

Parents,

“Be Not Afraid! Life with Christ is a wonderful adventure!” – St. John Paul II

Before he spoke these words in 1997, Pope John Paul II (JPII) had survived an assassination attempt, communist Poland, Nazi occupation, and the early deaths of his father, mother and brother. Here was a man who had seen great suffering, yet found peace, joy and purpose in Christ. He devoted his life to spreading the Gospel, especially to young people. As a priest, he dedicated himself to mentoring young adults, leading adventurous hikes and hosting camping trips. As Pope, he instituted World Youth Day, which still draws millions of young Catholics together from all around the world.

We need this great Saint’s intercession today, because new studies estimate that 85% of young Catholics stop practicing their faith within 7 years of being Confirmed. Moreover, recent studies show that the teen depression rate has risen 50-60% over the last decade and the teen suicide rate continues to climb. Too many teens struggle with loneliness, anxiety, and addiction. Social media and a 24/7 news cycle ensure that bad news is only a click away. We are in desperate need of Jesus Christ and His Church.

So let’s write a new story. Imagine what it would be like if your son/daughter had a place to question, ponder, and wrestle with faith - knowing their voice mattered. What would it be like if every one of our teens had a brotherhood or sisterhood of close friends who were dedicated to growing in virtue, and had an adult mentor to show them what it looks like to be a man and women of God? What would our weekends sound like if every teen made a commitment to participate in Sunday Mass? And what would our communities look like if every recently Confirmed student was equipped and empowered by the Holy Spirit to lead, heal, preach, and serve, or as St. Catherine of Siena says, to “set the world on fire”? This is the vision we have for our parishes.

Over the next few months you’re going to hear a lot about Alpha, small groups, and a new high school and Confirmation program. I ask you to please pray for these endeavors and to be open-minded and open-hearted about the changes your family will see. I know that change can bring confusion and frustration, but together we can adapt and ensure that this generation knows the call of Christ, the love of the Father, and the power of the Spirit. On our end, we are committed to consistent, clear communication and making sure that we offer only the highest quality formation opportunities for your family.

So, parents, I warmly invite you to do the following:

- 1) **Pray:** Please, please pray that this is a renewal led by the Holy Spirit. Even a daily Hail Mary while brushing your teeth or a Glory Be while sitting at a red light will be heard.
- 2) **Meet With Me:** Come hear about our new youth ministry program and get all of your questions answered in person. I have set aside numerous 20-minute meeting slots at all three parishes. There are day, evening, and weekend times available, beginning next week. Sign up for a time [here](#) or on our website at triparishfaithformation.org or by contacting me. After we have met, I will help you register.
- 3) **Get Excited and Get Involved:** This could be the beginning of something beautiful. In my experience, parents have a far greater impact on their sons/daughters than they realize. If you are excited for what is coming, they will be more open as well. And watch for opportunities to get involved as a mentor, table leader, cook, or hospitality helper this year!

Thank you for being part of our parish community and for allowing us to be a part of your family’s life. Please don’t hesitate to contact me and let me know how we can best serve you.

In Christ,
Sarah Daszcuk
Director of Youth Formation & Discipleship

