

Our Lady of the Assumption  
Faith Formation and Youth Ministry  
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# Living in Faith

*A Newsletter from the Faith Formation and Youth Ministry Office*

## A Letter from our Pastor



Dear Parents, Youth and Children,

My dear friends, as I write this message to you, I am reminded of the message in the Gospel of St. John (John 14) where Jesus tells the disciples, "Do not let your hearts be troubled, have faith in God and faith in me, I am the way the truth and the life."

We are all feeling a bit like the disciples being tossed about in the boat wondering what's next. You are faced with many decisions about personal safety, health concerns, jobs and school. Since March when we were shut down because of Covid-19, I have made a special intercession at each mass to pray for safety and health of all our families and parishioners. *"Lord Jesus keep watch, over your flock here at OLA. May Mary your mother shield us from all illness. St. Joseph, protector of the Holy Family be with us."*

This Faith Formation Newsletter is composed of four parts: Pastor's Letter, Elementary Level, Youth Ministry, Liturgy & Sacramental Life. I hope you will take some time to read our message as it outlines our Faith Formation Program for the coming months, September – December 2020.

Our first goal is to support you, parents, youth and children, to continue to grow in your faith even as we are apart. Secondly, we do not want to add another layer of expectations to your already busy schedule as you begin the school year. Bringing our children together from various school communities, trying to coordinate classes, maintain social distancing and Covid-19 guidelines is just not practical for the present time. Therefore, we will not be holding in person sessions for the Fall semester. However, we hope you will participate in the on-line, Zoom and weekly Faith Formations opportunities being offered on each grade level. Please take the time to read the messages from Mrs. Kristi Pegarella and Mrs. Rosemary Gavin.

The parish received a generous donation to cover the cost of registration and faith formation materials for the coming year. There will be no financial cost to you but we do ask that you register your children for planning purposes.

If there is anything that we can do for you at this time please call me directly at the Parish Office number: 518-785-0234 or call the Faith Formation Office number: 518-785-1605. Email: [ourlady@nycap.rr.com](mailto:ourlady@nycap.rr.com)

God's peace and blessings to all. Please be safe, stay healthy, keep the Faith!

**Fr. Burke**



## Elementary Faith Formation (Grades 1-5,6)



This fall, as Fr. Burke shared in his letter, we will not be holding Faith Formation sessions in-person. The safety of your children and our catechists is top priority. After looking at numerous programs, we've decided to use Saint Mary's Press, *Discover: Finding Faith in Life* for grades 1-5. Why? First, this program uses as its core text, *The Catholic Children's Bible*. Each child will receive their own Bible to keep and use in future years. In addition to the Bible, each child will receive a folder with grade appropriate activity booklets for each chapter. The program offers different options for delivery and you'll be able to choose which way works best for your family. Once we CAN return to in-person catechesis, this program offers wonderful sessions for our catechists to share. Until that time, *Discover* can come home to you in two different ways:

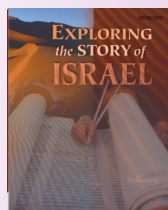
- a video you watch with your child and a few questions that you submit answers for at the end of each chapter. You will also complete the activity pages with your child. You will receive a unique username and password from our office to access our digital program. I would be able to see your responses and monitor your progress with your child.

OR

- a Home Guide, that offers the same lesson without need for a screen. We will print the Home Guide for you and send these with you when you pick up your Bible and activity folder. Home Guides will go home for parents to follow for all the chapters OLA plans to cover this fall. Those selecting to use the Home Guides will need to return the completed activity pages in December. That will be your way to let us know you've covered those chapters with your child.

With either delivery method, we will be available by email or phone to help with any questions. With a parent, we can even plan a Zoom call to answer questions if you want help face to face. We want to make this as simple for you as possible, while keeping everyone safe.

*Time commitment.* Depending on the grade level of your child, you can spend as little as 20-30 minutes or as much as an hour each week. Once you start reading the stories in the Bible with your children, you'll be amazed at all they may already know, at all they will learn, AND at all you will remember.



**For the sixth grade**, we will send home a Youth Bible, and another program from St. Mary's Press, *Exploring the Story of Israel*. We will have a home study packet available for our sixth graders to complete and return. Once a month, I'll touch base with our sixth graders and a parent via Zoom; Tuesday from 7:00-8:00 p.m. on October 20, November 17 and December 15. We will discuss the Old Testament, share current liturgical happenings, like Advent, and touch base about how the program is going.

*If you have a first grader starting our program, we will mail you a new student registration form so that we can establish a permanent Faith Formation and sacramental record at OLA. Thank you!*

Blessed by you, Mrs. Kristi Pegarella

### We need to hear from you.

Once you've read through our plans, we need to hear back from you. Please go to our website, [www.olalatham.org](http://www.olalatham.org) and complete the registration form. (If you cannot access our registration form, you may also call our office to confirm your plan to participate in Faith Formation this fall. 518-785-1605.) For Grades 1-5, you will select the digital program or the Home Guides. Please select the option that best fits your family's needs. If you try it one way and it doesn't work, just let us know and will make any adjustments needed. We need you to register for our program by the end of the day on **Friday, September 18**. This will give us enough time to order our Bibles, books and copy Home Guides for you. Each child registered will pick up their materials at the best time for you:

Saturday, October 3 (5:30-6:00 p.m.), Sunday, October 4 (10-10:30 a.m.) or Monday, October 5 (9 a.m.-4 p.m.)

None of those times work? Just give us a call at 518-785-1605 and we'll make other arrangements to connect.

## Mid-Level and High School Faith Formation

What champions you all are! In the face of this huge challenge, you are rallying and doing an incredible job ! We have been praying for you throughout the summer, that you have found ways for rest and refreshment despite all the restrictions.

As we struggled with best practices to bring faith formation to your young people, the decision was made, as has already been stated by Fr. Burke and Mrs. Pegarella, that instruction should be done at home rather than gathering in person. Therefore, in the case of 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> graders, there is a comfort level with *St. Mary's Press Discover* series, so we are preparing packets to accompany the books to be completed by the youth. The booklets are very brief, so we have added some worksheets to enhance the understanding, and also feel that reflection and discussion will help enrich the lesson. To address that we will offer Zoom meetings every few weeks to get everyone on the same page. I also think it will help with keeping pace while at home, and add to the sense of community as they get to greet each other. Fall semester for 7<sup>th</sup> grade will be *Exploring the Bible*, and each youth will receive one of the BreakThrough Bibles we have on hand here. If you would like your youth to have a brand new Bible, they can be purchased at <https://www.smp.org/product/4141/Breakthrough/> for \$29.95 +S&H. 8<sup>th</sup> grade will begin with the booklet from the same series called *Seeking Justice*. It introduces Social Justice, Catholic Social Teachings, the concept of peace, and dignity of all life. They too will receive a Bible for home use, and hopefully will grow deeper into all the sacred Scripture holds for us.

High school faith formation is more involved because it prepares the youth for the Sacrament of Confirmation in Spring of 10<sup>th</sup> grade. In 9<sup>th</sup> grade we will be using an online program from St. Mary's Press called *Catholicism 101*. It consists of 13 modules that can take 10-20 minutes each to complete. There are questions and reflections to be completed along the way that are readable only to the catechist and myself. There are supporting video gatherings to enhance the concepts and understandings in the individual modules. We will also do an in-depth study of the mass, and the Gospels using *From Mass to Mission: Understanding the Mass and its Significance for Our Christian Life* from Liturgy Training Publications.

10<sup>th</sup> grade will use another on-line curriculum from St. Mary's Press called *Understanding Catholicism*, which again has individual modules to be completed, and video gatherings for discussion and further understanding. There is a separate program that will be done in the Spring for immediate preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation. Hopefully by then much of that can be done through in-person sessions.

If adjustments need to be made, please contact Mrs. Gavin as soon as possible. User names and passwords will be issued by early October.

## Youth Ministry

It is challenging to envision how to create relational ministry when we cannot gather in person, but we are continuing to brainstorm and share ideas. The Youth Ministry Core Team is meeting in September via Zoom to bring some of those ideas to life, so look for information in the bulletin. In the meantime, we continue to benefit from the generosity and efforts of the CLYNK program which financially supports our vision with your donations of 5 cent returnables through the use of the green bags available in the gathering space alcove. Just fill, scan with the hand-held device at any Hannaford market, and drop the bag in the door. We are also holding our annual Mum Sale on September 12th and 13th in the parking lot. Mums are \$9 each or 3/\$25. All are locally grown by Hillard's Greenhouses. Proceeds will benefit the Youth of OLA and the programs they sponsor. Did you know that each month OLAYM sponsors a child named Stephen in Uganda? We follow his progress through school and send him our pictures and letters of encouragement. We sponsored his older brother as well. Thank you for helping us continue the mission.

We still plan to hold the annual Christmas Wreath sale in December because nothing cancels Christmas, right? In the meantime, we will continue to pray for you, and hope that you will pray for us as well. Nothing fills the gap in our hearts of not being able to be present to you and your teens face to face, but I know that if the Israelites can last for 40 years in the desert, we can withstand this time and keep our eyes on all of us arriving safely to the Promised Land of post-covid life.



UNDERSTANDING  
CATHOLICISM



## Worship and Sacraments

We are so grateful to once again be celebrating liturgies in the church! Albeit, with restrictions, but just to be together and inside the sanctuary again is such a blessing! Families and individuals are welcome to join us Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m., but early registration to reserve your space is highly recommended as we are still limited with seating to maintain social distance requirements. Please call 518-785-1605 no later than Friday at 1:00 p.m. Masks are required for the entire time you are in the building.



If you prefer to watch the mass at home on your device, links to our YouTube channel can be found on our website [olalatham.org](http://olalatham.org). You may come after viewing mass to the OLA parking lot where the Holy Eucharist is distributed on Saturday evenings from 5:30-6:00 p.m., and Sunday mornings from 10-10:30 a.m. You may drive up and receive in your car, or park and walk up to the special ministers of the Eucharist. Either way, we can receive our Lord Jesus in this Holy Sacrament once again! Fr. Burke also celebrates mass on Tuesday mornings at 6:30 a.m. that you may attend in person, or watch a livestream of mass on Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m. on our YouTube channel [Our Lady of the Assumption Faith Formation](#), or find the link on our website. Bulletins are available online, and in the tote in the Gathering Space alcove, as well as the Evangelist Newspapers and other devotionals, and of course CLYNK bags for your 5 cent returnables. The Chapel is open for private prayer M-T-W-F from 9 a.m. to noon. Please maintain social distancing requirements and wear your mask! And don't forget the beautiful outdoor Rosary around the center island in the parking lot. You are welcome to enjoy the grounds and the lovely weather all while praying with our Blessed Mother Mary. Look for the painted bead markings on the ground by the statue to begin your prayer.

Mrs. Pegarella is finishing up the celebrations of First Eucharist that were re-scheduled from May, and gathering the new group who will prepare for the celebration next spring. If you have a child entering second grade, or an older child whom you would like to prepare for the sacrament, that is not already registered with our Faith Formation program, please reach out to her soon to share your information.

Mrs. Gavin will be celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation on Tuesday September 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. with the group that was re-scheduled from the spring. Bishop Scharfenberger will come to anoint 47 young people. Please keep them all in your prayers. Anyone who wishes to prepare for the Sacrament in Spring 2021 is asked to call Mrs. Gavin soon if you are not already registered in our Faith Formation program.

We welcome any adults who wish to prepare celebrate the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, or Confirmation to please reach out to Fr. Burke. Anyone wishing to celebrate a marriage or Baptize a child should also plan to reach out to Fr. Burke for preparations. Please leave him a detailed message at 518-785-0234.

There is a glimmer of normalcy in all that we are doing here at OLA, but there is the lingering concerns as well. We pray that everyone is staying safe and healthy, and we encourage all of you to reach out at any time for information, companionship, prayer, or whatever your needs may be. As always we are here for you...to be your accompaniment on the spiritual journey of life.

