

December 15, 2016

Dear Parents:

We are happy to hear that your child will be participating in the Christmas Eve Children's Mass. Our practice for the Mass is Wednesday evening, **December 21**, from **6:45 PM to approximately 8:00-15 PM**.

It is very important that your child be on time for the practice. We have a lot to cover and we want your children home as close to 8:00 PM as possible. If your child has a specific part but is not present for the practice, your child's part may have to be given to someone else. If your child becomes ill and cannot attend the practice or the Mass itself on Christmas Eve, please call to let us know. I can be reached at 419-203-3018

The practice will begin in the church. The children will be seated as a group in reserved sections on each side of the middle aisle. We could use some parents to help with costumes, the line-up in the gym and to sit among the children. If you can help, would you please call me. I really do need the help.

Your children should wear Christmas best clothing—no uniforms, jeans, T-shirts etc. A description of your child's part is given at the end of this letter. If your child is a shepherd or king, you do not need to provide a costume. We have those. If your child has a reading part, a copy is enclosed. Your child will not have to bring this copy with them for the practice or for the Mass. It is meant for practice at home. **Please practice the reading part every day.** It is not expected to be memorized; however, it should be so familiar to your child that he or she will feel comfortable in reading slowly enough to be easily understood, using inflection in speech and, perhaps, even making some eye contact with the assembly. Practice using a strong voice. Even though we have a sound system, your child will need to use much louder than normal speech.

I have been looking at the weather forecasts for our practice and for Christmas. Right now, December 21 looks to have freezing drizzle in the evening. Christmas Eve looks good. Of course, we know how weather predications, especially this far out, can change and in a matter of minutes. If the weather should cause you to question whether or not we will be able to hold a practice, you can check the following:

www.stmarysvanwert.com Click on *Religious Education*. If there is a cancellation, it will be posted

WBCL radio (90.3 FM) Listen for announcements
www.wbcl.org Click on *Delays and Cancellations*

Text Alert: If you have not yet signed up, go to www.ohioalerts.org. Click on the St. Mary's Royals symbol and sign up for SOR or the School or both.

If we must cancel, I will use all of these ways of announcement.

There was one year when the practice was canceled due to weather. Mass involved a lot of prompting and, I am sure, the children did not feel so confident, but we still fully participated.

I do not recall that our special participation was ever canceled for Christmas Eve. If we must cancel, however, it will only be our participation. Mass will not be canceled—unless Father is stranded in another town, two hours away on a good day, with a major blizzard going on. That has only happened once, that I know. Your parents may remember the Blizzard of '78.

On December 24, Shepherds and Kings should meet in the Religious Education Office by 5:30 PM. Everyone else should meet in the gym by 5:40 PM. All coats should be hung in the gym for pick up after Mass.

You are welcome to watch the practice or come into the church at 8:00 PM. We will be finished or almost finished by then. If you are in the church, you can take your child to your car. **Please come to the pew to pick up your child.** If you would rather not stay for the practice, pick-up will be at the bell tower. Three cars at a time fit well under the carport, so please pull up to the first red cone. We will watch for you. I am sorry that I cannot promise an exact 8:00 ending; however, it should not be long after 8:00 for us to finish. Please make sure your child knows whether or not you will come to the pew to pick them up or to the bell tower. No child will leave alone by any other exit.

No child will be dismissed early, even though their particular part may be done. We have a couple of prelude songs to sing and a song to sing after Communion. These are songs sung by the children as a group. Everyone is needed.

If your Junior High or High School children have volunteered to be altar servers for this Mass, it would be helpful to us to have them also attend the practice.

If you have any questions, please call me. See you all on December 21 at 6:45 PM.

Yours in Christ,

Cheryl L. Freewalt
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