

Dear Parents,

Each day as I fulfill my responsibilities as principal, and contribute to the education of our students, I give thanks for the privilege of serving the great people of the JSS community. Often, I reflect on the differences between Catholic education today in the 21st Century as compared to my experience as a Catholic school student in the 1960's and early 70's. While some similarities remain, in most ways a child's experiences at a Catholic school today are profoundly and positively different. So, what does it mean to be a Catholic school student today?

From a pragmatic viewpoint, the academic education at JSS is relevant, highly engaging, inspiring, and taught from a critical thinking perspective; and taught by highly qualified teachers whose training includes advanced degrees, consistent professional development, and a "calling" to teach. JSS, like many Catholic schools of today, is developing a robust and enriching fine arts, and performing arts curriculum. The arts, which traditionally have not been identified with a Catholic school, play a vital role in a child's development, and certainly is in alignment with the JSS philosophy to teach to the "whole" child.

My observations always confirm that JSS students are happy learners – they come to school each day with a unique enthusiasm to learn, and are inspired by their own success. They enjoy working with their classmates; they learn independence, and they learn to contribute to the common good. Their confidence and emotional maturity is remarkably advanced.

Catholic education of today, must be different than it was a half century ago. Catholic education has evolved and will continue to improve and expand to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse and discerning clientele that has many choices and options for educational services. At JSS, we must nurture and celebrate a culture of learning by our students, our parents, and of ourselves as educators, so that we grow intellectually and spiritually, and that your children will be well served to meet the demands of an increasingly complex society.

I contend that Catholic schools are needed today more than ever before. The intangible aspects of learning and growing as part of a faith-filled community creates a greater awareness of self through confidence, and the joy of sharing in our contributions to the common good. The importance of the formation of conscience, self-confidence, positive self-identity, and faith, as our children prepare for high school, cannot be overstated.

Fr. Ronald Nuzzi, an educator at the University of Notre Dame, (Director of the University's ACE RISE Department) writes eloquently on Catholic education. Each week, I will share with you, one of Fr. Nuzzi's, *Ten Reasons Why Catholic Education Still Matters*. This will help answer the question and to further define *what it means to be a Catholic school student in the 21st Century?*

Here's the first of ***Ten Reasons Why Catholic Education Still Matters***, by Reverend Ronald J. Nuzzi, Ph.D. Director, ACE (Alliance for Catholic Education), the University of Notre Dame.

1. An Incarnational View of the World

Catholic School students learn that God is present and active in their lives and in the world. They learn to recognize the "footprints of God" in their daily experiences, especially in the midst of life's challenges. They develop a sense of "sacramental awareness". They see the signs of God's love around them, and become instruments of God's grace in their own neighborhoods, communities and the world. In an

incarnational view of the world, there is no such thing as a secular subject as all learning helps to develop and bring to full bloom that image of God that is in each person.

School Photos

The date for JSS school pictures is set – please mark your calendar for Wednesday, November 1 and Thursday, November 2. Details on photo packages, including cost, is attached to this newsletter.

Professional Development Day (Tomorrow, Friday, October 27)

Tomorrow, Friday, October 27, is a Diocesan Professional Development Day for all teachers and there will be no school.

Halloween is Almost Here

We look forward to a fun celebration of Halloween on Tuesday, October 31. The JSS Halloween fun includes the following:

- Parade, 10:30-11:00 (all grades)
- Carnival for PreK-3rd grades, 11:00-11:45
- Class activities for 4th-8th grade, 11:00-12:10

I ask that Halloween costumes follow a few important guidelines. Costumes that are intended to be shocking or are designed to scare a young child are not permitted. Please leave costume weapon accessories at home. “Play fighting” is against the school policy and costume weapons, such as plastic swords, are a real temptation to engage in play fighting. Please ensure that your child’s costume is safe and does not put them at risk for tripping or being unable to see clearly. We look forward to a fun and memorable day.

All Saints’ Day Mass, Wednesday, November 1

Please join your children for the all school Mass on All Saints’ Day. Mass begins at 8:15am. Following each school mass, a light reception is offered for all parents. All parents are invited to attend and to join our 3rd grade students who will be participating in the All Saints’ Day Mass liturgy.

Wednesday, November 1 is a 2:00pm Dismissal

Friday, November 3, is an early release day, 12:10pm dismissal

Extended Care will be open.

Colds and Flu

It is that time of the school year when we see more students affected by colds and flu. If your child has a cold or the flu, please follow the appropriate care suggestions, including keeping them at home so that they can recover quickly and avoid spreading germs. Here are several suggestions from the CDC to help prevention.

- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.

- If you are sick with flu symptoms, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone for 24 hours without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like the flu.

The JSS protocol for our janitorial crew is to clean all surfaces (tables, desks, door handles, etc.) thoroughly with disinfecting agents each evening. We encourage all parents to use caution when sending a child to school when cold or flu symptoms appear. During a normal school day, the students can be in close proximity to each other, so as a courtesy to others, I ask that you exercise good judgment when determining your child's readiness for school if they have been sick or are exhibiting the cold and flu symptoms. Click on the following link to the CDC website for more information.

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm>

JSS Hurricane Outreach

While the JSS outreach to support the thousands of people in Puerto Rico whose lives have been in turmoil since the hurricane has concluded, it is important to keep these people in our thoughts and prayers. Thanks to everyone for your tremendous support and a special thanks to the Walker family for their leadership and generosity.

Gym Floor Project

Through the leadership of the JSSPA, along with the approval and support of the Parish, we have begun raising funds to resurface the gym floor, and to paint new sports boundary lines. To protect the refinished floor, a portable floor covering system needs to be funded and purchased. The protective floor covering system will be light weight, portable, and specifically designed to protect gymnasium floors from damage while being used in non-athletic events. The cost to refinish the floor is approximately \$5,000; the cost of the floor covering system is approximately \$10,000 to \$15,000. The JSSPA will be reaching out to the greater JSS Community, including the alumni, to support this project.

Next Week's Newsletter

In next week's newsletter, I will provide a "giving" update to share our progress on the gym floor project and to share the final total of the JSS outreach to the people of Puerto Rico.

Peace and Blessings to everyone and enjoy the weekend.

Sincerely,

Bruce Stewart

Principal