

**Pastor's Notes: Our Religious Education Program and Transition**

**June 6, 2021**

This weekend we celebrate Corpus Christi, and very appropriately, we therefore celebrate the First Holy Communion of many of our young people. Forming our young people to fruitfully receive Communion is a large task, and I have been grateful for those who have put the time, energy, and love of the Eucharist into this past year's sacramental preparation class. The sacramental preparation class is a part of our parish Religious Education program, which has been capably led by Danielle Stradley, with her husband Michael, since 2014. Our parish Religious Education program consists of classes ranging from preschool all the way through to high school and incorporates the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation. We also offer normally offer Vacation Bible School in the summer. The RE program has hosted the Father-Daughter Dance and the May Crowning. The highlight of the year has always been the All Saints feast day, where the kids dress up as their favorite saint. Most recently, we have introduced a Christmas pageant in the Octave of Christmas, around Holy Family weekend. To coordinate all of these many wonderful offerings is a large job indeed. I want to commend Danielle Stradley and her husband Michael for the many hours of work that have gone into making these events a reality and for coordinating the education of our children in the most important aspects of our faith. Danielle recently told me that due to changing circumstances in her life, she needed to step down from the leadership of this ministry. We are sad to see her go, and we are grateful for the heart that she has put into this ministry until now. Well done! Danielle and Michael remain committed to supporting our RE program as volunteers.

After time for prayer and reflection and consultation with various members of the parish, I have asked Florence Porter to take on this important role of DRE for our parish. Florence is a long-time contributor to our Religious Education program and a familiar face to all of our young people receiving the Sacrament this weekend. I am happy to report that Florence has agreed and will begin this summer coordinating our Religious Education for the parish. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to this role, and I am confident that she will pick up the baton where Danielle left off. In discussing this role with Florence, we plan to resume in-person RE classes in full in the fall, and in particular emphasize the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for our youngest children, with the hopes that eventually we will expand to a second level of the CGS. However, this will require many more teachers to be trained in this method. It is an extensive training, but the parish is committing resources to train those who are interested. If you are interested in supporting our RE program as a teacher, please contact Florence Porter at 423-316-0563 or dre@stspeterandpaulbasilica.com.

Our Religious Education program is an important part of every child's faith formation. We are working hard to provide a good curriculum to give them the necessary knowledge of faith but also to engender in them a solid relationship with Our Lord. This program is an important aspect of the communal life of our church also, in that children form close bonds through these classes with their fellow parishioners, and it helps to strengthen our parish family. I encourage all families to consider enrolling your children in our program all the way through high school, not to replace, but to complement the religious education you provide for them as parents. I pray that our children will be well-formed in their faith and become active and engaged members of the Body of Christ.

*Rev. J. David Carter*



*Thank you, Danielle & Michael Stradley,  
Co-Directors of Religious Education since 2014*



*Please welcome Florence Porter, catechist, in her new role  
as Director of Religious Education*