

Enlightening Minds, Enriching Lives

St. Germaine Family Newsletter

February 4, 2008

Snow Days: Our Rationale

Ash Wednesday and Lent

We begin the season of Lent as we celebrate Ash Wednesday on February 5th. Students will attend Mass at either 8:30 or 10:00 a.m. to begin the season. The parish theme focuses on a portion of St. Paul's letters. In his letter, he reminds us all that "Hope does not disappoint." Spend some time with your families discussing what it means to be people of hope. What do we as a family hope for? As a Church? Do an internet scripture search or a search of Bartlett's quotations to find out what authors have said about the importance of hope in our lives. Discuss the importance of selecting an action for Lent that will remind us of the hope that we share in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Washington Adventure CD

Hopefully you've had a chance to view the Washington DC CD. It is formatted as a POWERPOINT presentation but contains a POWERPOINT READER if your computer does not have Microsoft POWERPOINT. We'd love to hear your reactions.

Little Company of Mary "Heart Connection"

Little Company of Mary Hospital is sponsoring a nine week grief support program for student ages 5 to 17. The program begins on Monday, March 3, 2008 from 6:15 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. Only 32 participants can be accepted, so it is important to register early if you would like your child to participate. Each group is facilitated by a trained professional. For information or to register, contact Peg Schneider, Chaplain at 708-2295480 or 708-229-5484.

After Friday's snow, we thought it would be appropriate to restate the rationale for closing school or remaining open during inclement weather.

The decision to close for inclement weather is always a dilemma for principals. We're often on the phone to one another at 5:00 in the morning debating the issue. On the one hand, no one wants to have to extend the school year by having to add a day at the end of the year. On the other hand, however, we need to be aware of the safety of all those who need to travel to the building. The judgment also needs to be made in enough time to inform teachers before they leave for school. Part of the decision also needs to account for how many of the teachers will be unable to make it to school. Parents who might need to find child care need time to make those arrangements.

With all of that in mind, our practice has been to leave the decision up to the parents as often as possible. We believe that, as parents, you are best able to make the decision about whether or not it is safe to send your child to school. You are also in the best position to decide whether or not you can stay home from work or find another adult to watch your children. If you are able to remain home from work with your family and travel would be dangerous, you should make the decision not to attend. By remaining open, we can provide a warm, safe environment for the children whose parents cannot be absent from work themselves.

While it's easier for parents when we make the decision to close, either decision we make will impose a hardship for some families. I heard from a number of people at the Parents' Night Out party that they were grateful that we elect to remain open whenever possible.

Catholic Schools Week/ Blue Ribbon School Assembly

On Thursday, January 31, we hosted an assembly for all the students as we continue to celebrate our "Blue Ribbon School Award." The US Department of Education's Regional Representative, Kristine Cohn, visited many of the classrooms before the assembly. She engaged the students in some lively discussions—ranging from "bats" to "fractions." At the assembly, she presented our school with a plaque from Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings. Congressman Dan Lipinski also addressed the students and presented us with a formal House of Representatives Resolution (read into the Congressional Record) that recognized our achievement. State Senator Edward Maloney and State Representative James Brosnahan also offered their congratulations. Both Representative Brosnahan and his sister who is a federal judge, are graduates from St. Germaine. Oak Lawn Mayor Dave Heilmann, Clerk Jane Quinlan, and Trustee Steve Rosenbaum were also present for our celebration. It is wonderful to know that so many of our civic leaders would take time to recognize our excellent educational program. We thank them for being with us.

Many people helped to make Catholic Schools Week a success. The School Board sponsored both the Open House reception and the Parents' Night Out X party, which were both great successes. The Family School Association sponsored the Wheel of Wisdom assembly on Monday, February 4 for all of the students. The assembly was very interactive and allowed many of our students to participate. Everyone seemed to enjoy it.

Haircuts

It seems an appropriate time to remind everyone of the hair length policy for boys in school. The handbook states: "Boys may not wear their hair over their ears nor below their shirt collars." Some of the boys are beginning to look a little "shaggy." If your son comes home and tells you that I said it was time to "fall under the lawn mower," it's a subtle hint that he needs a haircut. After the students receive the verbal warning, a written note is sent home to be signed by the parents. Continued non-compliance will result in an in-school suspension until the matter is resolved.

Thanks, in General

Thanks to Chris and Eileen Parker for spending an afternoon cleaning out the trophy case in the Activity Center Lobby. It looks great—now all we need to do is figure out what to do with the "old" trophies. Thanks, too, to Greg Kirwan, Brian Swiatek and the Athletic Association who added electrical circuits to the Church Hall kitchen and did a thorough cleaning in the downstairs and the kitchen in the Activity Center as they prepare for the Athletic Association Fish Fry during Lent.

Visa/MC Tuition Survey

The parish established an account for the Harvest Ball which allowed us to accept credit card payments for the Silent Auction at the Dinner Dance. Since the account is open, we would like to get an idea of how many families would find it helpful to be able to make tuition payments using their Visa or Mastercard credit cards. If you think you would make use of this service, please send a note to the office. If there is enough interest to merit the monthly service charge for the school, we may be able to implement a program even before the end of this school year.

Catholic Schools Week Essay Winners

The theme for Catholic Schools Week was "Catholic Schools Light the Way." During our week of celebrations, students in Grades 4-8 were asked to write STEP UP TO WRITING paragraphs that explored the way they might be able to help solve one of the problems the world faces. The topic sentence began, "In the future the world will need. . . I can help fulfill this need by. . ."

We had a number of excellent entries. Spencer Scott, a fifth grader, was selected to read his essay at the Catholic Schools Week assembly last Thursday.

Other students who were recognized for their efforts were:

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| Room 201: | Angeline Sales, Aidan Mitchell, Dan Malone, Keri Beiderman |
| Room 203 | Emily Zawaski, Spencer Scott, Joey Strelow, Meghan Pelehac |
| Room 206 | Decky Kennedy, Aileen Mallon, Matt Hickey, Meghan Baker |
| Room 202 | Jill Augustine, Jenny Buschbach, Ryan Arends, Erin Blake |
| Room 204 | Keira Chocola, Margaret Mallon, Shannon Gill, Lizzie Malone |
| Room 208 | Caitlin Conroy, John Curran, Grace Ringhofer, Kimberly Lipinski |
| Room 211 | Cal Kennedy, Connor White, Meredith Byrnes |
| Room 205 | Sabrina Perinno, Robert Nelson, Isabel Dougala, Katie Flynn |
| Room 207 | Steven Buschbach, Bridget Tracy, Kevin Scholl, Bryan Brazill |

Thanks to all the students who participated. We look forward to the positive things they can do for our world.

Looking Ahead. . .

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| 2/5 | Family School Mardi Gras Party, Church Hall, 6:00 p.m. School Board, 7:00 p.m. in the Faculty Room |
| 2/6 | Ash Wednesday—Students will attend one of the parish Masses (8:30 or 10:00) |
| 2/12 | Market Day (Teams 10 and 11) |
| 2/15 | Half Day Faculty Meeting—Students dismissed at 11:30 a.m. Extended Day as usual |
| 2/18 | President's Day—No school |
| 2/20 | Athletic Association Meeting, 8:00 p.m. in the Faculty Room |
| 2/28 | Yearbook Activity Photos—for sports activities and extra-curricular events |
| 2/29 | Second Trimester Report Cards distributed to students |