



ST. MARY SCHOOL

Week of 10-20-2011

Weekly Envelope content will appear in the following order:

Principal's Letter

Student Centered Learning

High School Fair

The Halloween Fun Fair

Annual 8th Grade Caramel Apple Sale

Chess Club

October 20, 2011

Alone we can do so little; together we can
do so much.

~ Helen Keller

Hello St. Mary Families!

The days have been dark and dreary outside, but bright and sunny inside with our students' smiles and laughter! We always have so much going on, and this week was no exception. The Parish Center was filled with students and parents alike who were able to enjoy the Mexican

Dancers! What joy to hear the music, watch the children dance, and hear our students join in with clapping! Mrs. O'Connor did an outstanding job organizing this, thank you!

Father Tom May's Installation mass is Sunday, October 30th at 11:30 AM. Father has been such a blessing to all of us, so to show how much we appreciate him, Mrs. Hall has requested that we fill a table with sweets to show him just how much. Please bring whatever sweet you bake to the Oak Room prior to mass so we can fill the tables. If you have any questions please contact Mrs. Teresa Hall at hallrts@sbcglobal.net or call her at 708.447.3044.

Classroom News:

Mrs. George's class did lots of outdoor planting last week. On the 11th and 12th they planted bulbs, only after Mrs. George was out there digging it up, tearing it down, and generally preparing the earth for these beautiful future flowers! The bulbs were donated by the parents and children who then so generously showed up to help plant them ... thank goodness the weather was beautiful. I've been told the vegetable garden is ready for its last crop ... brussel sprouts, yummy! Thanks to our Pre-Schoolers for tending our gardens and creating such a beautiful environment, can't wait to see it in Spring!!

Information:

- Next week is Red Ribbon week Let's support the Anti-Drug campaign by wearing red all week long!

The Student Council has come up with some ways for us to show our support: on Tuesday everyone should wear a red ribbon or hat; Wednesday wear a red sweatshirt, sweater, or shirt with your uniform pants/skirt. There is also a poster contest and fact finding contest, so let's all join in and say NO to drugs! Adding a red accent to your uniform all week long is certainly a great idea!

- October is Fire Prevention month so we will have the Riverside Fire Department in to talk to all our classes about fire safety on Tuesday the 25th.
- On Wednesday, the 26th two things will be happening:
 - At 6:00 PM parents and teachers are invited to the school library for coffee and sweets to talk about an article on 'student-centered learning' environments. The article will be part of the newsletter this week, so read it, and come share your thoughts and ideas with us as we share with you what we are doing that is student-centered at St. Mary. Please come in the school office entrance and go right on up to the library.
 - From 7:00 – 8:30 we are also having a high school night here at St. Mary. Many of the local high schools came to talk to our 8th graders this week. It would be a good idea for parents to hear about the different schools as well, we encourage parents of 8th

graders, and maybe even 7th graders, to stop in to the Oak Room to get some information when making the decision for high school. It's from 7:00 – 8:30 PM, so stop on by anytime and find out what schools are out there and which one may be best for you.

- On Friday, the 28th, two things will also be happening:
 - FUN FAIR!!! Come join us from 5:30 to 8:30 in the Parish Center. The costume contest starts at 7:00 PM, so 'be there or be square'. Buy a ticket for \$10.00 and get unlimited fun and games and then a hot dog meal is just \$2.00! A great night to get out with the children, so come one come all, it will be a '*spooktacular*' event!
 - A Halloween Dance for the Junior High students!! After helping the younger children at the Fun Fair, the Junior High students get to have a dance in the Oak Room from 7:30 – 9:30! A treat for our young ladies and gentlemen ... for a small fee they get to gather together, eat some treats, dance, and unwind together. Don't forget to get your admission ticket 6th, 7th, and 8th graders!
- Halloween parties will be on Monday the 31st,

remember there is a Halloween parade that starts at 12:45 which includes a walk around Mary Park, then down Longcommon and up to Cowley and then back to St. Mary Parking lot. Students will enter the Parish Center doors and head back to the classrooms for a party ... parties end at 2:15 to facilitate cleanup. If you are a room parent please remember that you are there for the class you are throwing the party for, so please do not bring any younger, or older, children with you when helping at the party.

Reminders:

- World's Finest Chocolate pick-up is Wednesday the 26th in the Parish Center Lobby. Don't forget to pick it up, or it may end up as Halloween treats!

I know we started the new dismissal routine, the teachers and I think it is going very well. Thank you for making the transition so smooth!

This month we are celebrating the rosary, and one of my favorite memories is kneeling beside my parent's bed and saying the rosary together as a family. It's easy to focus on Halloween and all the festivities that surround that, but please take time to remember the rosary. It's a good time to start traditions that your children can carry on with their families which include prayer. It's the simple things that children remember, the times they spend with you in prayer is one of them. Try to take time before the

month is out to pray the rosary, maybe it's when you are driving to grandma's house, or before the children go to bed, but make the time, as this is time you'll never get back.

Peace,

Ms. Diane M. Simonaitis
Principal
St. Mary School

'Student-Centered Learning'

There may be no universally accepted definition of 'student-centered learning' but some things can be said about it. It is characterized by not being 'traditional' or 'chalk-and-talk' teaching. From the information we collected from teachers, they say that it happens much more in [National Certificate](#) programs than in other courses, and that there is more of it now than before. 95% of teaching staff in FE colleges said that 'non-traditional' methods formed a significant part of their teaching of NC modules, with very nearly two-thirds saying that they used these methods 'to a large extent'. This far outstripped the reported use of these methods in other types of course taught by these same teachers.

Teachers reported significant increases in the use of methods which involved students actively in their learning. Group work, practical work, projects and assignments, simulations and role play were all used more than before. Many more teachers now allowed

students to progress at their own pace and over 60% used 'whole class' teaching less than before. Both students and teaching staff reported frequent use of diagnostic assessment as an aid in teaching and learning. On the whole, teachers welcomed the changes in teaching which had taken place; students appreciated the new emphasis on practical work, projects, assignments and diagnostic assessment; and employers thought, as one put it, that 'anything's better than chalk and talk - what happens is better and deeper than that'. It would seem, therefore, that the National Certificate has been successful in encouraging more adventurous teaching but that is not the whole story. It became apparent that what the teachers valued was less the teaching methods themselves than the freedom they now had to extend their repertoire and increase the range of techniques used. 'Variety' was the keyword. Few teachers wished to abandon 'chalk-and-talk' altogether, but its role was being re-defined and it was no longer seen as the sole method of teaching. While some teachers welcomed student-centered learning wholeheartedly, others identified factors preventing its full use. Chief amongst these were time and resources. Comments such as 'student-centered learning is the most effective approach but is very difficult to implement in the time allowed for a module' were common. This was one reason why chalk-and-talk remained in use: it was seen as a relatively efficient method of imparting information quickly: 'For me to give individual attention to 20 students... is quite difficult. Two minutes spent showing something on the board can save an awful lot.'

Teachers were also reluctant to commit themselves completely to student-centered learning because they felt

that some of their students were unready to take on the responsibility: 'Some students experience difficulty as they are not always able to work independently to discover information.'

There was some evidence from students that some were not fully aware of their own learning processes, and so could not take full advantage of student-centered techniques. Institutional context matters:

Colleges differed in the support their staff gave to changes in teaching methods. We identified a group of colleges where there was a high degree of support for student-centered learning, combined with positive attitudes to team teaching, flexible and open learning strategies, inter-college co-operation and changes in assessment. All these colleges had more staff development and support from the college administration in implementing the National Certificate than the other colleges studied. It would seem that student-centered learning is more likely to be accepted where an appropriate infrastructure has been established to support it. We conclude that the National Certificate has introduced substantial changes in teaching which are largely welcomed but that staff are taking a pragmatic view about appropriate teaching methods. More traditional methods still have their place. Nevertheless, given appropriate support and encouragement, many teaching staff now see these changes as very worthwhile." Learner-centered education places the student at the center of education. It begins with understanding the educational contexts from which a student comes. It continues with the instructor evaluating the student's progress towards learning objectives. By helping the student acquire the basic skills to learn, it

ultimately provides a basis for learning throughout life. It therefore places the responsibility for learning on the student, while the instructor assumes responsibility for facilitating the student's education. This approach strives to be individualistic, flexible, competency-based, varied in methodology and not always constrained by time or place. Instructional Delivery in Learner-centered education advocates a student-focused teaching and learning environment. Educators attempt to maximize student productivity, knowledge acquisition, skills augmentation and development of personal and professional abilities. Such educators may use a variety of instructional tools and methods, as well as flexible arrangements of time and place. Student-centered educators urge students to join them in the learning process. Learners assume primary responsibility for their choices and have opportunities to exercise control over their learning. These efforts may often lead to collaborative partnerships among university faculty, administration, staff and the community at large. The learner-centered environment facilitates the exploration of meaning and content knowledge through personal and interpersonal discovery. The process implies active involvement by the student and the integration of academics with the student's total development. Examples of learner-centered educational practices include, but are not limited to: Collaborative group learning, both inside and outside the classroom; Individual student research and discovery; Research and discovery by students and faculty together; Problem-based inquiry learning; Student-faculty studio and performance activities; Service learning activities; Hands-on,

experiential learning activities; On-site field experiences; Self-paced tutorials. Learner-centered education also creates an environment that supports the individual as a whole person. It attempts to meet the individual needs of a broad range of learners who have different ways of knowing, skills and cultural backgrounds. Different learning styles may be addressed by a variety of means, such as music, art, performance, visual representations and auditory input. Although students with background knowledge and experiences in a content area may quickly master the course material and required skills, others may need more time and additional help. Consequently, students in learner-centered environments will often complete course work at different rates. Flexible course time frames can be accomplished through such varied means as instructional contracts and self-paced modules. Educational services that support the whole student may include: Providing appropriately focused counseling, advising and tutoring services; Offering supplementary services such as child care, elder care and referral to community agencies; Encouraging co-curricular activities such as debate, public lectures, fine arts performances, intramural athletics, museum exhibits, workshops and community outreach; Accommodating special needs, such as handicap access, interpreters, readers for the blind, note takers, and adaptive technologies. Assessments in Learner-centered education must retain the rigor and standards that traditionally have characterized education. The emphasis is on the student's competence and proficiency in specific areas of academic knowledge, skills and understanding. Competency-based assessment is an integral part of learner-centered education. The

learner is asked to achieve and demonstrate competence in academic disciplines. Assessment may take a variety of forms, such as: tests, demonstrations, papers, portfolios, performances, individual reports, group reports, individual projects, group projects, and electronic presentations. Competence in an academic area may be demonstrated by the learner's application of knowledge in solving real or simulated problems.

St. Mary School will be hosting a
High School Fair.

When: Wednesday October 26th from
7:00PM to 8:30PM

Where: St. Mary School in the Oak
Room

High school representatives from: **St. Ignatius, Fenwick, Nazareth, St. Joseph, St. Patrick, Brother Rice, Trinity, Queen of Peace, St. Laurence, De La Salle, Mt. Carmel, Mt. Assisi and Riverside Brookfield**

High School

This is an informal event.....feel free to come at any time between 7:00 and 8:30 to talk with a representative and get information about the high schools that you are interested in.

For further information contact Michelle Cronin at 708-257-2712 or mcronin@ameritech.net.

It's Time for
The Halloween Fun Fair!!!

******Friday, October 28th******

5:30p.m-8:30p.m.

Join us for games, food and fun!

Costume Contest @7:00p.m.

**The Cake Walk and Junk Food walk are the most popular games;
please plan on sending small packages of baked goods or junk food.**

\$10 for unlimited fun & games per child

Wrist Bands 1 for \$10 #____x\$10 =____

(Wrist Band is needed to play games for ages 5 and up)

Hot Dog Meals \$2 #____x\$2 =____

(hot dog/chip/drink)

Family Name_____ Total =_____

We need 6th, 7th and 8th graders to work the games from 5:15-7:15 for service hours.

Name_____

Parents we need your help for games & food.

I can work 5:15-6:15(food only)_____

I can work 6:15-7:15(food only)_____

I can work 7:15-8:00_____

I can work 8:00-8:45_____

I can work clean up_____

I would prefer to work at_____

I have a great idea_____

Make checks payable to St. Mary PIE

If you have any questions or comments please call/email

Rita Domeier 442-5171or markdomeier@ameritech.net



ANNUAL 8TH GRADE CARAMEL APPLE SALE

It's Affy Tapple time! Enjoy a crisp, delicious Affy Tapple. Buy a case and save! Send your order back to school with your payment by Wed. Oct. 19 to my attention, Beckylee Ortiz. Please make checks payable to St. Mary School or cash can be accepted. If you have any questions, please email me at blcso@yahoo.com or call me at 708-443-5174. Small orders (under 10 apples) will be sent to homerooms for students to take home. Larger orders (over 10 apples) should be picked up after school in the Parish Center Lobby or at the St. Mary Fun Fair on Friday Oct. 28. (Not responsible for orders not picked up.)

TYPE OF APPLE	# OF APPLES	# OF CASES	\$AMOUNT
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Caramel Apple Plain
\$1.25 each or \$22 case of 24

Caramel Apple Nut
\$1.25 each or \$22 case of 24

Triple Chocolate Chips
\$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00

TOTAL\$\$\$\$

NAME _____ ROOM # _____ PHONE # _____

Address: _____

The 8th grade students and their parents thank you for your support. This fund raiser will help defray the expenses incurred throughout this year.



**P.I.E.
ST. MARY GOLDEN BISHOPS
CHESS CLUB**

Research has shown that chess enhances scholastic ability, including test scores!

All levels welcome, especially beginners

Thursdays after school, November 3 through March 30

Grades 3-8

Starts Thursday, November 3

2:45 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

School Library

(band participants welcome to attend after 3:30 p.m.)

Limit of 40 students—first come, first served

COST: \$10

(one-time fee to cover costs of drinks/snacks/handouts)

Coaches:

Colette Fairchild Saganich and Dianna LaMantia

Optional area-wide tournament hosted by St. Mary's in March

Questions: Colette Fairchild Saganich
(708) 853-9375; colettefairchild@aol.com



**ST. MARY GOLDEN BISHOPS
CHESS CLUB**

SIGN UP FORM

Thursdays after school, November 3 through March 30
(2:45 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.; band members welcome at 3:30 p.m.)
\$10 per student*

Sessions will feature an instructional period followed by match play

** One-time fee for all sessions for drinks/snacks/handouts; all students welcome regardless of ability to pay.
Contact Coach Colette at (708) 853-9375 or Coach LaMantia at 442-2535 with any questions.*

Group 1: Limited or no playing experience
Group 2: Some playing experience/intermediate

Coaches reserve the right to place players in appropriate group based on ability.

Student name(s) _____

Group (see above) _____ Grade/Room Number _____

Phone _____ Parent e-mail address _____

Amount enclosed _____

Parent signature authorizing participation _____

Return form via school envelope as soon as possible or bring form to first session on Thursday, November 3. Students accepted on a first come, first served basis (maximum 40 due to space limitations).

Optional area-wide tournament will be hosted by St. Mary's sometime in March at an approximate cost of \$50 (fee collected at tournament).