

February 5, 2008

Dear Families,

What a whirlwind our weather has been! Last Friday was the first time I needed to use our “**School Closing**” password and ID number. Electronically, the program refused to accept both the password and the ID number. The second option available to me was to call into a hotline number and leave my message there. I did that twice, and our school never was included in the closings. Thus, it was necessary for us to call as many of you as possible from our homes. Yesterday when I talked to the group that coordinates school closings, I was informed that they DID get my two phone messages. They were just too busy to put St. Michael’s on the TV and radio stations. We now have a new password and ID number, and we will be listed as St. Michael School. There are several other St. Michael Schools, but they will have their location listed. (For example, St. Michael, Orland Park). Of course, I do not expect our weather to produce storms that will close our doors in the future.

Open House: If you consulted your February calendar, you know that tomorrow is one of our first Open House dates. You are invited to join us in Church at 8:30 for Mass. You then are encouraged to return to school and visit classrooms of interest to you. Before you do that, please be sure to stop into the office to sign in. We will give you a label on which to write your name so that teachers know who is entering their classroom. Chairs will be right inside the door for your convenience.

Computer Teacher: I am happy to report that I interviewed a wonderful computer teacher to launch classes using our new HP laptops. Our intent is to prepare our students will need as they enter high school. As you might know, there are some high schools that require their students to purchase a laptop because all of their textbooks are online. This is the case with De La Salle High School to which many of our students applied. Our program will focus on a solid understand and application of Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint as well as the essentials of doing research and learning what information can be trusted. In this day and age, far too many students copy directly from another author’s material. Our students need to be guided by a strong ethic that is honest and just. Hopefully, we will launch our program.

Transportation Reimbursement: Do you know that if you live 1 ½ or more miles from school, you are entitled to apply for transportation reimbursement? All claims must be submitted to the state before June 30, 2008 through our school office. On the reimbursement for transportation log, please enter the total cost to transport your child(ren) attending St. Michael School. The claim amount may include bus fares and other payments made to providers of transportation and/or \$0.485 cents per mile driven when the parent/guardian or student drives to and from the school. To compute mileage reimbursement when driving children to school, multiply the distance between home and school by four then multiply the product by \$0.485 cents. This is the daily cost. Then multiply the daily cost by the number of days the child(ren) are driven to school. We will actually be submitting your transportation reimbursement request for you. However, we want you to keep a log of mileage that will be needed. **A copy of the State Pupil Transportation Reimbursement Sheet is enclosed in your packet for your use. We will let you know when we need it.**

Tomorrow we begin the very somber and beautiful season of **LENT**. **Your child will have the opportunity to receive ashes at the 8:30 Mass.** Throughout Lent, there will be some special celebrations. Every Wednesday afternoon in church at 1:30, there will be the Stations of The Cross and Benediction. Our students are invited to join members of St. Michael Parish for

that opportunity. On February 23rd in church, our 2nd graders from both the school and parish will be receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time. On March 5th, Mrs. Andres and her eighth graders will be leading us in the Chaplet of Divine Mercy at 8:30 in church. Bring your rosary if you have one. We will be sure that all of our students have a rosary for this beautiful experience. The following week on March 12th, we will have a school-wide Reconciliation followed by the opportunity for our students who have received the Sacrament of Reconciliation to go to confession to Father. Then, on the 19th, our 8th graders will lead us in the Living Stations of the Cross. As you know, adults are invited to FAST during the season of Lent. That translates to not eating between meals. **We would like to challenge your child to FAST—only we don't want them to FAST from food. We would like to invite them to FAST from TV or their video games or their time on the phone or...things that they spend so much time doing. Perhaps you might want to sit down as a family and talk about what that might look like in your family.**

New Brochure: We are in the process of publishing a new marketing brochure for St. Michael School. It will include pictures of our students. Before we publish anything, we will be requesting your permission to use those photos in this brochure. It is our intention to have the brochure completed by the time we begin our school registration process. That begins at the end of February as the calendar noted for you. The brochure will give you a wonderful overview of new curriculum that will be added next year along with an increased number of creative after-school activities that so many of you have hoped for even this year. We are producing this brochure with the help of one of our parishioners who is in marketing with the Mexican Museum of Art.

Blessings on us all as we enter the season of Lent with hearts open to change!

Peace.

Ms. Barbara Lee