

# ST. FRANCIS DE SALES CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL NEWS

Kids Win  
when Parents  
Get Involved!  
St. Francis de Sales School  
613.283.6101

## Message from Council

On the weekend of January 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008, while Father Amato was away, we were fortunate to have Father Robert Ryan, from the Apostolic Nunciature in Canada, celebrate the Masses with us. Father Ryan's homily touched many people in attendance, so much so, that I contacted Father Ryan afterwards and requested permission to reprint his homily, which I have used in part. Although his homily was originally meant to mark Epiphany, I still felt that the message is pertinent as we observe the Easter season. During Lent and Easter, we reflect on all that Jesus did for us, and what we do in return. While many have relegated Easter down to no more than a second-class holiday concerned more with the Easter Bunny, Fr. Ryan very clearly expressed why we should make more of our faith, not less:

*"Worship is meaningless if it is not accompanied by a wholehearted offering of self. That is why the outward demonstration of our love for God is necessary. So often you will hear people proclaim their spirituality but without any formal and outward religious practice. That is as meaningless as the spouse who would tell their husband or wife: I love you but do not expect me to show it. Or the son or daughter who declares love and gratitude for their parents but never expresses it in any tangible way."*

As a Catholic parent, I often wonder if I am doing enough to reinforce and encourage our faith at home, and does the faith I practice at home actually have any effect on my children? I was heartened when Fr. Ryan recounted this memory:

*"I always recall my father. He would not bend for anyone but when as a child I saw my father kneel in prayer it made a powerful impression upon my child's mind. I urge you, dear parents to lead your children in prayer and worship. My family was the first church in which I learned to worship, the first schoolhouse where I learned the most valuable of life's lessons. Dear parents yours is an authority given to you not by the state nor by the Church but is an authority and responsibility entrusted to you by Almighty God."*

What a powerful message. So I reflect, during this most Holy season, on what being Catholic means to me, and to my family, and the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. Surely that sacrifice is worth an hour a week, spent in reverence and adoration?

--With special thanks to Father Robert Ryan, for allowing me to reprint his homily

Lorraine Fenn, Chair



## SPRING into LEARNING

Spring is just around the corner, and as you venture outdoors you'll come across many wonderful surprises. Shoots of grass, pointed spears of crocus and daffodil plants, and tiny little white, pink, or blue flowers are getting ready to emerge from their winter sleep. With such an exciting season of change, it's the perfect time to take advantage of some fun learning activities for the whole family.

### Mark the Spot

Try this fun and educational activity for discovering all of the changes that are taking place. Choose a small area in your yard that you can observe and study over a period of time. Using rope, string or pieces of wood, frame a small spot that you can visit regularly (it doesn't have to be a very large area). At first, you might not see many changes but as soon as you start to notice changes occurring, visit the spot more often. Have your children keep a diary or field journal of what goes on in the spot. Have younger children draw pictures of the changes as they occur. Have a contest to see who identifies the first insect, the first

blade of grass or interesting plant. If you get tired of your spot, simply choose another!

### The Great Backyard Bird Count

Encourage the whole family to become bird-watchers. Have each family member record every bird they see. Track the kind (or colour) of each bird. After awhile, find the family total for each kind (or colour) of bird and show your totals in a graph.

### Pick A Tree

Have everyone in the family choose the tree they think will be the first to bloom. Keep track of the choices by tying different coloured ribbons around each tree. The winning tree gets the honour of providing shelter for the first family picnic of the year.

Be creative, have fun and enjoy your family!



## Paint the Table RED

We've had pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, been marked with ashes on Ash Wednesday, sacrificed through Lent, received our palms, marked Holy Week, observed the Stations of the Cross, and celebrated the Easter Triduum. As we gnaw our way through chocolate bunnies and jelly beans, surely it is time to return to normal, or Ordinary Time? Not quite yet! Holy Week starts the seven weeks of the Easter season, culminating in Ascension Day and then Pentecost. Of course, Ascension Day marks when Jesus ascended to Heaven, to be seated at the right hand of His Father. Pentecost, observed several days later, marks when the Holy Spirit descended to Jesus' Apostles, to comfort and guide them. The first Pentecost coincided with the Feast of Weeks, which was a celebration of the first fruits of the harvest. How fitting that the Apostles received the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit while everyone celebrated the fruits and gifts of the land!

We see the imagery of the Holy Spirit when we celebrate the Mass on Pentecost in the red vestments worn by Father. This intense colour reflects the intense love and fire of the Holy Spirit. Why not celebrate Pentecost with your family? Red food would be appropriate, as would hot or spicy food or even food cooked over flame. Before you start to wonder where you put that fondue pot that you got from Aunt Lucy and wonder if you still have that recipe for Red Velvet Cake, go for simplicity and fire up the barbecue. If you don't eat red meat, chicken with (red) barbecue sauce will do nicely. Add a salad with cherry tomatoes and red peppers, and a Russet potato and you've got a very red dinner! The twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit are: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control and chastity. Reflect that in a light and fresh Twelve Fruit Salad for dessert. Try to choose fruits from the red and orange spectrum, such as: red grapes, blood oranges, red grapefruit, strawberries, raspberries, peaches, red apples, cherries, watermelon, cantaloupe, tangerines and apricots. Now there's the way to celebrate Pentecost! Delicious food and surrounded by family. What a great end to a miraculous season!

## A Wee Bit'O Green

March 17<sup>th</sup> marks the celebration of Saint Patrick's Day, both a holy day and national holiday in Ireland. St. Patrick is credited with bringing Christianity to the Irish. There are many legends and stories about St. Patrick.

At a tender young age (between 14 and 16), St. Patrick was kidnapped and taken to Ireland as a slave to herd and tend sheep. Lonely and afraid in captivity, St. Patrick developed a deep faith in God. One night, during his sleep, he was sent a vision of how to escape. After his escape, he eventually became a priest (and then a bishop). Years later, St. Patrick travelled back to Ireland to spread the Christian word. He used the shamrock, which resembles a three-leafed clover, as a metaphor to explain the concept of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). St. Patrick worked many miracles and wrote of his love for God in *Confessions*. After years of living in poverty, travelling and enduring much suffering, he died on March 17, 461.



### Next School Council Meeting:

Monday, March 31, 2008 in the library.  
Everyone welcome!

### Volunteers Needed:

If you would like to volunteer your time or talents to the annual St. Francis de Sales Catholic School Council Family Fun Night, please contact Tracey Stringer at 613-284-0972.

### School Council Newsletter:

If you have an idea for an article or you would like to contribute to this newsletter, please contact Shelley Nadeau at 613-283-3832.

If you are interested in volunteering, would like to attend a meeting or if you would like to learn more about the St. Francis de Sales School Council, please contact the school at 613-283-6101 or approach any member of council:



**Chair**—Lorraine Fenn, **Treasurer**—Margaret West, **Secretary**—Shelley Nadeau, **Community Representative**—Bernice Chiniborch, **Parish Representative**—Debbie Shea, **Non-Teaching Representative**—Patricia Meagher, **Teaching Representative**—Anik Blanchard, **Principal**—Derek Haime, **Parent Representatives**—Tammy Demidoff, Dorothy Hudson, Tracey Nichols, Tracey Stringer, Janet Yanosik