

November 27, 2007

Dear Families,

I am speechless as I notice how quickly the months are flying. Already we are about to greet the month of December—a month that quickly melts into Christmas. Please note some of the happenings that will be a part of our schedule during the month of December. We hope you can join us for some of the activities.

**On December 5<sup>th</sup>, we have our first Advent liturgy. Advent is a beautiful season of patient waiting for the celebration of Christmas—Christ among us. Our students will learn more about the significance of the Advent wreath in church and will participate in the lighting of the Advent wreath each Wednesday at our school Mass.**

**The Feast of St. Nicholas is the 6<sup>th</sup> of December. He is often noted for his good work that he did in secret. Our Student Council will be St. Nicholas “helpers” as they encourage our students to hang their sock (usually it was a shoe) outside their classroom to see if St. Nicholas continues to do his good work in secret. It is likely that treats will be in store for all of us. What a fun moment.**

**December 6<sup>th</sup> is also the science fair for students in Grades 6-8. Their projects will be set up in the cafeteria so that they are ready for the judging of their projects. Hopefully you can join us that afternoon to celebrate the research that has gone into these projects.**

**On December 11<sup>th</sup>, we will be celebrating the feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Our 8<sup>th</sup> graders in Mrs. Andres’ classroom will dramatize the story of Juan Diego in 1531 to whom the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared.**

**After Mass, our sister parish in Inverness—Holy Family Parish—has a wonderful surprise for all of our students. Earlier in the school year, teachers were asked to talk to their students and find out what kind of Christmas gift they might like. In turn, different families at our sister parish chose a student whose gifts they wished to buy. Our students will go down to Santa’s workshop in what usually is the cafeteria. There they will have a chance to choose a gift of their choice. I understand that it is a magical time for our students because Holy Family Parish members are so generous. I know you will be just as surprised as they are when your child arrives home.**

**On December 19<sup>th</sup> our Christmas Program will be held in church during the afternoon. Each classroom chooses the song they wish to sing and our PreK children will dramatize the birth of Jesus in their own precious way. We hope that you can join us on that day.**

I am so grateful to each family who took the time to complete the survey that went home in our Tuesday packets two weeks ago. We have about 200 returned surveys that will be sent on to the company from whom we purchased these surveys. They will summarize your evaluation of the various aspects of St. Michael School. This, in turn, will help us to make some of the changes we know are important to you. I thank you for your honesty. It is important to me as a new principal to St. Michael to know what you consider important in your child's Catholic education. You can be certain that we will listen carefully to you. Again, I can't thank you enough for the time you invested in this all-important task. We will share the results once they are returned to us.

Ms. Grankowski, our 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, will be going on maternity leave in another week or so. Fifth grade parents should have received a special letter telling you about the long-term substitute teacher we hired to continue the work of Ms. Grankowski during December and January. Please welcome Ms. Bridget Robinson—a teacher with four years of experience and a Masters Degree in Education. She is currently shadowing Ms. Grankowski—learning who the students are, the ways they learn best, what the curriculum demands of her as a teacher. She will spend the next week or more doing that until Ms. Grankowski finally hands over the planning and instruction to Ms. Robinson. We pray for blessings on Ms. Grankowski and pray for a healthy little boy whose due date is December 6<sup>th</sup>.

I expect to hear news from Big Shoulders about the **grants and scholarships** that will be awarded to our families. I have no idea how many grants will be given. These grants will be shared with families in 90 city schools in the Archdiocese of Chicago. We expect to receive close to \$75,000 in grants and scholarships. You will be notified by mail if you are the recipient of a grant. Mrs. Rodriguez will then credit your tuition account with the grant you receive.

I wish each of you the blessings that your family needs to experience at this time. Each morning we remember you in our prayers as a school family. We pray for the jobs you may be searching for, the good health that you need to do the work of parenting, the safety that you deserve in the neighborhoods in which you live, and the peace your family deserves to know.

The peace of Christ be with you!

Ms. Barbara Lee, Principal