

Dear Parents

When you asked to have your child or children baptized, you said you understood your responsibility to train them in the *practice* of the faith. “You must make it your constant care to bring them up in the *practice* of the faith,” the rite reminded you a second time immediately before you renewed your own baptismal promises and asked to have your child(ren) baptized.

“Practice” is the key word. Craig Dykstra and Dorothy Bass write “Christian practices are things Christian people do together over time in response to and in the light of God’s active presence for the life of the world.” A little later in that same essay they write, “in . . . the Eucharist, every one of the Christian practices finds guidance. The worshipers experience the extravagant hospitality of God at the table and commit themselves to extend God’s welcome to others; they collectively say no to what is harmful and yes to what is good; they keep the Sabbath holy in a joyful celebration of Christ’s resurrection.”

“A Christian community at worship is a community gathered for rehearsal. It is ‘practicing’ the practices in the same way a child practices catching a ball or playing scales. You may not think you need this skill, we tell the child, but stay in the game and the time will probably come when you do.”

We know how diligent you are in seeing that your children get to practices of many kinds. However we do not see this central practice of our faith, participation in the Sunday Eucharist, regularly getting the same attention. The primary reason our parishes built, maintain and support a Catholic school is to nurture the *practice* of the faith. Early in this new school year is an excellent time to examine your practice of the faith and your attention to the practices of the faith, especially you and your family’s participation in the Sunday Eucharist. It is an excellent time to attend to the practices which result in more faithful and fulfilling living for you and your children. It is an excellent time to make any changes which are needed to practice more faithfully.

If you are the parents of our non-Catholic student, know we are very pleased they are part of our school community. We want to support them and you in the practice of your faith. We trust that nothing we do at school compromises this. If it does, please tell us. We also encourage you and your families to join a community of worship each Sunday.

Together may each of us do our part to that in children’s lives and in our own lives God “may make us worthy of his calling and powerfully bring to fulfillment every good purpose and every effort of faith that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, in accord with the grace of our God and Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thess. 1:11-12)

Sincerely in the Lord Jesus,

Fr. Jerry Ward
Pastor , St. Patrick Church of Merna

Fr. Doug Hennessy
Pastor, Holy Trinity Church