



Dear Parents,

December 11, 2019

John the Baptist, the preeminent figure of the first weeks of Advent, calls us to **repent**. But what does that mean for us who are already practicing our Catholic faith?

I have been reading a book by Father Thomas Dubay, S.M. called *Deep Conversion Deep Prayer*. In it he states that while many people give up serious sins at some point in their lives, far fewer people ever stop the smaller ones. True believers can continue gossiping, overeating, telling small lies, holding grudges, shirking duties, acting with impatience, etc. up until the day they die. Even though they know it is wrong, and even though they may wish to change, few do. Even though they confess these sins in the Sacrament of Confession, they continue with the same sins. Why?

Wishes are not enough. Real repentance takes a firm purpose of amendment, which always includes a plan of action. In Father Dubay's words, repentance means, "I intend to stop this habit. I can stop it if I want to, and I will take the means to get over it." *Deep Conversion Deep Prayer* p. 50

If we are serious about repentance, we need to choose one specific vice, such as getting rid of our bursts of impatience, make a very specific plan, and beg for God's grace. The plan need not be complicated, only doable and concrete. The prayer need not be long. "God, help me now!" is powerful enough.

St. Therese of Lisieux is a great example of one who through prayer and a firm purpose of amendment, truly repented of her little vices. In order to rid herself of impatience, for example, she chose to smile at whoever interrupted her during her work. A simple plan that worked! It is hard to snap at someone upon whom you just bestowed a kind smile.

When thinking of a Christmas gift to give to Jesus and to your family this year, would it not be a most wonderful thing to really repent, i.e. get rid of, even one small unpleasant habit that has been hanging around for years?

If interested: 1) Choose one specific fault. You might ask the Holy Spirit or a trusted friend or family member which one should go first. 2) Make a simple but specific plan and stay with it. 3) Ask the Lord to help you. 4) Confess your sin as often as you fall and renew your firm purpose of amendment.

I think John the Baptist would be pleased with such an action plan and, as he teaches, good fruit would follow. Lk. 3:8 By targeting and repenting of one small vice at a time we can move from small deceits and lying to honesty and trustworthiness. We can move from overeating to temperance and better health, from greed to generosity, from anger to patience, from laziness to zeal, and from gossiping to supporting friendships. The list could go on, of course.

This Advent, let us heed John's call to repent by having a firm purpose of amendment. It will lead to a Merry Christmas!

In the Heart of Christ the King,

Sister Mary Alma, C.K.

Important Dates

December

- 12 Our Lady of Guadalupe Play (Grade 5) after Mass 8:50 am
- 18 Pre-K Christmas Program 10:30 am and 4:00 pm
- 19 K-6 Christmas Program 2:00 pm dress rehearsal and 6:30 pm program
- 20 1:20 pm dismissal for the Christmas Holiday

January

- 06 School resumes
- 08 Report Cards come home
- 13 1:20 pm dismissal – Faculty Meeting
- 14 First Penance Parent Meeting
- 21 SFA Meeting – 6:30 pm

SCRIP: We hope that every school family and all school faculty and staff purchases SCRIP at least for your grocery and gas needs. With Christmas coming soon, there should be many opportunities to order SCRIP.

Survey Coming Soon: St. James School is about to embark upon making a five year strategic plan. We need and value your input. Please answer the survey which will be sent to you before Christmas break.

Mark your Calendars: Please plan to attend the January 21 SFA meeting. At this meeting we will explain the Strategic Planning process and also give an update on the Good Shepherd Scholarship program. It is an important meeting and we need all who care about our school to be present.

Christmas Programs: The Pre-K Christmas program will be held on Wednesday, December 18 at 10:30 AM and 4:00 PM. The Christmas program for grades K-6 will be held on Thursday evening, December 19 at 6:30 PM. Students wearing costumes should arrive by 6:00 pm. All other students should report to their classrooms by 6:15pm at the latest.

Spot Light: We are in need of someone to run the spot light for the Christmas program. If you would like to volunteer, please let us know in the office (402 826-2318) or contact Mrs. Ward.

School Closings: St. James School will follow the Crete Public Schools for school closings and late start days due to dangerous weather conditions. Call School Closing (402) 826-7890 or, in Spanish, School Closing: (402) 826-7888. If the message says that Crete Public Schools are closed or have a late start due to inclement weather, know that the same is true for St. James School. Our announcement will also be on KLKN-TV Channel 8 and KOLN.KGIN TV Channel 10/11.

COMING HOME: Tuition envelopes, Hot Lunch notices, Scrip order form, Christmas program flier.

