

## Faith Formation is a Vital from Womb to Tomb

As you are aware, recently Mrs. Kayla Rooney who had been our Director of Lifelong Faith Formation started a new position at Saint John the Baptist of Savage. The position remains open, but we'll be having an interview coming up with a committee on Saturday, September 16th, next weekend.

One of the things I hope to continue to work with our new director on will be the notion of faith formation as a true "womb to tomb" thing we embrace. My hopes are we can help people of all ages on their faith journey.

Sometimes we see the sacraments as the signs of journeying through our Catholic faith; most of us celebrate first reconciliation and first communion in elementary school, then nearly a decade later are confirmed. The challenge though for us isn't to see the celebration of the sacraments like a "graduation" but rather stepping stones for us on our way to sainthood.

The problem is we live in a very secular world, and practically speaking being we are also very busy, sometimes faith formation can get put on the back burner to school, sports, household busyness, etc. So how do we fan the flames of the Holy Spirit?

It starts at home. It's important to remember the Church is there to help and assist parents, but faith formation is the primary role of parents. Develop a habit of prayer with the family, even if it's just a few minutes at the end of the day. Make Mass a priority in your week. Talk about what happens at Mass with kids and why we go there. Consider books on the faith for children. Use the faith to explain to kids why we do some things and do not do others. Go to confession every so often as a family. When we combine these things, it helps children to see faith not just for Sunday morning or Wednesday evening at religious education class, but as a way of life.

How is faith in our own lives? That's a key question to ask. For many of us it's been years since we were in a faith formation class. But faith formation entails both coming to Mass, but also truly entering into the Mass, praying, and finding times for spiritual growth. There are a lot of good online resources too that are helpful especially helpful. Consider checking things out online for spiritual reading and videos; favorites of mine are the bishops website, which has daily readings, reflections and documents at [usccb.org](http://usccb.org); Bishop Robert Barron's "Word on Fire" ministry at [wordonfire.org](http://wordonfire.org); "The Catholic Thing" a Catholic blog with articles on various topics [thecatholicthing.org](http://thecatholicthing.org); the Eternal Word Television Network site, [ewtn.com](http://ewtn.com), which also has numerous apologetic articles; and the home page of Blackfriars, a Dominican Order from England and Scotland, which features short, but quality weekly homilies dating back 10 years at [torch.op.org](http://torch.op.org). Then there is the Vatican's website too, [vatican.va](http://vatican.va), where you'll find the catechism, apostolic letters, info on saints, and all sorts of good stuff. And we are also as a parish a part of "formed" - a great apologetics website with tons of stuff for adults and kids. Simply create your own account going to [formed.org/signup](http://formed.org/signup), type in 55068 to quickly find our parish, and enter your name and email and you're good go to. And don't

forget apps for your iphone like "Hallow". Of course there are many mediocre sites out there too when you go looking that may have bad information or be misleading, so do some checking on the author and source.

We also think about the faith informing our lives. If we know the faith through prayer and study, we apply it to how we treat people we meet. As the saying goes, sometimes we are the only Bible people read, and especially for kids in the house, they learn so much when they see parents loving one another, making sacrifices for the family, saying both "I love you" and "I'm sorry" if they make a mistake and working hard.

Again, I think with respect to the faith it goes back to something I've heard Bishop Robert Barron speak of numerous times, namely the faith is not just one thing among many, but the center of our lives. God is like the north star around which all the others rotate. So many things fill our lives. Hobbies and interests are great, but at the end of the day we don't want to say to God we learned how to be a great golfer, a great busybody, or make a lot of money. Nothing matters more than getting to heaven. Jesus has shown us the way there, may we use the virtue of faith given to us on our baptism and grow in it every day of our lives.

Have a blessed week. Please continue to pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance to send us the right candidate, and for our interview next weekend.

God's blessings to you,

Fr. Paul