

March 12, 2010

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The march through March is a steady one this year, boasting a solid month of school. Thankfully, it has crept in as a lamb, a bit dreary and water-logged recently, but very pleasing temperature-wise. Perhaps this is a harbinger of spring. May the God that gives us sun and rain shower us with His love and grace.

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM: Last Friday, students in grades 3 – 8 were able to enjoy outdoor activities on a gorgeous March day. The students experienced snowshoeing, scientific observation, and snow games at the Fern Lake Ski Trail. Everyone returned, having thoroughly enjoying their sessions. I am very appreciative of the efforts of the teachers and volunteers who made this outdoor activity possible.

STAR TEAMS: Also last week, as part of our Conflict Management Program, our sixth graders attended a workshop at Concordia Language Village intended to teach them how to teach conflict management skills to other students. Beginning next week, Mrs. Margaret Hins will work with the sixth graders in preparing their lessons. In April, the students will host a kick-off event for all students in grades K-5, and then the Star Teams will go into the individual classrooms and teach specific skills to the younger students. It's a Win-Win program for us all!

BAND CONCERT: You are cordially invited to our second annual March Band Concert on Tuesday evening, March 16, beginning at 6:30 P.M. in the church. Our band students in grades 5 - 8 are eager to have an audience with whom to share their musical talents. Please come. Students should be here by 6:00 P.M.

SPIRIT WEAR: Looking for t-shirts or sweatshirts? Sent home with students this past week was a packet containing information about ordering St. Philip's School clothing. Families are welcome to take advantage of this opportunity sponsored by our Parent Association. Orders are due back by next Friday, March 19. If you did not receive a packet, please stop by the office. We have more.

SPRING AHEAD: Warmer weather has been upon us already. Then the rains have come. Now, the real sign of approaching spring, the need to lose an hour of sleep. Set your clocks AHEAD on Saturday evening, so that you are not late for Mass on Sunday morning.

SPEAKING ABOUT TIME....School begins at 8:30 A.M. and children are expected to be in their classrooms at that time. Most students, however, need a few minutes prior to that time to get themselves ready and organized for the day. Parents, please get students to school by 8:20 A.M. so that they don't miss the beginning of the school day or feel rushed because everything has already started. A reminder – anyone arriving after 8:30 must check in at the school office before going to class.

At the end of the day it is also extremely important to pick up students promptly. Classes are dismissed at 3:10 P.M. and by 3:30 P.M. all students should be either 1) on the bus; 2) with a parent; 3) with a teacher, staff member, or club/organization supervisor; or 4) at Noah's Ark. Lately we have had a number of students hanging around, often until 5:00 P.M. waiting to be picked up. I am pleased that the students want to be here and socialize, but I also need them to be supervised. Thank you for your cooperation.

THERE ARE NO MONDAY AND THURSDAY AFTER SCHOOL GENERAL STUDY SESSIONS for grades 6 – 8 for the next few weeks. Students should speak to their teachers if they are experiencing difficulty with subject matter.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: Enrich your Lenten experience by praying the Stations of the Cross. Our fifth graders assist with the prayers on Fridays at 2:20; prayer is led following the Catholic Aid Fish Frys; The Shadow Stations will be presented at 9:30 A.M. on Friday, March 26, and the Living Stations will be presented in the evening of March 26th at 7:00 P.M. in the church. You are most welcome to attend.

SURVEY RESULTS: in January, over sixty families responded to a brief survey of the School Council. The results have been tabulated. In summation, the topics considered Very Important were: class size, preference for parish religious education classes, quality of academic programs/instruction, quality of religious instruction, safety, school leadership, and tuition.

Topics considered Somewhat Important were: building/facility and quality of extracurricular programs. The item considered Slightly Important was convenient location. The items considered Not At All Important were: child has special needs and lack of transportation/busing. The complete tabulation is available in the school office if you'd like a copy. The School Council will review the material over the next several months. Thank you for taking the time to respond. Your opinions are valued.

MARCOUX CORNER: Our 7th & 8th graders will have the opportunity to hear Marcoux Corner, an a cappella musical treat, on Tuesday, March 16 at the Middle School. Marcoux Corner will be in concert next week to support the Vocalmotive show choir.

WAX MUSEUM: One of the highlights of fifth grade is the Wax Museum. After having researched and written about a famous individual, students will create an educational board and life-like statue of their subject. This year's museum will be open in the social hall on Thursday, March 25, from 1:00 to 2:30. Please visit us. There's no admission charge.

ITBS: In February, our students in grades 3, 5, 7, and 8 took the standardized Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. Kudos to our third graders who, as a class, had the highest composite score of any class since 2004, ranking in at the 88th percentile. Covering the areas of reading, language, and math, the core totals for the four grades were between the 70th and 90th percentiles. Well done, students! We're all proud of you.

EASTER YOUTH CHOIR: Due to a very limited amount of interest, there will not be a Youth Choir to sing at the 11:00 Mass on Easter morning. Perhaps this might become a reality in the future.

"Holy Week as Seen Through the Eyes of the Apostle John": Join guest speaker Brian Pizzalato on a journey through scripture on Friday evening, March 19, from 6:30 to 8:30 P.M. in the church. Bring a Bible.

END OF THIRD GRADING PERIOD: Next Friday, March 19, marks the end of the third grading period for us. Report cards will be sent home with students on Wednesday, March 31.

SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBER: if you are interested in being on the School Council, please notify me. The Council meets on the second Tuesday of each month, August through June, and is an advisory committee to the administration. The term is for three years.

SPRING GALA: Tickets are still available for this April 23rd event. To obtain tickets, contact Jim at 766-4520 or Tim at 766-2900. To assist with the silent auction, call Kevin at 766-6736. Thanks.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES: Help with the Year Book; 8th grade graduation powerpoint; help with the Information Desk; fish fry workers – especially for clean up; help with selling Gala tickets or obtaining silent auction items.

PLEASE PRAY FOR.....all those who have died, including Mr. Belanger's grandmother, Joe Malone, Grandma Billie's sister, and Mrs. Metzler's friend Michelle.....those who are experiencing difficult times.....those who have been affected by natural disasters.....those who are preparing for sacraments.

"A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

John 13:34

Very truly,

Carol Rettinger
Principal