

FAITH FORMATION NEWS CONCERNING THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-2021

Trying to determine what is the best way forward for our children and adults for this next year of Religious Education has been exceedingly difficult. The pandemic has changed our way of thinking about work, school, and our lives. At the parish and diocesan level, it has been no different. Every parish must do what is best for them locally while following diocesan guidelines about masks and social distancing. What makes it even harder for us at St Raphael is the number of students in our programs. We have over 1500 students in PRE. Our first priority is to keep them safe during this pandemic. If we want them to succeed in school, then we have to help these schools stay open by cutting down on the time we bring them together on a weekly basis. Here is how PRE (Catechism Classes) and RCIA will take place at St Raphael.

PRE/SACRAMENTAL PREP YEAR 1 AND 2/SPECIAL SACRAMENTS YEARS 1 AND 2

- All parents are encouraged to register their students for classes between now and November 15th. Please call the PRE office and they will explain over the phone what will be happening to your child in particular and set up an appointment for you to meet face to face.
- All classes will begin in January 2021 and run through May 2021.
- SACRAMENT YEAR 2 Students (First Communion and Confirmation): will meet weekly in class beginning in January. To accommodate smaller class sizes, additional hours and days will be added. They will receive their sacraments during the Easter Season 2021.
- SACRAMENT YEAR 1 Students (First Communion and Confirmation): will not meet in person but will be given material to start in January to be completed by May 2021.
- REGULAR PRE-CLASSES (NON-SACRAMENTAL YEARS): will not meet in person but will be given material to start in January to be completed by May 2021.

RCIA/RICA

There will be no in class sessions this year. Each candidate or Catechumen will be given material/schedule to study on their own and will be assigned a mentor to meet with monthly via phone, facetime or zoom to review lessons and questions that arise. The expectation is they will start in September with their lessons and those qualifying to enter into the church will do so on Saturday, April 3, 2021.

FIRST COMMUNION/CONFIRMATIONS

Those Catholics needing to complete the Sacraments of Initiation will follow the guidelines for those wishing to enter into the Church under RCIA above.

THIS YEAR'S SACRAMENTAL CELEBRATIONS

- Our office will call all parents of those students who were in First Communion, Confirmation and Special Sacrament that did not receive the sacraments last Easter. They will be celebrated in September, October, and November. **If you do not have a date for your child, call the office for more information.**
- RCIA candidates and Catechumens will enter into the church at a special Mass on Saturday, September 12th at 6:00PM.

My prayer is that by the of end of next fiscal year, next June 30th, Covid-19 will be contained and perhaps there will be a vaccine. In the meantime, Faith Formation will look different here at St Raphael. We are open to other ways for your student to learn such as the many great programs online, but with over 1500 students, the above guidelines are designed to accommodate the many. If you have any questions, please contact Darla Lucas or Monica Lopez, our directors of Faith Formation.

God bless all of us in these difficult days.

Father John