



September 26, 2020

Dear St. Mary's Families,

Our school had a wonderful week together! On Thursday we celebrated [Mercy Day](#), the day in which we recognize the compassion, service, and legacy of Catherine McAuley, the founder of the Sisters of Mercy. 2020 marks the 135th year of Catholic education in the Joplin area, when the several Sisters of Mercy arrived in Joplin to establish schools to help educate the local community. During our [Mercy Day Mass](#), Bishop Rice explained that when we think of Joplin, we should think of Mercy and the incredible influence the Sisters of Mercy had and have not only in education in Joplin and southwest Missouri, but in healthcare as well. 2021 marks the 125th year of Mercy Healthcare in the Joplin community. Mrs. Bashor's second grade class did a lovely job taking part in the Mass, and it was even more special having so many priests and religious sisters join us for the celebration. Thank you to everyone who helped plan and attend such a special day for our school community.

[Monday and Tuesday are picture days at St. Mary's!](#) Elementary students (Kindergarten – 5th grade) are asked to wear either a navy or red uniform shirt for school photos, early childhood students may wear any clothing that they feel extra spiffy wearing. Order forms were sent home in yesterday'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 you to place orders online. If your child is absent on Monday or is an early childhood student who does not attend school on Mondays, his or her photo will be taken on Tuesday. If school pictures come back in a few

weeks and you would like another photo taken, retakes are scheduled for Monday, November 2nd.

Please remember that we do not have school this coming Friday, October 2nd for a Teacher PD Day. Faculty members usually attend an Ozark 7 PD Day each October with other schools in our district, but it has been canceled this year due to COVID-19 precautions, trying to limit full-day interaction with other schools. Instead, St. Mary's faculty will be learning and working at our school, specifically expanding our training with Google Classroom and Meet. We look forward to welcoming our students back to campus on Monday, October 5th.

Speaking of October 5th, it is the first day of ITBS testing for 3rd – 5th grade students. The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) is a series of standardized achievement tests used to assess a child's knowledge of what they have learned in school and are not cognitive or IQ tests. St. Mary's students will take the test October 5th – 8th per diocesan standards, and again in the spring to be used as a measure of student learning and growth during the school year. Testing will take place each morning, and there will be no homework for students taking the test. If your child will be taking the test, please ensure they attend school each day, have a good night's rest each night, have a nutritious breakfast each morning, and arrive to school on time. Home and School will be providing nutritious snacks during test breaks, what a nice treat!

As a reminder, if you or someone in your family or social group has been exposed to COVID-19 and any member of your family is showing symptoms as a result, **do not send your child(ren) to school until the family member has been tested for COVID and they have received negative test results back.** Sending a child to school who has been in direct contact with someone who has been exposed and is showing symptoms is irresponsible and puts our entire school community at risk. Not only do students who sit near your child have to remain home for 14 days, but parents or grandparents have to take two weeks off from work or find another source of childcare for their child. We can keep the school incredibly clean and disinfected, practice social distancing and mask wearing, have students wash hands and hand sanitize many times throughout the day, change lunch periods and afternoon dismissal, and many other things that we are doing each day—all to no avail if a parent knowingly sends their exposed child to school. Thank you to the families who are

keeping their child home and/or contacting me or Sister Julie for more information in order to protect everyone as much as possible.

I hope your family has a wonderful weekend and enjoys the beautiful fall weather together! Area parks, walking trails, pumpkin patches, and your own backyard are great places to get some fresh air, put cell phones and tablets away, and create special memories together. The days are long, but the years are short... enjoy each precious moment with your child.

God bless and take care,
Joanne Lown

Upcoming Dates to Remember:

Monday, September 28 th - Tuesday, September 29 th	Interstate School Photos
Friday, October 2	NO SCHOOL - Faculty PD Day
Monday, October 5 th Walking Trail	Kindergarten Field Trip to Wildcat Glades
Monday, October 5 th – Thursday, October 8 th	ITBS Testing for 3 rd – 5 th Grades
Tuesday, October 6 th	Fist Tuesday at Club 609
Wednesday, October 7 th	Charity Dress Day
Thursday, October 8 th Pumpkin Patch	Early Childhood Field Trip to Wood's Farm
Monday, October 12 th	Moe's Monday
Friday, October 16 th faculty, please note change of date	NO SCHOOL - Diocesan PD Day for End of 1 st Quarter