



St. Michael Elementary School

December 15, 2009

Dear Families:

It is a busy week for us all, isn't it? So much tending to the world around us that tells us what we need, and what our children need. And desperately we seek to find whatever it is that our child(ren) might be expecting. I wonder what would happen to our world if children learned at very early ages who Jesus is as well as the stories that teach the values Jesus wanted his followers to represent (or if you are not Christian—what are the stories that are told in your tradition that teach your children the right path to follow)? One of my 7th graders who is one of three of our students in a Saturday science program at the University of Illinois shared a lovely story with me. After his mother picked him up Saturday afternoon, they went to serve guests at a meal program for those who would not eat if it were not for the generosity of those who give without counting the cost. What a great mother who wanted her child to think of more than of himself.

As you know from our calendar, Friday, the 18th, at 2:45 will begin our **Christmas holiday**. We expect everyone back on Monday, January 4th when school begins again. If you have not submitted your December tuition check to us before that day, it will be due along with January tuition. Life will go on here at school and we will be paying out two payrolls in the time that we are on vacation. Where will the money come from in that case? I wish Old St. Nicholas could hide it in my shoes or something of equal delight but....that is just dreaming.

In the New Year our teachers will be asked to offer two **after-school activities** running eight-nine weeks each. They will cut across age levels. Children must be serious about them or they will not be permitted to join the courses. Their behavior during the day while in class must also be respecting. We only want students who have a great interest in learning. Right now, Mrs. Ortiz has been teaching **crochet** to approximately 20 students. Each time that they come to crocheting, they sip tea out of real tea cups to add to the atmosphere in the room. How lovely can that be? Mrs. Ortiz is also going to sponsor a **SCRABBLE** group of about 16 students. She is only searching for serious students who will work hard at word choices. Ms. Dalton will be sponsoring a class in bead making—many possibilities of what can be made using their hand made beads. We will be sharing the other activities after the New Year.

We will knock on wood; however, our attendance has been quite good despite the flu season. Parents have been very smart in keeping their child home if s(he) has a fever and is coughing or vomiting. I only know of one documented case because the mother called me to let me know she took her child to the hospital where, through blood work, her child was diagnosed with H1N1. Marvelous.

Attendance... Teachers have been sharing with me their concerns for several students in their classes who have high absentee rates. That can seriously affect your child's ability to learn the skills needed in the school year. We may have to suggest that your child repeat the grade if attendance does improve. Have your child join the large percentage of students who are here day after day. It will mean much less struggle learning all that was missed.

Peace in this season to all of our families!

Academic Excellence in the Catholic Tradition

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