



Dear Parents,

Peace! Welcome to the last month in 2017. Time keeps marching forward. How appropriate we can begin this newsletter with a line from Psalm 19.... "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows God's handiwork." December is certainly a month that invites us to look up at the sky and reflect on the Advent/Christmas star, announcing the glory of God. May these Advent days be a time of peace and hope as you and your families prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

To begin the Advent season our Christmas play will challenge us not to get caught up in all the "stuff" that prevents us from the real meaning of Christmas - Emmanuel, God With Us. Come watch the Snowflake, Starfish and Electron teach us about the Holy Night. Dress rehearsal is Friday, December 1, at 1:00 pm and the performance is Friday, December 1, at 7:00 pm. Anyone not able to attend the night performance is most welcome at the dress rehearsal.

Our November activities have come to an end. Thanks so much for your support of our Christmas Bazaar, Barnes & Noble, SSJ Chances, Spaghetti Dinners, Joe Longshore Tournament and Thanksgiving Food Drive. Your goodness is deeply appreciated and will long be remembered. We ask that you continue to support our Grocery Gift Card and Scrip program.

This year Family to Family will take on a new look. In the past certain classrooms have adopted a family, purchased and wrapped specific gifts and had them ready for a special delivery. Rather than purchasing gifts we are asking for donations of gift card that will be distributed to needy families. This will empower the parents to purchase their own gifts for their children. It's a great concrete way of honoring their dignity. Thanks in advance for any donation you can make to help the less fortunate here in Marlton and beyond. God bless you for your generosity.

The official Advent Season begins on Sunday, December 3. Due to the fact that Christmas falls on a Monday, the fourth Sunday of Advent is on Christmas Eve.

We will have our December liturgy, Wednesday, December 6, at 9:00 am followed by our Advent morning reflection for moms, grandmoms, aunts, etc. Hope you can join us as we take a few hours to slow down and reflect on the meaning of Christmas.

Students on Grades 7, 6, and 3 will receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the Advent season. Thanks to Father Rich, Father Jorge and Father Leon for celebrating God's mercy with us.

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception will be celebrated on Friday, December 8. You are invited to join us for 9:00 am liturgy as we honor Mary, the Mother of God.

Report cards for the first trimester will go home on Friday, December 8. Please review them with your children. Congratulations to all who have done their very best. We are extremely proud of you. Keep up the great work. We now begin the 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester. Let's encourage our children to prepare for class, participate in classroom activities and complete assignments on time. We will continue to develop brain strategies that will assist them in their learning. Genesis Parent Portal will close on **Friday, December 1**, and will re-open after Report Cards are distributed. Please do not log in to the Parent Portal during this time.

Our eighth grade students will be entertaining our senior citizens on Tuesday, December 12, for their Christmas Luncheon. Thanks to all the moms and dads who will be preparing food for the celebration. **THIS WILL BE A BROWN BAG LUNCH**, as the cafeteria will be used for the luncheon.

Friday, December 15, is Santa Hat and Red/Green Day. Students may wear school appropriate dress down clothes with a store bought or handmade Santa Hat. Have fun designing your own. PTA will provide an ice cream treat. **With the number of food concerns growing and the reality that our children are not in need of goodies, we ask that parents DO NOT send in food treats for the holidays. There are many ways to celebrate the Advent/Christmas season in the classroom without brownies, cupcakes, etc. Thanks for honoring our request.** The day will end with a 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade dance from 7:00-9:00 pm. It will be a good day for all.

St. Joan of Arc will have the Annual Christmas Carol Festival on Sunday, December 17, at 3:00 PM. This year we are blessing stars. You are invited to bring your star from your nativity scene or tree. More details will be in the church bulletin.

We will have our closing Advent liturgy on Friday, December 22, at 9:00 am. Please join us as we end the season of Advent and anticipate our Christmas celebrations.

The Bowman School of Dance will provide us with entertainment and their interpretation of the Nativity on Friday, December 22. We look forward to their presentation.

The Mass schedule for the weekend of December 23/24, Christmas Day and New Year's Day is as follows:

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT -**

Saturday, December 23

No Confessions

Mass at 4pm and 5:3pm

Sunday, December 24

Mass at 7:30am and 9am



**CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE 2017**

Christmas Eve, December 24:

3pm Mass

5pm Children's Mass

7:30pm Choir Mass (*Musical Prelude begins at 7pm*)

9pm Mass

12 Midnight Mass (*with Procession of Light*)

CHRISTMAS DAY, Monday, Dec. 25:

Masses at 8am, 10am, 12 Noon

NEW YEAR'S EVE, Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017

5pm Mass

NEW YEAR'S DAY, Monday, Jan. 1, 2018

9am Mass

Our Brown Envelope is a very important program in our school. It is the tool we use to communicate with parents about everything happening at St. Joan of Arc School. It is important that the envelope be returned on Thursday as many things that are returned (especially Scrip) need to be processed on Thursday. Please remind your child to turn in their Brown envelope to the teacher in the morning. It is imperative that everything be returned in the Brown envelope and you use the small brown envelopes given you for lunch tokens and food certificates. The brown envelopes are checked for signatures so we can be sure you have received the information. **It is very important you check your e-mail every Wednesday. There is information in the Brown Envelope e-mail that is not sent home in the Brown Envelope.** Please print out forms and return to school in the Brown Envelope on Thursdays. If this is not possible please contact the school office. It is our goal to make sure every parent receives our school information. **Thank you for following our Brown Envelope policies.**

The official basketball season is underway. Thanks to our coaches for their time, patience and talent. We are looking forward to a great season. We ask all those who attend the games to follow the policies and procedures for the gym. They are:

- No food or drink in the gym
- No one on the steps or stage
- Only basketball players on court
- Grade school children need to be accompanied by an adult



Our school gym is used for a variety of activities such as the Christmas Show, sport functions, band recitals, Theater Week, etc. We ask that any children attending these events be supervised. We are concerned for their safety and respect for our property. Last year a number of children were jumping and pulling on the wall mats. Unfortunately, they became loose and detached from the wall. Thankfully no one was hurt but we did incur a cost to have the mats re-hung. **Thanks for being good stewards of our property. Your cooperation is expected and appreciated.**

To avoid hurt feelings or misunderstandings, children will not have a Pollyanna exchange on school property. Thanks for your understanding and the reasons for this policy.

Please refer to your December *Take Out: Family, Faith on the Go*, for Advent and Christmas home activities.

The finance committee has been meeting and reviewing last year's budget while preparing for the 2018-2019 school year. Every fundraiser, every grocery gift card, every scrip card effects the final decision regarding a new tuition rate. This commitment is why we need EVERY FAMILY to support GROCERY GIFT CARDS and SCRIP orders. We also ask that every family use the church envelopes regularly. Remember that tuition does not cover the cost of educating your child, therefore each and every child receives tuition assistance from the parish.

**Please mark your calendars for our annual financial PTA meeting on Thursday, January 25, 2018, at 7:00 PM and Friday, January 26, 2018, at 10:00 AM. We trust every family will attend one of these sessions. We believe it is very important that you understand the entire financial picture, not just the cost of tuition. Our goal is to support you as a parent and steward as we move forward.** Along with fundraisers the number of students enrolled effects tuition. While there are studies that show demographics are changing in Marlton, there are also children and their families that would enhance our SJA community. We ask you to reach out to your neighbors who attend Religious Education classes and talk about why you continue choosing Catholic Education. You are the greatest positive example of the benefits of a Catholic Education. Thanks to all who have been faithful to your tuition responsibilities. We appreciate your consistency in helping us meet our financial commitments.

The National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) will sponsor a national day of giving, **MANY GIFTS ONE NATION** from January 30, 2018, from 9:00 am to 9:00 am of January 31, 2018. The purpose of this day is to provide an avenue where people can support their local Catholic School. More information will be in the January newsletter. Please pass info on to any Catholic School graduates, parents and friends. Thanks.

**Please call 856-983-0078 to leave an absent call for your child or to leave any message for the nurse. You may also send an email to: [absent.tardy@stjoansk-8.org](mailto:absent.tardy@stjoansk-8.org) Please be descriptive of your child's reason for absence, i.e. doctor appointment, fever, congestion, nausea, vomiting..... It is also helpful to know if your child will be arriving late to school.**

**Students may return to school when fever free for 24 hours. The 24 hour rule also applies to the stomach virus and antibiotic treatment for strep throat and pink eye. Donations of throat lozenges, mints, and tissues for the classroom would be greatly appreciated. Thank You!**

We ask that you continue to be diligent in your child's use of technology. Monitor all instant messages, Snap chats, text messages, apps, Facebook, Twitter, etc. There is an excellent article in the September issue of The Atlantic by Jean M. Twenge entitled "Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?" I would strongly encourage every parent to read it and discuss it with your child/ren. I found it to be enlightening, thought provoking and challenging. Let's continue to work together to keep our children alert, aware and safe. May they realize the importance of face to face conversation, the value of eye contact with another human being and the importance of good healthy relationships. As they find their way through and around all the screen activities that are a part of their life may they always believe in their worth and respect themselves and others as a child of God.

There will be a slight change in carline starting December 1, 2017. You will come in as usual, However, the line will be in front of the island near the cafeteria rather than in back of it. This is another safety procedure. Thanks for your cooperation.

School will resume on Tuesday, January 2, 2018. We will have a special day to welcome in the New Year. **ALL CHILDREN** are to wear their gym uniform to school. PTA will supply hamburgers, hot dogs and a beverage as a special treat to begin 2018.

During the last week of December we will celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family. Back in September, I invited you to take a few moments before or after Sunday mass or stop if are driving by and visit our prayer garden. In there is a life size statue of the Holy Family In the midst of what can become crazy hectic days you are encouraged to take a few minutes each day to remember God's presence, take a couple of deep breaths and look up at the heavens that are declaring what Christmas is all about~**The Glory of God.**

Merry Christmas!  
God's Blessings,

*Sister Pat*

