

\_\_\_\_\_ ∞ S M S J WEEKLY NEWSLETTER ∞ \_\_\_\_\_  
SAINT MARY – SAINT JOSEPH SCHOOL - WILLIMANTIC, CT  
**A MAGNET SCHOOL FOR VALUES!**

December 7, 2011

St. Ambrose, Bishop

Vol. XLIV, No. 14

Dear Boys and Girls: During the season of Advent we hear a great deal from Isaiah (not Rivera) one of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament and John the Baptist, the “bridge” prophet between the Old and New Testaments. Both of them have told the people of their time and are telling us today, through the liturgy, to prepare for the coming of the Savior and we know that this is what Advent is all about. This past Sunday, these prophets got very specific about how we should be preparing: lower the mountains, fill up the valleys, smooth out the rocky path---make straight the way of the Lord. We talked in our prayer service yesterday about the mountains in our lives—pride, arrogance, always wanting to be first, telling lies that make us look better to others or keep us out of trouble; we talked about the valleys that have to be filled in our lives—selfishness, failure to help others, a “me-myself-and I” attitude. Think about the rocks that we put in our own paths and the paths of others, the kind of rocks that prevent us from being the best we can be. We all know there are challenges that sometimes test our strength to the end, but in today’s Gospel there is a very hopeful message. Jesus says, “My yoke is sweet and my burden light.” That’s because Jesus “yokes” Himself to us to help us to knock down the mountains in our lives, to fill up the valleys, to get rid of the rocks and debris, all of which will give us a straight way to Him. If there ever comes a time when you see two cows, two work horses or two oxen yoked together plowing a field (perhaps it will only be in a movie) think, “Jesus and me—together we can do this; together we can get closer to the Father. Tomorrow we celebrate the great feast of the Immaculate Conception. Ask Mary to tag along with Jesus and you, because she knows a sure way to get closer to the Father. She said, “Let it be done to me according to Your [God’s] way.” Doing it God’s way—that’s the secret. Peace!

6 Enclosures: Craft Fair flyers (2), Scrip Program, Grades 1 & 7 Candy Cane Grams, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade order form for grinders and Teacher & Staff Appreciation flyer.

**The School Mass for December** will be celebrated on December 8<sup>th</sup>, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. Holy Mass will be offered at St. Joseph Church at 9:00 a.m. The sixth graders will be preparing for this liturgy. Please come and join us.

**Tomorrow is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception**—a serious obligation for all Catholics to attend Holy Mass. If you are unable to attend the school Mass, all churches in town have a vigil Mass this evening and an early Mass tomorrow morning. Come and worship, giving thanks to God through Our Blessed Mother.

**The traditional Lessons and Carols, a celebration of sacred songs and Scripture readings** will be presented by the students on December 15<sup>th</sup> at St. Mary Church at 6:30 p.m.. Parents are asked to adjust their schedules as this is one celebration that is part of the school’s curriculum and we want all students to be able to participate in this event. It is a beautiful gift that the students present to the parents and parishioners every year.

**Holiday Craft Fair** – Our Christmas Craft Fair will be held this Saturday from 9:00 – 3:00 p.m. Over 55 crafters and vendors have signed up! Grades 1 and 2 will be selling breakfast sandwiches, fruit cups, etc. and Grade 8 will be selling grinders, cookies and will have a table to wrap your purchases. Grades Pre-K, 4, 6 and 7 will have wonderful raffles. There will be something for everyone! Come hungry and get all your shopping done! Eighth Graders have put in a **request for donations of Christmas wrapping paper** to wrap your holiday gift purchases at the Craft fair.

**Eighth Grade Grinder Sale** – The 8<sup>th</sup> graders will be selling grinders at the Craft Fair on Saturday. Please see the enclosed order form to pre-order your grinders.

**December Teacher & Staff Appreciation** – The SFA is looking for cookie bakers for the December Teacher & Staff Appreciation. Please see the enclosed flyer for more information.

**After-School Hours** – Please be advised that the back door will have the key pad activated every day at 2:45 p.m. If you do not know the code, please call the office. This code should be used by parents only and kept confidential. We will also have a sign by the back door that will have a phone number to call during latch-key hours in case you cannot get in. Just a reminder—it takes two hands to open up with the key pad.

**Advent Celebration** – Thank you to Kelly DeMarchi for organizing the beautiful Advent celebration. Thank you to all volunteers who helped! A special thank you to Carrie Ellis and Stacy Chowanec for your help.

**Band Concert** – Mark your calendars! The Christmas band concert will take place **TONIGHT** at 6:30 p.m.

**Chorus Concert** – The Christmas chorus concert will take place on Tuesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

**Scrip Program** – Our Scrip program is underway. Please review the new Scrip order forms that are enclosed. Please be sure to put your phone number and/or e-mail on all orders. This is a great way to stock up on those gift cards for Christmas and birthdays. **The last order before Christmas will be December 14<sup>th</sup>**. Please be sure your order forms are in the office by that date!

**50/50 Club** – There are still many chances to win – it's not too late to join the Club. For more information, please call Roland Huard at 423-8479.

**An Assembly, sponsored by the Ronald McDonald Foundation** to improve school climate will take place at St. Mary – St. Joseph School on December 12<sup>th</sup> for grades K-5 at 1:45 p.m.

**Christmas CD** – The Sisters of Charity have just released their Christmas CD. The CD contains 13 beautiful arrangements, featuring our own Sister M. Gabriela. The CD's are yours for just \$15.00 and are available in the school office.

**Art Supplies Needed** – Mrs. Church is looking for remnants of material, puzzles, acorns and wire clothes hangers. If you have any of these items that you would like to donate, please send them to the office.

*Thought for the Week*

*Our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds. No one would remember the Good Samaritan if he only had good intentions.*