

Religious Education



CCD Family Newsletter January 15 - January 22, 2024



CCD Schedule for Next Week

Monday - NO CCD

MLK Day - Enjoy your break!

Tuesday, January 21st

Lesson 12: *How do we respond to God's Love?*

[CCD Calendar](#)



Homeschooling Connection

Week of January 19th

Lesson 13: *How does God teach us to love?*

If at any point in the homeschooling process you need assistance, please feel free to reach out. We are always happy to help.



Gospel Reflection Stickers

This week the CCD students were all given stickers with my goddaughter (and niece) Lilly on them. During our Opening Service and Gospel Reading for the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, I show the kids photos from Lilly's Baptism. What was really cool about Lilly's Baptism was that the deacon added water to the church's baptismal font from the River Jordan: the same river Jesus was baptized in. We then discussed some of the similarities between Jesus' Baptism and our own. (The biggest difference is that because Jesus is God he is perfect and did not need to be baptized.) How cute is Lilly, Child of God?!?



Attention Sacramental Preparation Families

First Eucharist Parent Meeting

Thursday, January 23rd

1:00 pm or 7:00 pm

Via Zoom

A letter regarding the preparation program for First Eucharist was emailed to all parents last week. You can access it [HERE](#). Packets for our Monday students went home this week since there is no CCD next Monday.

COLD or FLU?



Cold and Flu Season - Ugh!

Cold and Flu Season is definitely upon us! **Thank you to all of those families who kept their children home from CCD while they were sick these past two weeks.** We've missed them and are looking forward to their healthy return!

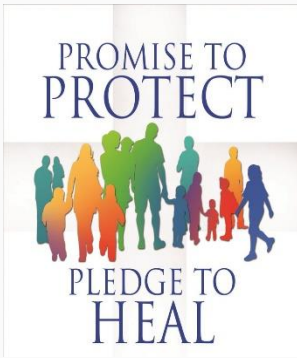
If your child is out sick, they can still stay on track with their peers by completing the make-up assignments posted to their *Christ in Us* portal.

Mrs. McDonald and I generally post missed assignments to the portal on Wednesdays after the conclusion of both CCD days. If you need information on how to access your child's portal, please reach out.

Student username = first initial of first name and last name (all lower case)*

Student password = student

If you have children with the same first initial, the passwords will be their full first and last name. For example, I have a Sarah and a Sophia Noll. Their usernames would be "sarahnoll" and "sophianoll" and both of their passwords would be "student."



Empowering God's Children Parent Workshop

Earlier today our office sent out an emailed letter to the parents of all K-7th grade students regarding the Empowering God's Children Program. We thank you in advance for your cooperation and participation. You can access the letter [HERE](#).

If you are interested in attending the Empowering God's Children Parent Education Workshop with Virtus-trained facilitator Diane Beni on Saturday, February 1st at 10:00, please [RSVP HERE](#) or email Jen Noll at jennollols@gmail.com. During the workshop, Ms. Beni will be talking to parents about how to help their children understand their personal physical boundaries and the difference between safe and unsafe touches. It will also help parents teach their kids how to identify the safe versus unsafe adults in their lives.



OLS Food Pantry Update

Here are some 2024 statistics from the OLS Food Pantry:

- In 2024, the pantry distributed 6,520 bags of shelf stable items groceries (pasta, sauce, rice, PB&J, beans, soup, tuna/chicken, etc.). These are only the bags received by every family. In addition to this bag, each family is provided with fresh produce, milk and bread on all distribution dates.
- On average, the pantry distributed food to 250 families every other Saturday. A family may consist of 1 person or as many as 10 individuals. The average family size is 3-4 people.
- About 67% of those served by our pantry are adults, 22% of them senior citizens. The remaining 33% of our clients are children.

- Approximately 25% of our pantry families live in Maplewood/South Orange, with the balance living in the surrounding area.
- Adding up all our Saturday distributions for 2024, the pantry served 5,843 families, representing 19,978 individuals. This was a 19% increase from 2023.

The pantry's inventory is running low after a very busy holiday season. A list of the pantry's most needed items can also be found on the OLS website <https://olschurch.com/foodpantry/>

Thanks for your help!



5 Things to Know about Jubilee Year 2025

Jubilee 2025 is a special Holy Year proclaimed by Pope Francis, dedicated to the theme “Pilgrims of Hope.” This Jubilee is a time for renewal, reflection, and spiritual growth, offering us an opportunity to deepen our faith and experience God’s grace in profound ways.

1. A jubilee year, also known as a “holy year,” is a special year in the life of the Church currently celebrated every 25 years. The most recent ordinary jubilee was in 2000, with Pope Francis calling for an Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy in 2015-2016.

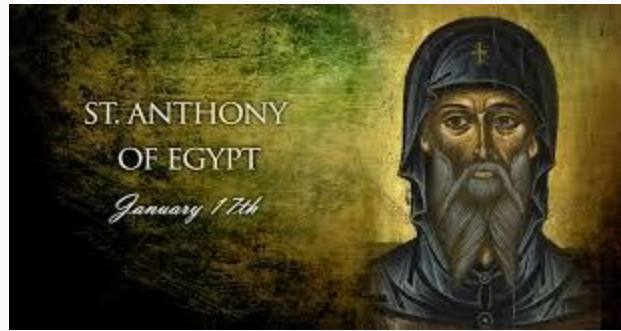
2. Jubilee years have been held on regular intervals in the Catholic Church since 1300, but they trace their roots to the Jewish tradition of marking a jubilee year every 50 years. According to the Vatican website for the jubilee, these years in Jewish history were “intended to be marked as a time to re-establish a proper relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation, and involved the forgiveness of debts, the return of misappropriated land, and a fallow period for the fields.”

3. Jubilee 2025 opened Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, at 7 p.m., with the rite of the opening of the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican immediately before Pope Francis celebrates midnight Mass. Holy Doors were also opened at Rome's three other major basilicas: St. John Lateran, St. Mary Major, and St. Paul's Outside the Walls on Jan. 5. A Holy Door will also be opened Dec. 26 at Rebibbia Prison, a Roman prison Pope Francis has visited twice before to celebrate Mass and wash inmates' feet on Holy Thursday.

3. The doors represent the passage to salvation Jesus opened to humanity. In 1423, Pope Martin V opened the Holy Door in the Basilica of St. John Lateran – the Diocese of Rome's cathedral – for the first time for a jubilee. For the Holy Year of 1500, Pope Alexander VI opened Holy Doors at Rome's four main basilicas. At the end of a holy year, the Holy Doors are formally closed and then bricked over by masons.

4. The theme of the Holy Year is "*Pilgrims of Hope*." The papal bull, issued May 9, that introduced the coming Jubilee Year is titled "*Spes Non Confundit*," or "Hope does not disappoint," drawn from *Romans* 5:5. "Everyone knows what it is to hope," Pope Francis wrote. "In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring.

5. Drawing on their Jewish roots, jubilee years emphasize the sacrament of reconciliation and restoring relationships with God. They also provide an opportunity for a special jubilee indulgence, which can remove the residual effects of sin through the grace of Christ.



SAINT / FEAST OF THE WEEK

St. Anthony of Egypt, Abbot

Feast Day: January 17th

Anthony was born in Egypt in 250. At age 20, when his parents died, Anthony made sure his younger sister's education could be completed in a community of holy women. He then sold all his possessions and left for a life of solitude in the desert. There an elderly hermit taught him about prayer and penance. For 20 years, he lived in isolation. Anthony wanted to know God deeply. He did penance by taking only bread and water once a day at sunset. The devil appeared to him in terrible shapes to tempt him. But Anthony had great confidence in God. Anthony's unusual life did not make him harsh but radiant with God's love and compassion.

Stories of Anthony's holiness spread, and people came to learn from him how to become holy. Some admirers wanted to stay, so Anthony—at age 54—founded a type of monastery consisting of hermitages near one another. Anthony wrote a rule that guided the monks. Later when Anthony heard of the persecutions of the Christians, he wanted to die a martyr. At 60, he left the desert to minister to the Christians in prisons, fearlessly exposing himself to danger. He came to realize that a person can die daily for Christ by serving him in ordinary ways with great love, so he returned to the desert to his life of prayer and penance.

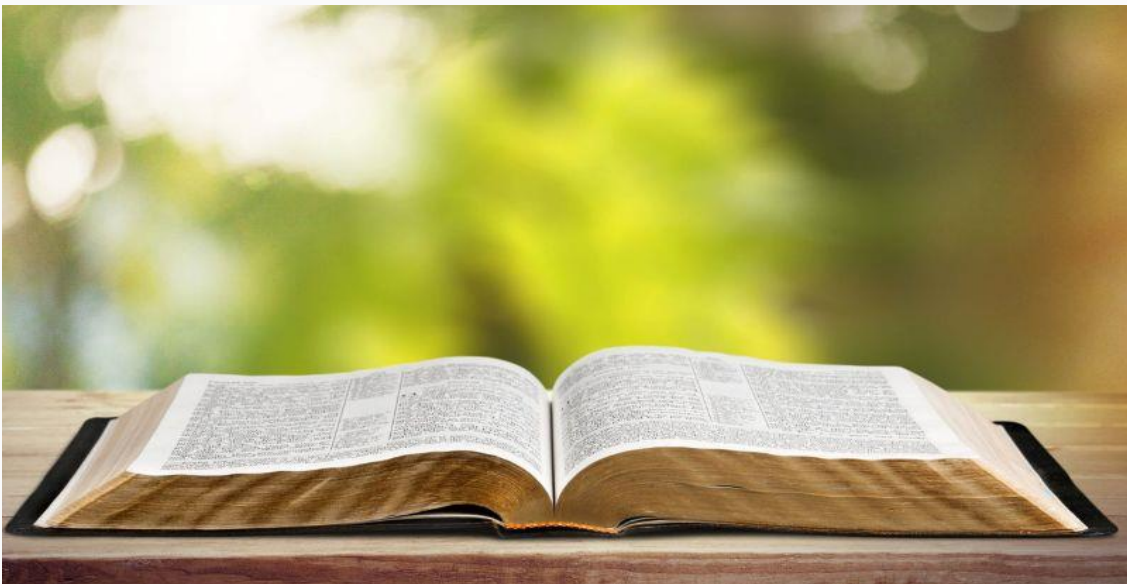
His life of solitude was again interrupted, however, when at age 88 he had a vision in which he saw the harm Arian followers were doing to the Church by denying the divinity of Christ. Anthony left for Alexandria to preach against this heresy. At age 90, another vision sent Anthony searching the desert for Saint Paul, the first hermit. These two holy men met and spoke of the wonders of God. Anthony is said to have died peacefully in a cave at age 105.



Applying the Lessons of a Hermit

Forget "timeouts!" The next time you see your child's actions bordering on misbehavior, try "hermit time." Direct your child to a quiet place and ask them to practice 15 minutes of silence. Allow them to read Scripture, write in their reflection notebook, or read the life of a saint. Invite them to share what they learned from their solitude.

You can also try teaching your child short prayers, such as "My Jesus Mercy," "My God I Trust in You," and "Jesus, Mary, Joseph." Encourage them to pray one of these prayers silently during the day - especially in times of need.



In the Liturgy of the Word, the Church feeds the people of God from the table of his Word. Previewing the readings before Mass is then a bit like looking over the menu before you get to a restaurant: you have a better idea of what you can expect so that you can enter into the experience more fully prepared. And like a good discussion during a meal, discussing the readings and how they can be applied to your family's daily life helps your family to truly go out and proclaim the gospel after leaving the church.

Here are a few resources to help your family delve deeper into the Liturgy of the Word:

[The Second Sunday in Ordinary Time](#)

[Loyola Press: Sunday Connection](#)

[Sadlier: This Week's Liturgy](#)

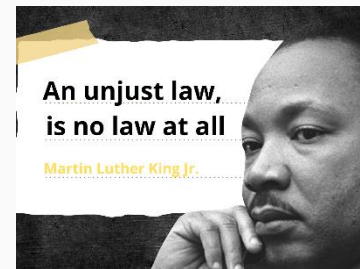
Catholic Trivia

Question: Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous quote regarding unjust laws is a quote first attributed to which Catholic saint?

- a) Augustine
- b) Frances de Sales
- c) Sebastian
- d) Vincent

Answer: a Augustine

In the fourth century AD, Augustine of Hippo said "for I think a law that is not just, is not actually a law" ("*nam mihi lex esse non videtur, quae justa non fuerit*"). He wrote this when discussing why evil exists; his conclusion was that it is ultimately a problem caused by people departing from good or just behavior.



Joke of the Week

Question: *"Did you hear the joke about the germ?"*

Answer: "I'm not telling you. I don't want to spread it around."

Jen Noll
Catechetical Coordinator
jennollols@gmail.com
973-763-5454 x235

Colleen McDonald
Religious Education Assistant
sorrowschurch@gmail.com
973-763-5454 x285

[Our Lady of Sorrows Website](#)