



St. Joseph the Worker School February 2021 Newsletter

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Several people have told me it has felt like a hectic January. I can relate to them. I couldn't put my finger on WHY exactly the past month has seemed so hectic. Then someone reminded me that January is considered a more "sombre" month, due to the anti-climax that is felt following all the joy of the Christmas season. Throw in some particularly dreary weather and combine all this with the reality that we are in Month 11 of a global pandemic, then the hecticness and heaviness starts to make sense.

During such times, I personally need to dig a little deeper than normal to find where my personal sanctuary lies. In my personal digging, I rely on the wise words of pastor and writer Terry Hershey. Through his gift of words, Terry helps me explore where I can find my personal sanctuary – my own place of rest. Everyone has these "sanctuaries". Each of our sanctuaries is as unique and personal as our personalities. They can be both outer and inner places of rest, where God allows us to reclaim the gift of our authentic person: our whole and imperfect selves.

I appreciate the gift of mental imagery Terry gives me through his telling (and re-telling) of both stories and modern-day parables. In a recent article, he talks of the emotional "sack" we each seem to carry. Again - these sacks are unique to each of us. What each of our sacks have in common is that their contents tend to weigh us down. Common ingredients in our emotional sacks? Things like the anxieties of the day, resentment from past grievances, woundedness from perceived slights or unfairness, fear of conflict, preoccupation with busyness, or a desire for perfection. Whatever our sack's contents are, Terry shares that: "we allow our sacks that we so diligently carry to tell us who we are. We seem to find assurance in the weight of our sacks, even though its contents prevent us from living this life as a gift – a gift to be awake and present for."

So- if our sacks are so detrimental, then why do we so diligently carry them every day? Perhaps it is because their contents take care of something in each of us. Healthy or not, they may give us a sense of identity. Or we may fear being called selfish if we dare to set our emotional sack down for a while.

This is why we need to find our own personal sanctuaries – places where we can unload our sacks and simply be as God intended us to be.

During this upcoming Lenten season, I pray that each of us can examine where each of our sanctuaries lie. Let us invest some time in ourselves and find what keeps us from being fully alive and well on the inside.

Paul Fraser, Principal

COVID Health Update for Schools - February 4

There was a live update from the Ministry of Education and Dr. Bonnie Henry on Thursday, February 4. Contained in this health update were tightened COVID protocols for all BC Schools. We were pleased to note every one of the improvements to school safety protocols outlined in the update have already been in place at St. Joe's for the past several months.

Shrove Tuesday - Share Your Pancake "at-home" Pics!

Sadly, we are not able to host our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Breakfast this year. We are already looking forward to having our St. Joe's families back in the gym for pancakes in 2022.

In the meanwhile, we are encouraging our school families to find a way of celebrating "Fat Tuesday" or Shrove Tuesday in their own family bubble. Have a family breakfast feast or have breakfast for dinner on February 16. Take a picture of your family celebration and, if you are able to, send it to us at the school. We will print out all the pictures we receive and create a Shrove Tuesday Family Wall in the front foyer for all the students to see.

You can send your photos to: pfraser@stjosephtheworker.ca

Ash Wednesday Virtual Mass for Students

Ash Wednesday- the beginning of the Lenten Season, is just around the corner. Our Friars will be holding a live Ash Wednesday Mass broadcast at 9:30am. All classes will be watching and participating in the Mass in their classrooms. Afterwards, the Friars will administer ashes on all the students using a non-contact "sprinkling" method of distribution.

Results for January's Spirit Day

We are pleased to be sending a cheque for \$402 to "The Door is Open" in Vancouver's DTES. Many thanks to all the students who made the extra effort to earn their toonie through allowance or special chores around the house!

Digital Safety Tip: Top 3 Social Media and Online Sites

There are some excellent resources that the BC Government has made available online for parents who are trying to keep their kids safe in a digital world. Safer Schools Together (SST) has partnered with the BC Government to ensure both schools and parents are as aware and educated about online threats as possible. The link below will take you to a great resource article that talks about online sites that kids are gravitating to. As parents and guardians, we need to be acutely aware of our children's online presence.

<https://saferschoolstogether.com/the-top-3-social-media-and-online-sites-students-are-using-right-now/2018/05/07/09/50/45/7308/press/jlapointe/>

Reminder of School Closure for February 11th and 12th

All Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Vancouver will be closed for Thursday, February 11 and Friday, February 12 as all Catholic Educators gather for our 26th Annual Catholic Educators' Conference. The conference will be held virtually this year and features Bishop Robert Baron as one of the conferences keynote speakers. School resumes on Tuesday, February 16 (after Family Day).

St. Joseph the Worker PEC VIRTUAL AGM - Coming February 24th

Our annual Parish Education Committee AGM is fast approaching. On Wednesday, February 24th at 7:30pm, all school families are required to attend a virtual PEC Annual General Meeting, where PEC annual reports are presented and new school-relevant information is disseminated. Due to COVID protocols, re-registration packages with tuition tax receipts will be sent home with the students on February 25th.

Pink Shirt Day/ Spirit Day - February 24th

In our constant goal to create and sustain a school environment that is free of bullying, St. Joe's will have a Pink Shirt Bullying Awareness Day on Wednesday, February 24. All students, as part of our St. Albans' Spirit Dress-Down Day, are encouraged to include pink shirts as part of their clothing choice that day.