

from the principal, Joseph Bearns

***" Many people dream of what they will accomplish,
while others stay awake and do it."***

From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic School, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment. One illuminated by the light of faith and having its own unique characteristics, an environment permeated with the Gospel spirit of love and freedom.

Catholic parents value the Catholic school environment for their children. Instead of candy canes and snowmen, St. Mary's students celebrate the true meaning of Christmas during the annual Christmas program. Parents appreciate the disciplines of prayer, sacrifice and giving to others during the Lenten season along with visits to the nursing homes and canned food drives. They welcome the opportunities the children receive in planning for school liturgies and prayer services. I joyfully shake the hands of the song leaders after each liturgy and those of us able to attend can attest to the honor given to our Father by the readers, greeters, altar servers and all those who "share the table."

Parents take an active part in a Catholic school. With 100% participation in Parent-Teacher-Student Conferences, support for fundraisers and attendance at school events, they say to the children that their education is important. We only get one chance to raise our children in a way that helps them put their faith into action. If our children grow to respect all life, from the unborn to the elderly, become good stewards of God's creation and believe in strong faith-filled families, then we have done our job as parents and educators.

January 27 marks the beginning of Catholic School's Week. Our theme this year is **St. Mary's Catholic School Lights the Way**. Let people know how St. Mary's School lights the way in this world and the world to come. The staff and I thank you for your support and our goal is to continue to accomplish our goal of helping each student be the best they can be in faith, academics and character.

January, 2008

A Month of Progress

January brings a number of reports that assess the growth of our students:

* On January 17, your child will be bringing home their first semester progress report. At first quarter conferences students shared their goals and ways to meet those goals. The progress report gives us another picture of your child's achievement.

* Before the end of the month a "Report to Students and Parents" will be sent home for students in grades 3-6 indicating their scores from the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills given last November. Each teacher will conference with their students to note strengths and areas needing improvement.

* During Catholic School's Week an Archdiocesan report will be sent home with each family showing how Archdiocesan schools are doing in key areas. St. Mary's School will also have an insert showing the results of our test scores over time. Thank you for encouraging your children to give their best effort.

Absenteeism/Homework Policy

Please call the school before 9:00am to inform us of your child's absence. If homework is requested for a children, **parents may pick up assignments after 3:00pm outside the main office the day of the absence.** It is possible that your child can make up his/her assignments when they return.

Catholic School's Week

Catholic School's Week, January 27- February 1, 2008 will be celebrated with our annual "Soup Supper" on Sunday evening. An **Open House** will be conducted from 11:30-12:30 for those families who currently do not have children at St. Mary's School. Mr. Bearns will be available to give tours and answer any questions you may have about our programs.

Winter Weather

Iowa is having its share of winter weather, resulting in late starts and cancellations. Listen to KMCH (94.7) for weather related announcements. **WE WILL FOLLOW YOUR DIRECTIONS ON THE INCLEMENT WEATHER FORM THAT YOU COMPLETED AND SIGNED AT REGISTRATION.** We will follow West Delaware's schedule changes.

JANUARY-MAY STUDENT LITURGIES

January 18-	Mrs. Hansel and grade 4
January 25-	Mrs. Schlichte and Mrs. Fergesen- grade 5
February 1-	Mrs. Cole- grade 6
February 6-	Mrs. Phillips- grade 6 <u>Ash Wednesday</u>
February 22-	Mrs. Koontz and grade 2
February 29-	Sister Jessi/Mrs. Worden and grade 4
March 7-	Mrs. Fergesen and grade 5
March 14-	Mrs. Sellers/Mrs. Vaske- kindergarten
March 28-	Mrs. Hansel and grade 4
April 4-	Mrs. Koontz and grade 2
April 11	Mrs. Solomon and grade 1
April 18-	Mrs. Schlichte and grade 5
April 25-	Mrs. Phillips and grade 6
May 2-	Mrs. Sellers/Mrs. Vaske-kindergarten
May 9-	Mrs. Schlichte and grade 5
May 16-	Mr. Bearns & volunteers
May 23-	Mrs. Lammers and grade 3
Last day-	Mrs. Cole & Mrs. Phillips- Grade 6 advancement

First Eucharist

The First Eucharist for our second graders will be held during the weekend liturgies March 29 & 30. More information will be coming home.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, life is Your gift to us.

*Through **Baptism** You invite us to share the gift of our lives in service to others. Give us the courage and generosity to respond to Your call.*

*Through the **Eucharist** You fill us with Your life-giving presence and strengthen us in holiness. Give us the grace to make our efforts in Your service fruitful in Your kingdom.*

*Through **Confirmation** You seal us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and send us forth. Give us the strength to proclaim Your Word and make known Your Will to all the world.*

*Open our hearts to Your service and move the hearts of men and women to follow You as **Priests, Sisters and Brothers.***

*Help parents and teachers to share their
Catholic faith and to encourage our young people
to explore religious vocations.*

*Guide all people, Lord, in Your ways
of compassion, truth, and peace,
that we may find joy
in fulfilling our vocation.*

Amen.

Outreach

As part of participating in Catholic communities, our staff has given of their time and talent in a variety of ways.....

Lay distributors, Soup Supper, funeral singing, funeral baking, Parish Festival, weekend song leader/choir, children's liturgist, Faith committees- Advent & Lent, Catholic Identity Coordinators, Sacramental programs, Jump Rope for Heart, Spring and Christmas programs, visits to nursing homes, Parish Providers, SCRIP volunteers, Alumni Committee, money counter for parish collections, lectors, Parish Directory Company, Confirmation candidates (calligraphy), Confirmation committee secretary, GIFT, serving funeral diners, teaching Religious Education, Sunday School teachers, Anointing receptions, Respect Life activities, Catholic Daughter's activities, Summer Bible Camp, Home and School Stars activities, summer school; non-St. Mary's parishioners are also active in their home parishes.

We are grateful for the service shown by so many in our parish(es).