



# St. Mary's School Newsletter

Vancouver, BC | October 2025



Living,  
Celebrating, &  
**PROCLAIMING**  
**OUR FAITH**

*To every thing there is a season,  
and a time to every purpose  
under the heaven.*

- Ecclesiastes 3:1

## PRINCIPAL'S NOTE



*Dear Parents and Guardians,*

We've had a very active and wonderful start to the school year! As we step into a new month, there is so much to look forward to: cross-country meets, volleyball tournaments, Thanksgiving celebrations, our Walkathon, and, in October, a special focus on Our Lady of the Rosary. As a school community, we will pray the rosary

regularly and join millions of children around the world on October 7. This devotion is a source of strength, comfort, and joy for us all.



We also continue to deepen our learning about First Nations traditions and our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation. On September 29, our Grade 7 students led a beautiful Truth & Reconciliation Prayer Service. This year's theme, Indigenous Law, reminds us of our shared responsibility to care for the

land where we live, work, and play, and to live harmoniously with all of creation. You can view the service on our Instagram reel.

Please join us for school Mass on Wednesday, October 15 at 9:30 a.m., where we will be honouring Mrs. Maria Stokovac as she prepares for retirement at the end of the month. We're grateful for Mrs. Stokovac's dedicated service, and we'd love to have many parents present to help us celebrate her vocation and legacy.

*Brenda Krivuzoff, Principal*

October 2025  
*Month of the Holy Rosary*  
**Virtue: Reverence**

- 1** CISVA Cross Country Championships
- 2** Foundations Skills Assessments (Gr. 4 & 7) to Nov. 10
- 3** First Friday Mass 9:10
- 7** One Million Children — Praying the Rosary
- 8** Power Lunch
- 10** Walkathon 9-12 Central Park
- 13** Thanksgiving Holiday
- 14** School Closure (Professional Day In Lieu for Aug 26)
- 15** School Mass 9:30 Power Lunch
- 19** School Choir sings 5:00 Mass
- 21** Photo retakes (full uniform required) Power Lunch
- 23** Monster Mash Family Dance 5:30-8:30
- 24** School Closure: Professional Day
- 28** Notre Dame Band Performance 9:00
- 31** Halloween Out-of-Uniform & Events



## FEATURE: *Mrs. Maria Stokovac*

This month, we joyfully celebrate Mrs. Stokovac as she retires after an extraordinary 42 years of dedicated service to the St. Mary's School community. Throughout her vocation, she has touched the lives of thousands of students, instilling in them not only knowledge, but also a deep love of God and a special devotion to the saints.



Known as our resident expert on the saints, Mrs. Stokovac enriched the religious curriculum in countless ways. She often invited parish librarian Mr. Bill Murphy to share his expertise with students, helping to deepen their understanding. Her commitment to meaningful learning experiences also included building connections to the Grade 5 curriculum, from welcoming guest speakers such as Hon. Adrian Dix to leading the annual signature field trip to the legislature in Victoria. We are profoundly grateful for the example of faith, service, and joy that Mrs. Stokovac has given to our community in all that she does. As she begins her retirement, we offer her our prayers and blessings. This is not a goodbye, but a heartfelt "until we meet again."



### *Reflection by Maria Stokovac: My Journey in Teaching*

It has been a privilege to have taught in Catholic schools for the past 42 years. My Journey in my vocation began with my very devout Catholic Family. We lived the Faith every day. All our celebrations included God. The Church was our second home and provided us with all we needed. I was not disappointed when the Public Schools had no jobs, as my Priest put in a good word for me to apply at the Catholic Schools. I realized that God has a Reason for our livelihood. I have not been disappointed!

#### *There's a Reason*

*by Daughters of St. Paul*

*For every pain that we must bear,  
For every burden, every care,  
There's a reason.*

*For every grief that bows the head,  
For every teardrop that is shed,  
There's a reason.*

*For every hurt, for every plight,  
For every lonely, pain-racked night,  
There's a reason.*

*But if we trust God, as we should,  
It all will work out for our good.  
He Knows The Reason.*

When doubts come, this poem gives hope.

Time is a term used when waiting for something to happen. This journey has had no time attached; in fact, it is hard to believe how fast time has flown. I still cannot believe that my vocation in Teaching is now coming to a close. It has been a **special** time these last two months to contemplate my next journey. Being able to work with so many devout Priests, professional Administrators, Teachers, and EAs, and working with all the wonderful students and their parents who keep things in perspective, has been a special gift that I will treasure.

I trust that if God needs me, I will begin a new journey in my next phase of life. Retirement can be overrated, as the term has left me feeling overwhelmed. Am I lucky to be retiring? Only God knows! I am looking forward to what God has in store for me, as I know He has a **Reason**.

I give thanks to all who were part of my journey and pray for each of you to keep your Faith and Trust that God will lead you to where you belong.

God Bless you all,

*Maria Stokovac*





# VIRTUE IN PRACTICE

## *Reverence*

During October, we will practice the virtue of “Reverence: showing your deepest respect for things of God”. St. Mary's Code of Conduct states that students are expected to display “Reverence, Respect and Responsibility”. Where do we see these words in our school building?

This month will be an opportunity for students to more fully pay attention during Mass, classroom prayer time and school prayer at the end of each day. We will continue learning to still our bodies and quiet our minds; then we will be able to listen to Jesus' voice more easily.

The goal of Catholic Education is heaven, but knowledge alone will not get us there! “*Virtues in Practice*” is helping us to live out our faith everyday.



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## TOGETHER WE CAN

### *Our School, Our Future*

A huge thank you to all our parents and families for your amazing support of fundraising last year! Your generosity of time, effort, and contributions makes such a difference for our students. Together, we're able to provide outstanding programming—enriching resources, field trips, events, and equipment that help our children shine.

Some of our fundraisers also support the Parish/School Building Fund, while others directly benefit the school's daily operations. Every dollar raised is an investment in our children's learning and growth.

Here are some exciting highlights from the 2024–2025 fundraising year:

- 
- **The net proceeds raised through the Spring 2025 Purdy's Chocolate Bars fundraiser was \$11,170.**
  - **The net proceeds from the raffle sales is \$30,497.58 raised (Parish/School Building Fund)**

***Incredible work, everyone!***

***We'll be announcing our Walkathon totals at the end of the month—stay tuned for the big reveal!***



# LEADERS IN ACTION

## *Our Student Network*



We are excited to announce our newly appointed Student Ambassadors from Grades 1–7! These student leaders will be working alongside our mentors to help plan upcoming Out-of-Uniform Days and other community events.

The Student Network program is proudly sponsored by Mr. Mogatas, Mrs. Marino, and Ms. Krivuzoff. A special thank you as well to Ms. Paccani for her creative work with the mentors in producing TikTok videos for our socials and for the Walkathon Assembly. The team is excited for our upcoming Walkathon on Oct. 10th, and competing for some amazing prizes! Let's go SAINTS!

We look forward to seeing the great ideas and leadership our Ambassadors will bring to our school community!

### ***Mentors:***

Eoin Bailey  
Mischa Castro  
Victoria Atelevich  
Carl Espiratu  
Amelia Ferreira

### ***Ambassadors:***

1M Ethan Noel  
1M Matilda Hong  
1P Xyler Bangayan  
1P Aria Pham  
2 Sophie Nombrado  
2 Elisio Hughes  
3 Livana Ocaba  
3 Ethan Remo-Whitehouse  
4 Alexandra Flojo  
4 Lina De Menezes  
5LR Amelia Rogers  
5LR Kevin Uy  
5Q Trisha Espiritu  
5Q Ethan Bautista  
6L Shane Ravina  
6L Lara Menezes  
6M Sophie Brine  
6M Carly Narag  
7P Sophia Caspillo  
7P Andre Tuiza  
7S Betina Matsumura  
7S Tyler Tintero



“

*Peace is built in the heart and from the heart, by eliminating pride and vindictiveness and carefully choosing our words.*

(May 16, 2025)

”



Pope Leo XIV



*Leo P.P. XIV*



# VOICES OF CHANGE

## *What A "Zajac" Experience!*

*By Filippa Lee (7S)*

In the first week of September, our Grade 7 class went on a 4-day Outdoor Education trip to Zajac Ranch. It was not only a fun and unforgettable experience, but we also learned valuable outdoor skills, including both independent and social skills.

During these days, I discovered their "Adventure Challenge" programs such as wall climbing, high ropes, low ropes, and archery. These activities were challenging, but I felt proud of myself for overcoming my fears and boosting my confidence. With the guidance of the counselors, I was encouraged to try all the activities, which made me feel safe and supported.

I also developed a strong connection to nature. We hiked through the forest and around the lakes, enjoying the fresh air, the sound of waves, and the beauty of the surroundings. I even collected rocks to create DIY paintings, which gave me a sense of peace and a deeper appreciation for God's creation.

Throughout this outdoor trip, I developed important skills such as teamwork, cooperation, and responsibility through teambuilding activities like shelter building and water filtration. These activities gave me the opportunity to communicate effectively, solve problems with my teammates, and complete tasks successfully.

At the end of the trip, I appreciated that Zajac Ranch provided us with comfortable accommodations and delicious meals. In addition, the counselors from Zajac Ranch and our school teachers created a fun, safe, and supportive environment. I am especially grateful to Father Gilles, who kindly came to lead a morning Mass with us. This trip was a memorable and fantastic experience, and I am looking forward to returning to Zajac Ranch for another adventure.



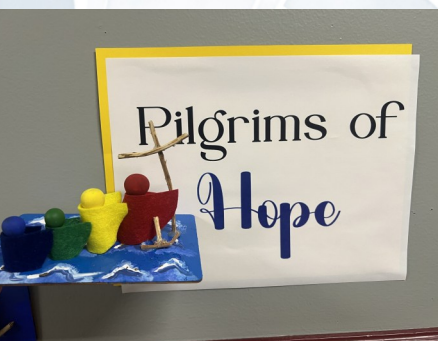




# LEARNING IN ACTION



*Exploring and  
Learning in Nature:  
Grade 7 at Zajac  
Ranch; Sept. 2-5*





## ON THE MOVE

### *Field Trips*



### *Buddy Field Trip — Grade 1 and 6*

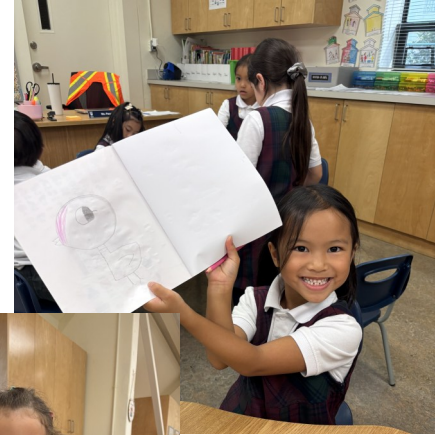
On September 19, our Grade 1 and Grade 6 students enjoyed a buddy field trip together. All students have been paired to foster new connections. They sit together during assemblies, participate in field trips, read to one another, and engage in various activities throughout the year.







## Grade 1P—First Days of School



## Grade 4 at the Cheakamus Learning Center

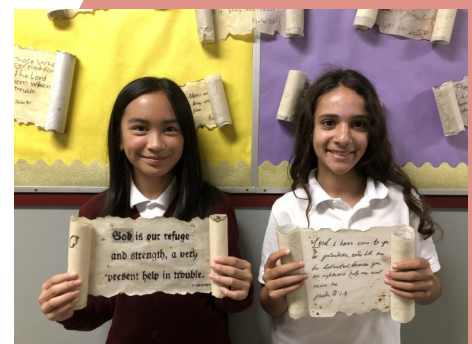


## NEUROGRAPHIC ART

Neurographic Art is a therapeutic drawing technique that uses freeform, meandering lines to bridge the conscious and unconscious mind, helping to transform stress and emotions into a more peaceful state. The process involves intuitive, organic drawing, followed by softening sharp corners where lines intersect, and then adding colour to the shapes to create visually appealing, neuron-like images.



## Grade 6M Scrolls





## JOIN OUR BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CLUB



We are delighted to offer the SAINTS Before & After School Club at St. Mary's School, providing convenient care with reasonable rates.

Club registration is guaranteed. Please click on the updated link below for more information.

<https://forms.gle/PUavk4hVGzaLx33BA>

## BACK TO SCHOOL BBQ

A big thank you to our PEC for organizing this year's Back to School BBQ—it was a wonderful way to bring our community together! Our face painter was a huge hit once again, delighting students with these incredible designs.

A heartfelt thank-you to Mrs. Irene Fong for leading the cake walk, which continues to be a much-loved tradition. We hope this year's BBQ was an enjoyable occasion to gather, share, and connect with parents and staff.



## Wedding Congratulations

Our school community extends heartfelt congratulations to **Micaela DeWitt (née Monk)** and her husband **Brenndon DeWitt**, who were married on **September 13, 2025**, at **St. Mary's Church**. A number of our staff were delighted to attend and witness this joyous occasion. We offer our best wishes and blessings as Micaela and Brenndon begin their journey together as a married couple.





## BEYOND CLASSROOM BOUNDS

### MONSTER MASH

#### FAMILY DANCE NIGHT

Get ready for a night of thrills, chills, and family fun! Join us on Thursday, October 23, from 5:30–8:30 pm in the St. Mary's Gym for our MONSTER MASH Family Dance.

Tickets: • \$10 Adult • \$5 Child (2–12)  
• \$20 Family of 4

In advance - E-transfer [mburns@stmary.bc.ca](mailto:mburns@stmary.bc.ca) with your child's name, how many tickets you would like and a note: Monster Mash Dance Night or at the door – cash only!

#### Highlights of the night:

- ◆ *Dance the night away to your favourite tunes.*
- ◆ *Show off your creativity in our Family-Themed Costume Contest with prizes for the best costumes.*
- ◆ *Enjoy delicious treats—popcorn, snacks, and drinks available at the concession (cash only).*
- ◆ *Fun surprises and moments for the whole family! (Parents must accompany students).*



### HALLOWEEN IN COLLINGWOOD – SATURDAY, OCT. 25

Several local businesses and organizations, including St. Mary's School, are excited to participate in this year's community Halloween celebration on Saturday, Oct. 25, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Safeway parking lot (Kingsway & Tyne). Families can enjoy trick-or-treating, safety tips, arts and crafts, and a variety of tasty treats. It promises to be a fun-filled event for all ages!

### ST. MARY'S SPOOKTACULAR OUT-OF-UNIFORM DAY, FRIDAY, OCT. 31

Students are invited to wear their costumes all day on **OCT. 31** for a **\$5 donation**, which will cover activities. A portion of the proceeds will also go to a local charity chosen by the Student Network. **A Day full of Tricks, Treats, and Tons of Fun for our Students...and various stations for students to participate in.**

1. **Spooky Scoops** – Ghosts and ice cream treats.
2. **Pumpkin Pounds** – Guess the weight of the great pumpkin. Win a prize for closest guess.
3. **Boo-th** – Spooky photo fun with friends.
4. **Pumpkin Face-Off** – Vote for your favourite staff-painted pumpkin.
5. **Ghost Bowling** – Roll a pumpkin ball to knock down the ghostly pins! Can you get a spooky strike?
6. **Pumpkin Relay** – Balance a pumpkin and race to the finish — don't let it tumble!
7. **Spider Web Obstacle Course** – Carefully crawl and sneak through the tangled web without getting caught!
8. **Creepin' the Catwalk** – Show off your Halloween costume on the runway.

Please keep the following guidelines in mind:

**No gruesome costumes, scary masks, or weapons** are allowed. Out of respect for our diverse community, we ask that all costumes reflect our school's values of **multiculturalism, inclusivity, safety, respect, and tolerance.**

Consider this a great opportunity to discuss with your child how global issues can impact costume choices and the importance of being considerate.

**Costume Contest:** Prize ribbons will be awarded in each class in the these categories:

- ✓ **Best Costume** ✓ **Funniest** ✓ **Most Original**
- ✓ **Dynamic Duo** (for pairs like Mickey & Minnie Mouse or Batman & Robin)

#### Parents Invited: Creepin' the Catwalk

**Costume Parade.** Join us in the gym at **1:30 pm** on Halloween for our Creepin' the Catwalk Costume Parade. Parents are welcome to watch as students showcase their costumes and enjoy the fun, creative spirit of the day.



## WELCOME ABOARD

### Mme. Yin



I began my teaching career as a French teacher after completing my Master's from Faculté d'Éducation, University of Montpellier-2, France in 2015. I taught French for almost ten years at the International School Yangon, Institut Français de Birmanie, French International School and a private French teaching program in Vancouver where I built strong connections with students and the school community.

I'm excited to join St. Mary's where I've already found the community to be warm and welcoming. I look forward to sharing my passion for the French language and Francophone culture, and to growing alongside the students, staff, and families.

*Merci beaucoup & bonne journée,*

**Mme. Yin**



## FRENCH LANGUAGE LEARNING UPDATE

Students across all grade levels have been enthusiastically practicing French greetings using the Accelerative Integrated Methodology (AIM), which incorporates gestures to support language acquisition. Everyone is invited to join in learning high-frequency verbs paired with gesture practice to deepen their understanding. The students will continue to learn to tell the story in French along with the AIM.

With reference to the BC core French curriculum, our intermediate students have been expanding their learning by exploring greetings and cultural nuances—both verbal and non-verbal. Their learning goals during the first term include introducing themselves by sharing their name, age, and personal interests, as well as asking simple questions.

All learners are also being introduced to French phonemes starting with diphthongs, which support reading development and spelling of vocabulary words.

Interactive communication is a daily part of classroom life, with students regularly engaging in spoken French while reflecting on their learning goals. This immersive and supportive environment encourages confidence and growth in language skills.





# ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Home of the



## Cross Country Meet

We held our 13th Annual St. Mary's Cross Country Invitational Meet at Memorial South Park last Tuesday. It was another banner year with sunshine and blue skies with 7 other schools in attendance. Over 100 students from St. Mary's from Grade 2-7 participated at our Meet. Many thanks to our guests, athletes, and the army of parent volunteers. Of course a thank you also goes to our wonderful coaches: Mrs. Marino, Mrs. Caldwell, Mr. Gabriele, Ms. Miiller, Mrs. Cipriano, and Ms. Olesiak for all of their time and dedication by hitting the ground running from the start of the school year. A special shout-out goes to Mrs. Faria for the many assists throughout the day! A heartfelt thank you to Mr. Mogatas for directing our cross-country season and planning a well-organized, fun meet. We'll see all of you at Track and Field in the Spring.

