



# St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church

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*Then children were brought to him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked them, but Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 19:13-14*

December 15, 2023

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We appreciate all that you do as parents/guardians to support your child in practicing their faith, especially those who are preparing to receive a sacrament. On the day of your child's baptism, you as parents and we as a Church made a commitment to your child to help bring them up in the Catholic faith. Through our example, we show our children the importance and power of our faith. After all, the first teachers of the faith for a child are their parents. The best way we can do this, and the most meaningful way, is the celebration of Sunday Mass. It is at the Sunday Mass where we receive so many graces to help us incorporate all that is given to us in the Sacraments. It is here that we are nourished by His Word in the Holy Scriptures and in His Body and Blood in the Eucharist.

Unfortunately, the demands of our weekly lives are starting to take us and our children away from this great source of grace. Now is the time to rededicate ourselves to the promise we made to our children and to God. To help facilitate this, starting in January, all **Catholic** children in our School in Grades 1 - 8 and all students in our PREP program will be given an attendance sheet for Mass. Each Sunday, at whichever Mass they attend, they will need to ask the priest celebrating that Mass to sign the sheet. This is especially important for our children who will be receiving their First Penance, First Holy Communion and/or Confirmation this coming year. It has been agreed upon by both the pastors of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Patrick's that if a child misses four (4) Masses, that child will be deferred to next year to receive the Sacrament.

The attendance of Sunday Mass is one of the pillars of our faith. Everything that we are and ever will be is contained in the Mass. That is why we are emphasizing the importance of going to Mass this year. Our hope is that through this program, all of our families will begin to have a newfound appreciation and love for the Mass. This letter and new program are meant not to scold or shame, but to show support to all the members of St. Francis of Assisi. As your shepherd, it is my sworn duty to help and encourage all of you to grow in your faith and relationship with God.

**If you have questions or circumstances related to your weekly Mass attendance, I'm completely at your disposal. I will be happy to meet with you in person to discuss anything that is on your mind.**

Sincerely in Christ,

Reverend Richard J. Smith, M. Div.  
Pastor