



December 2011

AROUND THE PARISH

LOOK CLOSER

What have you seen lately?
I mean what have you really seen?
The holidays are here and this year I took pride in getting ready for them earlier than I have ever done before, November 5th. That's when I began thinking Christmas and doing Christmas things. I will admit that I thought, no I believed that this would be the year my son and his wife would be announcing the approaching birth of their first child. That's how I justified pulling decorations out of the attic and down into my living and dining room so early. I even placed a count down on my cell phone and marked it, "The best Christmas yet!"
As life would have it, it will not be the year of my son's big announcement but it still will be the "Best Christmas yet!"
Why?
It's simple. My son and I have this agreement. Whenever I ask him, "What was your best Christmas?" he always answers, "The next one."
Yes, I surrounded myself with all the stuff of Christmas. But I never really saw it until yesterday.
That's when I took the time to "look closer."
I stopped. I'm always urging you to stop, too.
I've done it several times this year, but never really noticed until Sunday.
I suddenly became comfortable with the idea that the big day was approaching. I felt Christmas. So I decided to really look at it.
I walked into my dining room and tuned on the Christmas carousel I placed on top of a book case. The music began to play and the carousel, ferris wheel and animated figures moved.
Then I decided to "look closer."

I became one with it. Calling upon the child I keep hidden just below the surface, I began imagining I was one of the riders. Up and down and around I went. I could feel the cold wind in my face as I began to wave at the others watching nearby.
Then I turned to one of the many Santa displays I have. I could feel the warmth of the fireplace and smell the fresh cookies one of the elves was bringing to the jolly old man himself.
Not stopping there, I walked over to our tree and took the time to really see the dozens of ornaments we had recently hung on the fresh pine limbs.
"Hey Bobby! Down here!" I heard in my head.
My O gauge Lionel train was waiting to leave the station.
"Whoooooooooooo!" the whistle went and off they went.
Now, crawling on the floor I hurried over to the other side to see the skater twirl around the pond and the police car passing by.
"Merry Christmas!" I shouted and they all returned the greeting.
As I always do, I responded to the urgency of sharing this moment with those I love. I called my son and left a message on his phone.
"This is some fatherly Christmas advice. Take time today and everyday to look closer. Get down and play with your train display. Stand before your tree and really look at each ornament you hung."
When I turned around, Marianne and my two dogs, Ricky and Lucy, were waiting there on the floor for my return.
"Did you look?" I asked of her.
"Yes," she replied.
"No. I mean did you really look?" I asked.
"Yes, I just boarded the train and I'm heading to the Rockies for a winter

escape!” she assured me. Afterwards, while basking in the glow of reds, greens and soft candle light, I thought about it all.

Yes, I began thinking about Christmas earlier than usual this year and I did indeed decorate my home. But I never really saw Christmas until Sunday.

“How many things in my life am I really not seeing?” I asked.

I am a father, but do I really see my children? I need to “look closer.”

I am a husband, but do I really see my wife?

I am employed by someone part of my time. But do I really see what it is I do.

I am a friend, but do I really “see” my friends? I do need to “look closer.”

I am a child of God. But do I really see God in my life and those He places within it? I need to “look closer.”

Take time to really examine every aspect of your life. Make a list of all the labels you place on who you are and ask yourself if you really “see” yourself and others.

If you are in search of love, look closer. You are loved.

If you are in search of friendship, look closer and see those who consider you one.

If you are in search of a better relationship with those in your family, look closer and see how really important they are.

If you can’t find Christmas this year, look closer. There in the manger, no, in your heart, you will find Him.

Everything you need, you have, if only you “Look Closer.”

SACRED HEART SCHOOL NEWS

Sacred Heart School has been busy this fall! As we count down the days until the Christmas Bazaar, I thought I’d share with you some of the exciting activities of our students.

Our 7th graders visited the retired Sisters at Saint Joseph Villa, as part of their

“Party with Nuns” service project. I don’t know who has more fun - the students or the Sisters! On October 21st we hosted the Will Power touring company, part of the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival. Students in grades 5-8 participated in several workshops, including Shakespearean language and the very popular stage fighting. They then watched a performance of Romeo and Juliet, which they have been reading in class.

Our students and teachers enjoyed a wonderful “Celebration of the Saint” on Tuesday, November 2nd. Students learned all about the saints, and dressed as their favorite saint on that day. Our 8th grade student prepared altars to honor deceased loved ones in celebration of Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead), a Mexican celebration that they learned about in Spanish Class. Confirmation students prepared presentation boards on the saint they have chosen for their confirmation name. What a wonderful day seeing all these “future saints” walking the halls of Sacred Heart School!

Mini Vinnies, the junior St. Vincent de Paul Society, assembled Thanksgiving dinner baskets for nine needy families. Each class was responsible for collecting a particular food item, and the St. Vincent de Paul Society (Big Vinnies, as we call them!) donated the turkeys. Thanksgiving cards made by the Mini Vinnie members were included, wishing the families God’s blessings during the holiday season.

Submitted by: Kathy Napolitano, Principal SHS

SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

11-11-11

Eric Joseph Taylor

&

Terrie Ann Freeman

1ST QUARTER HONOR ROLL

SACRED HEART SCHOOL

Distinguished Honors

First Honors

Second Honors

GRADE 6

Dennis Brillantes Claudine Loop
Michael Duddy Catherine Maher
Molly Duncan Emma Maurer
Katrina Mulherin

Isabella Butler
Matthew Hughes
Trevor Jackson
Alex Mancuso
Katherine Morelli
Anne Moser

GRADE 7

Lindsey Eways-Bobst
Gwendolyn Loop
Isaac Nawa
Noelle Parisi
Londyn Witmer
Kaylin Wittmeyer

Elizabeth Gaspari
Allison Klinger
Suzie Neiman
Caty Stanko
Gabrielle Taormina

Riley Mintzer

GRADE 8

Kevin Duncan
Kevin Lattanzio

Thomas Gonzales
Cody Hart
Jordan Penn
Allison Sichler

Devon Merritt
Sarajeon Reinert
Bryan Rojas
Madison Woytovich

Congratulations to these students on their achievements!

SVDP—SOUP KITCHEN

St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP) needs your help! On the weekend of December 3rd & 4th, SVDP will be preparing and serving the noon meals at the Kennedy House Soup Kitchen. We will need approximately 15 people to set-up, prepare, and serve the meals and clean-up. We will be on-site at Kennedy House from approximately 10 AM till 1 PM each day. If you could help one or both days, please call Jeff Manley at (610) 670-1069 or email

jmanley@rmctc.org to reserve a spot. Please call if you have any questions. This is a wonderful opportunity to help with this important SVDP project. Thank You!

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Zachary Daniel Ruppert
Son of Joel & Amy Ruppert
Zachary was born on 8-20-11

NEWS FROM SHOPS OFFICE

For the month of December, Scrip orders will be placed on December 5th, 12th and 19th. For absolute guarantee of per-Christmas delivery we highly encourage you to have all of your card orders place by December 12th. Great Lake Scrip processes a huge volume of card orders in December and cannot always guarantee the same delivery schedule as they do the rest of the year. Orders place on December 19th will be available at Sacred Heart School SHOPS office between 8 and 10 AM, Friday, December 23rd for pickup. In-stock gift cards will be available for purchase through December 23rd at the SHOPS office.

There will be NO SHOPS sales at Mass over the Christmas and New Year holiday weekends. The first SCRIP order after the holidays will be placed on January 9th. SHOPS office will reopen at school on Tuesday morning, January 3rd.

Available on a first come basis, we are stocking additional cards including: Barnes & Noble, Bed, Bath, & Beyond, Best Buy, Bon-Ton, Boscov's, Burger King, Chili's, Dick's, iTunes, Outback, Olive Garden/Red Lobster, \$25 Panera, Starbucks, Subway, TJ Maxx/Marshalls, and Wendy's. Stop at the Fundraising desk after Mass or visit school to pick up your last minute gift card needs.

Questions or need help, contact: Ruth Butler at rbutler@sacredheartreading.org or (610) 745-8273 or Deb Bernheiser at sales@preventativemaintenance.us or (484) 336-6293.

PLEASE WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBER

Marcella Canfield

COFFEE & DONUTS WITH SANTA!

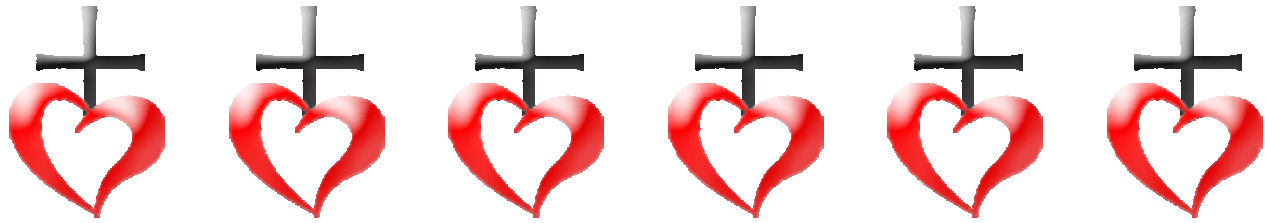
Mark your calendars....Santa Claus will be making a special visit to Sacred Heart's Coffee and Donuts on Sunday, December 18th after the 9:30 AM and 11 AM Masses. Santa will be holding court in the IHM Room which is on the 2nd floor of the school right off the parking lot. Come and enjoy the sweet treats, warm beverages, and the contagion of children's smiles upon seeing the *jolly old elf!* Anyone interested in helping with this endeavor, please call Bonnie at the rectory (610) 372-4010.

CHRISTMAS WISH PROGRAM

Once again, Catholic Charities is seeking your help with its annual Christmas Wish Program. Become a part of this warm, wonderful part of the season by purchasing a new Christmas gift for a child in need of your area. Our parish representative is Gerri Dando (610) 914-5110 or godando@gmail.com, and she has a list of specific children's names, ages, and some gift ideas suggested by the child's parent or guardian. Your part is to purchase a gift (valued at \$20-\$25), wrap it and get it to Gerri by December 11th. This program has been successful through the years thanks to the generosity of the Berks County parishes.

SACRED HEART'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

Will be held Thursday, December 1st from 6 to 9 PM in the School Gymnasium. This is an adult only get-together to celebrate the holidays while supporting the school. Mix and mingle with friends and fellow parishioners, enjoy cocktail & hor d'oeuvres, and a fabulous Silent Auction. \$5 Donation at the door.



News from SHS Advancement Office SHS 2012 Annual Fund

We are getting ready to kick off our 2012 Annual Fund! Parish support of Sacred Heart School's inaugural annual fund was magnificent! We raised nearly \$72,000 and we know over half of the total raised was from parishioner support. We are so thankful for every donation from our parish family!

Over the next few weeks, we will send letters to past supporters to start this fiscal year's campaign. We have a \$75,000 Annual Fund goal to fulfill by June 30, 2012. Once you make a donation to 2012 SHS Annual Fund, you will not be asked again. You may choose to send a donation right away or you may choose to make a pledge to be fulfilled by June 30, 2012. We ask that you carefully consider supporting the 2012 SHS Annual Fund. Donation forms and envelopes are always available at the fundraising desk in the Church.

What is the SHS Annual Fund?

The SHS Annual Fund is an opportunity for alumni, faculty, staff, students, parents, grandparents, and friends of Sacred Heart School to come together by making a gift that ensures our on-going ability to maintain our exceptional quality of education. Sacred Heart's ability to continue the highest academic excellence depends largely on the support from family, friends, and alumni - many of which are among our parish family. Gifts to the Annual Fund are used on a daily basis to help meet the school's greatest ongoing needs and support our academic mission. Dollars generated by the SHS Annual Fund are above and beyond tuition and the parish subsidy allowing our students to realize their full potential through enhanced programs and services.

Why give to the Annual Fund?

There are so many reasons to give to the Annual Fund. Here are just a few:

- You know changing the life of a student is an immeasurable return on investment.
- To reaffirm your commitment to SHS and Catholic education.
- Because one student, educated at SHS, can positively affect the lives of thousands.
- To enable SHS to attract and retain faculty who inspire a passion for learning.
- **You love Sacred Heart School.**

Contributions to the SHS Annual Fund are used by the school in the year they are given to benefit every child, every day. Each \$1,000 raised through the SHS Annual Fund provides annual support equal to a \$25,000 endowment. So please consider a donation to the 2012 Annual Fund today!

Questions, contact Ruth Butler, Director of Advancement, 610-745-8273 or rbutler@sacredheartreading.org.



CALLING ALL SACRED HEART PARISH CHILDREN GRADES K - 6!

Come and be a part of the Christmas Eve Children's Choir

Practices will be held in the Church, from 3 to 4 PM on Sundays: December 4th, December 11th, and December 18th. (An additional practice will be held if needed on Thursday, December 22nd from 6 to 7 PM.)

Participants must make every effort to attend each practice!

For more information, please contact Rose Kennedy at (610) 743-3363 or rosekennedy@gmail.com.

SHS CYO DECLAMATION

Open to all interested 7th and 8th grade students of Sacred Heart Parish.

WHEN: Come to a meeting on December 8th or December 22nd to experience what our club is all about.

WHERE: Students must be dropped off at Sacred Heart School, front door, at 3 PM with a punctual pick-up at 4 PM.

Our goal is to find a speech that you believe in, understand, and are willing to deliver to an audience with poise, gestures, and passion. We will ultimately compete with other Berks Catholic Schools to choose one male, one female (regardless of grade level) as Grand Champions of Berks, moving on to the Diocesan Competition.

The champions of Berks then compete with winners of other districts of the diocese in spring. No dates for either local or diocesan competitions have been issued to date.

Come to the meetings December 8th and/or December 22nd if interested.

Submitted by: Rose Consoli, moderator

CHRISTMAS GIFT SUGGESTION

Are you having some difficulty finding that special gift for that special someone who has everything? Consider making a donation to the St. Vincent de Paul Society in that person's name. A handsome gift certificate will be issued that you can present to them during the Christmas season. Sacred Heart's St. Vincent de Paul Society helps many less fortunate individuals all year long through their various projects. Make gift giving easy, meaningful, and help an individual or family in need! If you would like to make a donation to the St. Vincent de Paul society in your loved one's name, please call Bonnie at the Rectory (610) 372-4010.

QUESTIONS?

Misplaced your altar server/lector/EM schedule?. Can't find your bulletin or newsletter? Go to the parish website...it's all there.

www.shrcparish.org