



February 14, 2021

Dear Parents,

The third quarter is now under way and we are looking forward to a great second half of the school year. I hope you are all enjoying the long weekend celebrating Valentine's Day and Presidents' Day. So much love and kindness were spread at SVMS this past Friday when we celebrated Valentine's Day. All of our students enjoyed a free tag day as well as their grade level parties. Years ago, Presidents' Day was popularly recognized as honoring George Washington and Abraham Lincoln but today we also remember and celebrate the birthdays and lives of all the United States presidents.

This past Friday was also the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school. Our kindergarten students dressed like they were 100 years old (complete with gray hair and aching backs), counted by 10s to make a "hundreds hat", and brought in 100 objects from home. Both kindergartens read a story, "Miss Bindergarten Celebrates 100 Days of Kindergarten" and students practiced their reading, writing, and cutting skills to fix a sentence scramble. They also had a fashion show complete with oldies music.

This coming week, students in grades 2-8, will take the NWEA MAP growth test. This is the same test the students took in September. Once again, the subjects to be tested are Math and Reading. The results will continue to guide the teaching of our students, meeting their needs using the current raw data. The test will be given once again in June with the final score being documented for the school year.

This coming Wednesday is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. This is a season of penance, reflection, and fasting which prepares us for Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday. This season offers wonderful opportunities for spiritual renewal. Our parish has many opportunities during the Lenten season. Refer to the parish website at [www.svmnj.org](http://www.svmnj.org) for the details. Our students will participate in a livestreamed prayer service this day followed by the distributing of ashes in each of the homerooms by Fr. George, Fr. Chris and Fr. Jader.

Do not forget that Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>, Ash Wednesday, is a delayed opening for SVMS students at 9:45 am. No one will be permitted to enter the school lot until this time. **Please do not arrive earlier, as mass attendees will be departing the parking lot at the end of the 8:30 am and the teachers will be arriving at 9:30 am.** Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation.

Shelia Husk, the aunt of Mrs. Caitlin Fahey and Angelina Buono, the mother of Antoinette Walsh and grandmother of Thomas Walsh (5A) recently went home to God. Please keep both of these families in your prayers as they mourn their loss.

Have a great week.

Anne Marie Gisoldi  
Vice-Principal

## **Ash Wednesday Gospel Reflection**

(St. Joseph's Parish/Iowa)

**Gospel Reading: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18**

In this passage from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches us about prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. These are the three traditional “pillars” of Lenten observance. During Lent, we are encouraged to focus on prayer. This can be done by adding or increasing silent prayer time each day, taking time to pray as a family, attending Mass more regularly, experiencing Eucharistic adoration, in addition to other options. We are also asked to fast during Lent, which includes abstaining from meat on Ash Wednesday and all Fridays, plus observing a day of fasting on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. This also includes the tradition of “giving something up” for Lent. The purpose of fasting is to help us be detached from the pleasures of this world and focus our attention on God. Finally, almsgiving refers to acts of charity. This can include offering more of our time, talent, and/or treasure in service of God. With all these practices of Lent, Jesus in this Gospel passage calls us to be humble and do them with the right intention of serving and worshipping God.