



ST. FRANCIS

CATHOLIC CHURCH AND SCHOOL

Office of the Principal

December 4, 2019

Dear Parents,

I hope you had a blessed and relaxing Thanksgiving with family and friends. The end of the year is quickly approaching with a great deal to complete. Our virtue this month is patience, which is an appropriate virtue with Christmas quickly approaching. Though the Christmas season should be a happy time, it is also a very stressful time for many families and children. It is a month where the students are restless and are eager for Christmas vacation. Please remember to slow down on the streets, leave a littler earlier for morning drop off, help out a neighbor in need, and most importantly smile.

Thank you to all of the families that contributed to the Oregon National Guard Toy Drive. Ms. Hilburger and her kindergarten and first grade students did a marvelous job in collecting and graphing 262 toys. St. Francis Catholic School community has made a heartfelt difference in many children's lives this Christmas.

The students are busy preparing for our big Christmas performance on December 19th. The students are very excited to sing some of their favorite Christmas songs and the drama club is ready to act out *The Mouse and the Manager*. I am looking forward to this special evening. The Christmas program will begin promptly at 6:30 p.m. The students are to come dressed in their Sunday best.

As stated at Back to School Night and in my previous principal letter, we are working on marketing and recruiting students at St. Francis Catholic School (SFCS). When speaking to current families about why they joined SFCS the number one response is, "We joined because another family told us about how wonderful the school and community are." What this means is you (parents) are our biggest asset to filling the seats at SFCS. Our SAC and marketing team are brainstorming ideas on how to market our school to more families. We know our webpage is the number one tool in reaching others, and we are currently updating our website and in January a school video will be filmed. Additionally, I have distributed Open House fliers to businesses, preschools, and churches in hopes of attracting new families. **Please invite families to attend our Open House on December 15th from 11:30 am -1:00 pm**, and please continue to recruit families, so they too take advantage of our wonderful education and community. Moreover, Ms. Hilburger and I will be attending Nike's Kindergarten Fair on December 12th. Thank you for helping me in advertising our school and families.

As you are aware, we are in the process of writing our *Self Study* in preparation for our accreditation visit in the fall of 2020. Your input, as shareholders, is very important to us so we want to take this opportunity to thank you for responding to our Catholic Identity survey. There were forty-two families that completed the survey. This week a Parent Survey link was sent via the *Wolf Post* to be completed by December, 20th. Please take the time to complete the survey. The surveys are used to assist SFCS in seeking the best and most effective ways to educate children for the 21st century, infusing this education with a strong and vital Catholic identity, while supporting parents in their role as the primary educators of their children. The staff, students, SAC, PSO, and the Pastor will also complete their surveys by December 20th. We are leaving no aspect of the school unexamined as we continuously strive to improve our school, meet the needs of all learners, and ensure the high achievement of all learners.

Mrs. Smith (middle school science and mathematics teacher) and I visited Quatama School in Hillsboro, Oregon, this month in partnership with Portland Public School's (PPS) STEAM program. Throughout our morning, we observed effective teaching strategies through art integration, technology, engineering, and mathematics to engage students. While the resources provided were exponential, the teaching was comparable to SFCS; however, our student to teacher ratio is exceptional! In January, Mrs. Smith and I will further our work with PPS in growing our STREAM program.

If you get a chance, please thank Ms. De Jesus for her work with our middle school students in science. Her last day at SFCS is December 20th. She did a great job and will be an outstanding teacher. We wish her well and we will miss her knowledge and positive attitude.

I want to thank you for supporting our Dine Out Nights. Additionally, we thank Mr. and Mrs. Van Nice for the wine tasting event that raised \$1,355.00 for SFCS.

I wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a blessed Happy New Year.

May God continue to bless each and every one of you!

Sincerely,

Ms. Gonzalez
Principal