

August 14th, 2021



Dear Sacred Heart Parish Youth Faith Formation Families,

I am thankful to Bishop Donald DeGrood for assigning me to be your parish priest here and at St. Pius X Parish as of this past July 1st, 2021. I did not realize how great of an opportunity this is for our parishes and for me. After five years, I was just getting done addressing the deferred maintenance issues in my two parishes and started to begin having the opportunity to lead my parishes into a “new springtime in the Church” as St. Pope John Paul II envisioned it at the turn of the new millennium by facilitating a “New Evangelization.” I was ready to revitalize the Religious Education program and begin an evangelization and discipleship process in my parishes. At the same time, we received a new bishop with a new vision for our diocese who invested a full-time priest position in the Office of Discipleship & Evangelization. I met with Fr. Scott Traynor, who is in that position, about the direction I have been going in my parishes and the direction our new bishop envisions. We were completely in line with each other, and he is available to help us implement Bishop DeGrood’s vision for us to develop in our parishes “Lifelong Catholic Missionary Disciples Through God’s Love.”

At my first Parish Council meeting, I found out that the Council members and other parishioners have been interested in restarting our Religious Education program. I already had this planned out for Sacred Heart Parish in Eden. Now, I know God was preparing me for my move to these parishes. St. Pius X Parish has been in need of direction as well and is excited about it too. So, I jumped at the opportunity. I hope you will too!

I have been passionate in my homilies and in explaining in my bulletin columns how I have been waiting to do this for twenty-five years with much frustration, and many people in our parishes see the need for it too. We have many parishioners who want to seize this opportunity, but we need many more. We are short a couple catechists, but we have many volunteers who are willing to substitute and help. Please prayerfully consider God calling you to make a commitment and be a part of our parish team to be effective instruments of God so that He can form our young people and youth through His Love in us to make His children into “lifelong Catholic Missionary Disciples.” This takes a discipleship team effort by all of us doing our parts, and how fulfilling it will be!

This first day of our Youth Faith Formation Mission sessions needs to be Wednesday, August 25th, 2021! We have to move quickly to maximize our time with our young people so we can incorporate formation activities with our traditional catechesis using new curriculum. Please find enclosed the following: Sacred Heart Parish Youth Faith Formation (YFF) Handbook, “Made in His Image” Safe Environment information letter, YFF Mission Calendar, Religious Education vs Youth Faith Formation (YFF) new vocabulary to help us make the missionary minded transition, and the YFF Registration Form. Please be sure to read the handbook with your children, complete the registration form, sign it, and return it to our parish office, church sacristy, or bring it to the first day of YFF. Everyone must do a new registration form! Catholic families must be registered in a parish. If they are not registered in our two parishes, they need their parish priest’s permission. Non-Catholic families are always welcome! They only need to complete a registration form. No registration fee is required, but if families are not from our parishes they can consider a \$10 donation per child.

Dates & Times: We begin in person Wednesday, August 25th, 2021 with grades 1 – 5 meeting 3:45 – 5:00 p.m. and grades 6 – 12 meeting 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. We will end on Wednesday, May 11th. See the enclosed calendar. Notice, this includes our 11th & 12th graders. I will be the catechist teaching mostly new material and information that they have not been taught before and need to know as Catholic adults. We will focus on why we believe what we believe and helping our youth acquire the Faith and become dedicated disciples for themselves! Many parishes do not offer anything for their high school youth other than Confirmation!

COVID-19, Colds & Flus: Please understand that if any young disciple shows any signs of illness at all, his/her parents will be contacted, and the student will need to be picked up immediately. If your child shows any signs/symptoms of sickness at all, please do NOT send them to YFF, and also, please contact us so we can contact their catechist.

Curriculums: Grades 1 – 8: “Faith & Life” by Ignatius Press with handouts for parents and online resources and grades 9 – 12: “Why Believe” by Augustine Institute along with practical Faith Formation topics for daily life

Staffing & Volunteers: I am the director assisted by Beverly Thomas in the parish office. Joane Beringer is our volunteer coordinator who will be in the Mission Center office in the afternoons. Veronica Wager is assisting her and will be in the Mission Center office in the evenings. We are very blessed to have some wonderful volunteer catechists for our young disciples! The following is a list of our catechists: 1st Grade: Brooke Brown, 2nd Grade: Stacey Penrod, 3rd Grade: Tammy Simon, 4th Grade: Cari Rausch, 5th Grade: (**Vacant – HELP!**), 6th Grade: Barb Everson, 7th Grade: (**Vacant – HELP!**), 8th Grade Joane Beringer, 9th – 12th Grades: Fr. Brian Simon with assistants will have Sacred Heart Parish grades 9 – 12 combined with 9 – 11th grades from St. Pius X Parish. We will rotate locations so all high school youth can have consistent catechesis by Fr. Simon who needs to rotate locations for the sake of the other young disciples in both parishes. Once we have virtual technology setup, we can use that when we have poor driving conditions. Please volunteer to help!

Thank you so much for your continued support of our parish, young people, and youth! If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me by email at frbriansimon@sfcatholic.org, at my office number 765-2161 or cell phone number 769-0281 (Text is best.). You can also contact Joane Beringer at her home number 765-9654 or cell phone number 769-5014, use our YFF email address: sacredheartre@venturecomm.net, or go to our websites www.getshc.org or www.sacredhearted.org.

I am looking forward to our first Youth Faith Formation Mission year at Sacred Heart and St. Pius X Parishes and sharing our Faith and our love for the Lord and His Church with our youth for their sake and His Glory!

Yours in Christ through God’s Love,

Fr. Brian P. Simon
Parish Priest
Sacred Heart Parish of Potter County
St. Pius X Parish of Sully County

Enclosures

NOTE: We greatly NEED catechists who can at least commit to a month at a time for some consistency; otherwise, the materials will need to be sent home and our young disciples will lose significant formation opportunities. Please help us in keeping our Youth Faith Formation Mission going by sharing your time, your talents and your treasure in passing on our Faith. If you are willing and able to help be a catechist at least to some extent, please contact me, Beverly, or Joane for the sake of our children and your fulfillment!