

CATHOLIC CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

School Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 3
December '06—January '07

From the Principal's Desk:

Dear Parents,

The second quarter of the school year is highlighted by the transition from fall to winter and also the celebrations of Thanksgiving and Christmas. At Catholic Central where Faith in God permeates everything that we do, these are days of family and school celebration that we enjoy. They are also days that we truly can live out the gospel message of taking care of the "least of our brothers," by focusing not on our personal enjoyment of the holiday season but on doing what we can for the poor and vulnerable of our society.

School-wide service projects such as the Thanksgiving food and necessities drive and the Christmas Families Project help keep the students of Catholic Central focused on putting others first as the true meaning of these holidays. The commitment of Catholic Central students, staff and parents in these endeavors brings hope to many families throughout the Grand Rapids area and especially to our neighbors within the Heartside district itself.

With the current conditions of a struggling economy and the threats of violence in the world garnering today's headlines it would be easy for us to focus on the negatives in our lives. But, we certainly have much to be thankful for within the Catholic Central community and we have a choice in our personal perceptions of the world. We can concentrate on what is wrong, or we can appreciate and be thankful for what is right. Being around such generous and caring students, staff and families of Catholic Central makes it easy for me to be thankful for the many blessings that God has given to our community.

One of the major goals that we have this year is to review our curriculum offerings. This week teachers from Catholic Central and West Catholic will collaborate to assess the effectiveness of our current curriculum with an eye on the new Michigan graduation requirements. Though we believe that we are offering our students a solid curriculum that prepares them well for higher education as the world changes around us we too must stay current and stay ahead of the curve to maintain excellence in academics. We welcome your input and will keep you informed of any changes.

As we continue to assess what makes us a Catholic school, the religion departments and administration will place a major focus on reviewing our current religion curriculum. Input from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the diocese, parents and students will be used to restructure the religion curriculum to meet the needs of all of our students. Because of the diversity of our student body and the messages from our secular culture it is a growing challenge to meet the spiritual needs of our students. We are committed to giving students a true Catholic education that is grounded in Christ's teachings. Upon completion of this review all religion textbooks used will be from the approved list of the U.S. Bishops. The Catechism of the Catholic Church and Papal encyclicals are used to supplement the text to give students the Catholic view on worldly issues. It is our goal to not only have students learn about their faith but to also learn how to live it.

One assessment that we have used and will continue to use to measure our students knowledge of their faith is the ACRE test. The ACRE test is an Assessment of Catechesis for Religious Education that is sponsored by the National Catholic Education Association. The test on Faith Knowledge is divided up into the four pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: Profession of Faith (Creed), The Celebration of the Christian Mystery (Liturgy and Sacraments), Life in Christ (Morality) and Christian Prayer (Prayer). Our most recent test results showed that Catholic Central High School students scored above the national average in all four domains of the test on Faith Knowledge. The test results also give us a breakdown by test question so that we can assess our strengths and weaknesses and address those areas within the curriculum.

Important Phone Numbers

Main Office: 233-5899
Attendance: 233-5812
Guidance Office: 233-5810
Athletic Office: 233-5898
Business Office: 233-5976



Steve Passinault, **Principal**
Tom Maj, **Assistant Principal**
Heidi Clark-Smitley, **Director of Guidance**
Mike Neuman, **Athletic Director**
Kathryn Walsh, **Campus Minister**
Susan Swanson, **Technology Director**

Principal News cont.

In closing, as we approach the time of year that eighth grade students and parents are making final decisions on high school enrollment I ask for your help. If you know of any family/student that is uncertain about where they will be going to high school next year please share your Catholic Central High School experience with them. We have found that parent to parent marketing and recruitment is most effective. Encourage students to contact us and attend the Seventh and Eighth Grade Visit Day on December 5th or parents to attend the next Parent Information Night scheduled for January 9th. Any encouragement that you can provide could make a difference.

May God bless and protect you and your families during this holy Christmas season.

Sincerely,
Steve Passinault

From the Assistant Principal

Dear Parents, Alumni, and friends;

Discussions on what makes a school Catholic and how that Catholic school should relate to the Church have been on-going this school year. This exercise of leadership goes beyond simply ensuring academic excellence or maintaining organizational coherence. Balancing academic proficiency, religious formation and student leadership development to ensure the growth of a community of Catholic and Christian leaders requires vision, reflection, and collaboration. Throughout this school year both Bishop Hurley and our Pastor President, Fr. Louis Stasker, men who have committed themselves institutionally to the faith of the Church, have provided Catholic Central with a vision that reflects the Church's view and oversight in matters of curriculum and theology. In their homilies and addresses to faculty and students they have reminded us that the Catholic Church is one of the few institutions which speak of certain truths and absolute rights, specifically requiring staff and students to "think with the Church".

Throughout this school year, Bob Kennedy (Chair of the Religion Dept.) will lead the faculty through curriculum review. Our staff will have the opportunity to examine and evaluate the predominant values and norms of society and culture from a Catholic perspective in this review. In keeping with the teachings of the Church, our faculty will remain faithful to Catholic doctrine as they develop a course of study in Catholic theology---a theology that continues to inspire and inform all of our teachers.

Thanksgiving Project: This past Sunday, Fr. Steve Cron's chose an electoral metaphor for his homily on the Feast of Christ the King. Fr. Cron reminded us that God cannot give Himself to us if we do not permit it, thus we elect Him each and everyday by choosing to rely on Him or believe in Him. And that to deny God's love is ultimately to deny our own reason for being. For the past quarter of school, Catholic Central staff and students have chosen repeatedly to "elect God" as manifested in Mary Burns' (English teacher) Coat Drive, the school-wide food and clothing drive, Marc Olejniczak's Blood Drive, All A's, and the hundreds of hours of service logged by CC students. Congratulations!!

Our students also demonstrate support for each other. It is always gratifying to see the CC student body turn out for events. Recently Zeeland West and Coopersville personnel both complimented our students for their spirit and conduct. We, too, commend them for their support of CC and their schoolmates.

Winter weather: Please review the Policy on "Delay of school/weather related" (p.16 Student Handbook). If school is to be delayed or cancelled notification will be given through the local media. If there is to be a two hour delay, school will begin at 10 a.m. with first hour. Zero hour classes would be cancelled.

Assistant Principal cont.

New Clothing: New outer garment options may be made available soon. A long-sleeve polo, fleece garments, and a tailored roll-neck sweatshirt may be available pending the outcome of a student interest survey. Sunshine Uniform Company will send out a mailing once a decision is made.

Reminders: In the event that your son/daughter will be absent we ask that you call by 10 a.m. Money can be deposited into lunch accounts at any time. We ask that it be done early in the day to avoid delays during lunch.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,
Tom Maj, Asst. Principal.

From the Guidance Office

Seniors & Parents: The Financial Aid Information Night for Senior parents will be held on December 6, at 7:00 p.m., in our cafeteria. Our speaker for the evening will be Mr. David Steffee, who is the Director of Financial Aid at Aquinas College. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) – the form required by virtually all colleges and universities for determining eligibility for financial aid – will be explained at this meeting.

Another reminder for seniors and their parents: Students who are applying for admission to four-year colleges and universities should be completing their application forms. Many schools have deadlines of December 31. Thus, seniors are advised to submit recommendation forms/applications/transcript requests no later than Monday, December 11. When requesting a transcript or letter of recommendation, students need to take into consideration both the volume of applications we receive at this time of year, as well as the days away from school for Christmas break.

Parents are encouraged to consult the CC website's Guidance page (under "School News") for up-to-date information regarding the college admissions process and scholarship opportunities. Please send a copy of any award letters and scholarship offers your student receives so that we can include this recognition in our graduation program this spring. The amount of scholarship dollars received by the class as a whole is reported in publications about our school, so we appreciate your help in collecting this important information.

Juniors & Parents: If you were unable to attend the College Planning Information meeting in November, we suggest you review the information packet given to your student by the Guidance Office.

The Michigan Merit Exam (formerly, MEAP) and the ACT will be given during the school days of March 13, 14, 15. There is no charge to take the ACT on this occasion. Further information will be mailed home at the end of January.

Juniors who are involved in a spring sport often find that they have a conflict with a contest that is scheduled for the same day (June 9) as the ACTs. Other test dates to consider are February 10 and April 14. Information about registering for the ACTs is available from the Guidance Office, or can be found at www.act.org. Information about SATs is at www.collegeboard.com.

Sophomores & Parents: Please mark your calendars now for an important meeting, Wednesday, February 7, 2007. We will be discussing strategies for academic success, course selection and career exploration resources. We look forward to see you there!

Freshmen, Sophomores and Juniors & Parents: Results from the fall standardized testing (Explore, PLAN, PSAT) will be mailed home before Christmas break.

Athletics

What a great day to be a COUGAR! It has been an exciting season for our community. Congratulations to *players and coaches* for representing our school extremely well. Thank you *parents and spectators* for providing positive support of our hard-working students and coaches.

2006 City League Champions: Congratulations to these Cougar teams who finished 1st in the Fall Sports season-- Boys Golf (Coach Kim Napieralski), Girls Tennis (Coach Pat Williams), and Football (Coach Tom Passinault).

Good sportsmanship matters! Five of our Sophomore athletes (Brianna Shefferly, Lauren McCarty, Jourdon Wilson, Noble Sullivan, and Leah Nakfoor) recently attended an MHSAA Sportsmanship Summit with students from other West Michigan high schools. The workshops provided an exchange of ideas and experiences regarding positive athletic environments.

Communication with coaches: A young athlete's life is filled with opportunities, choices, and goals. Adults in their life greatly influence these opportunities and choices. Parents want only the best for their child, and they support their child striving to reach goals. Parents should take the time to discuss athletic goals with their child. Coaches--also a major influence-- establish and pursue goals for teams and individuals. The only way this process stays in harmony among student, parent, and coach, is through effective communication.

Team Schedules: Please visit the school website, www.grcatholiccentral.com, for up-to-date information for all our teams. Under "Sports" at the website, the "Sports Hotsheet" has cancellations, team results, and important announcements. The "Schedule" item allows you to select a view showing all athletic events for the month, or a season schedule for any team. These are new features to improve communication with you.

Vacation time: Parents, if you have a family activity that conflicts with practices or games, please discuss directly with the coach as soon as possible. Our policy is covered in the school handbook.

TICKETS: City League policy-- *Except Basketball, which is described below, prices for Winter sports are \$4 for Adult, \$3 for students, and \$1 for children 10 or younger*

<u>Basketball</u> JV/Varsity	<i>Adult</i>	<i>Student</i>	<i>Child(<10 yrs)</i>
At Door	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$1.00
Pre-game	\$3.00	\$2.00	\$1.00
Home Season(10 games)	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$10.00
Freshmen game only	\$3.00	\$2.00	\$1.00

Family Pass provides a ticket for two adults and all children under 18 in the home.

Cost: \$100.00

Basketball Season Tickets are available at the Athletic Office after December 2 or at the ticket table in the gym on game night. Season tickets are valid for Freshmen, JV, and Varsity games played at the CC gym only. Not other schools, not Aquinas College. Ticket prices for the Holiday Tournament at Aquinas (Dec 27,29) will be announced in mid-December. Single game tickets for the next City League game (Home and Away) will available in the school office 7:30am-3:00pm, Monday-Friday, at pre-game prices.

Review the CC Handbook you received last August. The Athletic Code, pages 25-28, provides guidance regarding academic, student conduct, and health requirements to maintain eligibility for school sports.

CSS Special Events Office

CACHE AUCTION NEWS

Have a Merry CACHE Auction Christmas!! Give yourself, your family or others a ticket to the Fiesta—South of the Border auction to be held at the Aquinas College Fieldhouse on Saturday, March 10, 2007. A \$100 Auction ticket will buy you hours of fun, delicious food, an open bar, musical entertainment and best of all, it's all for our students and schools. For \$125 you can purchase a Benefactor Raffle ticket with the chance to win the Grand Prize choice of a 2007 Pontiac G6 convertible (provided through Dreisbach Pontiac GMC of Hastings) OR \$20,000 CASH along with 3 other cash prizes. These tickets come wrapped and ready to put under your tree or in a stocking. Think of these items for the "hard to buy for" people on your list!

Gift-Giving party update:

Several Gift-Giving parties have already taken place across the community with others scheduled in December, January and early February. That's exciting news, but we would sure like to see every school parent available to participate. So, if you would be willing to host a gift-giving party or would like to make sure that you will be invited to attend a party, please contact Arnette Kraus (233-5985 or cacheess@hotmail.com)

Remember: The CACHE Auction is the major fundraiser for our high schools and as such, we need the support of each of you in some capacity. Perhaps you work for a company that could either donate or could give us a good price on their product for our silent or oral auction. Maybe you have a service that you would like to render as a donation (we have had cooking classes, snowplowing service, golf lessons, etc. donated in the past). Perhaps you would be able to pray for the success of our event. There is no gesture or donation too small or too large! Please consider what your role might be in participating in this community-building event that will benefit every school family in keeping Catholic education affordable and available for our students and for those to come. A donation form is included in this mailing.

Invitations to the auction will be mailed in February. The co-chairs for this event are Steve and Carol Hickner, Gary and Mary Ann Mancewicz and Tom and Kim Melcher (CC Parents) along with Mike and Anne Harpold and Mike and Patty Konwinski (WC Parents). There are always spaces available for volunteers to come on board to help with set-up, decorations, selling raffle tickets and collecting gift donations. We welcome any and all help.

Our online auction will begin on March 6 and can be accessed through both school websites. Check the site in early March to see some of the items up for bid along with further auction information.

If you have any questions, would like to order tickets, would like to host a gift-giving party or would like to volunteer to help, please call Arnette Kraus or one of the auction co-chairs.

Have a wonderful holiday season and blessed New Year!

CACHE Auction College Sweatshirt Donations

The CACHE Auction would appreciate a donation of a sweatshirt from any college that your sons/daughters are attending. These sweatshirts not only showcase where our former students are attending college, but they are also an

item that is highly desirable to our auction attendees. Please have your son or daughter bring a sweatshirt home when they come for the holidays or go online and order one yourself through the college bookstore (this may help their pocketbook!!) Drop the item off at the Catholic Central, West Catholic or CACHE Office (660 Burton SE) with the name of the student, the year they graduated and the price of the item. You will receive a donation letter and your student will be recognized in the auction catalog. Thanks for your help.

Campus Ministry

Dear Catholic Central Family,

It was wonderful to talk to so many of you during conferences.

We celebrated our Thanksgiving Mass the Tuesday of Conference Week. We collected clothing for the Cathedral Outreach Center and non-perishable food items for the Downtown Churches' Food Pantry. Our celebrant for this Mass was Fr. Lou Stasker, our Principal-President.

We will have two more All-School Masses before the New Year. On December 8 we will commemorate Mary's Immaculate Conception. With this feast we are reminded that Mary was conceived without sin. On December 21 we will gather for our traditional Advent/Christmas Mass which precedes the delivery of Christmas Families. Fr. Steve Cron from the Cathedral will be the Celebrant for both of these Masses.

We will begin Christmas families during the first week of December. Mrs. Mary Hanks and Student Congress are coordinating Christmas Families this year. Every 5th Hour class will receive information about a family that has been screened by the Cathedral of St. Andrew. Most are members from the parish, many are Hispanic, some have not lived in the area for very long. The need is great and we need your help. Most of you probably met your student's 5th hour teacher, so you will be familiar with the person coordinating your student's Christmas Family. We will be delivering on the morning of December 21, after Mass, and we must have adult drivers for every family. This activity is one of the Catholic Central traditions that I love the most! See Mary Hanks's article for more information.

On December 13 we will have an All-School Reconciliation Service in the Cathedral. The focus of the Prayer Service will be preparation for Advent Reconciliation. This will include an Examination of Conscience, some Scripture readings, some music and some time to reflect. The following day, December 14, students will be given the opportunity, during their Religion class time, to meet with a priest and receive absolution. This will be happening throughout the day. We hope to have 8 to 10 priests available for students. We began this method of making the Sacrament available for our students during Lent of last year. It seemed to work well for all.

The Eucharistic Minister Training scheduled for November has been changed to January 25. Dennis Rybicki and I will be training confirmed juniors and seniors who are interested in becoming Eucharistic Ministers. This training is designed for high school students and emphasizes Eucharistic theology and the History of the Eucharist as well as the rubrics of distribution of the Sacred Body and Blood. Students can still Eucharistic Minister at our school liturgies if they have been trained in their Parish for this ministry. We do ask for a phone call or note from someone at the Parish notifying of the training.

Many of our students are signing up for all the service opportunities this season. They still seem to find time to meet the needs of others although we all know they too are living very busy lives. God bless them!

The Liturgy Planning Team and Dennis Rybicki are looking forward to planning a fun week for Catholic Schools Week at the end of January. It is always fun to celebrate who we are after we have gone through the stress of exams. Bishop Walter Hurley will be the celebrant at our Catholic Schools Mass on January 30.

God bless you and your families during this Advent season. Liturgically, it is a season of waiting and preparing. I hope you can make the time to prepare spiritually and take advantage of all the wonderful readings and activities throughout this season. Many parishes have evening services during the week, some families try to have a prayer time every evening around an Advent wreath. Find some time together. Please keep those who are lonely, sick, and mourning in your prayers. I will remember all of you in my Advent and Christmas prayers. Thank you again for your children and all you give and do for our school.

Student Activities:

We had a very successful All A's fundraiser exceeding our goal. Our only disappointment was that the weather did not cooperate with us and it was a stormy day. Not only is it important for each student to meet their individual goal but also to have sponsors to support us. We would like to give a BIG thank you to our sponsors:

Gold Level Sponsor

World of Floors

Silver Level Sponsor

Beene Garter LLP

BetterLife Unlimited

Emerald Graphics

Jostens

Timothy and Cynthia Smith

Spartan Stores

Bronze Level Sponsor

Fisher & Dickinson PC

Grand Rapids Allergy, PLC

Grand Rapids Spring and Stamping

Ronald and Kelley Grifka

Hendrickson Family

Tammy Stone (Realtor)-Gold Realty

Williams Group

We are fast approaching our Christmas Family Project. Here is a quick overview for those of you new to the event. Each 5th hour classroom adopts a family, provided to us and screened through St. Andrews. Each class is responsible for providing the family with a Christmas—gifts, food, clothes, etc. Clothing and household items may be new or gently used. Gifts are wrapped for the children and the family to be opened on Christmas Day.

*It is a wonderful opportunity for CC Students and their families to spread some Christmas cheer with needy families from St. Andrews. In addition to donations, **we will be looking for parents to volunteer to help with the drop off on Wednesday December 21st @ 10:45am.** Driver forms will be handed out by December 13th.*

Freshman Parents:

Save the Date!!

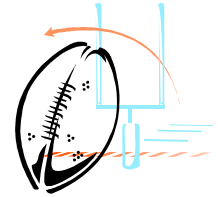


January 20, 2007 is our Mid-Winter Parent Party!! 8PM until Midnight. \$15 a person/\$25 a couple. Food, beverage, music, raffles and a great time for all!

Come and meet more Freshman Parents and help start raising funds for the Class of 2010's Senior All Night Party!! More information to follow in January.

Parents of the Class of 2008

Save the Date!



A Super Bowl Pre-Party ~ Saturday, February 2, 2007

You are invited to a Super Bowl Pre-Party at Dolphin Stadium in Miami, FL (o.k. it's really at Noto's Restaurant in Grand Rapids, but it will feel like Miami, the food will be better and it will be a lot more fun!)

Many hands make light work. If you want to have fun and be on one of the Super Bowl Committees—Just take a minute to call or email one of the chairs listed below:

Decorations—Margaret Murphy (459-5227 or dougmurphy@glis.net)

Entertainment—Laura Mangan (456-0486 or mangangr@netzero.net)

Publicity—Open

If we have any D.J.'s amongst our 2008 parents or know of anyone interested please contact:

Joni Poggi (485-2800 or jnpoggi@comcast.net)

Any donations appreciated. Thank you!



Holiday Gift Ideas:

Happy Holidays from the Cougar Den! Can't figure out what to get your student or CC fan for Christmas? How about CC Spirit wear. We carry many items for your discerning Cougar. We have Blankets, Fleece Jackets & Vests, Hooded Sweatshirts, Crewneck Sweatshirts, T-Shirts, Baseball Hats, Golf Umbrellas, Youth Sweatshirts & T-Shirts. Cougar Den hours are M-F 7:30-3:00, it is located outside the Guidance Office - see Lauri in the Guidance Office or Tricia in the Main Office.

100th Anniversary History Books ~

A new hardcover book was published this past spring to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Catholic Central and West Catholic. This hardcover book has 140 pages and contains many historical photographs. It is a great way to get in touch with our schools' history and would also make a great Christmas gift for any CC or WC student or alum. Books can be purchased at the Catholic Central Main Office for \$25. If you have any questions about the book, you can contact Patrick Nugent at 233-5941.

Directory Corrections:

Christine Hendershot (11) ~ Allen & Terese Hendershot ~ 532-2011

Monica Miller (10) ~ Paul & Helen Miller

Please also note that the Catholic Secondary Schools has moved their offices. Their physical address is 600 Burton S.E., they are located on the 2nd floor ~ Room 211. Their mailing address is P.O. Box 327, Grand Rapids, 49501. Phone number is 233-5976.