

March 2021

A LENTEN PRAYER

Loving Father, so many times we turn away from you and always you welcome us back. Your mercy and love gives us confidence. Thank you for the invitation to share, fast and pray so that you can form a new heart within us. Your powerful compassion for our weaknesses leads us to ask for mercy and await with great hope the Easter joy you share with us. May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. AMEN .

A highlight for this month is our **Iconography Residency** which will run during the week of March 8-12. Father Bohdan Nahachewsky will lead us virtually through teachings and creation of icons for all students in grades K-6. There will be a charge of \$7 for this experience and a letter with more information will come home this week. We are looking very forward to this holy opportunity.

Please take some time to explore our updated website at www.stbenedict.ecsd.net
We have added virtual tours of the school and we have moved some information around so that it is more accessible to you.

Please also check out our new St. Benedict Instagram page at [stbenedict_ecsd](https://www.instagram.com/stbenedict_ecsd)
We are very excited to be highlighting the wonderful things that our students are doing.

Thank you to School Council for the Pancake Breakfast they provided for students and staff for Shrove Tuesday. Much appreciated!



Thank You!

VIRTUAL BOOK FAIR will take place from March 15-22.

INTENTIONS FOR 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

An **Intention Icon** has been developed on the parent portal. Parents of currently registered students in pre-K to 12 **will need to declare which school they intend to register their children in for next year**. The Intention Icon was activated on February 22, 2021 and should take less than a minute to complete. The intention screen will:

1. Identify the current school the student is in.
2. Identify his/her designated school for next year. (Students in transition years may have more than one school identified as some areas are double designated. Students in non-transition years will default to their current school).
3. You will be asked if the student intends on going to the designated school (Yes or No).
4. If you select NO, it will ask you to identify which school he/she plans on going to from a drop down menu.
5. Submit. If you have more than one child, you need to complete this process for each child individually.

You have until March 22, 2021 to complete this information. Please call the office if you require any help with this. Thank you in advance.

HOCKEY ACADEMY FEES AND BUS FEES

DUE BY MARCH 8.



KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATIONS FOR 2021-2022

We are now accepting registrations for the 2020-2021 school year. Please register on-line at <https://www.ecsd.net/schools/8232/how-to-register/Pages/default.aspx> To attend Kindergarten, your child must be five years old on or before December 31, 2021.

Documents required to complete the registration package are your child's birth certificate, baptismal certificate, and immigration documents (if applicable) of the child and parents. Proof of address is also required.

Our Virtual Open House for Kindergarten is March 10 at 6:30 p.m. The link will be available on our website.

HOCKEY ACADEMY

We are now accepting registrations for our St. Benedict Hockey Academy. Our Hockey Academy program is for students in grades four to six. Three times a week the students go to the arena to practice hockey skills or to improve their fitness through other physical activities. The cost of the program is \$250 per month which includes apparel, all costs for hockey instruction, and costs for other fitness activities.

Applications will be reviewed and successful applicants will be informed by June 1. In order to qualify to attend Hockey Academy, students must have good attendance, be completing all schoolwork, and demonstrate a positive attitude to staff and other students.

Our Hockey Academy Virtual Open House will be on March 3 at 6:30 p.m. The link will be available on our website.

NO CLASSES

There are **NO CLASSES** on March 18 for students as staff will be engaged in professional and faith development.

FULL DAY AND PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

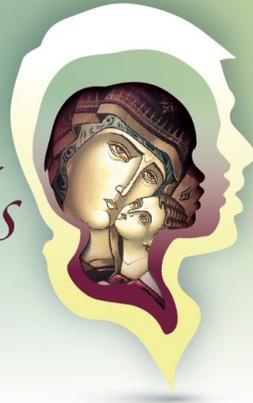
Thursday, March 25 is a **FULL DAY** for students. We will have **Parent Teacher Conferences** after school. You will have the opportunity to connect with your child's teacher virtually via TEAMS/phone call. Please watch for further information from your child's teacher in regard to scheduling a time for this.

DISMISSAL FOR SPRING BREAK

March 26 is a **HALF DAY** for students and then we dismiss for Spring Break. Classes will resume on Tuesday, April 6. We hope you enjoy a relaxing spring break and joyous Easter during this time.



God Calls Us



EACH BY NAME

March 2021

“Lent is a journey that involves our whole life, our entire being. It is a time to reconsider the path we are taking, to find the route that leads us home and to rediscover our profound relationship with God, on whom everything depends.” (Pope Francis, [Homily](#), 02/17/21)

In his homily for Ash Wednesday, Pope Francis invites us to look to a bigger picture of the journey of Lent. It is not only a journey into the desert with Jesus as he prepares to go to Jerusalem for his ultimate sacrifice. Our Holy Father invites us to look more deeply upon the journey of Lent as one where we commit our lives to always returning to God, his love, and his mercy. The Pope shares that through the gift of the person of Jesus, God came to us so that he could take us by the hand and walk us towards the joy of salvation.

Our planning for the 2021-22 school year is well underway. As with all things over the past many months, we recognize that there is uncertainty that exists because of the pandemic. Our schools have done an outstanding job at ensuring that students and staff are safe and that all COVID risk-mitigation protocols are followed; these will continue for the duration of the pandemic.

Understanding that our mandate is to provide in-person learning, we have also arrived at a model for online learning for the 2021-22 school year for those students that would benefit from this learning option based on their learning style. This option is significantly different than the COVID-inspired online platform presently in place, and a conversation with your child’s administration would be beneficial in understanding these differences as they pertain to your child’s learning needs.

We are asking parents to indicate their learning stance intention (in-person or online) for each child before March 22. The Division will analyze the number of requests to establish the most efficient and cost-effective way of delivering the online experience based on family choice. By families making decisions that meet their needs early on, it will allow us to create a robust learning experience for every student. All online students will be given one opportunity to return to their community school, on February 1, 2022. There will be no opportunity for students that want online learning to enroll after the start of the school year.

Please be sure to go to your PowerSchool Parent portal to indicate your intentions for each child for next year by March 22, 2021 so that we can be sure that our staffing meets the needs of our students in both in-person and online learning. [Click here](#) to learn more.

Pope Francis published an encyclical letter, [Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship](#), last fall. This month, our Religious Education Services (RES) Secondary Consultant writes about chapter 5, *A Better Kind of Politics*, and chapter 6, *Dialogue and Friendship in Society*. The article is included as an accompaniment to this newsletter.

I leave you with a final thought from Pope Francis' beautiful Ash Wednesday Homily: "Lent is a humble descent both inwards and towards others. It is about realizing that salvation is not an ascent to glory, but a descent in love."

Many blessings on your continued Lenten journey towards our God.

Sincerely,

Robert Martin

Chief Superintendent

Lent – Our Forty Days in the Desert

“Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” But he answered, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’” Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’” Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.” -

Matthew 4. 1-11

Lent, traditionally a time for fasting, almsgiving, and prayer, is also a time to take stock of our lives, to prepare ourselves physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually for the death and resurrection of Christ. For many Christians around the world, Lent is one of the most important times of the year. Unlike Advent which serves as a time of celebration and of great anticipation, Lent is more frequently a time of solemn observance and preparation for Easter. From its start on Ash Wednesday, this year on February the 17th, until its conclusion on Easter Sunday, we find ourselves, like Jesus, in the desert.

As Lent is the time for greater love, listen to Jesus’ thirst ... He knows your weakness. He wants only your love, wants only the chance to love you.” -St. Teresa of Calcutta

It is hard to imagine this barren wilderness as described in the gospel of Matthew as we remain shrouded in snow and cold. Yet, the imagery of the desert is still important; it helps us recall our need to stop and reflect; to prepare for the expected and unexpected events in our lives Lent is an invitation for us to accompany him on that journey; the forty days that Christ Jesus prepared himself, body and soul, for his ministry on earth. Even in the midst of temptation, Jesus revealed to us what it means to live out one’s humanity; what it means to be in relationship with God.

Today, Christians around the world observe Lent in many ways. Some will still observe the fast strictly, beginning with the wearing of ashes on Ash Wednesday and abstinence of meat until Easter Sunday. Others will choose to give up something trivial for Lent. At the same time, many other Christians will use Lent to study their Bibles and pray more intently, making use of devotional books, and daily reflections. And even others will act generously as a way to place others first. In whatever way you recognize Lent and however you prepare for Easter, remember always to remain fixed on Christ; to follow him, mind, body, and soul, from the forty days and forty nights in the desert, to a life dedicated to serving God and serving others.

Sandra Talarico, Manager, Religious Education Services

Better Politics - Truly at the Service of the Common Good

The pleading call for all societies to engage in “A Better Kind of Politics” is the focus of chapter 5 in Pope Francis’ encyclical letter *Fratelli Tutti*. In the midst of a world pandemic, political decisions that are “truly at the service of the common good” (par. 154) are not only needed, but essential!

Pope Francis’s message is clear; we must engage in politics that takes into account more than just economics. Though economic growth is a necessary consideration, stable economies are not built solely on profit; stability also relies on putting social structures in place that support human dignity. “Populist” leaders (*leaders that claim to represent the well-being of others, while in fact, pursuing their own agenda*) who show a lack of compassion for all people, undermine the principles of human dignity. A “better kind of politics” (par. 154) would see leaders do the ‘right thing’ in the interest and benefit of all people, not just what is popular for short term benefit or gain. A better type of leadership considers “the need for a greater spirit of fraternity, but also a more efficient world-wide organization to help resolve the problems plaguing the abandoned and suffering in poor countries” (par. 165). As a society, our goal must be to engage in “healthy politics” (par. 177) — this is where we will see true reform and peace.

Dialogue and the essential role it plays in creating a culture of “liberty, equality, and fraternity” (par. 219) is at the heart of chapter 6 “Dialogue and Friendship in Society”. Each of us has something to contribute; “each of us can learn something from others.” (par. 215) Currently, we live in a culture where social media exploits people’s weaknesses and makes them feel less worthy. Pope Francis says that when we engage in meaningful dialogue, we learn that “no one is useless, and no one is expendable.” (par 215) A country will flourish, when economics are not the sole focus and “when constructive dialogue occurs between its many rich cultural components: popular culture, university culture, youth culture, artistic culture, technological culture, economic culture, family culture and media culture.” (par. 199) When we take time to use social media for good — connecting with others, uniting in solidarity with others, and creating a sense of unity with others we “offer immense possibilities for encounter and solidarity.” (par. 205)

It is in “respecting the truth of our human dignity and submitting to that truth” (par. 207) that we can build a great future for our children. This means recognizing other people’s right to be themselves and accepting diversity and positive change or progress in our world. This means finding the time and energy, in a world that spins so quickly around us, to show care, generosity, and compassion for others. The simple “gift of a smile, to speak a word of encouragement, to listen amid general indifference” (par. 224) is integral to building new pathways for a world of hope; a world with compassion and understanding.

Susanna Kaup, Religious Education Services