



***St. Teresa of Calcutta is often quoted for saying this:
“It’s not how much we give, but how much love we put into the giving.”***

This beautiful thought is one of the pillars of our school: we are working to prepare students for college while teaching them the importance of doing what they can for the poor and doing it with love. A hallmark of Pope Francis’s papacy is also the attention he gives to the poor, especially in leading by example in his own life.

I am so very proud of what our students do on a consistent basis for the poor. Twice each month, we send one teacher and seven students to Eva’s Village to serve lunch to the poor and homeless. They always return to school grateful for the love and the comfort they have at home. They are grateful to parents who are there for them, especially in times of need. And they are grateful for the ICBS teachers who “really care.”

This past semester, our students have raised money for breast cancer research, held a Blood Drive which saved many lives, helped a school in Texas that was ravaged by a hurricane, and have filled the shelves at Mary’s Pantry (ICBS parish) with food for the holidays. Our NHS recently launched a coin drive in order to purchase new stuffed animals for the children residing at Eva’s. Such amazing young people with such supportive families!

This leads me, of course, to the rapidly-approaching season of Lent. This year, Lent begins on Valentine’s Day, what a tough day to fast! Lent is a season for prayer and introspection, a time to walk the walk with Jesus as He prepares to give the ultimate sacrifice for us. I want you to know that we approach Lent through the words and works of St. Teresa of Calcutta. She directs our daily prayer and provides us all with good insight into ourselves and others. I encourage you to discuss this at home with your child. Please know that meat will not be served in our cafeteria on Ash Wednesday and on all Fridays during Lent. Lent comes to an end with the glorious resurrection of our Lord and Savior on Easter Sunday.

Below are some updates you may find interesting:

- Faculty will submit grades for the 2nd quarter on Feb. 5th;
- The Financial Aid Night for junior and senior parents will take place on Feb. 8th at 7pm in the cafeteria;
- Our final Open House takes place on the same night, Feb. 8th, 6-7:30pm. Encourage any “undecided” 8th-graders you may know to attend;
- The students who have scholarships from the Student Partner Alliance (SPA) will have breakfast with their mentors on Tuesday, Feb. 13th at 8:30am;
- The Junior Class is selling chocolate roses for Valentine’s Day, \$1.25 each, available in brown, red or white chocolate;

- We will open the Lenten season by attending Mass at the parish at 12:10pm on the 14th. If you are free, please join us;
- Report cards will be distributed on Feb. 15th, 3-5 and then 6-7:30pm. Please try to come and meet with your child's teachers;
- The next PTA meeting is set for Feb. 15th at 7pm in the Faculty Dining Room. Please join in the fun as we gather gifts for the first-ever Tricky Tray on May 11th;
- The students are off on Friday, Feb. 16th as the teachers will have a Professional Day. The topic is assessments and grading;
- Students are NO LONGER OFF on Monday, Feb. 19th. It is now a full day;
- Both the girls and boys basketball teams are doing very well. We wish them the best as they enter the final regular games of the season. Soon, both will compete in the County and State tournaments. Go, Lions!
- On Tuesday, Feb. 27th, all juniors will take the ACT. Please make sure your child is here and has had a good breakfast. The juniors will be dismissed after the test. More will follow;
- We began our celebration of BLACK HISTORY MONTH on Feb. 1st with special prayers and historical data being read over the p.a. On the 28th, we will have our Black History Assembly. Again, more info will follow.

I would like to switch gears and give a huge plug to our first-ever **TRICKY TRAY** being planned by our hard-working PTA. The event will take place on May 11st in Madonna Hall, our church basement. Donations of items for the baskets are needed – sooner rather than later. If you have something to give, kindly send it in with your child. Students received a flyer from the PTA to take home to you. I wonder how many made it home! Certainly, more info will follow on this special event.

Acceptances to college are pouring in for our seniors, and they are awesome! Senior parents should be very proud of their children's hard work. We have definitely seen an uptick in the quality of the schools to which the seniors are being accepted. Later on, we will publish a complete list.

On a sad note, we said goodbye to Mr. Christopher Wall of the Religion Dept. on Jan. 31st. Mr. Wall is realizing his childhood dream of becoming a firefighter in his home town of Jersey City. We pray daily for his safety and we wish him well. His replacement is Ms. Arnecia Henson, a graduate of the College of St. Elizabeth. Ms. Henson is a practicing Catholic who is also very active in sports. We hope to get her on our coaching staff very soon! We are confident the students will love her!

Service hours are due by the end of March. Is your child helping out in his/her elementary school or perhaps even in church? How about at a food pantry or senior citizens' home? There are endless possibilities out there for service. Senior parents should remember that the service hours are a graduation requirement. Please make sure your child has this under control.

I thank you for your continued trust in the work we do here at Immaculate. Our faculty and staff are tremendous! They care deeply and work hard. I pray you have a good February. Thank you and God bless you Mrs. Neves, Principal