



Principal's Newsletter

NEWS FROM 17th & GIRARD

December 2006

Dear Prep Parents and Guardians:

Greetings from St. Joseph's Prep! I hope this letter finds you well as we approach the close of 2006 with the mid-point of our academic year around the corner. Each school year is a journey, a quest that challenges and inspires us and leads us to great discoveries. I am reminded of a passage from Rev. Bernard Lonergan, S.J., who writes: "Human consciousness is constantly questing. Seeking, desiring, questioning, and choosing are natural to human consciousness...Questing is what the human spirit is. It's what the human spirit does...and what we quest for matters...We need to seek and find what's true and what's truly good...The challenge of our lives, then, is learning to seek well what is truly worthwhile." And what we seek at The Prep, what we find is truly worthwhile, is the development of your son and his commitment to do all things for the greater glory of God. That is our quest, and we—Prep faculty, staff, and parents—are walking that road together with your son.

I confidently use the word "together." Since my last newsletter, I have had the chance to speak with so many of our amazing Prep parents and guardians. Whether it was an informal meeting in a hallway at Homecoming or outside The Prep at 10:30 p.m. after a mixer or a more formal group setting such as Mini-School Night or a Prep Mothers' Club meeting, you continue to show tremendous love for your son and a wonderful support of St. Joseph's Prep. Both are invigorating to me, and I am grateful.

One of the greatest gifts of being the principal here is the opportunity to witness the growth of your son, the dedication of our faculty and staff, and the love of our God in so many different moments during the day. I wish you could see what I see everyday. Ms. Susie Cook tying in the "Curse of the Bambino" with the witchcraft in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, Ms. Barbara Brown reflecting on her service trips when she was in high school at our Thanksgiving Mass, Mr. Dave Pepino and Ms. Jennifer Lyons leading the faculty volleyball team against a team of very determined seniors, Fr. Frank Skechus, S.J. combining laughter and learning as students prepare for an upcoming chemistry test, students playing their hearts out at Battle of the Band tryouts, a pick-up dodge ball game,

or the Madden Tournament, a couple of freshmen celebrating their findings under microscopes in Mr. Martin's class, or one senior patting the back of another senior a couple of days after a tough athletic loss—these moments just begin to paint the remarkable picture of what happens at 1733 Girard. It is these moments and countless others much like them that truly make me feel blessed to be here. They remind me so often that God is present in all that we do.

Several important items are explained in this newsletter and are included in this mailing. I ask you to give them your attention.

With Thanksgiving behind us, my wife Sarah and I are looking forward to our first Christmas together in the Philly area. This past weekend as we unpacked our boxes of garland and ornaments and decided where to hang our lights and put the tree, we agreed that we both certainly feel at home. We are grateful.

As we begin our Advent season, I remember the words of Julian of Norwich, who, 600 years ago, tried to express her sense of the love of God: "The love that God most high has for our soul is so great that it surpasses understanding. No created being can comprehend how much, and how sweetly, and how tenderly our maker loves us." It is my hope for all of us that, in these hectic days leading up to Christmas, we remember these words and, as best we can, realize God's abundant love for us as we celebrate the gift of Christ our Lord.

As always, please know how grateful I am that you entrust your most precious gift—your son—to us at The Prep. You and your family will be in my prayers this holiday season.

Peace.

Mr. Michael Gomez

Our Mission

The mission of St. Joseph's Prep as a Catholic, Jesuit, urban, college preparatory school is to develop the minds, hearts, souls and characters of young men in their pursuit of becoming men for and with others.

New Faculty Members for 2006-2007

The following four teachers were hired at the end of the summer, after the publication of the last Principal's Newsletter. We welcome them to The Prep!

Ms. Patrizia Clerico – Modern Language

Ms. Clerico comes to The Prep after teaching at St. Edmonds' Academy in Wilmington, Del., and Delaware County Community College. She is proficient in Spanish, French, German and Italian. Ms. Clerico is a graduate of Chestnut Hill College (B.S., Computer Science) and Immaculata University (B.A., Foreign Language and International Studies).

Mr. Dennis Hart – History

Mr. Hart is a familiar face at The Prep. A 1995 graduate, he has also served as assistant baseball coach since 2001. Mr. Hart most recently taught eighth grade American History and Government at People for People Charter School, where he also served as varsity basketball coach. He is a graduate of Temple University (B.A., Education/Social Studies) and Community College of Philadelphia (A.A., Education), where he earned the Adele Magner Speech Award.

Ms. Natalie Sandone – Drama

Ms. Sandone has taught acting at several places, including most recently "Act Out! Drama" in Cherry Hill, N.J. A graduate of the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, Ms. Sandone is a member of the improvisation group "The Philly N Crowd" and worked as a "Phanstormer" for the Philadelphia Phillies. She also performed in a recent production of "Tony and Tina's Wedding."

Mrs. Gina Steinberg – Nurse

Mrs. Steinberg brings a wealth of school nursing experience to The Prep. In addition to her time here, she also works at St. Francis Xavier and Philadelphia Mennonite High School. For the 10 years prior, Mrs. Steinberg served as the nurse at Benjamin Rush Middle School in Northeast Philadelphia. A graduate of Widener University (B.S.N., M.Ed., Supervision of School Health Services), Mrs. Steinberg has earned a certified school nurse certificate.

Mission Renewal

Rev. Bruce Maivelett, S.J., Director of Ignatian Identity, reports on the status of our Mission Renewal process:

"In the summer, we set a goal that all members of the St. Joseph's Prep community would participate in the process of Mission Renewal. I am happy to announce that, since September, each Prep academic and administrative department spent a full day (plus eight discernment days) participating in the Mission Renewal process while several parents have attended evening sessions. Members of the class of 2007 are in the process right now and the underclassmen will follow after semester exams. The students will be asked to reflect on how their experience of family life, school life, and society in general either encourage them or inhibit them in living out our mission as Prep students. The students will also reflect on how they will individually strengthen our identity and advance our mission."

Ignatian Service

Mr. Sam Deitch, Director of Ignatian Service, offers this reflection concerning Prep service projects this year:

"The young men of St. Joseph's Prep have been involved in many great service opportunities this academic year. Whether Mr. Steve Oldham is taking students to St. Francis Inn the second Tuesday of each month or our students are tutoring every day after school at the Gesu School, our students have truly shown their desire to live out the school's mission while living as men for and with others. Also, the entire sophomore class and thirteen faculty members spent two days volunteering at numerous agencies throughout the Philadelphia region. For example, some of our students went to Inglis House, a wheelchair-bound community, to transport and visit residents while assisting them in cleaning their closets.

This month, the entire Prep community will take part in Operation Santa Claus—a gift-giving, wrapping, sorting and delivering program sponsored by the Community Service Corps. The Prep will also send seniors to Virginia, Louisiana and Maryland on service immersion trips during the spring semester where they will serve, pray and reflect on their service experience."

Taggart Cultural Event Series

In response to conversations during our mission renewal efforts, a group of St. Joseph's Prep faculty, staff and students have been meeting to make a "cultural events" series a reality. They have developed a mission statement and named the series in honor of beloved Prep teacher **Rev. J. Vincent Taggart, S.J.**

The mission of the Taggart Series is to foster a greater awareness of and appreciation for the cultural, intellectual, artistic, and academic learning opportunities that exist beyond the curricular programs offered at St. Joseph's Preparatory School. It is the goal of the committee to afford the greater SJP community (students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents and friends) frequent, suitable occasions that stimulate discussion and / or debate, reinforce and enrich the Jesuit curriculum, and educate in an entertaining and provocative manner.

The Taggart Series kicked off with a capacity crowd in our theatre on Tuesday, November 28 as Prep **President Rev. William J. Byron, S.J., '45** presented *Maxed Out*, a film about the dangers of credit card debt. Fr. Byron, a noted professor of business ethics, introduced the documentary and then presented a discussion about the film.

The Taggart Series committee is composed of:

Bill Avington, Judy Christian (co-chair), Patrizia Clerico, Joe Daniels (co-chair), John Dodig '07, Tim Dooley '07, Dennis Hart (co-chair), Deb Hilton, Mike Damiano, Ben Haney, Christie McGuire-Villareal, Fernando Mendez, Sonia Nelson (co-chair), H.L. Ratliff, Leslie Ryan, Kathleen Sullivan and Rich VanFossen.

CSC Feeds 150 Families for Thanksgiving

The St. Joseph's Prep Community Service Corps again sponsored the annual Thanksgiving Food Drive. This year, food baskets were sent to 150 families in the neighborhood immediately surrounding The Prep. Each homeroom was assigned a specific food item and each student was asked to bring in four of that item to make the food drive a success. Many school families also donated turkeys that were then given to the families. Although the weather was cold and dreary, there was a great turnout of students, faculty and staff to deliver the food immediately following school on Wednesday, November 22.

Faculty/Staff Development

Our faculty and staff have modeled the "Grad at Grad" characteristic of being "open to growth" by participating in many professional development activities this year. Below is a list of some of those experiences:

- Blackbaud Administrator's Conference;
- Classical Association of the Atlantic States Meeting;
- CUPRAP (Colleges and Universities Public Relations Association of Pennsylvania) Fall Workshop;
- Gesu School's Ninth Annual Symposium;
- JSEA (Jesuit Secondary Education Association) Eastern Region Counselor's Conference;
- JSEA Principal's Conference;
- Maryland Province's New Ignatian Educator Retreat;
- "Teachers Teaching Teachers Workshop," sponsored by the Multicultural Resource Center of the Philadelphia Area Independent Schools.

A highlight came in November when all nine members of the Science Department attended the National Science Teachers Association's East Coast conference in Baltimore. The group attended workshops and lectures on topics including the following: Teaching Current Topics in Science; Activity before Concepts; Sound and Light Activities; Electricity and Magnetism; Metals; Oxidative Stress and Motor Neuron Disease; and Health Effects of Exposure at the World Trade Center Disaster.

National Achievement Scholar

James Gallagher '07 qualified as a semifinalist in the 2007 National Achievement Scholarship Program. He joins more than 1,600 Black American high school seniors from around the country in meeting the criteria for this prestigious award.

The privately financed National Achievement Program was initiated in 1964 to honor academically promising black youth throughout the nation and to provide scholarships to a substantial number of the most outstanding participants. More than 27,000 young men and women have received Achievement Scholarship awards worth \$86 million.

The initial screen for semifinalists was determined by taking the 2005 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. All Achievement Scholarship winners are selected from the Finalist group on the basis of their abilities, accomplishments, and potential for success in college.

National Merit Semifinalists

Nine Prep seniors—**Jake Braithwaite, David Campbell, Kevin Crenny, Matthew Diener, Brian Dillon, Ross Drueding, Peter Dugan, Andrew Matas, and Luke Reilly**—have qualified as semifinalists in the 2007 National Merit Scholarship Program. They join approximately 16,000 semifinalists from around the country in meeting the criteria for this honor.

The initial screen for the semifinalists was determined by taking the 2005 Preliminary/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Semifinalists represent less than one percent of the U.S. high school seniors, including the highest scoring entrants in each state. To become a Finalist, a Semifinalist must have an outstanding academic record throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by the school principal and earn SAT scores that confirm the students earlier qualifying test performance. Approximately 15,000 Semifinalists from this group will advance to the Finalist Level where the Merit Scholarship winners will be chosen.

The National Merit Scholarship Program is a not-for-profit organization that operates without government assistance. Founded in 1955 to conduct the annual National Merit Program, it offers talented high school students the opportunity to compete for Merit Scholarship awards. The awards are worth \$33 million and will be offered next spring.

Student of the Week

This year, the tradition of naming the “Joe Dugan Student of the Week” has returned. Each week, a student, nominated by a member of The Prep community, is selected for this honor. The Student of the Week is announced over the PA during seventh-period announcements, and his achievement is listed in the bi-weekly e-mail update and on The Prep Website.

The Student of the Week Award is named in honor of the late **John “Joseph” Dugan ’52**, a longtime member of The Prep faculty who was also active with the baseball and bowling teams. Mr. Dugan taught geometry to several generations of Prep students and was also an avid fan of the old Philadelphia A’s as well as all other Philadelphia sports teams.

This year, Student of the Week honors have been given to:

- November 13-17: Ashton Miller ’08
- November 6-10: Ryan Zehner ’08
- October 30-November 3: Eric Hahn ’08
- October 23-27: Thomas McGlynn ’07
- October 16-20: Christopher Gannon ’07
- October 9-13: James Lehair ’08
- October 2-6: Shaun Slusarski ’08

- September 25-29: Andrew Zebley ’07
- September 18-22: Dan Kaufmann ’07
- September 11-15: Eric Leis ’07
- September 4-8: Colin Francesco ’08

To read about each student’s achievement, go to http://www.sjprep.org/news/sow_archive.html.

National Honor Society

I am proud to announce that 109 members of the senior class were inducted into the National Honor Society, a true reflection not just of their academic strength but the character and selflessness of this class. These young men did not attain this achievement alone. They had the caring support and encouragement of their families, as well as the nurturing gift of knowledge that was shared with them by their teachers here at The Prep. For this, we are most grateful.

Brad F. Adams; Mark A. Alexander; William A. Augustyn; Nicholas T. Barnes; Jeffrey M. Battipaglia; John L. Bauer; John J. Braithwaite; Michael P. Britton; Daniel R. Browne; Peter Y. Bruno; Matthew A. Campanella; David H. Campbell; Thomas M. Carey; Michael F. Cavanaugh, Jr.; Matthew P. Celano; Zachary A. Certa; Bradley B. Clark; Kevin P. Crenny; Anthony P. D’Angelo; Michael R. Deasey; Francis A. DeMichele III; Matthew E. Diener; Brian M. Dillon; Michael B. DiMarcangelo; Michael V. Diorio; John J. Dodig; Timothy W. Dooley; Joseph M. D’Orazio; Ross E. Drueding; Peter C. Dugan; Christopher J. Farrell, Jr.; James O. Fenningham; Timothy A. Feron; Michael A. Gallagher; Sean R.M. Gallagher; John J. Gazzola III; Ryan J. Golasa; Peter G. Goldner; Galen P. Grady; Matthew J. Griffin; J. Michael Haines; Andrew F. Hakanson; Michael P. Heenan; Andrew B. Heinbockel; Matthew W. Hill; Kevin E. Hoban; Andrew J. Horgan; Christian B. Horn; William T. Houston; Geoffrey R. Johnson; William G. Kain; Joseph R. Kampman; James W. Kane; Adam O. Kasprzak; Daniel P. Kaufmann; Robert N. Keleher; Thomas M. Kelly; Ryan J. Kidd; Joseph R. Kruse; Jeffrey M. Kubiak; Bernard V. Kueny; Dmytro D. Kryryliouk; Dominic J. LaFauci; John P. Lalor; David H. Lee; Eric P. Leis; Matthew P. Martella; Andrew A. Matas; Devin T. McDermott; Thomas G. McGlynn; Aaron P. McGraw; Joseph McKendry; Michael S. McKenzie; F. Sean McKeon; Sean P. McNulty; Kevin R. Melnick, Jr.; Andrew A. Mone; Jonathan A. Monteiro; Christopher A. Morell; Daniel J. Morson; Daniel J. Mullen; Kevin J. Nihill; Anthony J. Notte; David C. Oakley, Jr.; James Michael Ousley; Gregory R. Owens; Matthew J. Papparone; Edward M. Phillips; Matthew J. Prybella; Ryan P. Quigley; Sean J. Radomski; Luke M. Reilly; Anthony J. Rossano; Alexander J. Rulon; Sean C. Sasso; Matthew V. A. Shaw; James J. Shields; Marco M. Spigonardo; Joseph M. Squadroni; John P. Taras; Gregory P. Taylor; Phillip J. Tomezsko; James J. Warkulwiz; Kurt M. Watkins; Francis A. Weber; Devin M. Welsh; Christopher R. Whitney; William C. Woody; James A. Zebley.

School Closing Info

As we head into the winter months, the possibility of school closing due to inclement weather increases. The school closing information is listed on the back page of the Prep school calendar. In cases of closure, official notification will be posted on www.sjprep.org and given to KYW Radio (1060 AM), KYW-TV (Channel 3), WPVI-TV (Channel 6), WCAU-TV (Channel 10) and WTXF-TV (Channel 29). Notification will be made as early as possible, preferably by 5:45 a.m. The snow emergency code number that KYW Radio assigns to The Prep is 218 in Philadelphia County. School closings and delays are announced twice each hour by the radio station. The television stations scroll school closing/delayed start information by school name across the bottom of your television screen. The television stations also now list school closings on their websites.

The announcement would usually indicate one of three options:

- (1) classes are cancelled for the day;
- (2) classes will begin one hour later than usual (buses on regular schedule); or
- (3) classes will begin two hours later than usual (buses are one hour later).

There is a list of FAQ'S about school closings posted in the calendar as well. Please check there for more information.

Fall Athletics Review

Our fall teams represented The Prep well in their respective sports. The football team, under the direction of **Gil Brooks '75**, advanced to the Catholic League Red Division title game for the seventh straight year, an outstanding achievement.

The soccer team won the regular season Southern Division title for the 25th time and made the playoffs for the 32nd straight season. Congratulations also to **Jim Murray '59** for winning his 500th game, making him only the second soccer coach in state history to achieve that mark.

The cross country team, under the direction of **Curt Cockenberg '71**, won the Jesuit Schools Championship, finished second at the Independent Schools Championship and third in the Catholic League.

We are very proud of our student-athletes, who work hard to represent The Prep on the athletic fields while balancing their rigorous academic schedule. Thank you to these student-athletes as well as our Prep parents who offer support and encouragement to all of these young men.

Calendar Notes

There are several changes/additions to the printed calendar:

December

- 5 Swimming @ Malvern Prep, 3:45 p.m. (added)
- Wrestling vs. Haverford School, TBD (added)
- 16 Varsity Basketball vs. Simon Gratz @ SJU, 12:30 p.m. (added time)
- Wrestling @ Episcopal, 11 a.m. (originally Jan. 2)
- 17 Christmas Concert, 1 p.m. (new time)
- 19 JV and Varsity Basketball @ Judge, 6 & 7:30 p.m. (added)
- 21 Varsity Basketball vs. Pennsbury @ Arcadia, 8:15 p.m. (added time)
- 21 Christmas Mixer, 7-10 p.m. (originally Dec. 15)

January

- 8 Swimming vs. Bonner @ Widener, 7 p.m. (originally Jan. 11 @ Upper Darby)
- 13 Football Banquet, Time TBA.
- Soccer Banquet, Time TBA.
- 19 Wrestling @ Judge, 5 p.m. (JV), 6 p.m. (V) (originally Jan. 20)
- 20 Swimming @ Carroll, 7:30 p.m. (added)

February

- 6 Swimming @ O'Hara, 7 p.m. (added)
- 13 Junior Class College Night, 7 p.m. (originally Feb. 15)
- 23 PCL Basketball Quarterfinals @ O'Hara, TBD
- 28 PCL Basketball Semi-Finals @ the Palestra, TBD

March

- 4 PCL Basketball Championship @ the Palestra, TBD

Exam Preparation

Although many of us may have our eyes on Christmas break, let us look a little further ahead together to our First Semester exams. Included in this mailing is the exam schedule as well as procedures for this year's exams. Please pay close attention as some of the procedures are different than last year.

I encourage you to remind your son about the importance of these exams and that cramming a semester's worth of work into one or two nights is obviously not the best approach. Encourage your son to use some of the break as a time to prepare for exams. Hopefully, the early exam prep will alleviate some stress and give your son a sense of organization and confidence moving into the exam period. Should you have any questions about exam preparations, please have your son contact his teachers or guidance counselor sooner rather than later.

The Prep Shop

The Prep Shop, formerly the Spirit Shop, has undergone a transformation, thanks to the efforts of the Mothers' Club volunteers and new manager **Mrs. Beth Missett**. The Prep Shop, which is open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., is now also online at www.sjprep-shop.com.

Jesuit Corner

St. Ignatius Loyola was a prodigious writer of letters, giving us an insight into his spirituality and a better understanding of him as a person. Rev. Joseph N. Tylenda, S.J. reminds us of the importance of these letters:

“Much of Saint Ignatius Loyola's spiritual teaching is found in his letters, and these have always been regarded by Jesuits as an important source of their spirituality. Among Ignatius' many letters, those written to his fellow Jesuits have always had a special place, for in these the Jesuit of today not only finds Ignatius' teaching on the spiritual life, but he also meets Ignatius the man, expressing his affection for and interest in those to whom he wrote. None of Ignatius' other writings so ably exhibits the love he bore in his heart for those who chose to walk with him along the path toward Christ than do these letters.”

Here is an excerpt from a letter to Antonio de Araoz, S.J., concerning the ministry of Christian education:

“[Students] draw much greater merit and fruit from their studies since they learn from the beginning to make a practice of directing all their studies to the service of God...In time, some will emerge to play diverse roles—some to preach and carry on the care of souls, others to the government of the land and administration of justice, and others to other responsible occupations. In short, since the children of today become the adults of tomorrow, their good formation in life and learning will benefit many others, with the fruit expanding more widely every day.”

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