



+Saint Edmund Campion
December 1, 2016

Dear Parents and Students,

As our first semester comes to a close, I am reminded time and again of the joy that comes to us this time of the year. We wait in hopeful anticipation of many things. Students are logging in extra hours as they prepare for exams. Faculty are burning the midnight oil assuring that their students are prepared for exams. The anticipation of the end of school on December 22nd and the beginning of two weeks of Bandit R&R is palpable!

As we approach Christmas, I urge us to not overlook the authentic meaning of our holiday... In the midst of this flurry of activity, it is easy to lose sight of the significance of and gift that is Advent. Advent, a time of preparation, is different from our Christmas celebration. Our students often merge the two into one.

A spirit of anticipation characterizes Advent. However, with anticipation should come a sense of preparation, of hope, and of longing. With this idea, Advent becomes, for us, a journey, with each day moving from a tone of reflection and wanting to one of peace and joy. Last week in his Angelus address, our Holy Father, Pope Francis, remarked, "Advent encourages us to reflect on the contrast between our daily routine and the unexpected coming of the Lord." Pope Francis continues, saying "the Gospel is not trying to frighten us, but 'to open our horizons' to further dimensions, giving meaning even to everyday occurrences."

During our Advent season, Pope Francis concluded, "we are called to enlarge the horizons of our hearts, to be surprised by the life that is presented each day with its newness. In order to do this we need to learn to not depend on our own securities, our own established plans, because the Lord comes in the hour which we don't imagine."

For me, this is the true essence of Advent. We are reminded of God's gift of hope and of love, empowering us to recognize the possibilities in our lives, even when those possibilities fall outside of what we expect or plan upon happening. It further reminds us the God is fully present in all dimensions of our lives.

As you begin to celebrate the holidays, I encourage you to actively and authentically engage in the Advent journey with your children, being intentional in your openness to the surprises of God's love and plan for you. With a more intense focus upon Advent, we allow ourselves to be surprised by the ordinary elements of our lives by our openness to Christ. If we do this, we will experience Christ in a new way come Christmas, a way that brings joy and love in the purest sense. This is the hope of Advent.

In Charity and Truth,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Piwowarski".

Mr. Rick Piwowarski
Principal