

Our Lady of Peace School
December 2011
O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Advent greetings from Mrs. Folian:

If you say, "Peace be with you." to me, I will guarantee that unless I am REALLY thinking on my feet, my response will not be "And with your spirit." Yesterday, grades one, two, and three went to Mass, and I will tell you that I had never realized how often in the Mass we exchange that peace-filled blessing. Pay attention, you too might be surprised. Actually, that is one of the blessings of the new translation – new awareness of the beauty of our Eucharistic liturgy.

I am going around to all the classes when I finish this parent letter and I'm going to ask them a few questions. I will be making the questions (and accepting answers) in an age appropriate way, but I ask you to ask them too and to keep on asking other faith-sharing questions that teach your children. Whoever first shared the belief that "Faith is caught and not taught" understood that it is the combination of words and actions that teach children what our real priorities are.

The topics of my questions will/might include:

Who made you? Why did God make you?

Liturgical Year – Why could we have greeted each other with "Happy New Year" this past Monday?

Advent – what are we preparing for? How do we prepare?

Immaculate Conception – means what? Who was conceived without Original Sin? What is Original Sin? Why do we honor Mary?

What prayers do you know?

What is the third commandment? Why do we go to Mass on Sunday when it says "Sabbath"?

What is your favorite bible verse? Why?

What is a sacrament? Grade 2 will be going to Confession for the first time on Sunday, what advice would you have for them? What are the two other names of this sacrament? Why is this sacrament called by three different names?

As you see, there are too many questions for me to ask in one classroom visit, but God gave YOU the responsibility of being the primary religious educator of your children so you might use them as a sampling of questions you need to be asking. I am sure that when you start asking the question, your child will start asking questions back. The problem with that is you won't have all the answers and/or will be unsure that your answer is the actual teaching of the Church rather than just your understanding of a teaching. I say this because that is my own problem and I've

been taking classes since I was five or six and went to a Jesuit university and have been a Catholic schools educator for twenty-nine years. So, how is that remedied? By having resources at home. Each family should have a Bible and a Catholic handbook of some kind. I will tell you that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is very readable but it is written for adults. Ms. McMahon has used *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth* as her religion text for a few years. That handbook would be a wonderful resource because as part of its useful basic Catholic Quick Facts section, it has a Frequently Asked Question Index that you can use for self-study and questioning. I should mention that the Internet has some wonderful sites and resources but I have not really used them. Mrs. McEntire got online just now and when she did a search with "Catholic Dictionary" it came up with what looked like one that was easy to use. True, but I still like a book. If you want to see a copy of the youth handbook, let us know and we will send a new one. You may keep it and send in the \$20.00 it costs us or send it back.

God doesn't have any grandchildren. We are either His child or we are out of relationship with Him. It is our job to make sure that they know enough to make the choice to say YES when that becomes totally their responsibility. In the meantime, we are called to pray, pray, pray, teach, teach, teach, witness by example in every situation in our lives. The good news is that God gives us the grace and His Church (communion of saints) as the Body of Christ also supports us but faith is not developed in a vacuum, you must do your job.

In prayer for Advent blessings,

Carol A. Folian
Principal

P.S. I will try to find the name of the person our Blessed Mother appeared to but he reported her telling him that she promised that the children of anyone who prayed a rosary every day would be saved. Well, while I knew that many of the Saints and Popes had encouraged daily recitation of the rosary, I had never heard that before. It is fifteen minutes well spent for the intention of salvation for our children.

P. P.S. Updates:

-- We have heat! Yeah!!!

-- New office windows and the new front door are scheduled to be installed the week after Christmas. Mrs. McEntire and Mrs. Folian are both willing to be out of their offices WHENEVER the men come install them.

-- The Spring Pizza Sale day is March 30, 2012 so please save the date. Lastly, there is discussion of a new fundraiser – mulch in the Spring so please keep that in mind but you will hear more way before the snow has melted. ☺