



St. Paul Catholic Elementary School
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January 2019

Administrators' Message

Happy New Year! We hope that each of you enjoyed a restful Christmas holiday filled with joy, peace and happiness.

In January, we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany, also known as "Three Kings Day" and "Twelfth Day". This is a Christian holiday commemorated on January 6. It falls on the twelfth day after Christmas, and signals the conclusion of the twelve days of the Christmas season. In a homily on the Feast of the Epiphany, Pope Francis said:

"Seeing the star of Bethlehem did not prompt [the magi] to embark on their journey but rather, "they saw the star because they had already set out. ...Their hearts were open to the horizon and they could see what the heavens were showing them, for they were guided by an inner restlessness. They were open to something new."

The magi were open to the wonder and joy of encountering the Messiah in the person of the small, vulnerable infant born in the most humble of circumstances. We hope and pray that each of you is renewed by the light of faith as we begin this new liturgical year.

Mrs. Gina Almquist
Principal

Mrs. Kerry Carr-Jeschke
Assistant Principal

Thank You Volunteers!

We are so fortunate to have such a wonderful parent community, who work hard to ensure our students have a fantastic experience at St. Paul School.

Thank you to all the parent volunteers – we truly appreciate all that you do!!

School Council

Our next SAC meeting is on Wednesday, January 16 at 6:30 PM. It will be held in the Learning Commons.

Kindergarten Registration and Open House

We will begin accepting applications for our Early Childhood Program on **Monday, January 14, 2019**. This program is offered to children who will be five years of age on or before **March 1, 2019**. If you have any relatives or friends who have children in this age group, please make them aware of our early childhood program. On registration, we

require a photocopy of the birth certificate. Registration forms may be picked up from the office.

Additional information on programming will be provided at the Kindergarten Open House to be held at the school on **Wednesday, January 30st at 6:00 p.m.**

Faith Development Day

On **Tuesday, February 5th**, all staff of Edmonton Catholic School District will participate in our annual Faith Development Day. This is the one day during our school year that we gather as a community - secretaries, custodians, support staff, teachers, trustees - and become one as we pray and learn together.

Catholic education is an awesome vocation and responsibility. By being involved in the education mission of the church, Catholic schools provide a hopeful response to the great mysteries of life in an increasingly complex world. Faith Development Day provides us, as a community of faith, with the opportunity to become more deeply aware of the faith foundation of our lives and to find inspiration to enter into our life's work with deeper conviction. ***There will be no school for students on Tuesday, February 5.***

YMCA Childcare

We are currently conducting a survey to see if there are enough students to have a YMCA childcare program in the school. Provided there is adequate enrollment, there will be before and after school care as well as kindercare. The afterschool care includes Thursday afternoons. The survey can be locate on our website at <https://www.ecsd.net/schools/8225/layouts/15/ci/post.aspx?oaid=754579d5-c750-4944-bfd0-67b7bc8536af&oact=20001>

News from St. John the Evangelist Parish

Sacramental Preparation

Is your child ready to celebrate first **Reconciliation** and first **Eucharist** (Communion), or to be **Confirmed**? Our preparation programs are full for this year (and have already started!), but watch the next newsletters for information about registering your child for 2019-2020. It is never too late to prepare, so don't worry if your child is older than the common ages for these sacraments.

Have you received these Sacraments yourself? Many adults were not Confirmed when they were young, and now feel the call to complete their initiation into the Catholic Church. If you would like to prepare for any of the Sacraments, please contact us.

Baptism Preparation

Our next Baptism preparation class is on January 23, 7-9 pm, in the upper hall. Please call the Parish Office to let us know you are planning to come. Parents are required to take a course to help understand what it means to be baptized, and what they are committing themselves and their child to in this sacrament. We walk through the ritual of Baptism in the Church so you will know what to expect. Godparents are encouraged to come to the class too. For more information, please check our Parish website under the Sacraments tab. Please call us if you have any questions, especially about baptizing older children.

Marriage

Would you like your civil marriage to be blessed, or are you in a common-law relationship and would like to get married? Please contact us to see how we can help you prepare for the sacrament of Matrimony.

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Are you finding it a challenge to bring your children to Mass? Our 10:30 am Mass is late enough for a bit of a sleep-in, time for breakfast and not rush to get to Mass. Your children are invited to go to their own Liturgy of the Word while you stay in the Church and have some time in Mass for yourself to really be attentive to the Readings and Homily. The children return to the Church during the Offertory Collection for the Liturgy

of the Eucharist. The Junior group is for age 4 – grade 1 or 2, and the Senior group is for grades 2-6. They hear and discuss child-friendly versions of the Mass readings and pray. The Junior group usually does a craft too. Younger children should be able to sit and listen to the Gospel, and respond to the Leaders. If your child is very active, please accompany them. Parents are welcome to join their children, and help is always appreciated, especially when there are large numbers of children.

Have a very blessed Christmas,
Fr. Dean, Pastor,
Sophie, Pastoral Assistant, and Linda, Parish Administration

St. John the Evangelist Parish

9830 – 148 St., 780 452- 3988

www.stjohnevangelist.edm.caedm.ca

Pastoral Assistant email: sophie.ogle@caedm.ca

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WALKING TOGETHER IN GOD'S LOVE

January 2019

Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

~Isaiah 43:18-19~

The new year brings new beginnings and new opportunities. In this passage from Isaiah, the prophet is telling the people that God's great acts in their lives are so wonderful that they need not dwell in the past but look forward to their new path. Essentially, he is telling us not to focus on 'things of old', but to look forward with excitement to the new journey ahead. This is a great way to start 2019; move forward to positive places with enthusiasm, joy, and peace knowing that God is with you!

As always, January marks the time when we start to plan for the next school year. It is a time for families to look at registering for Early Learning, Junior, or Senior High. It is extremely important for those families who have students who will need to transition to a new level or program in the upcoming school year to research their options with Edmonton Catholic Schools and to go out and visit the sites that they are interested in. Our website www.ecsd.net has a wealth of information for families. Beginning the third week of January, when you click on the **Open House Information** link on our homepage you will find our 2019 Guide to Schools and Open House dates. You will also find many useful tools including our School Locator and Kindergarten Calculator.

Edmonton Catholic Schools has developed a new resource to support self-regulation both at home and in the classroom. Our children need the ability to self-regulate in order to be ready. Children need to be ready to attend and inhibit impulses. They need support and time to understand how to regulate so that they can build skills, learn, participate and socialize. Learn the special FOCUS Sequence that integrates research-based strategies into a single sequence of regulating activities that can be done with any age, across any environment and all in about 5 minutes! We will be hosting a **Parent Night on Wednesday, January 23, 2019 from 6:30 - 8:00pm at St. Anthony Centre (10425-84 Avenue)**. To register, please visit <http://bit.ly/ECSD-Parent-Series> or email Yvonne.Casey@ecsd.net.

Our annual Faith Development Day for staff will take place on Tuesday, February 5, 2019. All our schools and sites will be closed so that our staff may gather together to continue our lifelong journey of faith formation and to celebrate Eucharist together.

As you contemplate all that the new year holds for you and establish your dreams and goals, I leave you with an encouragement from Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation Rejoice and Be Glad: *"The important thing is that each believer discern his or her own path, that they bring out the very best of themselves, the most personal gifts that God has placed in their hearts."* (Rejoice and Be Glad, 11)

Have a wonderful 2019!

Sincerely,

Joan Carr
Superintendent

THEOPHANY - CHRIST'S BAPTISM - FEAST OF LIGHTS



The Baptism of our Lord, Jesus Christ

Jesus came as a "great light" to those who languished in darkness. No other word describes Christ as accurately as the word light. He comes as a light to those who sit in the darkness of despair. He lights candles of love, joy, forgiveness, peace, and meaning in the lives of people today.

In the early Church, Theophany - the day of Christ's baptism - became the day on which the converts to Christianity were received into the Church through baptism. Each newly baptized person held the baptismal candle during the liturgy. Christians who had already been baptized brought their baptismal candles to church on this day to renew their baptismal vows; to renew the commitment to Christ which they had made at baptism.

As a result, everyone in the congregation held a lighted candle on the feast of Theophany. The churches became the sea of lights. For this reason, this day came to be called the Feast of Lights.

The baptismal candle, in the early Church, was a symbol that the one who was baptized had received Christ who is the Light of the world. The candle would be kept by the one baptized and then brought to Church on the anniversary of one's baptism, the feast of Theophany and for the Easter Vigil liturgy. If the person was married, the same candle was used at the wedding. If he was ordained, he would light the candle at his ordination. When the final hour of life approached, it was lit again as the soul went forth to meet the Lord. The baptismal candle was a constant reminder for the Christian to live and die by the light of Christ.

The baptismal candle may be compared to the lamps used in the story of the maidens who awaited the arrival of Christ the Bridegroom in the darkness of the night. When the newly baptized person was given the lighted candle, she was urged to keep it to meet Christ at his return, like the wise maidens who kept their lamps burning for the coming of the Bridegroom. Thus the candle becomes a symbol of the perseverance of the baptized soul until Christ's return. Among the ancient Greeks the runner who had won the race was not the one who crossed the line in the shortest time, but the one who crossed it in the least time with his candle still burning. Our goal as Christians is that we may cross the line into eternity with the light of our baptismal faith still shining brightly.

Christ Himself is the light. His light shines today proclaiming to all of us: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). The light that God gives us for our present darkness was expressed so well by Louise Haskins:

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

Resources: "A Byzantine Rite. Liturgical Year." Julian J. Katrij, OSBM. Basilian Fathers Publication. Detroit, 1983.
<http://lit.royaldoors.net/2013/12/09/january-6-2014-the-holy-theophany-of-our-lord-god-and-saviour-jesus-christ/>

Christ is Baptized! In the River Jordan!

Fr. Julian Bilyj

District Chaplain

REJOICE AND BE GLAD: CHAPTER 4: SIGNS OF HOLINESS IN TODAY'S WORLD

In Chapter Four, Pope Francis speaks of the signs of holiness in the world. He calls them five great expressions of love for God and neighbour that he considers of particular importance in the light of certain dangers and limitations present in today's culture. [111] These five expressions of love for God and neighbour are: perseverance, patience, and meekness; joy and a sense of humor; boldness and passion; involvement in community; and constant prayer.

Francis insists on the need for holiness in all parts of our lives, including online: "Christians too can be caught up in networks of verbal violence through the internet and the various forums of digital communication." "Even in Catholic media," he says, "limits can be overstepped, defamation and slander can become commonplace, and all ethical standards and respect for the good name of others can be abandoned." [115]

One sign of holiness, Francis says, is "joy and a sense of humor." "This is not the joy held out by today's individualistic and consumerist culture. Consumerism only bloats the heart. It can offer occasional and passing pleasures, but not joy." Pope Francis speaks here "of a joy lived in communion, which shares and is shared, since 'there is more happiness in giving than in receiving' (Acts 20:35) and 'God loves a cheerful giver' (2 Cor 9:7)." [128]

Another sign of holiness consists in "boldness and passion," in an "impulse to evangelize and to leave a mark in this world" and in not allowing oneself to be paralyzed by fear. He told believers that "God impels us constantly to set out anew, to pass beyond what is familiar, to the fringes and beyond. He takes us to where humanity is most wounded...God is not afraid! He is fearless! He is always greater than our plans and schemes. Unafraid of the fringes, he himself became a fringe. So, if we dare to go to the fringes, we will find him there; indeed, he is already there." [135]

"When we live apart from others, it is very difficult to fight against concupiscence, the snares and temptations of the devil and the selfishness of the world. Bombarded as we are by so many enticements, we can grow too isolated, lose our sense of reality and inner clarity, and easily succumb." Francis writes, "a community that cherishes the little details of love, whose members care for one another and create an open and evangelizing environment, is a place where the risen Lord is present, sanctifying it in accordance with the Father's plan." [145] "Contrary to the growing consumerist individualism that tends to isolate us in a quest for well-being apart from others, our path to holiness can only make us identify all the more with Jesus' prayer 'that all may be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you' (Jn 17:21)." [146]

The final sign of holiness is "constant prayer," the pope writes, describing holiness as "a habitual openness to the transcendent, expressed in prayer and adoration." Francis says, "I do not believe in holiness without prayer, even though that prayer need not be lengthy or involve intense emotions." [147] "If we realize that God exists, we cannot help but worship him, at times in quiet wonder, and praise him in festive song. We thus share in the experience of Blessed Charles de Foucauld, who said: 'As soon as I believed that there was a God, I understood that I could do nothing other than to live for him'." [155]

Pope Francis tells us that "meeting Jesus in the Scriptures leads us to the Eucharist, where the written word attains its greatest efficacy, for there the living Word is truly present. In the Eucharist, the one true God receives the greatest worship the world can give him, for it is Christ himself who is offered. When we receive him in Holy Communion, we renew our covenant with him and allow him to carry out ever more fully his work of transforming our lives." [157]

Fr. Julian Bilyj
District Chaplain