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WELCOME TO THE CATHEDRAL COMMUNITY !

OUR PARISH ONLINE NEWSLETTER

Issue 33

August 28, 2020

Speaking of stress reducing --- here's one to try: "listening." Since the start of the pandemic, and sheltering in place, we've all been experiencing a lot of family conversation -- perhaps more than we can handle! After a while, the talk is predictable. We know what the other person will say before they even say it --- and we know already how we will respond. Maybe this is a good time to become a good listener.

I read recently about a study that was conducted by a professor of rhetoric at the University of Minnesota. He wanted to determine how carefully people really listened. So, he asked participants in his study to sit through a ten-minute presentation. He was shocked by the results. 48 hours later he asked the participants about what they had heard. Most listeners understood and retained only 25% of what they heard. And most of what the speaker had said was greatly distorted.

Although we do it all the time, there is a skill to good listening. It can be a powerful tool in which to help people heal. How can I become a better listener? One suggestion is to say very little when we listen to another person. Shakespeare said: "Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice." We can allow the person who is grieving or experiencing some difficulties the opportunity to do the most talking. A counselor suggests that "a response no longer than twelve seconds is usually an effective length in a helping situation." Another thing we can do is to empathize. When we show our understanding, empathy and acceptance, we convey our compassion and make it easier for another person to share with us. We can also avoid being judgmental. If a person is hurting, our acceptance of them can greatly ease a burden.

A letter once appeared in the New York Times from an M.D. with advice to new doctors: "The most important lesson for young physicians to learn going into general practice is to listen. I cannot count how many times I've heard, 'I feel so much better since talking about it.' Listening is cheap. Listening can save unnecessary tests. Listening can cure ills."

The spiritual writer Henri Nouwen in his book, *Out of Solitude* says it best: "When we honestly ask ourselves which persons in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving much advice, solutions or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a gentle and tender hand."



TEACHING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH DURING A PANDEMIC

Rose Davis

Like so much else in our lives this year, religious education requires us to think outside the box. No work is more important than teaching our children about Jesus and our Catholic faith. Each year our program is evaluated and changes are made to make it better. We choose books, materials and teaching strategies that meet the needs and learning styles of our students.

But this year we face the reality that students and teachers must be socially distanced and learning spaces should not be shared by multiple groups. Nazareth Elementary School, which leases our school building, needs to spread out into our faith formation rooms. We also know that families are being stretched in every aspect of their lives: some parents are without work; many work from home and care for their children at the same time; parents have helped to teach their children and now must make hard decisions about safety and sending them back to school.



All these factors are influencing our thoughts as we propose a different format for our 2020-2021 Faith Formation Program. This year we will offer an online family option with the possibility of an occasional, socially-distanced, in-person gathering. We're developing a series of video presentations on basic Catholic topics. These "classes" will begin in mid-October and continue through May with the usual holiday breaks. Videos will be one part of a half-hour session that includes the entire family, parents and every grade level child. Sessions will begin with a family prayer, continue with the presentation, and then each member will complete an online worksheet created for individual ages. Worksheets will be easily submitted to the parish with the click of a button. Through technology, sessions can be translated for parishioners who speak a different language at home. We hope to make a personal visit to each family while the weather is still good and bless them as they begin the new "school year." Suggestions for creating a prayer space at home will be provided. Each family will be invited into a small, socially-distanced gathering to kick off the year with more detailed explanation of the program.

Ours is a challenging time, but when we rise to the challenge creative new things can happen. We hope that Cathedral Community Faith Formation 2020-2021 will be one of those graced moments of new life.

REFLECTION FOR SUNDAY

Mary and Peter Knappen

"Do not conform yourselves to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...." (Romans 12:2)

Paul warns us not to confirm ourselves to this age because our lives shouldn't duplicate the values of the world around us. Instead, in order to "discern the will of God," we should renew the way we think.

How? One way is to read the Gospel story and imagine yourself in the story. This takes time; you can't do it while multi-tasking. Begin by asking God to enlighten you as you do this. Next, imagine what you see, hear, feel, smell, and possibly taste. Ask yourself, "What is God saying to me?" This takes practice, for it's a form of prayer that is a great way to transform our minds God-ward.