

# THE PEACEMAKER... *PIECES*



*St. Thomas School community prepares children for life in a respectful and supportive environment by providing a dynamic education centered in Christ.*



## St. Thomas the Apostle Student Council



### Theme Day "Famous Positive Person"

*When: Tomorrow, Thursday, December 13<sup>th</sup>*

*Cost: \$1.00 to participate*

*What: Famous Positive Person Day*

*Dress as a person...past or present... you admire for high moral values, community service, charity work or lifetime achievements. Who is your favorite historical or biblical figure? Is there an entertainer or sports figure that has worked to improve life for someone else? Do you have a favorite Saint?*

*This is a new idea created, nominated and voted on by Student Council.*

*Non-uniform guidelines will be in effect for this day.*

## Our Students Professionally Recorded a New CD

Yes, it's true, they really did! Please accept their newly released CD (attached) as a gift from Saint Thomas students to you this Christmas!

As most of you know the theme of our school year is, "Alive in the Power of the Holy Spirit". One day this fall I was listening to the second graders singing this year's theme song, "Holy Spirit Come" during music class. I was so inspired that I asked Mrs. Proulx if it would be possible to do a professional recording with the entire school. She told me that she knew the people at RiverCity Studios in downtown Grand Rapids. I said it would be a great experience for the students to do a professional recording in a studio, so she told me she'd check into the cost and possibility. One thing led to another and our students (1-8) made their first professional recording on November 13. Unfortunately, the studio capacity was not large enough for the whole school recording so RiverCity did a remote recording on location here at St. Thomas. Our students were incredible in their preparations under Mrs. Proulx's direction. We had several contributing student artists on instruments and Amanda Vernon on the piano. Mrs. Skallos assisted with the technology aspects of projecting the words so that all students could follow along without papers, and Mrs. Barth designed the artwork that was stamped on the CD itself.

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## Pick Up & Drop Off Information

As everyone has witnessed, the drop off and pick up has become even slower with the onset of snow and ice. We have a potential plan to make both dropping off and picking up our kids safer and more efficient. As you noticed today, we are testing the possibility of two sites for drop off and pick up, one in the normal church parking lot locations and a new one coming from the Fulton Street driveway to the Church lot gate and back out around the Mercy Respite Center. In order to "test" our plan, approximately 15 families have been pre-identified to give the new second location a try. Please do not use the new route unless you were asked to help us during our TRIAL PERIOD! We still need your patience while we "test" our plan! With help from GRPD we are observing both traffic and "kid traffic" to assure everyone arrives and exits school in the safest environment possible! Please continue using the same route until further notice. If you have any concerns during this trial period, please feel free to contact me at 451-2878.

~ Mary Jo Jones

## ATTACHMENTS

- CD (Gift from St. Thomas students)
- Auction Ticket Order Form
- Auction Donor Form
- Catholic Business Directory Form

# The Golden Compass

Dear Parents,

On December 7<sup>th</sup> the movie version of *The Golden Compass* opened. This movie is based upon the first book in a series or trilogy of fantasy novels by Philip Pullman entitled, *His Dark Materials*. While I admittedly have not read the trilogy and am not prepared to discuss the apparent literary gifts of this author in the genre of fantasy stories, I would nonetheless like to offer a strong caution to parents of children to whom the books and movie are being marketed.

I have received calls, emails, letters, links, and articles addressing this series, its author, and the movie. As a series written for adolescents with a movie attractive to young children, I felt compelled to do a little research of my own for the purpose of helping parents and teachers in a proactive and thoughtful approach to this series and movie. After having read transcripts of interviews with Pullman, author profiles, scholarly essays, commentary from various points of view (Christian and Atheist), and visiting the movie's official website, I feel the best way to present this information is through the author's own words and quotes from the movie's website. Keep in mind that Pullman is a multiple award winning author of **children's** and **young adult (adolescent)** literature as you read his own words below.

From Philip Pullman – the extended e-mail interview with Christian film critic Peter Chattaway. Nov. 28, 2007:

*“The plainest and simplest description of the world, for me, and the truest, is that there is no God, but that human beings are capable of great goodness and great wickedness, and we don't need priests or Popes or imams or rabbis to tell us which is which.”*

*“I'm not deluded: Christians are. There is no God.”*

Among many other quotes and specific references from “The Golden Compass: Agenda Unmasked” by The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, [http://www.catholicleague.org/images/upload/image\\_200710053349.pdf](http://www.catholicleague.org/images/upload/image_200710053349.pdf):

*“The trouble is that all too often in human history, churches and priesthoods have set themselves up to rule people's lives in the name of some invisible god (and they're all invisible, because they don't exist)—and done terrible damage. In the name of their god, they have burned, hanged, tortured, maimed, robbed, violated, and enslaved millions of their fellow-creatures, and done so, with the happy conviction that they were doing the will of God, and they would go to Heaven for it.”*

In a letter to the British Humanist Association: *“I am happy to support you and argue for your aims, and pour ridicule on faith schools.”*

*“I am all for the death of God.”*

*“My books are about killing God.”*

*“We don't need lists of rights and wrongs, tables of do's and don'ts: we need books, time, and silence. ‘Thou shalt not’ is soon forgotten, but ‘Once upon a time’ lasts forever.”*

*“When you look at organized religion of whatever sort, you see tyranny and repression. It's almost a universal law.”*

Now contrast these statements of Philip Pullman with the mission statement of our own school library, **“Our Library is a dynamic learning environment for all that promotes the love of reading and where our relationship with Jesus and our Catholic faith are the lens through which we discover knowledge and understanding.”** Pullman believes by his own admission and throughout the course of the fantasy world he creates that this very lens of our Catholic faith, that we embrace, is a source of tyranny and repression.

I do not believe that our children or adolescents, during these precious and formative years, are ready to place proper perspective upon the deceptions that are so carefully and artistically delivered. For this reason, St. Thomas will maintain its right to offer more positive choices in our school library that will serve to affirm and strengthen the formation of our students' faith. I advise parents to exercise strong caution and thoughtfulness about allowing your children to just read these books or see the movie solely for entertainment purposes. On the other hand, parents should take advantage of opportunities like this series and movie to present to their older children, who are beginning to discern the difference between positive and negative media influence, the contradictions often portrayed through popular culture to what we believe as Christians and Catholics.

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The cost of the recording was \$75 an hour and it took us less than two hours. The production of 250 CD's at a \$1.85 a piece will be \$462.50, and the artwork set up fee was an additional \$25. The total cost of this project was less than \$650. This expense was not in the budget, but because it was such a great experience for the kids, I decided to use the funds that are often given to me at Christmas time with a note to use "as you see fit". I hope you enjoy your copy!

A BIG THANK YOU to all who contributed time, talent, or treasure to this exciting project!

## St. Thomas Christmas Vespers

Please mark your calendars for Wednesday, December 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m., and join students in grades 4-8 for our annual Christmas Vespers service. Singers, ringers, choral readers and recorder players will lead us in a series of readings and music celebrating the prophecies and fulfillment surrounding the birth of our Lord. Our parish Youth & Children's choirs will also participate. It's wonderful to enjoy the true meaning of Christmas. ~ Mrs. Kathy Proulx



## A Special Auction Thanks!

The auction committee would like to thank the Fifth Grade Moms for the Awesome Procurement party and Ladies Night Out. Though the weather wasn't the most cooperative, all who attended had a great time. We are blessed to have such supportive families! Thank you from the entire Auction Committee.

## Congratulations

CONGRATULATIONS to Mrs. Furtwangler and Mr. Baxter for receiving a grant for \$2,000.00 for Multimedia Collaboration to be used for purchasing projectors for their classrooms. The grant was given by the Grand Rapids Community Foundation, Michigan's oldest community foundation, which was founded in 1922. It continues to fund, initiate, and lead programs that benefit the greater Grand Rapids community in the arts, education, the environment, health, human services, and community development.

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From the official movie website: <http://www.goldencompassmovie.com/daemons.html>:

Children are encouraged to use this site to meet their own Daemon (pronounced demon) in these words:

*"In our world it is possible that people have daemons as well, only they are invisible. If you would like to learn more about your daemon, and create your own daemon avatar to take out into the world with you select 'Meet your Daemon'."*

At this point I would like to close with the reflections of Father Jim after discussing this trilogy and movie at last week's parish staff meeting. I hope you will find his thoughts as helpful as I did in placing all of this into context:

"The recent random killing of nine people in a shopping mall in Omaha, Nebraska by nineteen year-old Robert Hawkins, affords us the sad opportunity to see the implications of the message Philip Pullman wants to spread in his books.

If Robert Hawkins, and children like him, take Pullman's counsel to heart and befriended their personal demon; IF their personal demon is Anger, and Anger is invited to become their personal counselor and guide in life; IF they take Pullman's counsel further and "kill God" with His restrictive commandment: "Thou shalt not kill;" Will we not shortly face the horror of more random killings in malls and schools? If the child's demon is "Avarice" (Greed) can we not expect more Enron?

It is the blessing of freedom of speech that Philip Pullman can write trilogies like His Dark Materials and can freely express his intent in writing them. It helps us clearly recognize the evil counsel in them and the horrors into which it will further lead us. The darkness in the human heart is real. Our personal demons are not "nice." They breathe violence into the world. God speaks to us candidly of the darkness in our hearts, names the demons that seek to become our counselors, and teaches us to confine these demons in strong boundaries. In the meantime, God weeps over those slain by the hand of the demon's counsel and grieves with those who suffer their loss. Blessed be God, that in Pullman's candid admission and in the trilogy of books he has written, evil can be so clearly seen for what it is and what it would lead to."

Peace in Christ,  
David A. Faber

*An awareness of Mary's presence can be a great help toward making the school into a "home." Mary, Mother and Teacher of the Church, accompanied her Son as he grew in wisdom and grace; from the earliest days, she has accompanied the Church in its mission of salvation.*

THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSION OF EDUCATION IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL  
1988 - Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education



# HORNET NEWS



## Attention All Concession Stand Volunteers:

As many of you are aware, the St. Thomas gymnasium concession stand was beautifully remodeled this past summer. To ensure proper procedures were followed, the Kent County Health Department was notified. For the health and safety of both volunteers and concession patrons, and in accordance with the Health Department’s food handling regulations, new guidelines have been established. Please read the following rules and guidelines, and put them into practice when you work your scheduled shift!

- All volunteers must wear a hat or hairnet when in the concession stand.
- All volunteers must wear gloves when handling food products.
- All volunteers must wash their hands regularly, especially after handling money.
- If you are sick or have flu-like symptoms, please find a sub to take your place.
- There must be at least one responsible person over the age of eighteen in charge of the concession stand.
- Young children will not be allowed to handle food or money.
- No more than four persons are allowed in concession stand at one time.
- Please arrive a few minutes before your scheduled time and read the operating procedures posted on the corkboard in the concession stand.
- Please clean the concession stand after your shift.

The St. Thomas Boosters have provided hats for you to wear during your scheduled time slot. Please be sure to return the hats when you have finished your shift. If you prefer to wear your own hat from home, be sure that it is clean and free of rude or vulgar motifs. With both the girls and boys basketball teams playing at the same time this year, there may be scheduling conflicts that arise. I will do my best to ensure that your family is not scheduled during your own child’s game, but if the situation arises please try to find a sub to take your place. Once again, in keeping with the new policy of mandatory volunteers, if you are unable to work your scheduled time slot you must find a substitute. If no one shows up for your allotted time you will be charged a \$25.00 no-show fee. If you have any questions regarding this memo please feel free to contact me at any time. GO HORNETS!

Helen Vrugink (459-6910)  
Concession Stand Coordinator

## Concession Worker Schedule



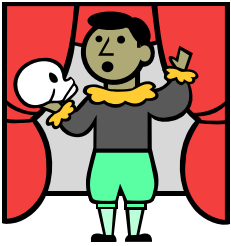
Saturday	12/15/07	8:15	Start-up	Blanco	957-5836
Saturday	12/15/07	9:00	6 <sup>th</sup> Girls Basketball	DenBraber	233-0703
Saturday	12/15/07	10:10	7 <sup>th</sup> Girls Basketball	LaVoie	954-0969
Saturday	12/15/07	11:20	7 <sup>th</sup> Boys Basketball	Mangan	456-0486
Saturday	12/15/07	12:30	7 <sup>th</sup> Boys Basketball	Fiorenzo	530-0949



## 8TH Grade Boys' Basketball Change

Boy’s 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Basketball  
Game: Sunday, December 16  
Opponent: Corpus Christi  
Location: Corpus Christi  
Time: 1:00 p.m.





## Variety Show is Coming!

The St. Thomas Variety Show is scheduled for Friday, January 25, 2008. While you are enjoying Christmas break, please consider a talent to

share on that day. More information will be sent home following vacation. If you have questions, please call Mike Trenshaw at 455-0540.

## Catholic Central/West Catholic High School Placement Test

High school placement tests for Catholic Central and West Catholic high schools will be given on January 12, 2008 from 8:30 am – noon at West Catholic and on January 26, 2008 from 8:30 am – noon at Catholic Central. For more information regarding these tests, please contact either Catholic Central (ph# 233-5801) or West Catholic (ph# 233-5900).

## Catholic Central Information Night

On January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008 Catholic Central High School will be holding an Information Night at 7:00 pm in the cafeteria. Students interested in attending Catholic Central are encouraged to attend. For more information, please call Catholic Central at 233-5801.

## Vocations Week Reminder

Vocations Week begins January 7, 2008 and Catholic Schools Week begins January 28, 2008. Please stay tuned for further information.



## Educational Outfitters BIG December Sale

12% Off Storewide  
40% Off selected Clearance items

Hours: M, W, F: 10:00-5:00;  
T, Th: 10:00-6:00; Sat: 10:00-3:00



## PUBLISHING CENTER

We are planning to start the publishing center this month. However, we need volunteers to make it happen. If you are willing to help out by typing at home, please contact Carla Klimp Van Dokkumburg at 451-3221 or [carlajim@sbcglobal.net](mailto:carlajim@sbcglobal.net). Thanks.



## Cookie Dough and Sub Pick-Up Reminder

This is a reminder that the Cookie Dough and Subs will be delivered this Friday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. Please make arrangements to pick your son or daughter up if they have a large load. Orders placed by families at conferences will be filled and delivered to the oldest student in the family. Thanks again for your support of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class.

## Next Spiritual Adoption Meeting

Junior High Students who have chosen to spiritually adopt an unborn baby in danger of abortion. The next meeting of reflection and prayer is Monday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 11:50, in the Lower Level. Bring your bottles with the Prayer card, and any change collected will be donated to St. Mary's Crisis Pregnancy Center.



## BLESS THE BABY JESUS

**K4J** invites all families to join us for the Blessing of Baby Jesus, Thursday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 4:15pm at St. Thomas Church.

Please bring your family's nativity scene figure of the Christ Child to receive a special blessing. Please help your child bring a small gift for a needy child such as hats, mittens, scarves or socks.



Take time out of this busy holiday season to share in this special event.

## Cookie Tray Volunteers!

Cookie trays for teachers and staff will be assembled on Wednesday, Dec. 19<sup>th</sup>. Those volunteers who signed up to make cookies or sweet treats will be getting reminder calls. If you would like to bake or bring in something, but did not sign up to do so, please call Jennifer Dalrymple at 447-9276 to volunteer or with any questions. Thank you for your help!



# ALIVE IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



**PICTURES NOT SHOWN FOR INTERNET SAFETY PURPOSES**

**BACK ROW:** Scarlett Wardrop, Brooke Nicholson, Kyle Nicholson, Jacob Baxter

**MIDDLE ROW:** Charlie Jordan, Addison LaVoie, Ana Corcoran, Mary Claire Coil

**FRONT ROW:** Isabella Gumbko, Anna Simonait, Carolyn Lignell, Lizzy Murphy

**BACK TO FRONT:** Jack Heffron, Luke Ens, Dane Wardrop, Brendan Salacina, Seth Alfaro, Jaylind Taylor-Cline, Connor Knapp, Megan Race, John Woodruff, Maddie Jaracz, Kathleen O'Neil, Emily Wheeler, Rebecca Faber, Noah Bosse, Maya Zimelis, Aden Shiel, Adam Kuzee, Matthew Schueler

**PICTURES NOT SHOWN FOR INTERNET SAFETY PURPOSES**

**BACK ROW:** Nick Vrugink, Maddy Zimelis, Abby Den Braber, Ashley McIlroy

**MIDDLE ROW:** Emma Heffron, Tim Wheeler,

**FRONT ROW:** Isabella Gumbko, Colin Tomac

**BACK ROW:** Maggie Kane, Jacob Jaracz, Dylan Sykes, Thomas France

**FRONT ROW:** Cory Skinner, Danny Mikolay, Kathleen Woodruff, Jacob Vrugink



## **Auction Action News**

Auction preparations are underway and the elves are busy working their magic. We have received lots of calls and emails on how one may help with auction. We decided to share these wonderful questions with all of you.

### **WHY DO WE DO AUCTION?**

Our auction provides ALL the funds for the entire Home and School Budget. Instead of having lots of little fundraisers like wrapping paper, candies, magazine subscriptions, etc., we pool all our efforts into one magical evening called *The St. Thomas Auction*.

### **WHAT EXACTLY IS THE AUCTION?**

The actual auction is made up of three main events. The Silent Auction allows you to bid silently with a pre-assigned number. The Live Auction, held with a live auctioneer, has items that are often the “hot items” or the “big ticket” items. Many of these include dinners that can be bid on by groups of people. Throughout the evening we also have 5-7 special raffles with prizes ranging from cash to jewelry to a \$2,000 gift certificate to Decker and Sons.

### **DO YOU SOCIALIZE AS WELL?**

Absolutely, this year we will have a bevy of food stations to please every guest’s palette as well as an open bar with beer, wine and soda.

### **WHAT IS THE TICKET COST?**

The ticket price this year is \$35.00 per person. Our move to Noto’s has higher costs but through the generous donations of several parish families, we do not have to raise the prices this year. This is a great price for a wonderful evening of dining, socializing AND donating money to our wonderful school and parish.

### **HOW DO I GET TICKETS?**

You may purchase tickets after all masses on January 5/6 in the lower level of the church. You may buy individual tickets or buy a table for 10 (ten). In addition, we will be selling raffle tickets, table sponsorships for special guests and Noto Bucks that weekend. Noto Bucks are coupons for “buy one get one free” dinners at Noto’s. They sell for \$20.00 for \$200.00 worth of coupons. These “bucks” will also help to offset our costs for food and drink without raising our ticket prices this year.

### **CAN I BRING MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS?**

The more the merrier! Buy a table and make it a night to remember with your family and friends. (Adults only, please).

### **WHERE DO YOU GET THE ITEMS TO SELL AT AUCTION?**

Awesome question....from YOU. We hope that every family will prayerfully consider donating at least one item, service, or experience to the auction. We have a list of ideas and a donor form attached to this *Pieces*. Be creative and don’t feel shy about asking other families for ideas.

### **CAN I GIVE YOU CASH?**

Oh yes, cash works great and helps the auction committee purchase the “big” ticket items for our raffles as well as fill in any “holes” in donations.

### **HOW CAN I VOLUNTEER TO HELP MAKE BASKETS OR HELP AT THE AUCTION?**

Lisa Wolf, our VIP Coordinator, will be coordinating volunteers for the Auction. Look for information from Lisa to be published in the January 9<sup>th</sup> *Pieces* or give her a call. We so appreciate any help you can lend to the committee.

### **DO YOU KNOW OF ANY BABYSITTERS?**

Kay Trenshaw will be working with the 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls to coordinate babysitting for service hours. If you need a babysitter or have a daughter who CAN babysit, please give Kay a call.

### **CAN I ADVERTISE MY BUSINESS IN THE AUCTION BOOK?**

Yes, we will be selling advertisements in the booklet again this year. For \$500.00 your company can place a full page color ad in our auction booklet. Call Kelly Olive if you are interested in this great opportunity.

### **HOW CAN I HELP RIGHT NOW?**

Think of a donation, buy things at the Christmas sales, buy an auction ticket and pray, pray, pray! Thank you again for your support and prayers.

**Your Excited Auction Committee**