

August 14, 2024

Dear Ave Maria Faith Formation parents,

When, last January, I transitioned unexpectedly from being Ave Maria's Liturgy director to becoming the new Faith Formation director, I did not have much chance to introduce myself to most of you. I have met many of you in the meantime and have been grateful for your support, and I look forward to meeting many others!

It has been a time of transition for the Faith Formation staff as a whole. We are very happy to welcome our new high school youth minister, Whitney West, and middle school youth minister, Kaelynn Mae Kenny. We welcome back Molly Sacha, our children's Faith Formation coordinator, whom many of you already know. All three have a great heart for young people and are looking forward to walking with you and your children!

This year is an unusual and exciting one for our parish, and **will involve some changes to our normal beginning-of-the-year programs and activities this Fall**. Ave Maria embarked last October on a parish synod, a shared journey in which we think, pray and listen intently to each other and to God, to discern how we might cooperate with what God is doing among us. From October 2023 to the end of September, we have been in the preparatory phase of this synod. The month of October will be dedicated to a series of spiritual conversations and moments of prayer that every volunteer from every group in the parish, including your children's catechists and youth group leaders, will be asked to participate in. Fr. Nathaniel has asked for all parish groups and ministries to refrain from their regular activities, meetings or classes during that month to make this possible. **This means that our Faith Formation program, which normally begins in September, will begin regular classes and youth group meetings in November.**

For you parents, this means something very important: **The month of October will be a time for you to embrace wholeheartedly your role as the primary catechists of your children.** After all, they receive far more life, love and living knowledge of the Lord from you than they ever could from a once-a-week class! Very soon you will receive information from your respective coordinator (children's, middle school or high school) containing material, tips and themes to help you to share your faith with your children during the month of October – and, hopefully, for the rest of their lives!

We ask you to pray for the parish in this beautiful time of renewal that is our synod, and to pray also for us on the Faith Formation staff. We are praying very hard also for all of you!

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