Family Faith FORMATION

January

Dear Families,

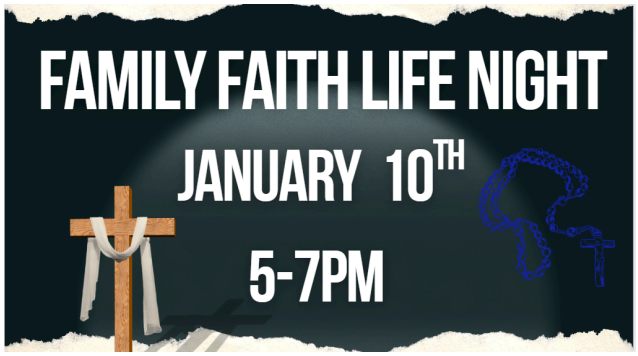
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. The opening days of January may be cold and nature bleak, but the domestic church still glows warm with the peace and joy of Christmas. We dedicate the New Year to Mary on the January 1st Solemnity honoring her as Mother of God; and on January 4th, the Solemnity of Epiphany, we rejoice with her, as her Son is adored by the three Wise Men.

St. John the Baptist, who ushered in the Advent season, is present once again to close Christmastide on the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord (January 11th), and to open the Season of Ordinary Time. He points to Jesus, the Lamb of God who unites time and eternity in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and even January's diminishing darkness seems to echo St. John's prayer: He must increase and I must decrease.

This is so fitting for our Faith of Faith January lessons, as we focus on the Eucharist. When we attend Mass, we are participating in a sacrifice. It is the sacrifice of Jesus' Body and Blood that we commemorate every time we celebrate the Eucharist at Holy Mass. Being able to receive Jesus in the Eucharist is the most precious gift we have. We need the Eucharist spiritually like we need food physically. It truly is our fuel for the journey. The Mass is truly and literally Heaven on earth, the wonderful gift Jesus has given us to be with Him in the flesh.

In Christ,

Pam



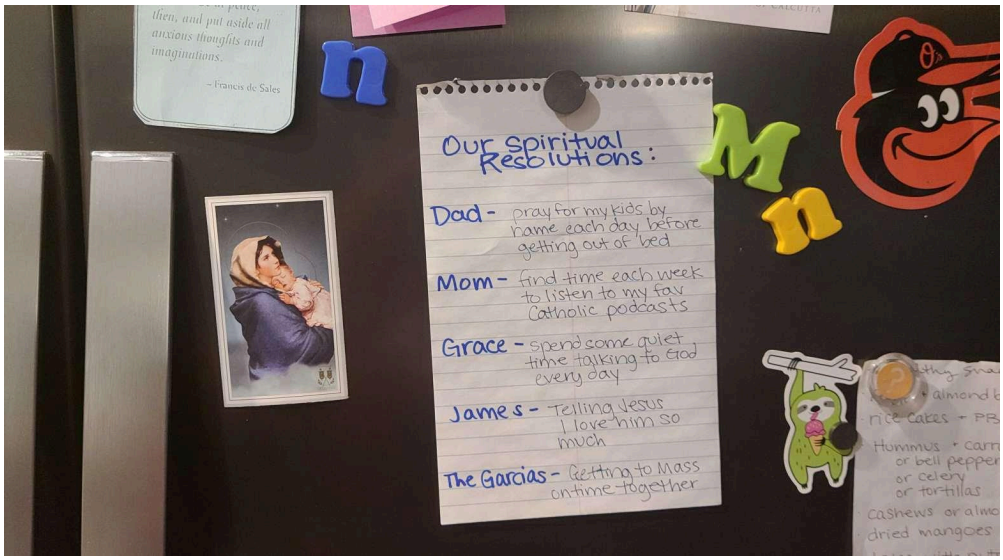
Mary Mother of God (January 1), **St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen** (January 2), **St. Elizabeth Ann Seton** (January 4), **St. John Neumann** (January 5), **St. Andre Bessette** (January 6), **St. Raymond of Penafort (January 7), Sts. Fabian and Sebastian** (January 20), **St. Agnes** (January 21), **St. Vincent of Saragossa** (January 23), the **Conversion of St. Paul** (January 25), **Sts. Timothy and Titus** (January 26)**,** **St. Angela Merici** (January 27)**,** and **St. Thomas Aquinas** (January 28)

A Spiritual Resolution

Some of the most common New Year's resolutions are exercising more, eating healthier, reading more books, and saving more money. These are all great goals, but there is an even better goal to strive for - growing closer to God.

If you've never tried it before, in addition to your other resolutions, try making a spiritual resolution this year. Even better, make one for the entire family. Each member of the family can create their own spiritual resolution, and you can have one BIG resolution for the family to do together.

One of the most common reasons people fail at their resolutions is because they don't have someone to help them or hold them accountable. The great thing about creating a resolution as a family is you can all help each other with your goals. Try something different this year:



Write the name of each family member on a piece of paper and then write your family name. Let each member write one or two spiritual resolutions and then choose one for the entire family. Post it on the fridge, or somewhere visible in your home so you'll be reminded each day. Then, every Sunday night at dinner, take down the list and discuss as a family how your resolutions went.

Here are a few ideas of some great spiritual resolutions you can consider:

- Let the first thing you say each morning be a prayer to God
- Go to Confession every month
- Fast from something you enjoy every Friday
- Donate money to the parish each week
- Read from the Bible every day
- Spend 10 minutes in prayer every single day
- Get to Mass early and sit in prayerful silence
- Keep a prayer journal where you write out your conversations with God
- Invite one friend to Church every month
- Tell God, "I love you" every day

Discuss as a family: How is God calling your family to get closer to Him?