

Glory be to God who can do infinitely more in us than we can ask or imagine!

August 28, 2007

Dear Families,

What a JOY it is to greet each new day with God's Word in our hearts and God's children in our care. The start of the year sets us all on a treasure hunt here to discover all the gifts and talents that your child possesses so that we can build beautifully upon them. These days have been spent in a variety of ways—practicing ways to move around the building in an orderly way, getting to know and welcome the students with whom they will be learning this year, taking some pre-tests so that teachers know what skills students have already or need to have, learning to pick a “just right book” that they can read from cover to cover. All of these activities have been wrapped in hot and humid weather that has made life sticky. What I dearly enjoy about our children is the respect and the thoughtfulness, the delight they have in being here. Today we only have four (4) children at home sick.

As I move from room to room each day, I am also hunting not only for the treasure mentioned above but also for the treasure in each of our teachers. After reading a story about ants, Brother Tim and his class (and I) went on an ant walk. Can you imagine that in your mind's eye? I don't think I have taken an ant walk ever. One thing I learned about our Preschool children is that they play hard together and in their centers AND they sleep hard during their afternoon naps. We have 23 children in that classroom and a waiting list of 9 children. Mrs. Schmeider has begun administering some of the assessments that let her know just what skills her students have in math. This will allow her to move ahead with those whose testing show that they are able to move beyond what would be taught in the first or second chapters. Another way to create a sense of motivation in our learners. Mrs. Stell is spending a lot of time building a strong foundation for number sense in her students. They use math manipulatives daily as a way of being able to visualize the ideas they are expected to know. She is introducing a new and powerful math system called Math Pentathlon this year along with her math text. I will tell you more about that as it begins to happen. Sister Jeanette is already building a strong sense of stewardship—care for the earth—by recycling throughout the building. Her students take that role very seriously. There are so many more treasures I find in teachers not mentioned. I will save those for another day.

I want to thank you all for taking your financial responsibilities to the school seriously. We have received a great response to the statements sent by Ms. Rodriguez for supplies and registration fees as well as the tuition. We do hope that you continue to remain committed to the financial side of your child's education. After all, just as you have a budget as a family that you need to meet to pay the bills, so also do we have a large budget we must meet each month in salaries, benefits, and instructional materials for our students' classrooms. We don't have a special little account sitting somewhere in some bank that we can use in case we are short. You are our special account from which we draw each month. Thank you for taking this seriously.

We feel very privileged this year to be seeing Father Perez frequently. He was here on the first day of school last week to welcome families back to school and to stop into classrooms to welcome our students back. He joined us for two days of our in-service as faculty and staff. This

year Father Perez is inviting us to worship together each week at an 8:30 AM Mass. He spent some of our Monday faculty meeting sharing what he hopes to see our students doing throughout the various sections of the liturgy. Ms. Agnew volunteered to plan the first liturgy with her seventh grade students. Please feel free to join us at St. Michael Church on Wednesday mornings at 8:30 AM if you are available. A special THANKS to Father Perez for all that he has done thus far to support our efforts at building a strong Catholic Identity.

To date, we don't have a gym teacher yet; however, I am interviewing two this week so keep us in your thoughts and prayers. Our children definitely need that opportunity to develop both their body and their skills. Once we have a teacher for physical education (gym), we will make it possible for you to buy gym clothes if they are needed.

Keep in mind the following dates:

Monday, September 3rd—Labor Day—No School
Monday, September 10th—Archdiocesan Teacher In-Service—No School
****Friday, September 14—October 9th—Candy Sale Fundraiser**
September 15th—Second Tuition Payment due
Saturday, September 22nd—Market Day Pick-Up

Our teachers and I have begun the process of beginning the School Improvement Plan that must be completed by January 22nd when we get visiting by the Illinois Department of Public Instruction as well as the Archdiocese of Chicago. You will be receiving a number of surveys that we are required to send out to parents. Please help us by completing them quickly and returning them to us so we can study the results. This process was actually to have been completed last year; however, for some reason it was delayed until this year. It is a process that schools are to work on for seven years in order to reach the goals that the school and the visiting team set for the school. We may also need some committee members who would be willing to put in a fair amount of time to help. Stay tuned for more news.

In the meantime, let friends whose children who have not yet started at the Chicago Public Schools know that we have openings in Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade, one opening in 3rd or 4th grade, and one opening in 5th and 6th grade.

Blessings to you all!

Ms. Barbara Lee, Principal