



From the Desk of Mrs. Leahy

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Lent... Springtime of the Church Year

Important Dates to Remember:

Ash Wednesday- Mass 9:00 am	2/25
Spaghetti Dinner	2/28
NYS Math Grade 4 Test	3/3
Science Fair	3/5
Early Dismissal – Faculty Meeting	3/6
NYS Math Grade 8 Test	3/10
ITBS Testing Begins	3/16

Historically called the Day of Ashes, Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent. Lent is the 40 days before Easter. The significance of the forty days comes from Jesus spending 40 days in the wilderness before beginning his public ministry.

This Wednesday, February 25, we will observe Ash Wednesday by attending Mass and having the mark of the cross made on our forehead with ashes. Palm branches from the previous Palm Sunday are burned to make the ashes. The cross reminds us that we belong to Jesus who died for all humankind on the cross.

Like spring, Lent is a time to grow closer to

our Lord. During this time we often give up material things and take on habits or good deeds that will help us to be better people. I would encourage you as parents to use Lent as a time to praise your children and encourage you to do good deeds for others together as a family.

Here at Saint Martin de Porres School during Lent our students will find ways to observe the holy season of Lent. During this time we will continue to take part in service to others. Our students will be involved in community, school, classroom, and individual acts of service. Our student government will lead our school in a much needed collection to benefit the Sisters of Saint Claire

and will work together as a club to prepare items to help others in our parish. The items that the students will be collecting for the sisters include gas cards, food, and personal items.

Also, during Lent, in each of our classrooms we will be providing our students with opportunities for individual and group prayer as well as special Lenten prayer services. Our students in grades 1 through grade 8 will also attend Stations of the Cross and we will continue to offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation to our students in grades 3 through 8 on a weekly rotation as we do throughout the school year.

Saint Martin's Helps Our Local SPCA

Mrs. Tenaglia our 4th grade teacher and Mrs. Van de Water our 3rd grade teacher surely showed our school their love and dedication to animals by their willingness to coordinate Saint Martin's annual collection for the SPCA. These two teachers encouraged our school community to reach-out and make a difference in the lives of those that often give

much pleasure to our lives.

Through the sale of raffle tickets for a lovable large dog, made by the very creative Mrs. Hilal, the sale of hearts which are displayed throughout our halls, and the collection of much needed items for the SPCA, Saint Martin's School has raised more than \$580 for the SPCA.. Along with this generous donation Saint Martin's will be donating many needed items such as food, blan-

kets, etc, to our local SPCA. The SPCA will be visiting our school on February 27 to be presented with these donations. This collection is another example of the way that our faculty, students, and families are reaching out to help and make a difference in our community. I am sure that our Lord is smiling down on these good deeds!

Testing... 1, 2, 3... Testing

Beginning March 16 all children in grades 1 through 8 will be taking the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). These are standardized achievement tests that are taken by all children in the Archdiocese of New York and all over the nation. The main purpose of the ITBS test is to provide our school with information that can be used to improve instruction, to help our teachers to check each student's year to year growth, and to identify each child's strongest and weakest areas of achievement.

The results of the ITBS are usually sent back to the school in late May. These results will not be used to determine report card grades of stu-

dents. In school, your child's teacher and I will use the results to monitor you child's learning of some of the important skills taught in school. Of course, the results will be useful supplementary information for their teacher, you the parents, and your child. When these results are used in conjunction with other information from both the classroom and the home, teachers and parents can work together to identify and address the educational needs of each student.

Also, during this month, our students in grades 4 and 8 will be taking the New York State Math Exams. The results of these exams are usually sent to our school in late spring or

early summer.

Students should be encouraged to do their best on the ITBS and the NYS tests as they should for all their school work. By monitoring a typical schedule and atmosphere at home during March, you can help your child have a positive testing experience. Please be sure that all children are well rested, have had a good healthy breakfast and have two sharpened number two pencils with them each day. Most importantly, encourage your child to do their best and help them believe that they will do well.

Science Fair is Coming Soon!

Saint Martin de Porres School annual Science Fair for students in grades 5 through 8 will take place on Thursday, March 5. All students are expected to bring their projects to school that morning and set-up all projects by 8:30 am in the school gymnasium. Judging will begin at 8:30 am and run until all projects are judged. Parents are welcomed to view the fair from 1:00 pm until dis-

missal on March 5 and again from 6:30 to 8:00 pm in the school gymnasium that same evening. The awards ceremony will begin at approximately 7:30 pm.

It is our hope that all students are working hard on their projects and we look forward to seeing their finished product. It is important to remember that all students are

winners as long as the project was a valuable learning experience for them.

Special thanks to our upper house science teacher Mrs. Canfield for coordinating the science fair for our school, to our wonderful students who are working hard on their projects, and to you our parents for your cooperation and support of the science fair.

Points of Interest Involving Our school

Our monthly Story Time will take place on Thursday, March 5 at 10:00 am in our school library for all pre-school age children and their parent.

Meet and Greet will take place on Friday, March 6 at 8:00 am in the parish lounge. Please take a moment and come and share a few minutes with the best parents in all of Dutchess County. Special thanks to Jen Scar-

pati and Clarissa Burrows our two hostesses for this month.

Our second Pancake Breakfast has been moved to Sunday, March 29. Special thanks to Pete Kelly for coordinating this event for our school.

Registration for the 2009/2010 school year has been going fantastic!

There are many new and interested families registered for grades prek through grade 7 and more calling each and every day. We are truly blessed here at Saint Martin's as we continue to grow while maintaining high academic excellence with Christ as our guide and Saint Martin de Porres as our patron. Are you aware that our enrollment here at Saint Martin's is up since our doors opened this past September?