

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

August 2022

Dear Parents or Guardians,

Let me start by saying thank you for all you do for your children, for making their faith formation a priority in your busy lives. Please take a couple minutes to thoroughly read this letter, we are making changes and updates will be determined by our new location for Faith Formation. Our Masses are celebrated Saturday at 4 PM, and Sunday at 10:30 AM. Faith Formation will be held 9–10:15 AM so that you can attend 10:30 Mass as a family. All Faith Formation Masses will be held at the 10:30 Mass. Faith Formation will begin September 25th with a family event at 9 AM in the newly renovated parish hall. This opening event is for all Faith Formation Families, and will be followed by Mass. I am planning 2 or 3 additional family events this year as well. They will be held seasonally. The family sessions will be especially important as they will help foster a sense of a domestic church for you. The opening event will be based on family activities focusing on the season of Creation. Attending Mass, will always be part of the family events. As I've said many times nothing makes sense to our children without an understanding liturgy, I strongly encourage you to recommit to attending weekly Mass. Regular sessions of Faith Formation for Grades K-9 will begin on Sunday, October 16th at 9 AM, in the parish hall for Grades K-6, and in Rooms 103 and 104 in the school for Grades 7-8-9. **The only entrance/exit for Faith Formation will be through the church.** Older grades with FF in the school are asked to exit via the church. Classes will meet face-to-face. Wearing masks is at your discretion, and parents are asked to keep your children home, if you think they are sick.

There are some diocesan and PCA events available for high school students. At Our Lady of Good Counsel, on September 25th there will be a Worship and Praise event with Chris Padgett and Jeremy Bobak. The event will also include Eucharistic Adoration & Reconciliation starting at 6:00 PM. In addition we are also hosting a high school event on Racism required for our students in Grade 9 and Confirmation. This event co-sponsored by the parishes in our PCA will be held Sunday October 23rd, 5-7 PM. It will replace FF for grade 9 on October 23 and is an extra class required for Confirmation Candidates.

I am very excited to tell you of our Fall Mission with Rita Ferrone. She will be here the weekend of October 22-23 to begin the mission with her reflection at our weekend liturgies. She will present her mission focusing on Eucharistic Revival, Monday and Tuesday evenings 7-9 PM. Parents with children preparing for First Sacraments are asked to attend one session. Parents and Confirmation Candidates are also asked to attend one session. Under extremely special circumstances, parents can choose a remote option for faith Formation and Sacramental Preparation (First Sacraments or Confirmation). Families who choose this option will be **need to discuss the options and the requirements** with me before the start of Faith Formation.

Please 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, as it is the only way I have updated contact information.** There is only one form per family. Register the children who will be participating in the Faith Formation Program, oldest to youngest. Do not register students who will be Confirmed on October 2, 2022. The fee is \$35/child or \$70/family. Please return the fee and registration form by October 2nd. You can drop it in the collection box or mail it to Maria Kirk, at the above address, you can also bring it with you on September 25th. Faith Formation is never contingent on your ability to pay, if you cannot pay, please register your children anyway.

First Sacraments (Reconciliation/Eucharist) will meet as usual, as I am expecting 12 children. Our First Sacraments Program 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. There are two liturgies in which the children participate, as well as the celebration of First Reconciliation, the mini-retreat in February, a Sharing Meal in March, and of course First Eucharist in May 2023. I will have the first parent meeting **October 23rd 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. Confirmation will meet as usual, once a month (November thru April) 9AM - 1 PM. **There will be an orientation meeting regarding the Sacramental process for Parents and Candidates, Tuesday, October 11th at 7:00 PM in the Parish Hall. All candidates and a parent must attend this meeting. At this session students will be planning their year long service project under our Creation Care umbrella, so come with thoughts and ideas.** Confirmation classes will begin on November 6th, the Rite of Acceptance will be on December 4th. More details will be mailed in September, but save the October 11th date.

If you are a member of another parish, but your children attend Faith Formation classes here, please have **your pastor** 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 take a moment to fill out a registration form, available from me or in the church, at 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 currently using a program called "Circles of Care" to provide this training. Please go online to www.syrdio.org to peruse this program. You can also view it in my office. It is really very well done. This training will be on November 20th during class time. I will hand out additional information regarding this training in early November. Feel free to stop in the office to look at the materials at any time.

Our Family Events are scheduled to co-ordinate with a seasonal event, and will take place in the parish hall during the regular Faith Formation time frame. The Family Events are part of our Faith Formation Program and are not optional. They are designed to be family faith time that provides a different kind of catechetical experience for you and your children.

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. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Maria Kirk, Director of Faith Formation

Fr. Tim Taugher, Pastor