. And, of course, Allah hears every plea of every prayerful pilgrim. Who is left to hear Akhi? And yet I must raise my voice on behalf of the poor. Who else will speak for them? I am doing the

best I can.

In your country you have a word for how I do what I do. "Perfect." It comes from a language as old as my own: the Latin word *perficio*. It means "to bring to an end." That is, "to finish" or "to complete." Nothing more. "Perfect" is usually misunderstood to mean "without a flaw." Akhi is pleased to tell you that is not so. Perfect simply means to finish what you set out to do – to do your work.

That is good news, is it not?

It is Akhi's task to cry out. And so my voice joins the others, perfectly.

Write soon.

-- Akhi