



# Saint Mary School

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November 2017

Dear St. Mary School Families,

When I was a child, I attended St. Barnabas School in New York. Back then, Catholic education was a very important part of our lives. In fact, St. Barnabas was our life!

During the week, we received an excellent education from incredibly dedicated teachers. I can remember teachers like Mrs. Chadwick, Mrs. O'Keefe and Mrs. Larkin - it felt like every adult was invested in me and my upbringing. Even when I went to the next grade, my previous year teacher remained connected to me and my family. I always felt safe and cared for - and I thought this happened everywhere...

When we went to Mass, I had to kneel, sit and receive Communion in a very specific way. I did not dare look right or left, or slouch, as this would have been a major infraction at St. Barnabas. Beyond the idea of *getting in trouble*, I did not want God to see me in any other way than at my best. This was critically important to me because it was so important to the adults at school. Innocently, I thought this happened everywhere...

When the school day ended, we stayed. Whether it was for extra help, basketball practice, or a service project, we wanted to be at our second home, we wanted to be together. My classmates and my teachers felt like family - we *were* a family - and I thought this happened everywhere...

As I went on to high school, it did not take me long to realize that I stood out from other students. What I learned at St. Barnabas set me apart and I noticed it instantly. I started to understand that what I was taught did not actually happen everywhere...

I eventually made my way to college and the rest of my life, all the while building upon the foundation that had been laid years ago at St. Barnabas. At every angle, I noticed I had something special in my background that not all others had - a Catholic education. Yes, I had a very supportive Catholic family - but it was within my Catholic school, on a daily basis, where I learned how to properly live life alongside Jesus. To this day, I credit my foundation at St. Barnabas for shaping and molding the individual who would later become the Principal of St. Mary School. I know, for a fact, that my Catholic education is the driving force behind any success I've experienced.

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*"Saint Mary School is a Christ-centered educational community dedicated to fostering Catholic faith and Gospel values, while striving for academic excellence within a nurturing family atmosphere."*

I want you to know that St. Mary School is providing that very same foundation for your child.

What I experienced, your child is experiencing. I know because I see it each day. Yes, times have changed - but what was important when I was a child is equally as important now (and maybe even more so). Following Jesus, being kind, showing respect, working hard - those values will remain in an ever-changing society.

Simply stated, you cannot place a price tag on the work being done at St. Mary School. Like me, your child will see that we are different. We are not better, we are just *different*...and that makes all the *difference* in the world! We are laying the foundation upon which all else will be built.

I want to thank each of you for choosing Catholic education and for choosing the great St. Mary School.

Below, please see the "Do It Anyway" prayer from Saint Teresa of Calcutta. I shared this with you last year but I feel the need to do so again. I think this would be a great prayer to review with your entire family - perhaps opening up a discussion about "carving your own path to God" and not allowing others to dictate how you should live:

***People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centered;***

***Forgive them anyway.***

***If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;***

***Be kind anyway.***

***If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies;***

***Succeed anyway.***

***If you are honest and sincere, people may cheat you;***

***Be honest and frank anyway.***

***What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight;***

***Build anyway.***

***If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous;***

***Be happy anyway.***

***The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow;***

***Do good anyway.***

***Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;***

***Give the world the best you've got anyway.***

***You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God;***

***It was never between you and them anyway.***

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As the First Quarter comes to an end, let's review the month of November and peek ahead to December. If you have any concerns or questions, please reach out to us in the Main Office.

### **Scholastic Book Fair**

Our book fair continues throughout this week. Coming in for Report Card conferences? Why not check out the Scholastic Book Fair, which is set up directly on our gymnasium stage. Special Thanks to our great wonderful parent volunteers, especially Mrs. Teng and Mrs. Gerhart.

Please review a recently sent email below (edited to reflect the correct day - Thursday):

*Please know that on Thursday, November 9, all students are allowed to accessorize their Thursday uniform to celebrate our "Wild West Book Fair" taking place this week. This is meant to be a simple and fun way to promote our "Wild West Book Fair" event.*

*There should not be references to violence or weapons, especially guns. Thank you for your special attention to this request. Some ideas include: boots, bandanna, hats, vests, braids, ponytails, or sheriff badges. Participation for students in Pre-K through 8th grade is optional. Students should come to school in their usual Thursday uniforms - whether you accessorize or not is up to your family.*

### **Report Card Conferences**

You should be set with your appointment times for your scheduled report card conferences. Please know that conferences are 15 minutes in length; if you require additional time, please set up a private appointment with the appropriate teacher(s).

### **Wine Tasting**

All are invited to join the St. Mary Home School Association on Saturday, November 18 for an evening of wine tasting, craft beer samples, specialty tastings, food and great company. Mix and mingle while meeting others committed to the mission of St. Mary School. Always an excellent night out! If you are interested in our babysitting service, provided by the 8th grade at our school, please contact our Assistant Principal, Mrs. McDonald, at: [KmcDonald@StMaryBethelCT.org](mailto:KmcDonald@StMaryBethelCT.org)

Tickets are \$40 in advance or \$45 at the door. Checks should be made payable to St. Mary School and remitted to the school office to the attention of Jennifer Zinzi. For questions, please email [jzinzi@yahoo.com](mailto:jzinzi@yahoo.com)

### **School Calendar**

Please be sure to access our website ([www.StMaryBethelCT.org](http://www.StMaryBethelCT.org)) for the latest updates on our school calendar.

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### Parking Lot Safety

Your children are our number one priority. PLEASE be very cautious when driving through our campus. Our students feel very comfortable here at school and often are not looking out for cars. It is OUR responsibility to drive in a safe and slow manner around school.

### Pep Rally

Our Pep Rally will take place on Tuesday, November 14 at 12:45pm. This will be a special Blue & White free dress down day. All parents are welcome to attend this fun event!

### Turkey Feast & Turkey Bingo

These fun SMS traditions will take place on November 16 (Turkey Feast for students) and November 17 (Turkey Bingo for families). Our students will have a blast on Thursday and *everyone* will have a blast on Friday. Please consider joining us for Turkey Bingo, a St. Mary School staple, starting at 6pm in our gym on the 17th.

### Thanksgiving Family Project

Last year, our students sent messages of thanks to two special family members. This year, the process is changing slightly. Please see the communication that will be sent home this week. If you have any questions on how to complete the project, please contact us in the Main Office.

### Special Gathering on Tuesday, November 21

We would like to invite our entire community to a gathering that will take place at St. Mary School on Tuesday, November 21. We will honor both Father Corey and Sr. Anne, as we purchased special “ground bricks” in their name at Immaculate High School. The replica “bricks” will be presented to Father Corey and Sr. Anne on this day, beginning at 12:15 in our school gym.

### Thanksgiving Break

We will have an Early Dismissal on Wednesday November 22. On this day, we will attend the 9am Mass. Please note: After School Club closes at 1:00pm. We will not have school on Thursday, November 24 and Friday, November 25. We will return to school on Monday, November 28.

### St. Mary School Facebook page

While we will use the Rediker system to communicate school closings, delays or early dismissals, our Facebook page will also be used and **may prove to be more reliable**. You do not have to be a member of Facebook in order to view our school page. Often times, the Facebook page will be the first place to receive a weather-related update, so please consider becoming familiar with this page.

([www.facebook.com/StMaryBethel](http://www.facebook.com/StMaryBethel))

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### **#GivingTuesday**

Last year, St. Mary School participated in a national day of “giving” entitled #GivingTuesday. We raised over \$7,000 in just 24 hours! That would not have been possible without your generosity. This year, #GivingTuesday is back, taking place on Tuesday, November 28. Please be sure to check out our Facebook campaign, which will begin as we progress through the middle of November. With much more to come, please stay “tuned” regarding this day of giving.

### **The Women’s Center of Danbury**

The great work from the Women’s Center of Danbury continues at SMS:

Wednesday, November 8: Grade 6 and Grade 7 (not combined; two independent sessions)

Wednesday, November 15: Grade 5 and Grade 8 (not combined; two independent sessions)

### **Interim Assessments**

At the end of this month, students in Grades 3-8 will take formative assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. These assessments provide teachers with valuable insight into their students’ understanding and comprehension of the curriculum standards. The results will drive planning and instruction.

### **Christmas Concert**

Our annual Christmas Concert will take place on Thursday, December 7. Our “snow date” is Tuesday, December 14. **Please note:** Afterschool Club closes at 5pm on the day of the concert. Special thanks to the great Mrs. Chamberlain for all of her hard work with our students.

### **Save the Date - Tuesday, December 19 - Special Advent Mass**

Please join us on Tuesday, December 19 as we gather in St. Mary Church to celebrate the coming of the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Please mark your calendars so that we can all celebrate together.

**Please note:** After School Club closes at 4:45pm on this day.

### **Last day before Christmas Break**

Please note that our last day of school will be Friday, December 22. It will be an Early Dismissal day and Club will close at 1pm. We will return on Tuesday, January 2.

### **Snow – Early Dismissal Days**

Some families have expressed concern regarding early dismissal days and not having the after-school club service available. After careful consideration of every option, we concluded that there really is no safe way to keep anybody in the school building during a snow emergency. I know this places a burden on some working families, but I ask you to consider the circumstances and why we need to close early: it is dangerous to travel.

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I am asking families to begin to think **now** about alternate plans in the event of an early closing. I would rather we spend time now, creatively thinking of alternatives, as it will be imperative that we clear the building out in a snow event. The school closes at 10:50am on these snow-emergency days and there is no After School Club option available.

**Kindergarten Information Session**

We will hold an informational session on Tuesday, December 5 for all families entering into Kindergarten in 2017-2018. The evening will begin at 6:00pm and will conclude by 6:30pm. This brief but very informative meeting should be attended by at least one Pre-K-4 parent in your family.

**Pre-K Open House**

Our Pre-K Open House will take place on Tuesday, December 12. The event will begin at 9:30am and conclude at 11:00am. As our program is highly regarded, there will be great demand, so we suggest early registration through Mrs. Garvey.

**Middle School Mid-Term Week**

Mid-Terms will take place the week of January 8 for students in Grades 6-8.

**Winter Open House**

Our winter Open House will take place on Tuesday, January 23 from 6:00-7:30pm.

**Catholic Schools Week**

This fun week begins on Sunday, January 28. More to come.

*We wish you and your family a very Blessed & Happy Thanksgiving!*

May God to continue to watch over and protect our children.

Gratefully,

  
Greg Vieeroy  
Principal