



ST. JOSEPH BY-THE-SEA HIGH SCHOOL
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December, 2024

Dear Parents:

What a shock we will get in Church on this first Sunday of Advent! The rest of the world is full of holiday cheer and the Gospel reading at Mass contains some pretty ominous words from our Lord, *There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth nations will be in dismay, perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.*

In the life of the Church, Christmas starts on Christmas Day and this period between Thanksgiving and Christmas is Advent, a penitential season in which we prepare to celebrate the coming of Christ, both in time 2,000 years ago and at the end of the world. St. Augustine counsels, *Let us not resist the first advent, and the second will not terrify us.*

The students will be home with you to celebrate Christmas and they will be with us in school during Advent. It is in that spirit that we are observing Advent in its Catholic sense here at Sea. That is, we are providing a schedule for homerooms, clubs, and teams to attend our daily 7:30 A.M. mass in the Chapel. That schedule is posted on the website and on the December calendar. Likewise, as always, we have Adoration during the lunch periods every Friday and we will have special confessions preceding our Christmas Mass on the last day before vacation.

I wanted you as parents to know what we are doing during this time so that you can encourage your children to fully participate in these activities. Unfortunately, in so many different places, Christ is not part of Christmas. Our music, our decorations, and our celebrations are often little more than a secular celebration of winter and nativity scenes on our front lawns are rare. While the government-sponsored school system censors Christmas, here at Sea, we are free to celebrate Christmas and so we shall!

As hardworking parents, I know you did not send your son or daughter to a Catholic school to receive a secular education. Catholic education only works when everyone is on the same page and hopefully, while the rest of the world is wishing each other happy holidays, our students will have a deeper appreciation for the birth of our Lord – the reason for the season!

Since we have Virtual Days when it snows, we no longer have to worry about saving up snow days for bad weather. That allows us to use our snow days to extend the Christmas vacation to two full weeks and so the students' last day will be Friday, December 20 and they will return on the Monday after the Epiphany, January 6th, which is the last week of the Christmas season. On that day, there will be a school mass at 8:15 AM.

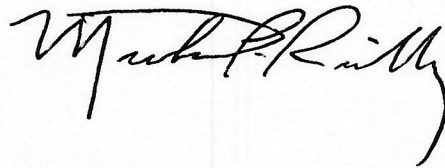
We moved the Fall Drama production to December this year because they are doing A Christmas Carol. The show will run Thursday, December 5th, Friday, December 6th, and Saturday, December 7th. Tickets can be purchased on the website. This year the Feast of the Immaculate Conception is transferred to Monday, December 9th (Since December 8th is the Second Sunday of Advent) and it is **STILL** a Holy Day of Obligation, so the students will be off to fulfill their obligation to attend Mass.

This year, in addition to our Christmas Concert, we will be holding a Family Christmas Party on Saturday, December 14th at 6:00 PM featuring the music of our talented Band and Choir. We're also going to do a live Nativity. There will be catering a buffet dinner, complete with soda, coffee and dessert, all for only \$35/person (Fair Share Event). So bring your family for a great night out together. The traditional Christmas concert will take place on Friday, December 13th at 7:30 PM.

I hope that you will have the opportunity to attend our **Christmas** Concert this year to enjoy the hard work of our talented Band and Choir – they've been practicing for these concerts since September.

May God bless you and yours this Christmas!

Faithfully In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Reilly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Fr. Michael Reilly
Principal