CCD Family Newsletter

September 2, 2026 - September 9, 2026

Family Mass and Coffee & Donuts Resume!

Sunday, September 13th

10:00 am

Our first official **10:00 am Family Mass** is coming up soon! Please **reach out to Colleen McDonald at cmcdonald@olschurch.com if your child would like to have a special role** during the Mass. And you know what the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month mean: Coffee and Donuts! Be sure to join your friends in St. Joseph's Hall for refreshments and crafts!

It's Party Time!

The annual OLS **parish picnic** is coming up on Sunday, **September 20th**. It's a great way to connect with other CCD families in an informal way before the start of classes. Be sure to join us for some food, fun and friendship. Honestly, who really wants to cook? And a good, old-fashioned barbeque just makes everyone feel like summer is still here! RSVP by September 15th.

It's Time to Select a Day!

If you were unable to commit to a day of the week at registration, **please let us know as soon as possible if your child will be joining us on Mondays or Tuesdays** this coming year. Knowing which day or students will be attending obviously helps us assign catechists where needed. Thanks for your cooperation.

It's Form Time - Sorry!

An email with all of the **necessary digital forms** for the start of the CCD year was emailed earlier today, you can also find links to them below. Please complete them sooner rather than later. Students will not be able to start without an up-to-date Emergency Contact Form on file.

2026-2027 Emergency Contact Form

2026-2027 Photo Opt In / Out

Mrs. McDonald will email Epi-pen Forms to all the families who indicated on their registration form that their children require the use of an epi-pen.

Our Handbook Acknowledgement and the Archdiocese of Newark's Digital Communications Policy Acknowledgement Forms, as per usual, will be sent out in hard copy form in your family's first day packet.

It's NOT Quite Time for CCD...

Take a deep breath; there's still plenty of time before CCD starts! Click HERE for the complete 2026-2027 CCD Program Calendar.

Homeschooling Begins: Week of September 27th
Monday Classes Start: September 28th
Tuesday Classes Start: September 29th

It's Time for 9th Graders to Register for Youth Group!

Colleen McDonald emailed information about Youth Group registration to all 9th grade families this week, so please check your inbox for additional details. There is a mandatory Youth Group parent meeting for incoming freshmen on Wednesday, September 30th at 8:00pm in the church. The first Youth Group meeting for freshmen will be held the next Sunday, October 4th, in the lower church in St. Joseph's Hall from 7:30-9:00 PM.

Questions about the Youth Group program should be directed to Colleen McDonald at cmcdonald@olschurch.com or OLS's youth minister, Chris Kaiser, at ckaiser@olschurch.com.

Youth Group Link for 9th Grade Students

It's Time for Cross Country!

Important Details:

Practices: Tuesday and Thursday 6:00-7:00pm / Saturdays from 9:30-10:30am at Flood's Hill in South Orange

Season runs from September to early November 2026

Open to boys and girls in grades: K - 8, No experience necessary

Volunteer Coaches Needed

Team is always looking for additional volunteer coaches. If interested, please reach out to Coach Elisa Nicoletti at a.e.nicoletti@gmail.com or Nick Rego at olsathletics@gmail.com

Meet Schedule:

Meets are typically weekend mornings to early afternoons; 1-2 meets are held on weeknights during the end of October. Meet Schedule will be released in the end of August.

Fees and Requirements:

$40 Registration Fee (Checks made payable to "OLS Sports", Send to OLS School Office with player's name - Attn: NICK REGO - XC 2027 FEES) Online Payment option will be provided.

Availability to work 1 volunteer shift at the February Frenzy tournament (February 12th - 21st, 2027)

Each athlete must have completed the following to be eligible to play (forms are valid for all sports in the 2026-2027 school year):

-Pre-participation physical evaluation filed with school nurse

-Sudden Cardiac Death Pamphlet Sign off

CLICK HERE TO ACCESS ALL HEALTH FORMS

CYO PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM AND LIABILITY WAIVER

OLS Crusaders Cross Country Registration Form

It's Time for Girls Fall Volleyball!

Key Dates:

First practice date - Early September after Labor Day

There will be a mandatory parent meeting in September on a date TBD before the start of the regular season

Regular Season Games: September 18th - November 7th

Playoffs: November 10th - November 15th

Requirements:

$150 registration fee per player (check or online payment - link to be provided)

Mandatory volunteer commitment for each family @ February Frenzy and regular season games.

Players must have all proper medical forms and provided CYO waivers completed

Practices:

1-2 practices a week (times/days of the week TBD by coaches)

Games:

Travel league play: 10-12 game season + playoffs

- Games will be on select weeknights and weekends.
- Home Games OLS gym

- Away Games @ neighboring CYO schools

Team Structure:

There will be 2 age group teams for this season with a maximum of 12 players on a team roster.

JV Girls: 5th - 6th grade girls and **Varsity Girls:** 7th - 8th grade girls

Coaching Requirements & Commitment:

- **We are in need of 2 volunteer coaches for each team. Volleyball coaching experience is not needed.**
- Must complete a Protecting God's Children course through Virtus Online
- 1-2 practice a week / 1-2 games a week (practice/game schedule are flexible)
- Mid-September to Mid-November season (10-12 games + playoffs)

If interested, please reach out to Nick Rego at olsathletics@gmail.com for more info.

OLS Crusaders Girls Volleyball Registration Form

It's Time for Music!

As you begin to figure out the calendar for the new school year, consider signing your child up for our St. Cecilia Singers choir. It's a great opportunity for kids in grades 3-8 to learn musical technique, gain performance experience and share their gifts with their parish family. Let Preston Dibble know if your child is interested. It's amazing, FREE vocal training.

It's Time to Get Serious About Your Child's Spiritual Life!

Prioritizing Christian Virtues

In a culture heavily focused on academic performance and competition, it is important for Catholic families to emphasize character over achievements.

Praise the Effort: Celebrate traits like integrity, kindness and humility just as joyfully as you would an "A" or a sports trophy.

Evening Reflection: At dinner or at bedtime, ask your children where they saw God during the day or highlight a specific Christian virtue - like patience or generosity - that they practiced.

Chores and Character: When setting up new chores or bedtime routines, explain the "why" behind them by connecting them to Christian virtues and gifts from God.

Stay Spiritually Engaged as Parents

Catholic parents need to be present and communicate love, security and a living faith with their children.

Partner with Teachers: Get to know your child's educators personally. Communicate your family's educational philosophy and expectations early on to build a unified team.

Parental Recharge: Take 15 to 30 minutes a day for your own mental and spiritual health. Steal moments of quiet time for your own prayer life, like slipping into a local church for silent prayer while your kids are at a sports practice or school rehearsal.

Watch for Signs of Stress: Keep communication positive and open with your children. Watch for back-to-school anxiety signs, including changes in sleep, loss of appetite, or social isolation. In your communication with your children, validate their feelings and let them know you are there for them.

School Year Faith Questions for Catholic Families

These questions can be used for personal journaling, bedtime check-ins, or family conversations in the evening.

With Elementary and Middle School Children:

- Where did I see God's beauty or goodness in school today?
- Was there someone in school today that looked lonely and sad? How can I be a friend to them tomorrow?
- What was the hardest part of the day? Did I ask God for his help?
- Was I honest and fair in my schoolwork and school games today? How can I do better tomorrow?

With High School and College Children:

- Was I faithful to my Christian identity today in my interactions with others?
- Did I take time today to pray and thank the Lord for his abundant blessings?
- Did I share God's love with those I met today? And, if I did not, how can I do better?

With the entire Family:

- Does our family calendar reflect that Sunday Mass and family prayer time is our top priority? If not, how can we make it so?
- How can we better support each other with the challenges that come throughout the school year?
- What "spiritual routines" can we realistically stick to this school year?

STAY CONNECTED!

ARCHDIOCESE of NEWARK

OFFICE FOR LIFELONG FAITH FORMATION

SAINT / FEAST OF THE WEEK

The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Feast Day: September 8th

Just a few weeks ago, we celebrated the Queenship of Mary, rejoicing in Mary as the Queen of Heaven and Earth. On September 8th, the Church celebrates something that might seem very different: Mary's birthday! The Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary celebrates the birth of the woman God chose to become the mother of His Son.

The Church teaches that Mary was the daughter of St. Joachim and St. Anne. Her birth was a beautiful beginning to the story that would eventually lead to the birth of Jesus. This feast gives families a wonderful reminder: God has a plan for every person from the very beginning of his or her life. Mary's parents brought her up in faith, and from her earliest years she was helped by her family to prepare for the special role God had given her.

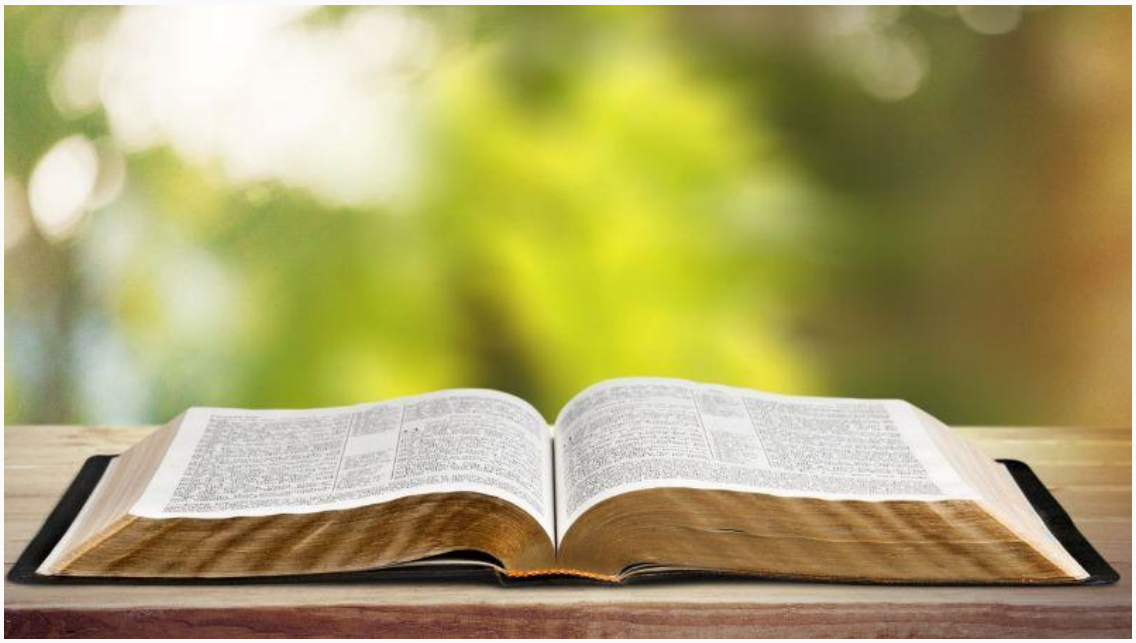
We are especially blessed at Our Lady of Sorrows to have two beautiful works of art that help us picture these early moments in Mary's life. When you walk into the church, look to the right: you'll see our beautiful stained-glass window of St. Anne holding little Mary. It is a wonderful image of a mother teaching and caring for her child—and a reminder that faith is first learned in the family.

Then look to the left of the sanctuary, where you'll find the beautiful painting of Mary's Presentation in the Temple. This depicts the tradition that Mary was presented to God at a young age, dedicating her life to Him. These two images give us a lovely picture of Mary growing up surrounded by faith.

Mary's birthday is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the gift of each child in your family. Take a moment to tell your children the story of Mary's birth and remind them that they, too, are wonderfully made by God and have a special purpose in His plan.

It's Time to Celebrate!

Every good birthday party needs cake and a few fun activities! Check out all of the great (and often quite delicious) ideas to help your family celebrate Mary's birthday on the Catholic Icing website. One of the easiest (and cutest) ways to mark this special day is by pulling out one of your child's old baby dolls and set it up in a place of prominence. It's a great reminder that the Queen of Heaven was once a little baby just like us!



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 this week:

USCCB: Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Loyola Press: Sunday Connection

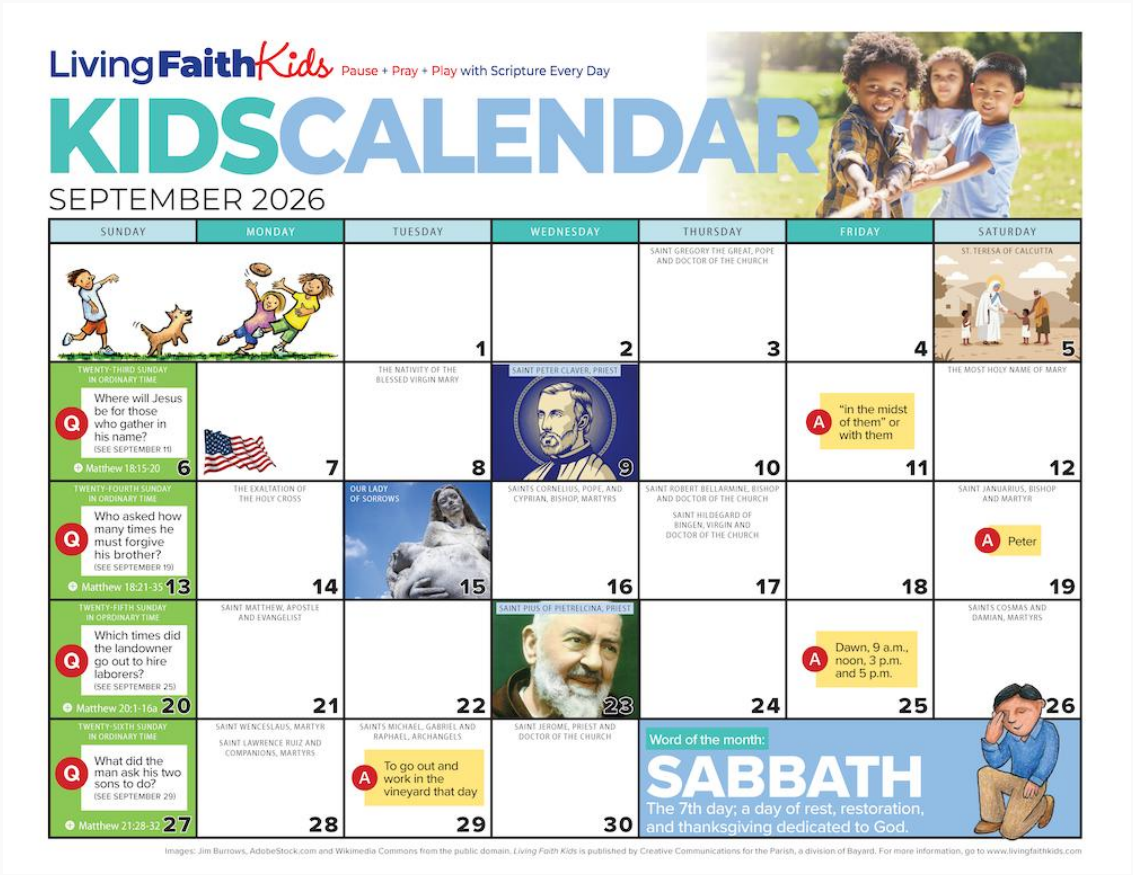
Sadlier: This Week's Liturgy

MaryKnoll Brothers Reflection: When Relationships Get Messy

It's Time for the Mark 10 Mission!

The good folks at the Mark 10 Mission are back with amazing Gospel reflections for kids. Please give them a try as they do an excellent job of opening up the scriptures for children. Prepare for Mass with the Mark 10 Mission!

Is Jesus with Me? - Little Liturgy for Kids 7 and Under
Forgiveness is a Strength - Liturgy for Kids 8 and Up



Download the September Catechist Magazine Calendar

Catholic Trivia

Question: Which local Catholic high school requires all its high school freshmen to complete a 55-mile Appalachian Trail hike?

a) Lacordaire Academy
b) Seton Hall Preparatory School
c) Union Catholic Regional High School
d) Saint Benedict's Preparatory School

Answer: D Each year St. Benedict's Prep prepares all of its freshmen for a mandatory 5-day, 55-mile backpacking trip from High Point State Park in New Jersey to the Delaware Water Gap on the Appalachian Trail, supported by adults but guided by the students themselves.

To read more about this amazing experience, click HERE.
To watch the CBS Evening News 3-minute video on the hike, click HERE.

Joke of the Week

Q: What's the difference between a teacher and a train?

A: A teacher tells you to throw your gum out, while a train tells you to, "Chew! Chew!"

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Our Lady of Sorrows Website