

## Bulletin Reflection

Hello Parishioners!

As I have nearly completed one year here at St. Patrick's, I want to take this time to reflect back on the many successes that we have experienced this year! We have tried to make the youth a little more present in the eyes of the Church, but there is still so much that goes on behind the scenes that perhaps you may not be aware of. We have had 145 students in our formation programs, from first grade all the way through high school. This does not even include our growing youth group! Twenty-five second graders received First Reconciliation and First Communion this year, while we also prepared three older students for these sacraments as well. Thirty-two students celebrated with us at our Confirmation Mass.

Students in third through seventh grade helped to write prayers for our Sunday Masses and participate in the various liturgical roles. Parents joined us in class to play games, pray the Via Lucis (the Stations of the Resurrection), and make crafts focused on the Easter season. Younger siblings were able to join us at our Easter Family event and our Christmas Movie Night. Our students created Jesse Tree ornaments during the Advent season to tell all the parishioners about the Salvation Story. But most importantly, our children spent time together in community and prayer, learning about this great God who loves them so much.

It is hard to encapsulate a year of religious education into just one note because it is not about the numbers. It's about the moments. It is the pride of the children receiving perfect attendance awards. It is watching our youngest students learn to genuflect and be present in sacred spaces. It is seeing a child read for the first time at Mass. It is our fifth graders touring the sacristy, and the joy that comes with being able to open every cupboard and touch the objects we use at Mass. It is the Confirmation student who, due to the pandemic, missed his First Reconciliation and approaches Father with trepidation but afterwards simply says, "That felt really good." How often do we forget the simple joys behind each of these simple, spiritual moments? How often do we put aside our stress, our judgements, our loss of wonder at these small moments and recognize that Christ calls us to have faith like a child?

I want to thank all the people who have made this year of wonder for our children possible. Whether you have prayed, volunteered, been a parent, enjoyed a Mass with us, seen our Jesse Tree, or taught, we are grateful for each and every one of you. Thank you for all that you do, and we hope you will join us again on our journey in the fall.

God Bless,

Dianne Marshall  
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