



My dear parents:

July 13, 2020

Blessings and peace! This is my first time writing to you as your shepherd addressing the topic of Faith Formation of your children.

The Covid-19 pandemic has challenged us all to be creative in developing faith formation programs that not only address the challenges of today, but also reflect the ‘signs of the times.’ In a recently published report on “American Catholic Religious Parenting,” by Justin Bartkus and Christian Smith of the University of Notre Dame, “The crucial location where youth’s religious outcomes are largely decided is not the congregation, or the parish, but the home.”

We believe that family is the domestic church. The day-to-day religious practices of the family and the ways parents model their faith and share it in conversation, collaboration and exposure to outside opportunities will produce committed Catholics. A healthy Catholic culture is at first developed and lived at home through parental initiatives. If your children do not “see” Catholicism in your “faces” as parents, they will likely never gain sufficient familiarity with it to commit to practicing the faith in the long run.

On a personal note, two priests and a religious nun in my family are the fruits of lived faith experiences and practices in my household and I am eternally grateful to my parents for their exemplary witness to our Catholic faith. So, my dear parents, you are the primary agents of the faith formation of the young church.

Therefore, beginning this fall we are introducing a new initiative in forming new disciples of Jesus through family catechesis. This program is developed by our Faith Formation Team in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

We are still dealing with the pandemic and many of us are struggling to respond to the financial, social, and religious challenges. Faith Formation must not be put “on hold.” Religious Education registration will be open in early August and I am reducing the registration fees for this year, simply because of the economic hardship we face during these times.

Our Faith Formation Team will introduce the program to you in two workshop events. I ask you to please attend one of these workshops and begin the process of family catechesis and register your children for faith formation. A flyer is included that explains our new program. I thank you for your continued support of our parish and for practicing your faith in these difficult circumstances.

After opening our church for Masses, I have noticed that many of our young families are reluctant to return out of an abundance of caution. I miss seeing and praying with all of you. I am encouraged by many of you “viewing “the Mass on our YouTube Channel. Please do not get too used to it! I hope to see you all soon. Please know that I am praying for you that you may stay healthy and safe.

Yours in Christ,

*Fr. Cyriac*

Fr. Cyriac C. Mattathilanickal, M.S.