

December 2008

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Mount Alvernia High School



Dear Parents,

What an enormous magnifier is tradition!

Thomas Carlyle

I have written many letters to you over the years about Christmas – the solemnity and wonder of it and the joy and festivity of it. No matter what the economic climate or the weather, even as adults we feel the magic of this time of year. The songs we hear and the movies we watch bring back memories of our own childhood. The traditions we follow – entertainment, decorations, food and experiences are things we deliberately preserve. For all of us they magnify the spirit of the season.

I used to tell the students I taught, "There is a wonderful comfort in routine." In a chaotic, unpredictable and frightening world, predictability often equals safety for us. Perhaps that is what motivates us to recreate recipes for cakes and cookies, carefully wrap fragile ornaments each year and set up the family creche. Menus and timetables for opening presents may vary from family to family; however, we all build in certain rituals that define this most joyous of holidays.

Like any family Mount Alvernia has Christmas traditions too. The season begins with the Winter Windfall Calendar drive in November and each year through your generosity we add thousands of dollars to enhance the educational experience of our students/your daughters. On December 8th, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, we celebrate with the Sisters their special day with a liturgy and a brunch with the Student Council. Through the annual Giving Tree we donate new books to school libraries in Boston and Bolivia. Over the last ten years we have added over 3,000 books to the shelves of these schools. On the last day before our vacation we all gather first in the chapel for our annual Christmas prayer service and then in the gym for performances by the choral and the drama members. This day always ends with the famous senior skit – a usually hilarious satire directed at faculty foibles – further proof that students miss nothing!

Last year for the first time the seniors planned a special night when they decorated the Christmas tree in the student dining room, hanging ornaments, making paper chains and sharing popcorn, hot chocolate and pizza, while watching a Christmas movie in their pajamas. I know the class of 2010 is looking forward to putting their personal spin on this new tradition.

As I gather with my own family this year, celebrating our traditions, I will think of you celebrating yours - magnifying the joy of this blessed season.

Merry Christmas

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathleen Kent".

Kathleen Kent
Head of School

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports for the second quarter will be issued on December 10th. They will be mailed home. Students should return them to school by December 18th.

TREE AND WREATH SALE

The annual Christmas tree and wreath sale will take place on Saturday, December 5 and Sunday December 6. Please plan to come and visit us. You can purchase trees and/or wreaths (decorated or plain). There will be baked goods available for purchase and a raffle table for those willing to take a chance. If you have any questions, please contact Sue Riley ext. 27 or Martha Brandt ext. 33.

WINTER UNIFORMS

The winter uniform may be worn from December 15 through March 1. Please refer to the handbook for regulations regarding winter uniform.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

All tuition payments are due on December 15th. Please remember that **no student** will be allowed to take semester exams in January unless all financial obligations have been met. If you have any questions, please contact Patricia Morley at extension 12.

SEASON OF GIVING

On Tuesday, December 8, we will begin the day with a liturgy to celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. We will kick off our "Season of Giving" book drive at this liturgy. At this liturgy, students will pick a book ornament from the tree. They should bring their unwrapped new book back to school on Friday, December 18. They will be collected at the Christmas prayer service. After the liturgy, student council members will host a brunch for the retired sisters.

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
to all of our students and their
families. Have a safe and restful
vacation. We will see you when we re-
turn to school on Monday,
Monday, January 4, 2010.*

CHRISTMAS BREAK

Friday, December 18 will be a full day of school for students. We will have regular classes until 1:00. We will end the day with a prayer service in the chapel and then go to the gym for the Choral and Drama performance. Dismissal will be at 2:33 p.m. Christmas break will then commence and we will return to school on **Monday, January 4, 2010.**

The building will close immediately at the end of the school day on December 18th. The after school study will not be available on this day. Please plan accordingly.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Faculty Meeting Friday, December 4 11:33 a.m.
After School Study will not be available. The building will close at 11:45 a.m.

WINTER WINDFALL

Calendars for the seventh annual Winter Windfall are currently available for purchase. Each family in the school has been asked to sell 10 calendars. The cost is \$10.00 a calendar. Each calendar makes the owner eligible for prizes drawn from December 25 through January 31. If you win a prize early on in the drawings, your ticket goes back into the bin for the next day's drawing. If you wish to purchase additional calendars, please call Mrs. Brandt in the office at 617-969-2260 extension 33 or have your daughter come by the office and see Mrs. Brandt. These calendars make great Christmas presents, gift cards or stocking stuffers.

GRADE 10 RETREAT

The Grade 10 retreat will take place on Wednesday, December 2nd at Regis College.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

The application deadline for new students in December 15th. Students still needing to take the entrance exam for grades 7 or 8 can do so on Saturday, December 5th. Please contact Mrs. Buckley at extension 46 for more information.

COFFEE WITH HEAD OF SCHOOL

On Friday, December 11th, all are welcome to join Mrs. Kent between 8:30 and 9:30 in the dining room for casual conversation.