



September 19, 2020

Dear St. Mary's Families,

The cooler weather and shorter daylight hours tell us that autumn is just around the corner, and the arrival of fall always brings a season of festive days and fun activities to St. Mary's. We have completed our fourth full week of school and our hallways are filled with displays of creative classwork and delightful artwork. I will be taking photos in the coming days and posting them on our school's official early childhood and elementary Facebook sites so parents and friends of St. Mary's can catch a glimpse of some of the wonderful and purposeful things our students are doing in the classroom. It is different not having parents in our hallways this year for afternoon pickup visiting with children, teachers, and other parents, but our school days are as busy, productive, and fun as always. In addition to the communication opportunity for parents-teachers and social interaction afternoon classroom dismissal has always provided, parents have also been able to see their child's and other students' work displayed throughout the school. **I hope seeing some of the hallway treasures on our Facebook sites will be enjoyable for you and your family.**

As you know, we had our first confirmed student case of COVID-19 at St. Mary's this week. Due to careful planning and organization we were able to identify the close contact group quickly and communicate not only to families impacted, but also the city and county health departments. Classrooms and the entire school are cleaned and disinfected throughout the day and each evening to prevent the spread of illness as much as possible, and the classroom involved has been deep cleaned and disinfected for students not being quarantined and teachers to return to on Monday morning. As careful as we are being, we cannot control if a student may be exposed to any illness outside of the school environment, especially by a

parent or guardian. **If you have been exposed to any contagious illness and/or are showing symptoms, especially COVID-19 symptoms, please keep your child (ren) home from school until you have been tested and negative results have been confirmed.** This not only helps to ensure your family's health and safety, but also our entire school community. I also encourage you to read and/or reread the *JACS Guide to Returning to School* so you are informed of our school's guidelines. Thank you.

Thank you to the parents who provided feedback in Home and School's survey sent out a few weeks ago. As a result of the survey, **Home and School will be holding monthly meetings on the third Thursday of each month in the St. Mary's Parish Hall beginning at 6:30 p.m.** Our next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, evening, October 21st. Home and School meetings are a fun and informative way to keep up to date with special school activities and events, a great way to meet new friends, and a thoughtful and generous way to support our students, staff, and faculty. If you are interested in being a room parent or helping with a class party (the first being Halloween on Thursday, October 29th), please text Tara Horinek at (417) 529-6684 with your name and what class your child is in. Home and School will be in touch with you with more information. Thank you for donating your time and talents to St. Mary's!

St. Mary's will be celebrating **Mercy Day on Thursday, September 24th.** Bishop Rice will be our campus guest for a few hours visiting classrooms and having lunch before he celebrates Mass with us at 1:30 p.m. Afternoon dismissal will be at the normal 3:10 p.m. 2020 marks the 135th year that Catholic schools have been in the Joplin area, started by the Sisters of Mercy in 1885. Not only did the Sisters of Mercy bring Catholic education to the Joplin area, they established the first healthcare system to take care of the community, now known as Mercy Healthcare. We are proud and grateful to the Sisters of Mercy for their dedication, service, and care throughout the years.

Don't forget that school pictures are coming up! **School Pictures at St. Mary's are scheduled for Monday, September 28th and Tuesday, September 29th.** Elementary students are asked to wear either a navy or red uniform shirt for school photos, early childhood students may wear any clothing that you wish them to wear for this special day. Order forms will be sent home in next week's Communicator Envelope. Ordering information is also available on the www.jacss.org website under the St. Mary's link. The website provides different backdrop options, more details about photo packages, and allows orders to be placed online.

Upcoming Dates to Remember:

Thursday, September 24th

Mary's, 1:30 p.m.

Monday, September 28th -

Tuesday, September 29th

Friday, October 2

Monday, October 5th -

Thursday, October 8th

Tuesday, October 6th

Friday, October 16th

faculty (Please note change of date from October 15th)

Mercy Day Mass with Bishop Rice at St.

Interstate School Photos

NO SCHOOL - Faculty PD Day

ITBS Testing for 3rd - 5th Grades

Fist Tuesday at Club 609

NO SCHOOL - Diocesan PD Day for