



NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL



Dear Parents and Guardians,

Ring in the Lunar New Year!

As we welcome the Year of the Snake, we extend our warmest wishes to all our families for prosperity, good health, and happiness.

Catholic schools across BC will celebrate **Catholic Schools Week** from **February 2-7**, with a variety of exciting events planned each day. We will begin the week with the **5:00 PM Mass on Sunday, February 2**—our choir will be singing and all are welcome to join!

The CISVA community will recognize **Mrs. Judy Der** for her **remarkable 40 years of service** at this year's **Catholic Teachers' Learning Days on February 13 and 14**. Mrs. Der has been an outstanding teacher and role model, warmly welcoming students, staff, and parents into our community. We celebrate not just her years of service, but the love and faith she has poured into every lesson and every student. Be sure to read more about her incredible contributions on the next page. Congratulations, Mrs. Der, on this incredible milestone! We are excited to welcome **Mark Hoo**, who will be visiting all classes throughout February. Finally, our **First Friday Masses** will feature **adoration in place of the homily**, and we invite all parents to attend. While we focus on anti-bullying strategies year-round, we place special emphasis in February, culminating on **Pink Shirt Day** on February 26. Our **Student Network** will host an assembly to inspire kindness and promote positive words and actions.

Yours sincerely,
Brenda Krivuzoff, Principal



"I love the Lord, because he hears me; he listens to my prayers. He listens to me every time I call to him."

Psalm 116:1-2 (GNT)

MONTH AT A GLANCE

February 2025 Celebrate Catholic Schools Virtue: Respect

- 1** Knights of Columbus Free Throw Competition for 9-14 yr olds. 8:30 registration; bring consent form
- 2-8** BC Catholic Schools Week
- 2** Choir sings at 5:00pm Mass; wear your uniform to Mass for a treat
- 4** Notre Dame Band Performance 9:00; Junior Choir at Holy Rosary; Grade 2 Reconciliation 6:30pm
- 7** First Friday Mass 9:10
- 9** Collingwood Lion Dance Celebration 11:30 -1:30 pm Boundary to Rupert/Joyce St. to Skytrain (CBIA Event)
- 12** Choir sings at Regional Choir Festival
- 13-14** Professional Days: School Closures; Valentine's Day
- 17** Family Day Holiday
- 19** School Mass 9:30
- 26** Out-of-Uniform Day Anti-Bullying/Pink Shirt Day \$2 to wear a pink t-shirt.



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF SERVICE

An interview with Mrs. Der

This month, Mrs. Judy Der will receive a CISVA award for 40 years of dedicated service. The presentation will take place during the Catholic Teacher Learning Days on February 13. Sitting down with Mrs. Der, she shared moments of her legacy career and what it meant to her to complete 38 of her 40 years at St. Mary's.

How did you come to St. Mary's, and what was your first impression of the school community?

"The Holy Spirit leads you where you need to go." At the time, there was a recession for teachers, but she saw a bulletin board advertisement for Catholic teachers and applied. Mrs. Der started teaching at St. Mary's in 1987 after a two-year position in Grade 6/7 at St. Francis Xavier and has continued teaching in our school for 38 years. She has taught a variety of grades throughout her career, including Grades 5, 7, 4, 3, and 1, staying at each grade level for several years, with the longest tenure in Grade 1. Her first impression of St. Mary's was that the kids were fantastic, the staff was amazing, and the parent community was very supportive. **"There is a reason why people stay,"** she shared.

What are some of your proudest moments in your teaching career?

- Mrs. Der worked diligently on a committee to create the CISVA Tool Box for teachers.
- She brought the Salmonoids in the Classroom program to St. Mary's when she taught Grade 4 and received a 20-year recognition award.
- She sang in the Catholic Educators' Conference Choir for 25 years and has been honored to introduce numerous speakers.
- She led a CISVA workshop for Grade 3 teachers.
- She has mentored ten student teachers over the years, including Ms. Lombardo.

What has been your favorite subject or topic to teach?

Her passion became science and math. Mrs. Der's love for science inspired her to plan monthly field trips for her classes. She also brought pets into the classroom including guinea pigs and white rats when she taught Grade 7, when studying the novel, *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of Nimh*. A former student told her that she became a marine biologist because of her. Another student joined a choir because Mrs. Der was always singing.

Do you have a favorite grade to teach?

"The grade you are teaching at the time you are doing it is your favorite grade." Mrs. Der spent the most time teaching Grade 1 during the important foundational years. **"You are actually experiencing learning at the grassroots in Grade 1. It is an amazing feeling to actually experience these kids and witness their learning."**

What advice would you give a new teacher starting their career at St. Mary's today?

"The best thing to do is to ask questions and learn from the kids. Show energy and enthusiasm for the job."

Mrs. Der attended many conferences over the years and was asked to lead prayers and a session on Indigenous resources at CISVA Zonal networking days. She is a lifelong learner, always willing to take risks and try new things. She was the first teacher in the school to have a computer in the classroom after attending a math conference, which led to a computer in the library and then development of the computer lab at that time. She also was the first teacher to bring the Cheakamus (Bighouse) program to the school, and we are still going there today.

What role do you believe Catholic education plays in shaping students' lives, and how has that been reflected at St. Mary's?

Catholic education provides strong moral development that guides students in their daily interactions. Jesus' teachings serve as a model for kindness and generosity. Her students are learning the song *Be the Light of God*, a reminder that they are called to be the light by their words and actions. Our core message, "Love one another as I have loved you" - is a great way of life and we can become the saints we are called to be. Mrs. Der shares that in Catholic schools we also have the ability to pray together for both the joys and challenges in life. Our community lifts one another up in prayer which provides strength and comfort.

What do you want to be your legacy at St. Mary's?

"My legacy is that I made an impression on my students and their families, and that they can remember me as being happy, enthusiastic and loving my work.."



Living,
CELEBRATING,
and Proclaiming
OUR FAITH

"The Holy Spirit takes leads you where you need to go... There is a reason why people stay."

Mrs. Der



DOMINICAN MONTHLY VIRTUE IN PRACTICE PROGRAM

Respect

This month in our "Virtues in Practice" program, we will focus on the virtue of **"respect"** which means **"recognizing the dignity of all people"**.

Our society often bases a person's value on their appearance or abilities. But that is not how God sees us. In reality, what we are *much more important than what we can do*. Each one of us is created in the image and likeness of God, and we are unique and unrepeatable gifts of His love. God loves us so much that He sent His Son Jesus to die for us, that we might live forever with Him in heaven. When we look at people from this perspective, we can't help but respect them! The Gospel calls us to have deep respect for all people including people of different ages, cultures, ideas, and abilities.

The goal of Catholic Education is heaven, but knowledge alone will not get us there! The "Virtues in Practice" program is helping us to live our faith in our everyday lives. St. Mary, pray for us!



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

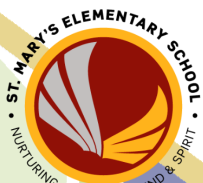
We begin our celebration of Catholic Schools' Week at the 5:00pm Mass on Sunday, February 2nd at St. Mary's Parish. We ask that all students who come to this Mass be **dressed in their school uniforms** as a reminder to the congregation of the deep pride students and families have for St. Mary's School. If a student comes dressed in uniform to the 5:00 Mass on Sunday, Mrs. Jaroma will have a treat for participants at the back of the church at the end of Mass. We look forward to great participation at Sunday's mass. Let's show everyone how proud we are of our wonderful school, St. Mary's!

Other highlights for Catholic Schools' Week will include:

- Catholic Trivia Competition
- Shared experiences of Catholic Schools from Staff members
- Special activities in appreciation for parents and Staff
- Presentation of "Spiritual Bouquets" from students to our Priests at First Friday Mass (Feb. 7)



*A Place to Grow: Faith-filled learning,
Lifelong Friendships, and Endless Fun!*



PHE & BLACK EXCELLENCE DAY

We had a fantastic start to the year with basketball as our focus in PHE lessons from Grades K-7. The students have shown tremendous growth in their skills, teamwork and sportsmanship. As we approach the end of the basketball season in PE, we will transition into soccer for two/three weeks before kicking off the much anticipated badminton season.

We were also fortunate to celebrate Black Excellence Day with Joel Haywood, also known as "King Handles." Joel shared his expertise with our students, focusing on skills like dribbling and shooting techniques. He was generous with his time, signing water bottles and basketballs, and sharing inspiring stories about his journey. The students absolutely loved learning from him! A big thank-you to Joel for visiting our school and leaving such a positive impact on our students.

Our basketball intramurals have been an incredible success! Over the past few weeks, students have been actively participating and showing great enthusiasm during games. They've not only improved their skills in dribbling, passing and shooting but also developed a deeper understanding of teamwork, court awareness and sportsmanship. Thanks to all staff members who have been involved in helping our kids develop their skills.

We look forward to continuing a fun and active term in PHE!



Former student Theo Mogatas visited K-Grade 4 classes to discuss the power of words, emphasizing the importance of kindness and the impact unkind words can have on others.



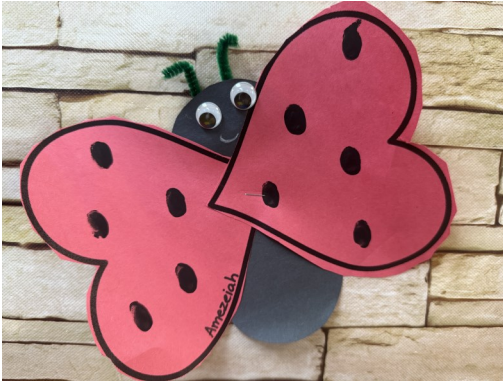


ATHLETICS

The CISVA elementary basketball season is in full swing and St. Mary's School is locked in! With seventy nine players amongst five intermediate grade level teams, our students are learning the value of cooperation, a good work ethic, and how to be a good teammate this season. It is wonderful to see these students commit to the goals of each team, all while having fun and cheering each other on in tournaments and league play. Families are invited to come and cheer on our teams. Join in on the fun and let's root for our Saints!



FROST & CREATIVITY: WINTER ART



Kindergarten Vukasovic Love Bugs



Kindergarten Miller Melting Snowmen



6L New Year Vision Boards



Grade 3 Winter Fox and Northern Lights



4Q Globes of Winter Fun



4C Northern Lights



6L Winter Trees



Grade 2 Up Close Adorable Snowman



5L Snowy Scene

LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS



KV Cherry Blossom Lanterns



Grade 3 Dragon Puppets



Grade 2 Chinese Zodiac Wheels

What is your zodiac sign?

The Year of the Wood Snake in 2025 represents creativity, personal growth and transformation.

*Presented by the
Collingwood CBIA
(right)*

*The lion contains two
performers in a small
costume that are
attached to each
other.*



