

St. Francis of Assisi ~ Faith Formation
1031 Chenango Street
Binghamton, NY 13901
607-722-4177

August 12, 2019

Dear Parents or Guardians,

Summer always ends too soon! And this was a great summer. Let me start by saying thank you for all you do for your children and the children of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, and ask you to please take a couple minutes to **thoroughly read this letter** and fill out the enclosed registration form regarding our Faith Formation Program. **This is my permanent record for the year and it is very important that the form is filled out.** There is only one form per family. Register **only** the children who will be participating in the Faith Formation Program, oldest to youngest. **Do not** register students who will be Confirmed on October 6, 2019. The fee is \$35/child or \$70/ family. Please return the fee and registration form by September 8th. You can drop it in the collection basket or mail it to Maria Kirk, at the above address. Faith Formation is never contingent on your ability to pay, if you cannot pay please register your children anyway.

Faith Formation for students in **grades K– 9 will begin, Sunday, September 15th at 9:30 AM in the Church.** Like before we will begin each week with Opening Prayer and classes will be dismissed to their rooms from the church. Faith Formation begins in the church at 9:30 AM, any Faith Formation Masses will be held at 11 AM. Thank you for attending our special Masses and weekly Prayer Services and continuing to take an active role in your children's faith development. We will have some kind of hand-on event for different grade levels during the year. I will give you at least 2 weeks notice if they involve a change in the time for faith formation. Hopefully, we will re-start Children's liturgy of the Word soon, if you would like to help out please let me know.

As you know Chenango Valley is using our building this year, it requires patience and understanding on everyone's part. Please remind your children that the items in each classroom are not ours, and to respect the property of others. Please do not bring in any snacks. I have assured the CV administration that any snacks or food that enters the building will be supplied only by me and that I will follow their explicit instructions regarding food allergies. We want our building to be safe for their students, and our own.

Our First Sacraments Program (Reconciliation and Eucharist) requires parents to attend two information meetings, and participate in two "coaching" classes with their children. These classes, one for each sacrament, will help you be more comfortable in forming your child's faith. In addition you are asked to attend at least one evening of our parish mission to enrich your own faith life. You are strongly encouraged to take part in the Lenten Series "Living the Eucharist" in some way as well. There will be two liturgies in which the children will participate, as well as the celebration of First Reconciliation, November 23rd, the mini-retreat on March 7th, a Sharing Meal on March 29th, and of course First Eucharist May 3, 2020. I will have the first parent meeting **October 20th in the parish hall** during the Faith Formation hour to review the process for the sacrament of reconciliation. Weekly attendance at Mass is required.

All students in 10th grade or older who have not been confirmed should be enrolled in **direct** preparation classes. In order to **begin** direct preparation for Confirmation, candidates must have had regular attendance in prior Faith Formation classes or been enrolled in parochial school. Other signs of readiness include a personal faith consciousness, an appreciation of Sacred Scripture, a communal faith life as demonstrated by participation in weekly Mass, a sense of service, and a sense of Christian identity. Weekly attendance at Mass here at St. Francis is expected. **There will be an orientation meeting regarding the Sacramental process for Parents and Candidates, Tuesday, October 15th at 7:00 PM in the Parish Hall. All candidates and a parent must**

attend this meeting. Candidates and Parents are also required to attend at least one session of the Parish Mission September 29-October 3. Students will begin classes on November 3rd, participate in the Rite of Acceptance December 8th and celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation in the fall of 2020.

Our LEAP Event will be held in March, during the regular Faith Formation time frame. The LEAP event is part of our Faith Formation Program and is not optional. It is designed to be family time that provides a different kind of catechetical experience for you and your children.

Our Parish Mission with Fr. Francis Pompeii will begin September 30, through October 2. He is a Franciscan Priest from Holy Name Province and lives in Syracuse, NY. A native of Oswego, Fr Pompeii has spent years working with the poor and has done extensive retreat work with both adults and teens. He has led many successful missions in our diocese. His message to our parish and its effects on your faith formation, will enrich your spiritual life. It is required that parents with children preparing for First Reconciliation and First Communion attend at least one session. Parents and Confirmation 2020 Candidates need to attend one session as well. Continuing to expand our own faith development is what keeps our faith alive and vibrant.

As you know attendance at Faith Formation is not optional. Please call the Faith Formation Office (607-722-4177) to explain his/her absence. Unexplained absences can affect your child's readiness for Sacraments, ***especially*** Confirmation. And I gently remind you that nothing in Faith Formation classes makes any sense without an understanding, appreciation and participation in weekly Mass. Mass, in our Catholic faith, is not optional. If you are a member of another parish, but have your children attend Faith Formation classes here, please be aware that **each year your pastor** needs to write a letter to Fr. Tim giving his authorization for your children to be catechized here. This is a diocesan policy. If you are members here I encourage you to attend weekly Mass at St. Francis' especially if your child is preparing for a sacrament. If you are not a member of any parish, but have your children catechized here, please come into my office and take a moment to fill out the registration form to join St. Francis' parish, and make attendance at Mass a priority in your family.

The United States Council of Catholic Bishops requires that all dioceses train and screen any adult that works or volunteers in any church facility. Our diocese provides Safe Environment training for all employees and volunteers. The diocese is also required by the USCCB to provide training for all children in child sexual abuse and awareness. The diocese is using a program called "Circles of Care" to provide this training. Please go online to www.syrдио.org to peruse this program. You can also view it in my office. It is really extraordinary and very well done. This training will be on November 3rd for grades K-9 during class time, Confirmation Candidates will receive the training during the January retreat. I will hand out additional information regarding this training in October. Feel free to stop in the office to look at the materials at any time.

Please join Faith Formation on Remind. Remind is a quick way to send you updates, especially in the case of a severe weather closing. You can have reminders sent to your phone or email or both and it's completely private!! A separate group will be created for First Eucharist and Confirmation families later. If you registered last year, you are in the group, if you're unsure just re-register.

If you have any questions, please call Maria Kirk at 607-222-1477. I am always open for any comments or feedback you may have regarding Faith Formation. **The registrations forms should be returned with your registration fee by September 8th.** You can return them by mail or drop them in the collection basket, to my attention. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Maria Kirk, Director of Faith Formation

Fr. Tim Taugher, Pastor