

Wednesday, February 8th, 2012
The Feast of Saint Josephine Bakhita

Dear Parents and Friends of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini School:

I pray that all of you are well! Please let me take a minute to briefly mention a couple of items of note.

Lenten Eucharistic Day Help Needed

You may recall that in November we held our first Eucharistic Day which began with an all-school morning Mass, followed by times for Eucharistic adoration for all of our classes, and concluding with Benediction for the whole school at 11am. The whole experience went so amazingly well that our students and teachers wanted to do it again in Lent. Part of why it went so well last time was because many of you came to pray with our young people, setting an excellent example for them (and for me).

I would love for you to come and pray with your children during adoration on Thursday, March 1st, between 9am and 11am for a half hour. We will be offering all of our prayers this time for an increase of vocations to the priesthood, religious life, and the diaconate. If you could please let Mrs. Galante know if you are able to come and pray it would be much appreciated.

Lent and Holy Week

Ash Wednesday is February 22nd this year, and with it we will begin the great and ancient discipline of Lent. I hope that you will truly engage the piety of this season as a whole family, doing so not only for yourselves but also for your children. Your children will have an opportunity to go to confession on Thursday, March 15th, and I also hope that all of you will celebrate this Sacrament yourself in the Lenten season. We offer it every Tuesday evening from 5:30pm to 6:30pm, and every Saturday morning after the 8:10am Mass.

Ash Wednesday is a day of fasting and abstinence for the universal Church. While it is true that these rules most strongly bind teenagers and up, the fact is that all of our children of any age need to be formed in this tradition. That means one main meal that day at your home, and no meat that day. If you are packing lunches for your children, be sure to make sure they are meatless that day.

All Fridays in Lent are also meatless- again, this is a discipline that we should not disregard. Over the years I've found that our children find it kind of special to do something that is unique to the Catholics this time of the year, and they will learn this from you.

Mass for the School on Ash Wednesday will be at 9am, celebrated this year by Father Pat Heppe. If you cannot make that Mass, we also offer Mass at 7am and 7pm.

Holy Week this year begins on April 1st, with Palm Sunday, and ends on April 8th with Easter Sunday. It is the most sacred week of the year for us as Catholics, filled with the most absolutely moving liturgies and rituals. I always find it to be an unfortunate fact that because Easter Break falls just after Holy Week, so many of our school families are gone for Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. That is a shame because, as you've already heard me say I'm sure, the reason school is off on those days is so that everyone will be free to be in church- praying. Trips to Disney or the Dells or the like are, frankly, not at all in the spirit of those sacred days when we recall that Christ shed his blood for our sake. I pray you will keep all of this in mind as you plan your Spring.

The more time I have spent in Catholic Education as a teacher, which for me is about a decade now, the more convinced I have become that our Catholic schools will not survive much longer if we do not take these core tenets of our faith seriously. For too long we have not done so (and I speak about schools in general). Without having faith-formation as our first priority, it will no longer be justifiable to expend the amount of time and money that we do to run schools- schools that will only continue to become more expensive. But, if we all work together to instill these traditions in our children, then I also have no doubt that the expense of a Catholic Education, no matter how great, will prove to be worth every penny.

Blessings!

Father Nathan