

Beacons Update: Youth & Family

Over the past year of our Beacons of Light journey, we've invested our combined resources into the formation of our children, youth, and families.

Through our sacramental preparation programs, youth ministry, and Family Sunday events, we've watched children and teens grow in their faith and seen parents mature in their God-given role as teachers of their children.

Youth Ministry Evangelization

The Fuller Youth Institute recently came out with a study that found that the number of adults needed in a young person's faith life for them to take ownership of their faith is **five adults**. We at Stella Maris Youth Ministry, both High School and Junior High, have striven to help youth keep, grow in, and fall in love with their Catholic faith.

One way we have done this is by having incredible Adult Core Team members help mentor and walk with the young people as they



encounter God through games, formation, small groups, and the Sacraments. We've had 15+ adult volunteers, or Core Team Members, in regular attendance at youth nights who have had an amazing impact on the young people at the Parish.

Our hope is that through the positive influence of adult mentors, we can help provide the necessary support that young people need in order to keep the faith their whole life long. In terms of eternal salvation, in the words of Léon Bloy, "The only tragedy in life is not to become a saint." Our goal with youth ministry is ultimately to help the youth to get to Heaven.

Whether it be the high school and junior high youth ministry programs, the IGNITE Confirmation Program, or the campus ministry efforts in our Catholic grade schools, our youth ministry evangelization efforts, by the grace of God, have impacted many lives and helped bring many souls closer to God.

Family Faith

The catechism states that "Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God." (CCC 2226)

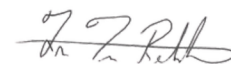
For this reason, parents played an integral role this year in First Reconciliation and First Communion preparation for their children, as well as the formation of children who entered the Church at Stella Maris this Easter. The First Reconciliation and First Communion prep program gave parents tools and guidance to help their children enter into and prepare for the mystery of these sacraments at home, with support from our parish catechists. Parents led their children in a series of family meetings, including prayer, learning, and hands-on activities that slowly unfolded the meaning of each sacrament.

Our Become Catholic for Children program combined bi-weekly classes in Stievenard Hall with at-home, family-based homework designed to help parents and children engage in meaningful discussion and prayer about the truths of the faith. In total, 12 children and 3 adults (parents) entered the Church this Easter after completing this preparation program.

Finally, our Family Sunday events helped parents and kids connect with each other and with God through good food, prayer, and fun. Nearly 50 families attended these events, and parents walked away with practical tools to continue leading their children in prayer at home.



St. Thomas More parishioner Kristen Bagnall, with her children Caroline, Delaney, and Bennett, after receiving the sacrament of Baptism this Easter.



Fr. Tim Ralston
Pastor of Stella Maris