

Today Fr. Tim gave our students a tour of the Church. We started first in the **Gathering Area**. That area outside the Church where we can gather with family and friends and talk before entering inside the Church where we need to be much more quiet.

The Church is **God's house** and we need to be respectful. God has many houses on earth - any Catholic Church is his house as this is where he is truly present in the Eucharist.

The **Baptismal Font** is in the back of the Church and our students were able to remember that it contains Holy Water that we use to make the sign of the Cross when we enter to remind us of our own Baptism. The students also remembered the **Ambry** which is next to the Baptismal font that holds the sacred oils.

We learned a new word. **Nave** - this is the body of the Church. It is the part where people sit in a modern church. The word "nave" comes from the Latin word for "ship", navis, because people in the Middle Ages thought a nave in the older Churches' looked like the bottom part of a ship turned upside-down.

Fr. Tim pointed out the four **Consecration Crosses** in our Church. We learned that the Consecration crosses are crosses on the interior walls and exterior architecture of a Christian church or cathedral showing where the bishop has anointed the church with chrism or holy water in order to consecrate it. ... The crosses signify the sanctity of the church.

The students then had a tour of the **Confessional Room**. We are always invited to come to Jesus and ask for his mercy when ever we have failed him.

Next we looked at the **Stations of the Cross**. Stations of the Cross, also called Way of the Cross, a series of 14 pictures or carvings portraying events in the Passion of Christ, from his condemnation by Pontius Pilot to his entombment. We are invited to pray this special devotion especially during Lent.

Fr. Tim then took the students into our 24 hour **Adoration Chapel**. We learned we can come anytime to sit and pray in front of Jesus in the Tabernacle even when the Church is locked.

We learned that the most sacred space of all in our Church is the **Sanctuary**:

The Sanctuary is the front part of the church from where the Priest stands during Mass. This is different than the rest of the Church. It is elevated to let us know it is different than the rest of the Church. We began the tour of the Sanctuary area by taking an up close look at the Tabernacle. We noticed the **Red Sanctuary Light** was lit letting us know Jesus is present in the **Tabernacle**.

We knelt in front of the Tabernacle and with it open we prayed together with Fr. Tim:

O Sacrament Most Holy

O Sacrament Divine

**All Praise and All Thanksgiving
be every moment thine.**

We then turned towards the **Altar** and we were reminded that we give reverence to the altar by bowing, by the use of incense, as well as the “kiss” given by the priest at the beginning and conclusion of Mass. These acts of reverence are meant to be reminders that the Altar is indeed a symbol of our Lord. The liturgical action which takes place at the Altar is at the heart and center of our worship of God on earth, foreshadowing the heavenly banquet which awaits us.

Most of our students were able to remember who the Lady was to the left of the Sanctuary: **St. Catherine Laboure** - the Patron Saint of our Parish. We ended our tour at the back of the Church in front of the statue of the **Immaculate Heart of Jesus**.

Be sure to ask your children what they can remember from this informative tour! Thank you Fr. Tim

Next week we will tour the Sacristy and the Vesting room.