

Wednesday Notes



January 5, 2022

Dear OLM Community,

As many of you (hopefully!) know, one aspect of our school spiritual life is the Virtues in Practice program created by the Nashville Dominican Sisters. Each month, students study a new virtue and a new saint who exemplified that virtue. Our virtue for the month of January is gratitude. That may at the moment seem ironic. After all, we have witnessed this week the tragic loss of one of our young parishioners and alumni. By comparison, this makes the present struggles of the pandemic look quite small. Yet those struggles are still real as well, and they have a real impact on our students, our teachers, and our families.

Still, when I look at the big picture, I am filled with gratitude for what our community has been able to do and what we continue to do for the sake of our children.

I am grateful for teachers who brook no conversations about "sick-outs" and instead ask what they can do to help their students keep learning, even when it is inconvenient or in some cases even dangerous for them.

I am grateful for a school staff that is working almost literally around the clock to keep our school open for our students amid truly bizarre circumstances related to COVID-19 and at unbelievable personal sacrifice.

I am grateful for students who keep showing up, working hard, and looking out for each other, whether that is in the classroom or on Zoom.

And I am grateful for families who continue to find ways to make it work amid all the struggles that the last two years have presented.

We have been dealt a ridiculous hand to play right now. But play that hand we must. And I am grateful for every single person who keeps answering the call to do what needs to be done for our whole school community. Because a strong community builds strong children. And every single action that builds up our school builds up our children.

The adage goes:

Strong men make good times.

Good times make weak men.

Weak men make bad times.

Bad times make strong men.

May our times make strong young men and women, saints and scholars who build a world where mercy may flourish. And may we be grateful even for our sufferings, for that is where our sanctity is forged.

Community

This Friday's 9:00 am school Mass will be offered for the repose of the soul of Olivia Passaretti, OLM Class of 2019, who passed away tragically on New Year's Eve. All families and friends who wish to attend are welcome. We ask that any guests at this Mass sit in the side pews, as the center pews of the church will be reserved for students and teachers.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held for Olivia at Our Lady of Mercy Church this Saturday, January 8 at 10:00 am. We will have overflow seating available in the school gym. All who wish to attend are most welcome. We ask that all attendees wear masks, in accord with the wishes of Olivia's family.



Olivia Rose Passaretti

July 22, 2004 - January 01, 2022

East Greenwich, RI - Olivia Rose Passaretti, 17, died tragically on Saturday, January 1, 2022. Born in Providence, she was a beloved daughter of Janine A. (Muro) Passaretti-Molloy and the late Michael A. Passaretti.

Stepdaughter of Dennis Molloy. Cherished sister of Jacqueline and Victoria Passaretti. Granddaughter of Arleen (Proia) Notardonato, "Nana", Richard Notardonato, "Grampy Rick", and the late John A. Muro, "Papa". She was the niece and goddaughter of Erika Muro, and Steven Catanzaro. She was the niece of Stephen Passaretti and the cousin of Brooklynn and Brandon Catanzaro.

Olivia, "Liv" or "Livvy Rose" to her mother, was a junior at East Greenwich High School and a member of the Girls Softball Team. In the school parking lot, space No. 25, which she chose being her late father's birthdate, has quickly become a memorial to her.

She is being remembered as a kind and caring young woman, whose smile would always light up a room. Often described as an "old soul", anyone who knew her quickly came to understand how loving and wise Liv was, a wisdom that truly was beyond her age. Her energy for life was seen through the passion with which she lived each day. It became the source of her success as she worked tirelessly to earn a black belt in martial arts, and as she stepped onto a softball field.

Olivia's spiritual life was rooted in her growing up in the Our Lady of Mercy Parish and being an altar server during mass. She found joy in making others happy. She was very empathetic to others, and never missed an opportunity to say, "I love you!".

Olivia loved to spend time with family and close friends, and with her dog Sonny. She loved music and dance. She had amazing rhythm. She loved to make funny online videos and playing virtual reality games. She loved sports and following the Raiders football team and the Red Sox.

A mass of Christian burial will be celebrated at Our Lady of Mercy Church, 4th Avenue, East Greenwich, on Saturday, January 8 at 10 AM. Face masks are required. Calling hours have been respectfully omitted. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made payable to: East Greenwich School District, ATTN: Finance Department, 111 Peirce Street, East Greenwich, RI 02818. Please note on your check, "Passaretti Athletic Fund".

Condolences may also be offered to her family and remembrances of Olivia shared online at www.carpenterjenks.com.

Updates & Reminders

- **Thank you to all our families who have been keeping us informed about COVID testing plans, close contacts from outside of school, and every other permutation of COVID-related news! It makes all the difference in keeping our classrooms open and our students in the building!**
- Please bear in mind that this year we are only making remote learning available for those students who must isolate because of a positive COVID-19 test or who must quarantine because of a COVID-19 exposure.
- Please also allow two school days from the time that the school is initially notified of the need for remote learning until the time that students can begin Zooming into class. This permits our teachers the time they need to prepare materials for students and ensure they are delivering a high-quality educational experience to both students in the classroom and students at home.
- We have received many questions regarding the ever-changing CDC quarantine guidance, which had been updated over the Christmas break. In the email that we sent on Friday, December 31, we noted that Governor McKee had indicated that the quarantine guidelines for Rhode Island schools had not changed and must continue to be followed. The following letter was sent to Rhode Island public school leaders over the weekend leading up to school's re-opening, and it has since been made available to Catholic school leaders as well. As this is guidance developed by the Rhode Island Department of Health in conjunction with RIDE, we are bound to follow it:

Dear LEA Leaders,

As you know, earlier this week, our national public health experts issued updated guidance on isolation and quarantining. While we're working hard to incorporate that new guidance into our state-level guidelines for schools, we want to update you on our plans for Rhode Island's return to school on January 3rd, 2022.

Out of an abundance of caution and with the safety of our school communities in mind, Rhode Island will not be immediately adopting the new CDC guidance into our schools as we are expecting additional information from the federal government that could help shape final school policy changes. **When school reopens on Monday, we will follow the same guidance that we were following before the holiday break.**

In the meantime, recently released CDC guidance and potential policy changes are being fully reviewed for implementation. During the upcoming week, the State of Rhode Island will work alongside our local education leaders, labor representatives, and other stakeholders to update new K-12 guidance that will meet the needs of our schools and families and reflect the new CDC guidance, including shorter quarantine periods for asymptomatic close contacts and shorter isolation periods for individuals with confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Our goal is to avoid confusion while we ensure that any future protocols implemented in our schools maintain the health, safety, and smooth operations of our school communities in the weeks and months to come.

Schools remain one of the safest places for students and staff. Over the past two years, COVID-19 spread inside schools remains limited due to layered prevention strategies in a structured setting. From early September 2021, less than 10% of the Pre K-12 student and staff cases were reported as due only to an exposure inside schools. This measured approach will ensure that our schools continue to be safe from the spread of COVID-19.

We are deeply grateful to you and your colleagues for your hard work in keeping your school community safe.

In partnership,

RIDE Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
255 Westminster Street | Providence, RI 02903

As is our school's professional responsibility, we will continue to follow the quarantine guidance of the Rhode Island Department of Health. **Please defer to our school staff on these quarantine guidelines.** We take our responsibilities very seriously and are intimately familiar with RIDOH guidance as it relates to the school setting. *The following few weeks will almost certainly include more quarantining, and we all must be prepared for that reality.* If you would like to see that reality change, please reach out to the Department of Health or your

state representatives. **Our Lady of Mercy School does not have the authority to change quarantine guidance.**

- We also ask that each family send their child to school with two quality masks each day- one to begin the day and one to replace it if the need arises as the day goes on. We are using far more school-provided masks this year than last, and it is not a prudent use of our funds. Thank you very much for your cooperation in this matter.

The Week Ahead

Thursday, January 6 Student Council Meeting 2:30-3:15 pm

Thursday, January 6 "Beloved" Meeting 2:30-3:30 pm

Thursday, January 6 Band Practice (Drums, Guitar, & Piano) 2:30-3:15 pm

Thursday, January 6 Choir Practice 3:30-4:30 pm

Friday, January 7 First Friday Mass 9:00 am; *Formal Uniforms*

Friday, January 7 Band Practice (Brass & Woodwinds) 2:30-3:15 pm

Tuesday, January 11 School Mass 8:15 am

Wednesday, January 12 PTG Board Meeting 6:00 pm

Spiritual Life

Beloved

The next meeting of "Beloved," our middle school ministry for girls is tomorrow, January 6 from 2:30-3:30 pm in the school gym.



PTG News



Happy New Year! We hope you and your family had a wonderful holiday season and are ready to kick off a brighter and better new year!

[Click Here for PTG Newsletter](#)

2022-2023 Applications

PK-3 Interest

We are still reviewing the feasibility of a new PK-3 classroom at Our Lady of Mercy School for the 2022-2023 school year. **If you know of friends, neighbors, relatives, or others in the community who would be interested in enrolling in a PK-3 program, [please encourage them to complete an inquiry form on our school website](#). You can also help spread the word by sharing our [Facebook post](#) soliciting inquiries about the program.** As we develop a sense of the interest level in a new classroom, we will be able to take next steps to determine feasibility and make a firm decision about our ability offer a high-quality, joyful, and rigorous PK-3 program in the 2022-2023 school year.

COVID-19 Vaccination Information

We are sharing below information from both the Rhode Island Department of Health and the Rhode Island Department of Education regarding COVID-19 vaccination for children ages 5-11. We encourage all of our families to read this information carefully and to consult with your child's pediatrician in making an informed decision about vaccination for your child. If you would like your child to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, you may sign him or her up for any of the clinics listed here:

[Upcoming Vaccination Clinics for Children Ages 5 to 11](#)

If your child receives the COVID-19 vaccine, we do request that you provide a copy of the vaccination record to our health office once the vaccine series has been completed. This documentation is not a requirement, but it does allow us to have accurate health records for all of our students, and it assists in contact tracing should that become necessary.

As always, thank you for your support in helping all of our children as they strive to be saints and scholars.

[RIDOH & RIDE Letter to Families Regarding COVID-19 Vaccination for Children Ages 5-11](#)

Wednesday Envelope

Nothing This Week!

Upcoming Dates

Friday, January 7 First Friday Mass 9:00 am; Formal Uniforms

Tuesday, January 11 School Mass 8:15 am

Wednesday, January 12 PTG Board Meeting 6:00 pm

Monday, January 17 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: No School

Tuesday, January 18 School Mass 8:15 am

Friday, January 21 Eighth Grade Science Fair 3:00-5:00 pm

Tuesday, January 25 School Mass 8:15 am

Sunday, January 30 Open House 10:00 am-12:00 pm

January 30-February 5 Catholic Schools Week

Friday, February 4 First Friday Mass 9:00 am; Formal Uniforms

Our Lady of Mercy, Pray for Us!