



ST. MARGARET, QUEEN OF SCOTLAND

ST. THOMAS CHAPEL • SPRINGFIELD

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19 July 2020

The Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dearest Parishioners of St. Margaret:

Catechesis, or the process of education for the faith, is of extreme importance in the life of the Church. It makes an individual's faith become alive, conscious, and active through the light of instruction. Throughout its rich history, the Church has constantly emphasized that parents are the primary educators of their children in the faith, and as the heart of catechesis, the family has a unique privilege of transmitting the Gospel by rooting it in the context of profound human values. This is articulated in the Church's legal Code as it states *"Parents have a most serious obligation and enjoy the right to educate their children; Christian parents are especially to care for the Christian education of their children according to the teaching handed on by the Church"* (Canon 226).

It is the Church's responsibility, however, not only to *support* parents as they pass on the faith to their children but to *assist* them as well, and this is done in a variety of ways and places. Most education takes place outside of the classroom where children see and experience the faith in action. Liturgy in the parish community is where the proclamation of the Gospel begins and where we are invited to conversion to follow Christ. In turn, the way in which the community responds to the Gospel in worship, education and service will impact all of its members.

Still, the Church exercises her role of vigilance in matters of faith. Religious education forms, informs, and transforms. The parish must take care to ensure that catechesis is carried out with attention, and it is the duty of pastors *"to take special care for the Catholic education of children and young adults"* (Canon 528). Because **the pastor is responsible for the religious education of his parishioners**, it is imperative that he structure an adequate program that both meets the needs of the people while remaining vigilant in the Church's mission to preach the Good News throughout the world.

2020 has brought a variety of challenges to our world and our Church due to the impacts of COVID-19. At this time, **St. Margaret is planning to host its Parish School of Religion program in-person as we have done traditionally.** Declarations from the Governor and directives from our Bishop, though, may force us to modify how we offer religious education this year. **Should we move toward a virtual model of catechesis, this will be communicated by my staff to all parents with children enrolled in our programs.** 2020, though, is still an exciting year for us since we will implement our newly developed in-house program! I will discuss more about this at our initial parent meeting at the beginning of the semester.

Contact me should you have any further questions or concerns!

Yours in the Good Shepherd,

Rev. Jamin Scott David, JCL
Pastor

THE 2020/2021 ST. MARGARET PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION (PSR) PROGRAM

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

A variety of challenges have been brought to our parish and world due to the impacts of COVID-19. At this time, St. Margaret is planning to host its PSR program in-person as has been done traditionally. Declarations from the Governor and directives from the Bishop of Baton Rouge may force the modification of these plans as time progresses. Should we move toward a virtual model of catechesis, this will be communicated by the Parish Staff to all parents with children enrolled in St. Margaret's programs.



In terms of in-person PSR, all individuals who enter the Hall of Saints will be required to wear masks to protect others from viral spread. Social distancing between students and teachers and students and other students will be strictly observed. All individuals entering the Hall of Saints or Parish Hall will be asked to do a small screen-in procedure including receiving a temperature check and using hand sanitizer. Anyone who has been exposed to COVID-19, who has experienced symptoms of the virus, or who feels ill should not participate. Anyone with a temperature of 100.4 or higher will be denied entry.

LITURGICAL PARTICIPATION

The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason, the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, which include Sundays and Holy Days. This obligation extends to all the baptized faithful unless impeded by some grave reason or unless dispensed on singular occasions by one's pastor. Currently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Bishop Duca has issued a dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass. St. Margaret is complying with all directives from the State of Louisiana and the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Catholics, if comfortable and healthy, are invited and encouraged to participate weekly in Mass since as "first teachers" of their children, parents should be attending Sunday Mass within the context of their faith community; children should also be attending Mass at the same interval.

The Parish School of Religion Program functions only in tandem with the Sunday liturgy; without it, such catechetical instruction is fruitless since the program merely serves to explain the faith that is proclaimed in the liturgy and lived in the world. **All children along with their parents are required to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation throughout the calendar year.**

TIMES & DATES OF CLASSES

To greater emphasize the link between the liturgy and religious instruction, PSR classes will be held at St. Margaret in the Hall of Saints for grades Kindergarten (K) through six (6) from **11:15AM until 12:30PM on Sundays**. This provides families both the opportunity to attend Mass together and subsequently engage in holistic catechesis afterward.

PSR classes will be held in the Hall of Saints for grades seven (7) through eleven (11) from **6:45PM until 8:00PM on Sundays**. This too provides families the opportunity to attend Mass together and to take advantage of other programs for adult catechesis offered at the parish.

As class time is valuable, children should be at the Hall of Saints on time and prepared for class.

CATECHETICAL MATERIALS

Catechetical manuals and textbooks are important and helpful tools in the process of catechizing children. There is probably no single series best for every parish. Programs should be sequenced to present the essential truths of

the faith in an understandable manner that corresponds to the stage of the student's development. The process in lesson planning should reflect good and various methodologies.

With the evolution of our new in-house program, there are no texts that will be used by students. Prayer exercises and activities will be utilized. In terms of the catechetical lesson, it is the goal of St. Margaret to have these lessons videoed and available for viewing by parents and even parishioners.

CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT

The structure of the Parish School of Religion Program is linear – each year's instruction builds upon the previous year. To receive the sacraments, students are required to attend every year of religious education beginning in kindergarten and ending in eleventh grade. Students who do not attend every year of instruction will be required to participate in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) or the Rite of Christian Initiation of Children (RCIC) to receive Confirmation or Eucharist respectively based upon their age and their understanding of the precepts of the faith. Students transferring from other Parish Schools of Religion will be required to show proof of their previous level of instruction before integration in the St. Margaret PSR Program.

REGISTRATION

All students currently enrolled in the Parish School of Religion Program will be required to register for the 2020-2021 school year before **10 August 2020**. No late registration will be permitted. This facilitates facile planning for the Religious Education Staff and prevents the parish from uselessly wasting resources by purchasing unneeded supplies. Only new parishioners will be allowed to register their children for the Parish School of Religion Program after this date. **Registration fees are \$30 per child and \$15 for each additional child in a given family.**

Only territorial or registered parishioners are allowed to register their children in the PSR program. Parishioners of neighboring parishes can register *only* with the written consent of their pastor.

ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL RETREAT

Retreats are a common component of many spiritual traditions. They provide structure to answer the inner calling to step away from the ordinary and routine in order to be redirected and grounded in what God desires. All students in grades nine (9) through eleven (11) are required to participate in the annual retreat provided by St. Margaret on her campus by the NET Ministries National Evangelization Team on **Saturday, 06 February 2020 from 9:00AM until after the conclusion of the 4:00PM Mass at St. Margaret.**

FAMILY FORMATION – EDUCATING THE FIRST TEACHERS

Being a parent in a Christian context in today's modern world can be a daunting task. Some parents are unaware of their duties as teachers and models of faith within their homes; other parents believe their role in their children's faith formation is to assure they receive the sacraments of initiation while placing the onus of doctrinal catechesis on the Church and its clergy. Yet, no one can replace the influence and example of a parent on the spiritual life of their child!

To assist and equip parents in their responsibility as "first teachers," **Family Formation Sessions** for parents will be scheduled at the same time as the Parish School of Religion (PSR) at least once per month. It is St. Margaret's goal to bolster this program into a weekly model. For parents with children in grades Kindergarten through six (6), these sessions will be held in the St. Margaret Room of the Hall of Saints (or Parish Hall) from **11:30AM until 12:30PM** and will be facilitated by the Pastor or his delegate. For parents with children in grades seven (7) through eleven (11), these sessions will couple with the adult formation *Theology in a Bottle* sessions which are also scheduled monthly from **6:45 until 8:00PM** and facilitated by outside professionals of theology. **At least one parent per student is required to attend each session every month**, though it is preferable that both parents attend these sessions. Should a parent(s) have children enrolled in both morning and evening PSR sessions, or should a parent have a scheduling conflict due to work or other obligations, those parent(s) can choose which monthly session to

attend, either the morning Family Formation Sessions or the evening *Theology in a Bottle* sessions; at least one session must be attended monthly for a total of eight sessions in the academic year. Attendance at as many sessions as offered is surely preferable.

Such engagement and the witness of parents learning alongside their children coupled with their intentional decision to bring the whole family to Mass weekly and on Holy Days of Obligation communicates to young people that life is more than work or sports (as important as are these activities!) Rather, it communicates the message that we are worth more than we do and shows this not just by words but also by family action!

RECONCILIATION SESSIONS

To emphasize the importance of regular use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, each PSR class will be scheduled twice annually as a class or group of classes to attend Reconciliation in St. Margaret Church with the Pastor. Parents of PSR students are also invited to participate in these sessions especially as a witness to the importance of its routine use. Dates will be chosen by the Pastor in collaboration with the Coordinator of Youth Formation and communicated with all parents in a timely fashion.

ATTENDANCE

Once registered, students are expected to attend all classes, and parents will be notified of repeated absences and/or tardiness. Excessive absences will result in a lack of completion of the grade in question. **No more than four absences per year** will be accepted. If a student is absent from class, that student is to present a signed note from their parent detailing the reason for their absence from class. **It is the responsibility of the parent or student to contact the catechist for missed assignments due to absence.**

CODE OF CONDUCT

Students should enter the Hall of Saints in a quiet and orderly manner observing any screen-in procedures. Out of respect for other students and parochial property, no running or pushing is allowed. Unless an adult is in a classroom, students are not allowed to enter classrooms. Students should also dress in an appropriate manner. Food and drinks are prohibited in class.

Good Christian attitude and respect should be shown to both catechists and classmates. **Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.** Parents will be contacted and students sent home should such situations occur. Repeated disciplinary action will result in dismissal from the Parish School of Religion Program. **Any student found in possession of cigarettes, alcohol or drugs or who perform any illegal activity on the parochial grounds will be immediately removed from the Parish School of Religion Program.**

All electronic devices brought into the Hall of Saints should remain in the off position.