

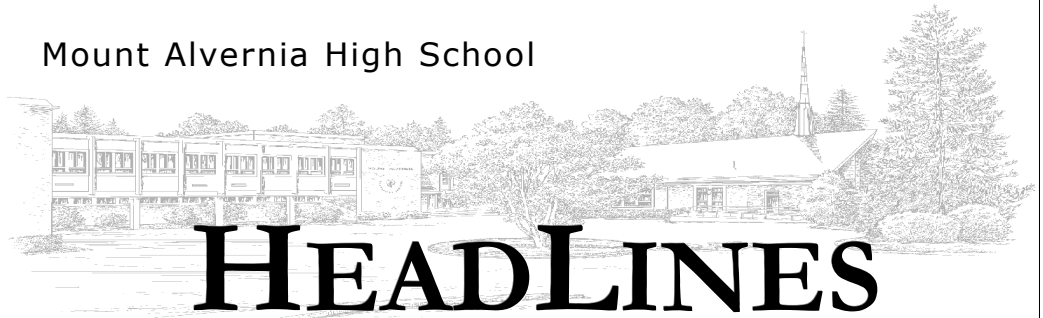
January 2010

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Mount Alvernia High School



Dear Parents,

“The object of a new year is not that we should have a new year. It is that we should have a new soul.”  
G. K. Chesterton

At first reading, Chesterton’s observation is difficult to understand and raises many questions. How can we get a “new soul” every year? What does he mean by using the word “soul”? What do we think when we hear the word? If you search the dictionary for “soul,” you’ll find phrases such as “the actuating cause of an individual life,” “animating principle” and “a person’s total self.” According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, “The soul may be defined as the ultimate internal principle by which we think, feel and will and by which our bodies are animated.” It sounds as if this English writer and ardent Christian was advocating a fundamental transformation within each person each new year.

Chesterton (1874-1936) became a Catholic in 1922 at the age of 48. His long spiritual and intellectual journey to this decision was filled with many attempts to explain the mystery of human existence.\* His writings often explored ideas about how we should live and a reoccurring theme was the tug between the immediacy of choices rooted in the here and now and the restraint prompted by visions of the hereafter. One eloquent reference to this tension we all live with is his comment on a “seize the day” approach to life.

“... *carpe diem* religion is not the religion of happy people, but of very unhappy people. Great joy does not gather the rosebuds while it may; its eyes are fixed on the immortal rose which Dante saw.”

The allusion to Robert Herrick’s Cavalier poem and the reference to Dante’s *Divine Comedy* are deliberate and very clear. Which poet’s vision and advice should we follow? Should we grab the moment before it passes or temper our choices with thoughts of our ultimate goal – salvation? Both Herrick’s short poem and Dante’s three book epic use images of roses and focus on the inevitable and inexorable passage of time and what the human response to that undeniable fact should be. What should life be about for us – each new day – each new year?

Perhaps this question is the reason behind our January 1<sup>st</sup> resolutions. At some level we see the turn of the calendar as a reminder of the passage of time and an opportunity to make changes in our lives. Do the changes we make fundamentally alter our souls – “our ultimate internal principle”? Maybe! Chesterton certainly thought so.

Happy New Year! Happy New Soul!

Sincerely yours,

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

Kathleen Kent  
Head of School

\* He also wrote a biography of St. Francis of Assisi.

## **SEMESTER EXAMS**

When we return on January 4th, we will finish the work of the first semester and then begin preparation for the semester exams, scheduled for Thursday, January 14, Friday, January 15, Tuesday, January 19 and Wednesday, January 20. The long weekend in the middle of the exam period should offer extra time for study. These tests are important assessments of your daughter's academic progress and she should begin early to organize for them. The exam in each subject represents 20% of the semester grade. Therefore, performance is important. Please remind your daughters about the school policy regarding all electronic devices during tests.

In order to prepare for exams students will be dismissed at 11:30 on Wednesday, January 13. The dismissal time for students with two exams on any given day is 11:45. The dismissal time for students with one exam on any given day is 9:45. **THE SCHOOL WILL CLOSE AT 1:30 PM ON THE DAY BEFORE EXAMS AND ON EXAM DAYS. THE STUDY HALL WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE.**

*In the event of a snow day, exams scheduled for that day will be given on the day school resumes. For example, English and math are scheduled for Tuesday. If school is cancelled because of snow, the English and math exams that were scheduled on Tuesday would be given on Wednesday and the exam period would be extended by one day.*

## **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

All tuition payments were 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.

The seat deposit of \$750.00 for current grade 8 students (going into grade 9 in 2010-11) is due on January 28, 2010. Invoices will be mailed along with financial contracts by December 18th. You **must** return this deposit and contract to secure a seat in grade 9 for next year.

Thanks for everyone's participation in the Winter Windfall Calendar sales.

Drawings will start on December 25 and run through January 31. If you are lucky enough to win, you will be called by Mrs. Brandt.

Good luck to all!!!

A list of winners will be posted next month.

## **EARLY DISMISSALS AND NO SCHOOLS**

Friday, January 8           **Early Dismissal 11:30**  
Faculty Meeting - Building closes  
at 11:45 p.m. No study hall today.

Wednesday, January 13   **Early Dismissal 11:30**  
Exam study time No study hall today

Monday, January 18       **No School**  
Martin Luther King Day

## **SNOW ANNOUNCEMENTS**

In the event that school is cancelled due to inclement weather announcements will be made on Channels 4, 5 and 7 and 25 and the Alert Now System will make calls to all home phone numbers. If you call the school, the closing announcement will also be in the greeting and if possible, we will post it on the web site under daily news and on the home page. **PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE CONVENT.**

If we need to dismiss early due to inclement weather all parents will be contacted through the Alert Now Rapid Communication Messaging System. **Please make sure we have current phone numbers for home, office and cell phone.**

Although we do not encourage it, parents may come to the office to get their daughter at any time if they feel the weather is becoming too bad for her to stay.

## **TEACHER ASSIGNMENT PAGES**

Teachers are now posting assignments on their individual assignment pages on the web site. Click on students (upper right hand corner of the home page) teacher assignment pages (left hand side of page). Each teacher is listed with a link to the assignment page for the courses taught by that teacher. Students should be able to keep current with homework when school is closed or if she is out because of illness.

## **PLEASE NOTE:**

**THERE WILL BE NO ACCESS TO THE SCHOOL BUILDINGS DURING THE CHRISTMAS VACATION. STUDENTS SHOULD PLAN TO BRING HOME THEIR BOOKS AND STUDY GUIDES ON OR BEFORE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18TH**