

Parent Letter --- November 2011

Dear OLP Parents,

As you read this, my pilgrimage to the Holy Land will be in its last days. In preparing myself for this once-in-a-lifetime experience, I have spent time primarily reading Scripture and thinking about Jesus' public ministry. Then two events this October also had me thinking – my standing in for Father Kavanagh at the First Communion/First Confession meeting for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade parents and Father Grimes' death. The interesting fact is that all three made me newly aware of how very short our time is here on earth and how many ways our God has provided for us to know Him so we would love Him and want to serve Him in this life so that we can be happy with Him FOREVER in the next.

I'll share my reflections on The Holy Land once I return, but while I'm there I promise to pray for you and ask that you pray for me and my group. My grief for Father Grimes is too raw for me to be able to write now about his influence in my life, but he was a wonderful priest and boss. I will just mention that he once told us that the best self-help book ever written was the Bible. I shared that with my Mom and she told me that she thinks one of the first questions that God will ask us when we get to heaven is, "Did you read MY book?" Below you will find my notes from my presentation to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade parents concerning First Communion and First Confession. One thing I did to prepare that I totally recommend to you is that I listened to many (at least five) of the Lighthouse Catholic Media CDs on Confession and the Eucharist. They were informative and enjoyable (especially Father Larry Richards and Dr. Scott Hahn) and you will not regret the time spent listening. When I get back, I am happy to let you borrow my copies, but I will make you sign them out because I want them back. They are only \$3 each but not all titles are in the current set available in the Gathering Space in Church.

God promises to help us in everything we ask Him to do including passing your faith onto our children (and building your faith while you are at it).

November Blessings,

Carol A. Folian, Principal

Bullet points for at the First Communion/First Confession meeting:

- All scripture is inspired by God and useful ... 2 Tim 3:16 Remember that the Scripture that Jesus knew and fulfilled was the Old Testament.
- Jesus acted with Authority while He was alive. After His resurrection he established the Church (4 Marks of the Church -- One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic) put Peter in charge and gave His **Authority** to Apostles
- “Doctrine” is the truths of our faith as taught by the Church. Examples:
  - Jesus Christ is the second Person of the Holy Trinity
  - He has two natures – human and Divine
  - We use the term Paschal Mystery to describe His life, death, and resurrection.
- Jesus gave us the Seven Sacraments – at their Baptism the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders received the Holy Spirit; now in grade 2 Reconciliation and the Eucharist

**Confession/Reconciliation/Penance** – Names for the same Sacrament seen from different perspectives.

- He gave His Authority to forgive sins to ten of His disciples John 20:21-23 “Whose sins you shall forgive are forgiven” ... Matt 16:19 “Whatever you bind on earth” Also: 2 Cor 5:18 James 5:13-15
- Since he didn’t give them the power to read minds – telling is necessary. When we confess to the priest, in reality they are confessing their sins to God and it is **He** who does the forgiving.
- So why did Jesus give us this sacrament since God (He) already knows our sins even better than we do? It’s so that by our awareness, being truly sorry and the firm determination to repair any damage we have done, allows God to give us the Grace.
- How often to go? FYI - Pope John Paul II and Benedict/ Mother Teresa went once a week HUMMMMM

**Second Sacrament of Initiation -- Eucharist** –

- As Catholics we believe that the Eucharist is really the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ because that is what Christ said It is!!!! “This is my body ... This is my blood.” Matt 26:26-28, Luke 22:19-20; Mark 14:22-24)
- Christ also said: “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life within you....” (John 6:53, 56; 54-56). This is what the Apostles believed.
- A BIG deal when parents don’t set coming to church on Sunday as a first priority in their lives and the lives of their children.
- I remember our family praying before dinner, my dad praying with us, his kneeling to pray next to his bed, his prayer after receiving Holy Communion. And his telling me that there were no atheists in fox holes (he was a Marine in WWII ).