



December 18, 2020

Dear St. Mary's Families,

As we celebrate our last day in school before the Christmas holiday, I would like to wish you and your family a blessed Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year. In the hustle and bustle of the holiday season we sometimes lose focus on the true meaning of Christmas, the celebration of Christ's birth and God's gift of infinite mercy and grace. As Father Joe explained in his Mass homily this morning, Christmas is our gift from God and we are responsible for sharing the love, joy, and promise with others. Let us focus on this gift as we celebrate Christmas and begin a new year of promise and hope in 2021.

We have had a festive and fun week at St. Mary's! Classroom holiday music programs and a virtual visit from Mr. and Mrs. Claus have been dropped into your child's Google Classroom for you to enjoy. Ms. Crabtree has done a phenomenal job of preparing a holiday program without singing, and it has been wonderful to watch and listen to what our students have learned and presented in the process. Students have finished making and writing out Christmas cards that will be delivered to the Communities of Wildwood before Christmas as well this week, ensuring we keep our thoughts and prayers on others. Classrooms had wonderful celebrations this week as well, ranging from wrapping up reindeer portraits, calendars, and other gifts made by love for you by your child to Polar Express parties and fun games for all. Home and School treated our faculty and staff to a "Twelve Days of Christmas" experience during the month of December, and our school community loved the daily themed gifts and the careful thought and festive fun that went into each day, thank you!

As your family continues to prepare for Christmas, mark your calendar for Monday, December 21st, approximately 45 minutes after sunset when the Christmas Star will appear in the sky for the first time since 1226. On December 21st, the planets of Saturn and Jupiter will

appear 0.1° apart – that’s about the thickness of a dime held at arm’s length – which means the two planets and their moons will be visible in the same field of view through binoculars or a small telescope. Look for them 45 minutes after our sunset, low in the fading twilight, roughly 14 degrees about the southwestern horizon. This will be Saturn and Jupiter’s closest alignment since July 16, 1623, but that alignment was too close to the Sun for anyone to observe. The last alignment as easy to see appeared back on March 4, 1226.

Merry Christmas! As your family gathers - either in person, from a distance, or in your treasured memories - let us keep everyone we hold dear close in thought and prayer. Although 2020 has been a challenging and overwhelming year, God continues to provide grace, mercy, tremendous daily blessings to keep our hearts thankful, grateful, and hopeful. **Our beloved St. Mary’s school community has not only completed an incredible semester during a worldwide pandemic, we have also continued to educate, love, and nurture the whole child – heart, mind, body, and soul – in enriching and purposeful ways.** Thank you for all that you do for your child, including sending him or her to St. Mary’s.

God bless and take care,
Joanne Lown
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Upcoming Important Events:

December 19 th – January 3 rd	Christmas Break
Monday, January 4 th	Classes Resume
Tuesday, January 5 th	First Tuesday at Club 609
Wednesday, January 6 th	Charity Dress Day
Tuesday January 12 th , 19 th , 26 th	4 th and 5 th Grade Classroom Spelling
Bees	
Monday, January 18 th	NO SCHOOL – Dr. Martin Luther
King Jr. Day	
Thursday, January 21 st	Free Dress Day
Friday, January 29 th	St. Mary’s Final Spelling Bee, 10:00
a.m.	
January 31 st – February 6 th	Catholic Schools Week