



Saint Mary Catholic School

December 2011

Dear Parents:

I hope that everyone had a very blessed Thanksgiving holiday and an enjoyable break! November held so many blessings for St. Mary Catholic School. Thanks to our Home & School Association, in partnership with the Giannaris Family & Nick's Airport Inn, SMCS hosted two community-building events. Our traditional Thanksgiving luncheon was enjoyed by all who attended. The food was delicious and the company was special! Our next big event was *Cruising with St. Mary Live & Silent Auction*. What a fabulous event! Not only was it profitable, the event was so much fun!

Now we find ourselves in the season of Advent, a time to reflect on our lives and to prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus. As a Catholic school community, we can make an effort to look for Jesus in everyone and to spread "kindness and gentleness" in all we do. We can remember that through our words and through our actions we are able to build up the Kingdom of God. Let us encourage our children to appreciate the gifts God has given them and to also challenge our children to look for God's gifts in everyone they meet.

December offers many opportunities to be thankful for being part of a Catholic school community. Please try to attend our Christmas Shows to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas.

FIRST TRIMESTER PROGRESS REPORTS

The first trimester of the 2011-2012 school year ended on November 18. Progress Reports will be sent home with students on December 1. Parent Access will re-open on December 5.

CHRISTMAS BREAK

The last day of classes before Christmas is December 16. Classes will resume on Monday, January 2, 2012.

DECEMBER MASSES

Our **First Friday Mass** will be on December 2, at **10:30 A.M.** On Thursday, December 8, **The Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary**, a school mass will be celebrated at **10:30 A.M.** All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

NOVEMBER'S FIRST FRIDAY MASS

In attendance at our First Friday Mass in November were many saints. It was such a special celebration with the sixth graders portraying our heroes of the Church, the saints. They did a beautiful job sharing the lives of the saints with the classes they visited. A special thank you is extended to Father Limmer for being our celebrant at the Mass.

Grade 6

John Agostinelli – St. Michael the Archangel

Katherine Alexander – St. Catherine of Alexandria

James Carden – St. James

Charlotte Caruso – St. Lucy

Jennifer Elbin – St. Anne

Nader Fawaz – St. Luke

Georgia Giannaris – St. Margaret of Scotland

Maura Hevey – St. Cecelia

Seamus Murray – St. Ignatius of Loyola

Eric Oh – St. Francis of Assisi

Colin O'Hanlon – St. Patrick

Erica Quinones – St. Joan of Arc

Jared Semler – St. Blaise

Farene Shahid – St. Maria Goretti

Emma Shearer – St. Rose of Lima

Everest Shives – St. Thomas Aquinas

Isabelle Snyder – St. Elizabeth of Portugal

Julianna Swarner – St. Bernadette

Mark Thompson – St. Mark

Danielle Wells – St. Mary Magdalene

CONGRATULATIONS

Good S.A.M.s

I want to congratulate our Good S.A.M.s for November: Gabriel Mallow, Julia Judge, Logan Flanagan, Anne Balog, Samuel Strama, Harrison Ewing, Erica Quinones, Abigail Theis, Bridget Scott, and Adam Fisher. **Thanks for your Service, Attitude, Manners!**

JHU TALENTED YOUTH

Many of our seventh and eighth graders are invited to participate in the 2011-12 CTY Talent Search sponsored by the Johns Hopkins University for Talented Youth. To qualify for the Talent Search, a student must score in the 95th percentile or higher on a reasoning section of a nationally-normed test. The following students scored in the 95th–99th percentile in strategic areas of verbal, math, and/or core totals on the Stanford 10 last spring: Conner Caruso, Tyler Gilks, Jason Marinelli, Colin Quinones, Andrew Dillard, Nick Judge, Alexandra Martin, James Spinnler, and Madeleine Ward. Congratulations, students!

LIGHT OF CHRIST MEDALS

Joseph Zabrocky, Lucas Hammer, Brandon Kijowski, and Nicholas Schmitt will be receiving *The Light of Christ Medals* on December 2 at our school Liturgy. Each Bear Cub Scout worked over four months to complete the activity book developed by the National Catholic Committee on Scouting. The activity book walked each scout through a program that fosters a relationship with Jesus and a deeper involvement in the church with the family. Congratulations Scouts!

HSA News

St. Mary Catholic School's first Live and Silent Auction Event on Sunday, November 13, 2011, was an overwhelming success. We were able to generate a profit of **\$17,691**

for the needs of our school. The wonderful venue was provided by Paul and Kristina Giannaris at Nick's Airport Inn. Those in attendance feasted on delicious appetizers, a variety of wines, cold beers, and soft drinks. Our auctioneer for the evening was Craig O'Connor, with assistance from his wife, Rachel. He did a fabulous job engaging and enticing the crowd with each live auction item. The HSA has the deepest gratitude for the Giannaris and O'Connor families for selfless support in giving their time, talent, and treasures to benefit St. Mary Catholic School. The HSA would also like to thank the Live and Silent Auction Committee, Rhonda O'Malley, Mo Tedeschi, Carrie McMahan, Mary Minahan, Lisa Dorsey, and Teri Schmitt for their hard work and dedication. A special thank you is also extended to Father Collin for his enthusiasm, generous donations, and unconditional support.

Attached is a spreadsheet listing the donors of our Live and Silent auction items, the final bids each item received, as well as a list of which families donated their time, talent, or treasure to support this event. This was our first mandatory fundraiser of the school year; our second one will be our Annual SMCS Golf Tournament in May. If you were unable to assist with the *Live and Silent Auction Event*, please consider donating your time, talent, or treasure to the *SMCS Golf Tournament* on May 24, 2012.

Congratulations go to Frankie and Debbie Corsi on winning the Cruise raffle!

THANKSGIVING LUNCHEON

Our Thanksgiving Luncheon was absolutely wonderful! There were 421 dinners served. Delicious food from *Nick's Airport Inn*, festive decorations, and good company were definitely among the highlights. Thank you again, Lisa Dorsey, for organizing this enjoyable event. With the help of Jacqueline Ewing, Jennifer Singer, Mo

Tedeschi, Teri Schmitt, Rhonda O'Malley, Kathleen Murray, Jackie Strama, Mary Minahan, Jennifer Sword, and Stacey Stine, the event went very smoothly.

BAKE SALES

Grade 3 will have a bake sale on December 1 and grade 2 will hold a bake sale on December 15.

SOCIAL HOUR

Middle School Social Hour will be held on December 2 from 3:00 to 4:30.

PHASE I RAFFLE TICKET FUNDRAISER

Congratulations to the following November winners:

- (\$50) Week 1: Molly Shearer
- (\$50) Week 2: Pamela Ward
- (\$50) Week 3: The Starlipers
- (\$100) Week 4: The Mentzells

PHASE II RAFFLE TICKET FUNDRAISER

Fundraiser II raffle tickets were sent home before Thanksgiving and are due back by December 14. Phase II begins January 1. The tickets make great Christmas gifts.

SCRIP

Last SCRIP order dates before Christmas Break are December 5 and 12. Thank you, Mrs. Michelle Shaper, Mrs. Kelly Bracken, and Mrs. Kelly Kenney for helping so many families save money towards tuition.

PIXIE SHOP

With Christmas around the corner, Mrs. O'Connor and Mrs. O'Malley, assisted by many wonderful parent volunteer elves, will host the Pixie Shop on December 6 and 7. Students from all grades will be invited to shop for those special people on their lists. Santa's elves have been very busy stocking the shelves with items for everyone on your child's list. Simply send in a shopping list and money with your child. All items are

below \$6.00 and free gift wrapping is included! There will be a bake sale table, a religious items table, and two special raffle items, an 8GB iTouch and a Marie-Grace American Girl Doll. It is \$1.00 per chance or \$5 for 6 chances. Parents are welcome to volunteer and/or shop!

Shop Hours: Tuesday, December 6, and Wednesday, December 7, from 8:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M.

TARGET'S TAKE CHARGE OF EDUCATION

When supporters of SMCS use their REDcard (Target Visa Credit Card, Target Credit Card, or Target Check Card), Target donates up to 1% of their purchases to Saint Mary Catholic School. Register @ Target.com/tcoe or 1-800-316-6142.

GoodShop.com

GoodShop.com is a new online shopping mall which donates up to 30 percent of each purchase to St. Mary Catholic School! Hundreds of great stores, including Amazon, Target, Gap, Best Buy, eBay, Macy's, and Barnes & Noble, have teamed up with GoodShop and every time you place an order, you will be supporting St. Mary Catholic School. All you need to do is start your shopping at GoodShop.com, choose St. Mary Catholic School-Hagerstown as your charity, and choose your store. The donation will be made automatically when you check out, and it doesn't cost you a thing. Please support St. Mary Catholic School as you do your Christmas shopping this season. HSA just received a check for \$148.84 from purchases made last year.

STUDENT COUNCIL NEWS

CANNED FOOD DRIVE

Thanks to the efforts of the Student Council and the generosity of the student body, St. Mary Catholic School donated 847 items of food to the Hagerstown Food Bank. All students who contributed should be

applauded for their kindness. The Student Council would like to thank Dr. and Mrs. O'Hanlon; Colin, Rory, and Aidan O'Hanlon; Ms. Poffenberger; Alice Poffenberger; Nick, Ellen, Danny, Julia, David, and Roch Judge; Mrs. Judge; Mrs. Hilmoie; Annemarie Hilmoie; Olivia Balog; Nader Fawaz; and Mrs. Forsythe for delivering the canned goods to the food bank.

READ-A-THON

The students did a fabulous job of reading for 100 minutes! Students in the younger grades enjoyed listening to stories by guest readers. The students in the older grades appreciated a good book as a quiet diversion from normal studies. Many of the middle school students were invited to read to the primary students. Besides encouraging students to value the gift of reading, this activity also gave students the opportunity to earn money for purchasing Christmas gifts for needy families. Each grade has adopted a family through the Salvation Army. With the effort of our students and the generosity of our school families, many families less fortunate than us will have a brighter Christmas!

DECEMBER TAG DAY

Students who made a donation through the read-a-thon for the Salvation Army family their grade adopted will receive a pass to come out of uniform on December 16. The theme for the day will be Christmas attire. Any students who forgot to contribute may still bring in a donation by December 2 and receive an out-of-uniform pass. The minimum contribution for this TAG Day is \$5.00. Passes will be distributed through December 2.

SPORTS

CRUSADER BASKETBALL

Saint Mary Catholic School is excited to begin the 2011-2012 basketball season. The schedule for the Varsity and JV Crusaders is included in this packet and can

also be found on our website (Student Life Section, Athletics Tab). All games are at Broadfording Christian Academy, but there is one varsity game at St. James School on January 19.

PEP RALLY

There will be a pep rally on January 6, at 2:00 P.M., to acknowledge our 2011-2012 basketball teams.

OTHER NEWSWORTHY ITEMS

CHRISTMAS SHOWS

- The Christmas Show starring the students in grades two through five will be Tuesday, December 6, at 7 P.M.
- The First Grade Christmas Alphabet will be at 9:30 A.M. on Thursday, December 15.
- The Kindergarten Christmas Play will be at 1:45 on Tuesday, December 13.
- The Pre-K Christmas Show will be Wednesday, December 14, at 10:15 A.M.

LEGO LEAGUE TEAM

The Saint Mary School Lego League Team, coached by Mrs. Kim Caruso, will be competing on December 3. Best of luck is wished to our SMCS team, *Eggo My Lego*, consisting of James Carden, Charlotte Caruso, Jennifer Elbin, Nader Fawaz, Colin & Rory O'Hanlon, and Farene Shahid!

IT'S SPELLING BEE TIME!

This year St. Mary Catholic School is changing the way we determine our 6th, 7th, and 8th grade contestants in the Washington County Spelling Bee. In years past, a written test was administered to the students, and the two with the highest scores were declared the winners. Beginning this school year, the written test is still given. This took place during the week before Thanksgiving. From this test, six to ten students from each grade (6th, 7th,

and 8th) with the top scores will move on to compete in the SMCS Spelling Bee, which will take place on the afternoon of December 15. From this contest, the top two students from each grade will move on to compete in the Washington County Spelling Bee. In addition, from the SMCS Spelling Bee, the top 6th, 7th, and 8th grade spellers will be named, plus an overall school champion will be crowned, with prizes awarded to the top spellers in each grade and to the overall school champion! Thank you is extended to Mrs. Karn for organizing this contest!

6th Grade Spelling Bee Contestants: John Agostinelli, Katherine Alexander, Nader Fawaz, Seamus Murray, Eric Oh, Jared Semler, Everest Shives, and Danielle Wells

7th Grade Spelling Bee Contestants: Jacob Epstein, Benjamin Gilks, Alexandra Martin, Rebecca Mason, James Spinnler, Asher Starliper, Vincent Steiner, and Madeleine Ward

8th Grade Spelling Bee Contestants: Olivia Balog, Taylor Blenckstone, Ramsay Farah, Ian Ferguson, Maria Giannaris, Nathan Hammer, Annemarie Hilmoie, Jason Marinelli, Gregory Oh, and Briana Whelan

CAREER DAY

On Monday, January 30, 2012, we are planning a Career Day for Catholic Schools Week. If you are interested in sharing your career with our students, please complete the attached form and return it to school by December 16. More details will follow after Christmas.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

St. Mary Catholic School follows the announcement for Washington County Public Schools. Please listen to your local radio stations or NBC25 for possible school cancellations, late openings, or early dismissals. In the case of a two hour delay, Pre-K will not have school.

STAND TRAINING

In July of 2007 the Archdiocese of Baltimore updated the procedures for volunteering in schools. "If a volunteer will have *Substantial Contact* with children, then the following must be completed before he/she begins to serve in the Archdiocese of Baltimore:

1. Application for Volunteer Service completed;
2. Names of references provided and checked;
3. VolunteerSelect Criminal Screening completed; and
4. Training received regarding child abuse and protection of children, including STAND video."

If you have a Volunteer Compliance Card from another parish and want to be a regular volunteer at St. Mary Catholic School, you must complete the Application for Service, including the reference section. **The STAND training is now available online.** A complete packet including directions for the online training is available in the school office or visit our website. On the Families Tab, select STAND.

IN YOUR PRAYERS

Please remember Cyriel Forsythe (father-in-law of Mrs. Tina Forsythe) who passed away this past month. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

As always, I ask for your prayers to the Holy Spirit to give me the guidance and wisdom needed to serve as principal of St. Mary Catholic School.

May God Bless You!

Patricia A. McDermott