

Dear Boys and Girls: Today in the Church's Year of Grace, we celebrate the feast of St. Matthew. In our prayer service reflection on Monday, we talked about the generosity, the mercy and compassion of Jesus that goes far beyond our wildest imagination. We talked about how God's way of thinking is not our way of thinking and that our job is to shorten the gap between our way of thinking and God's way of thinking, a job that will take us a whole lifetime. Well, today's feast is one that continues to teach us how God thinks and how we need to think. Jesus called St. Matthew (his name was Levi) to become one of His apostles. Now St. Matthew was anything but popular. In fact, the Jewish people at the time of Jesus did not think very much of Matthew at all because he was a dishonest "enemy" to them. He worked for the Romans who ruled the Jewish people when Jesus was on earth. He collected taxes and took more money from his Jewish countrymen than he should have. And you know, Boys and Girls, a cheat is usually a liar as well. So here we have it—a man who is a cheater, a liar, an enemy to his countrymen and Jesus calls him to be one of the chosen 12 apostles, closest friends of Jesus. Jesus looked into the heart of Matthew and saw more than all those terrible things; He saw a man who was going to be a good and generous follower of Jesus right up to the end of his life. Most scholars even believe he was the same person who wrote one of the Gospel accounts. What is the lesson in all of this for us? Sometimes we have classmates that are unpopular because they don't treat others fairly; they are mean and nasty and don't play fair on the playground; they have lots of faults. Those are the classmates at whom Jesus is calling us to take a second and third and even a fourth look. He wants us to see beneath the outside of that person and know there is someone inside that person made to the image and likeness of Him. Yes, Boys and Girls, Jesus wants us to befriend that person and bring out the good that is hidden just like He did with Matthew. Are we willing to take the risk to love the unpopular one among us? Let's narrow the gap!

Welcome back "picnic" and orientation night: Thank you to all who were able to come. It was so good to see and hear so many of you interacting and building up the SMSJ community. Let us continue to communicate with our children's teachers. Keeping this door open solves so many concerns before they become seriously problematic. Thank you also for bringing all those goodies to the supper and thank you, Chef Ed, Mr. Bradstreet and Mr. Kelly for all your help in the kitchen. Class Act once again!

Folks, when you see a notice enclosed like this, you know it's a READ AND HEED! There seems to be some traffic problems at the end of the day. Please enter the Jillson Square parking lot from Main Street only and park in the parking area designated **and** in parking spaces so marked. Please do not park on the grass or park in such a way that you prevent folks from driving out of the parking lot. Cooperation in this matter is much appreciated. You really don't want Officer Mark out there directing traffic, do you?

Gentle reminders—Our little ones (grades PreK to grade ___ shall we say, 8), don't always know if they are taking a bus or a walker. Please write a note or call us if there is a dismissal change; do not rely on your child giving the oral message. We have them working and playing so hard, they forget by dismissal time what they're suppose to do. Also, any absenteeism needs to be followed up with a dated note describing the illness. If it is personal family business, so stated is sufficient, but a note should be sent with your child on the day of return, in addition to the phone call in the morning of the absence. Thank you so much for attending to these matters. They keep the school running smoothly, safely and healthy.

Menu change—This Friday will be pizza and next Friday will be macaroni and cheese.

A word about Edline—We will soon have Edline up and running so that you can access your child(ren)'s progress any time and any day. We will be sending home a letter that will, hopefully, answer all questions regarding how to access (for the new families) and a refresher for those who already have an activated account. It is our goal to have it up and running by next week. We will let you know when your child(ren)'s marks will be posted (grades 3-8).

Standardized Testing Program for grades 2-8 will begin next week. Because these test show us the students' progress from last year and highlight the areas on which the teachers need to focus for this year, we take these tests very seriously. Ample time is given for them (two weeks), so the teachers can spread out the subtests. Parents will receive the results as soon as they are scored and returned to the school. Please be sure your child is in good health and gets plenty of rest during the testing period. Please, at all cost, try to avoid absenteeism during the testing days, Sept. 26th – Oct. 7th, as make-ups often do not present the optimum circumstances for good results.

Congratulations to—

- Elijah Bailey, gr. 2, who now has a new baby brother, Isaiah! Mom is doing well.
- Our 8th grade officers: Caleb Nuhn, president; Alyssa Te, vice president; Rebecca DeMarchi, secretary; Michael Hope, treasurer.

Wine Tasting Committee—We have begun planning for our wine tasting fundraiser in November. We look to our school community as a resource to obtain “free” items for the raffle. Do you know a family member or friend that has a good or service that they would be willing to donate? Or, maybe you have a business connection that you would be willing to ask for a donation? If so, please contact Tom Holton at 860-450-0893. Cash donations are always welcome. This year our efforts will benefit our school athletics program!

Cross Country Challenge (gr. K-4)—Next meet is Sept. 27th at Windham Center School. See enclosed flyer.

Spirit Jackets-- If you are interested and would like to see these jackets, we have several of the styles hanging up in the office. If you need a new jacket for the fall or winter months, consider one with the school’s logo. Deadline for orders is Sept. 29th.

REPEATS WORTH REPEATING!

Cristoline and Food Court Brochures—our first fund-raiser--some great items for Christmas and the holidays. Keep selling the wonderful items from these two brochures. Do you have family and friends who are far way, but would like to participate in our fundraiser? They can! Family and friends can go to www.cristolinefundraising.com and at login enter stmarystjoseph for a login name and willimanticct as a password. They can then peruse, order and pay for items from the Cristoline catalog (Food Court not available on line). There is a spot to enter your child’s name so that they will be able to receive the credit towards their total sales. Please note: if ordering online you must pay shipping. **Fundraiser forms need to be returned to the school by September 23rd. Please be sure to fill out the top of the form with one child’s name, grade and phone number.** Please check your orders before sending them in. All checks should be made out to SMSJ School. HAPPY SELLING! Go for it!

Stopandshop.com/aplus—It’s time again to register your Stop and Shop card. Even if you registered your card last year, you must register again. All you have to do is register your card and SMSJ will get money back at the end of the year. It’s real easy—just go to **stopandshop.com/aplus**. Click on A+ School Rewards. Click on “register your card”. Fill in the first three letters of your last name and enter your stop and shop card number. It is a 13 digit number on the back of your card or key tag. Click “Submit school and continue”. Click “complete registration. Click “confirm my registration” and you are done. If you don’t have time, just send in your card number and Nancy will register it for you. Remember, every little bit helps our school!

Sunshine Photos will be at the school October 18th and 19th. Oct. 18th—class pictures in full dress uniform; 19th, individual photos in appropriate clothes of your choice.

Important forms to fill out and return-- emergency paperwork from the nurse, emergency paperwork for the office, free & reduced lunch applications, internet usage contract, permission to use your child’s image in publications—please get all of this paperwork in ASAP.

Volunteers needed and wanted! Playground duty to partner with a teacher in morning and/or afternoon recess. Library help—we are turning our library into an electronic scan program. We need folks to come in and put the bar codes on the books--little or no training necessary.

We save everything: empty ink cartridges, Box Tops for Education, Campbell’s Labels, etc. Bring ‘em on as we actually get money for them and are able to purchase supplies from Staples with the ink cartridges recycled.

Communication with teachers—Beginning now, please communicate with the teachers, using the e-mail address on our Website. This does not preclude the use of Alexander G. Bell’s invention. Keep in mind that your child’s teacher may not interact with your child through the use of social media.

Clean fill needed? There are three piles of dirt (of various compositions—all clean) on the East side of the building next to the blue dumpster. If anyone needs clean fill or just-out-of-the-goodness-of-your-heart has a truck to remove these piles, Mr. Borgos and Sr. Mark will be delighted.

(4) ENCLOSURES: 50/50 Club Notice, Wine Tasting flyer, John Rosemond article, Cross Country Challenge (gr. K-4)

Thought for the Week

(From the Wit and Wisdom of Benjamin Franklin)

“These are scraps from the table of wisdom that if well digested, yield strong nourishment to thy mind.”