



# FAITH FORMATION NEWSLETTER



March 2026

## THE HOLY MASS

**Programs:** Please pray especially for our second graders preparing for First Communion in April and our OCIA folks nearing the end of their preparation studies. If you haven't already celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation, please consider this wonderful Lenten opportunity!

**The Mass:** Let's continue our consideration of the Mass by discussing our prayerful preparation for Mass, Father's vestments, the Procession, and the Introductory Rites.

**Mass Preparation:** It's sometimes difficult to find time to prepare for Mass. If we're lucky, we can carve out a few minutes at home to pre-read the Mass readings and/or get to church a few minutes early. Remember, the real point here that moves us from thinking of Mass as an obligation to Mass as an opportunity, is to focus on God's incredible love for us and how we can show gratitude for His love. During our quiet preparation time, no matter how brief, think of how God is constantly seeking us. Jesus willingly took on flesh to suffer and die for us because He loves us so much. Strive to make your preparation for Mass awe-filled – e.g. “God, I am so thankful for your love. Help me to accept your love and help me to love you more.” “Help me, a sinner, to approach the Eucharist with reverence and faith.”

**Father's vestments:** Each article of vestment and each layer that Fr puts on for Mass has deep meaning and symbolism. Here are the key things to keep in mind:

- Mass is not about the priest – he wears his vestments to remind us of Christ, the High Priest, not himself.
- Amice: white cloth around the neck to symbolize the “helmet of salvation”
- Alb: white robe to symbolize Baptism. Albus/white.
- Cincture: waist cord to symbolize chastity and service
- Stole: long narrow cloth over the shoulders and hanging in the front to symbolize the yoke of Christ and the authority (service) of the priesthood
- Chasuble: outermost, colorful, poncho-like garment to symbolize charity (Casula – little house)

Green – (time to grow) ordinary time; purple/violet – Advent and Lent (penance and preparation); white/gold – Christmas, Easter, Feasts of Mary and some saints (joy and purity); red – Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Pentecost, feasts of martyrs (sacrifice); rose – Gaudete Sunday and Laetare Sunday (4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent); black – rare for funerals or All Souls day





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**The Procession and Introductory Rite:** During the procession, we stand and sing because we are on a pilgrimage with Father to celebrate the Sacred Mystery of the Holy Mass. Father bows and kisses (reverences) the altar – our consecrated table of both sacrifice and banquet. Did you know that every Catholic church altar contains a saint's relic? This tradition goes back to early times of celebrating Mass in the catacombs on the tops of saints' (often martyrs) coffins or tombs, and shows our continuity with the communion of saints. Following the sign of the cross to bless us and remind us of the Trinity and Christ's sacrifice, we prayerfully acknowledge our sins and participate in the penitential act – the Kyrie and the Confiteor. This brief penitential act, along with our celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist and our receipt of Holy Eucharist, if we are truly contrite, forgive our venial sins. The Gloria helps us to thank God for His love and mercy and, with the collect prayer, completes the Introductory Rite.

## Next month: The Liturgy of the Word

Ed Anderson – Director of Faith Formation

## FIRST COMMUNION MASS

**First Holy Communion is a family and a community celebration.** This year, we will be celebrating First Communion with the second grade students and their families at all three weekend Masses on April 18 and 19. There will be 14 students and families at the 4:30 pm Mass on April 18, one student and family at the 8:30 am Mass, and 10 students and families at the 11 am Mass on April 19. Please pray for our 25 First Communicants and their families. We want this to be a parish-wide welcoming celebration (Sacrament of Initiation), but we do anticipate a potentially large crowd for the 4:30 pm and 11 am Masses, in case you would like to plan accordingly.

## 2026 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

**Walking with St. Francis: Celebrating the Franciscan Jubilee Year** Registration and volunteer sign up is now open for this year's Vacation Bible School! We invite your child who will be completing Kindergarten - 4th grade to join us! Space is limited. Volunteer opportunities are available for students entering 5th grade through high school, and adult volunteers are also needed and greatly appreciated!

**When:** Monday-Wednesday, June 1-3, 2026

**Time:** 9:00 - 11:30 AM

**Location:** St. John's



Register



Volunteer

