



Saint Mary School

24 DODGINGTOWN ROAD · BETHEL, CONNECTICUT 06801 · 203-744-2922 · STMARYBETHELCT.ORG

December 2016

Dear SMS Families,

Greetings from the Principal's Office of St. Mary School and Happy Advent! What a wonderful time to be together, as we prepare to celebrate the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Let this Advent season be a time of celebration for you and your family. As the month of December progresses and the Christmas bustle intensifies, remember to take time for reflection. I said to the students last week...think about what you have, not about what you want, and thank God for all that He has given to you. Indeed, the Christmas season is a time for family, giving and for expressing gratitude for all of our blessings.

Christmas Concert (12/7)

Our annual Christmas concert will take place on Wednesday, December 7 at 7pm in our school gym. A big "thank you" goes out to Mrs. Chamberlain for her incredible work in preparing our students for this wonderful tradition. Mrs. Chamberlain continues to play such an important role in the traditions of SMS and we are grateful for her professionalism and dedication to her craft.

Please note the following regarding the concert:

- Club closes at 5pm
- Students should arrive by 6:40pm and proceed directly to their Homeroom
- Students should follow the dress guidelines set forth by their Homeroom Teacher
- Parents: please meet your children in their Homeroom at the end of the night. We prefer to not have students walking down the hall on their own; we rather the organization of a "homeroom pickup" instead.

St. Mary School goes "Facebook Live"

We are happy to announce that we will begin to show special events at our school *live* on the internet, via our school Facebook page! As you may know, Facebook now has a feature that allows us to "broadcast" an event to our school page in real-time. This excellent technology will allow you to view school events "as they happen" just by going to our school page at: www.Facebook.com/StMaryBethel

You do not have to be a member of Facebook to view our great page. *Our next "FB Live" event will be the Christmas Concert, taking place on December 7.*

Christmas Craft Fair Wrap Up

Hopefully you were able to come to our Christmas Craft Fair this past Saturday, December 3. The event was full of fun and holiday spirit, along with great items to purchase, excellent food and great beverages! Many parents and students chipped in to make the day successful, and we must thank Kathy Friscia, who led this great tradition. Her dedication to our school is so greatly appreciated. She spent countless amounts of time and effort to ensure the Fair's success and she "made it happen" yet again! A special "thank you" goes to Ray Manzella for leading the action in the kitchen.

A Day of Remembrance (12/7)

Our country was attacked at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. We remember this day with great respect and reverence for those who lost their lives on this day.

Immaculate Conception (12/8)

The Immaculate Conception commemorates the holy conception of The Blessed Virgin Mother in the womb of Saint Anne. We will observe this holy day of obligation on Thursday, December 8. School will not be in session on this day. Please plan to attend Mass with your family.

"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."

#GivingTuesday Update

We want to thank each of you who contributed to #GivingTuesday at SMS. This was our second year participating and after raising just over \$3,000 last year, we set a lofty goal of raising \$4,000 this year. Incredibly, we surpassed the \$7,000 mark and all we can continue to say is “thank you” for all of your support.

Kindergarten Information Session (12/13)

We will hold an informative session for families that will be entering into Kindergarten in the Fall of 2017. The gathering will take place on December 13 from 9-10am.

St. Mary Church

One of the reasons I came to St. Mary School was Father Corey. Upon meeting Father, I learned of his dedication to Catholic education and more specifically, St. Mary School. Since that initial meeting, Father Corey has been incredibly supportive to both myself and our school as a whole. I have gone to him on many occasions and each and every time, he has helped us. Thank you to Father Corey and to St. Mary Parish – there is no us without you.

8th Grade Trips

Friday 12/9 (New York City)

Wednesday 12/14 (Westchester Broadway Theatre with Father Corey)

School Closings/Delays/Early Dismissals

We will continue to use the MSP system to communicate to our families in the event of a Closing, Delay or Early Dismissal. (Please know that our school Facebook page is quickly updated during School Closings or Delayed Openings.)

Reminder: there is no Club service when we have an Early Dismissal. Please plan ahead so that you do not get caught “off guard” and without a plan in place. We dismiss at 10:50am during an Early Dismissal.

Pre-K Delayed Opening Time Change

Please note the following change for Pre-K: in the event of a Delayed Opening, Pre-K doors will open at 9:30am. This is a change from previous communications, so please make note.

Wine Tasting Wrap Up

Thank you for Erik Apotheker and Jennifer Zinzi for organizing a wonderful Wine Tasting event at St. Mary School in November. Their dedication and commitment to our school is very much appreciated and we thank them for producing an outstanding evening for all who attended.

Pre-K Registration for '17-'18

We are currently accepting registration for our Pre-K programs for 2017-18. Interest is extremely high. If you would like to register your child, or need more information on the program, please contact our Enrollment Director, Linda Garvey, at: LGarvey@StMaryBethelCT.org

Please note: we do anticipate the program being at full capacity. Priority registration will be extended to our current families through December 22, 2016.

Facebook “Likes”

Have you “Liked” our school page yet? We now have over 930 “Likes” and we are pressing forward towards our goal of 1,000 before the end of the year. Help us reach our goal by “Liking” our page today!

Annual Appeal Reminder

As you know, we have kicked off our 2016-17 Annual Fund drive at St. Mary School. Thank you to those families who have already participated. Please remember: in order to receive your 100% tax-deductible benefit for 2016, your donation must be made before the end of the year. You can go to our website (www.StMaryBethelCT.org) and click on the Annual Fund banner or simply call the school at 203-744-2922 to speak with our Annual Fund Director, Robin Taylor.

Personal Identification will be needed for Club Pick-Up on 12/15

Please note that ID will be needed for Club Pick-Up as we may have an afterschool substitute on this day.

Turkey Feast & Turkey Bingo Wrap Up

A huge "thank you" goes out to Suzy Fehr and Tammy DeAngelis for producing a wonderful Turkey Feast for our students last month. And a huge "thank you" goes out to Kate Ball and the Curnans for producing a fabulous and exciting Turkey Bingo event at our school. We also thank the many parent volunteers that made these events happen!

Christmas Mass (12/20)

On December 20, we will have a Christmas Mass at St. Mary Church and all of our families (and your extended family) are invited. The celebration will begin at 5:00pm with our students performing Christmas songs by grade. We ask all families to arrive by 4:45pm on this day. Mass will begin at 5:30pm.

Please note: Club will end at 4:45pm on this day.

Christmas Vacation

Please note that SMS will not be in session from December 23 through January 2. We will resume school on Tuesday, January 3.

Email the Principal

Please know that you can reach Mr. Viceroy at any time at: GViceroy@StMaryBethelCT.org

Mid-Term Week

Mid-Terms will begin on Monday, January 9.

Middle School Meeting

All middle school (6th-8th grade) parents are invited to St. Mary School on Monday, January 9 at 8am. We will discuss any questions you may have about the middle school program at SMS.

Please review the following information regarding MSP:

My Students Progress (MSP) is the online grading, attendance, and communication system used throughout the Diocese of Bridgeport. With MSP, parents are able to monitor their child's grades in the teacher's gradebook as the teachers enter them. In order to access MSP, parents are emailed a username (their email address on file) and password upon being entered into the system by the school office. If you have not received a password, please contact Mrs. Decker. (The website is: www.mystudentsprogress.com)

Within the system, parents can set up alerts that allow them to be informed, by email, of any grade that is below a predetermined value (set by the parents).

To do this:

1. Log onto MSP
2. On the left side of the grade book under "preferences", click on the gear; this will bring you to where you can set up alerts for your child's grade.
3. Choose "yes" to receive email notifications; then set the percentage you would like to be notified of that is below this value.
4. Hit "update" to save your settings.
5. On your child's homepage, under the gear, you should now see "notify on".
6. This needs to be done for each class you would like to receive notification on (ie. Reading, Religion, Social Studies, etc.).

Teachers are required to update their gradebooks in a timely manner. Grades are usually entered on a weekly basis. Exams and larger projects may require additional time to be graded and recorded on MSP.

Please note: Kindergarten does not put grades on MSP.

Please review the following information regarding School Rack:

Teachers in Grades K - 4 maintain a class website. Class sites contain the homework for the week, along with other important information such as class announcements and "Specials" schedules. Teachers update sites on a weekly basis.

Teachers in Grades 5-8 also have class websites. These sites are updated daily with the day's homework. Important class information can also be found on these sites.

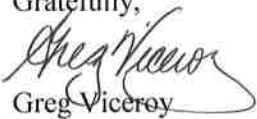
Class sites (sometimes referred to as SchoolRack.) can be accessed by visiting the St. Mary School webpage, and selecting your child's grade or teacher name from the list of Class Sites on the left hand side of the page.

Parents can "subscribe to class sites" by clicking on the blue "Subscribe to this Page" button found in the upper right hand corner. By subscribing to a page parents can receive an email each time the page is updated.

I speak on behalf of our entire faculty and staff when I say Merry Christmas to each of you. Let us rejoice and hail the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. May this season continue to remind us of our love for our family, our friends and each other.

***But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.
You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.
He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.
The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David,
and He will reign over Jacob's descendants forever;
His kingdom will never end."
-Luke 1:30-33***

Gratefully,



Greg Viceroy
Principal