



St. Rita News

The new monthly newsletter serving Saint Rita Parish

SEPTEMBER 2013

VOLUME II, ISSUE 8

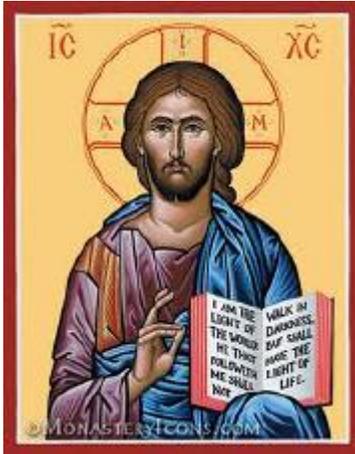
New CCD Structure Promotes Learning the Faith as a Family

Some changes are in store for students of St. Rita's Religious Education Classes, which will begin September 15. In an expansion of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, Kindergarten students will also now attend the Montessori Atrium

Level 1 each Sunday from 9:30-10:45 am. Though many students will continue to meet on a weekly or semi-weekly basis, students in grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 will attend CCD on Sunday mornings only once per month. The balance of their study time will be spent completing assignments with their parents from home.

Recalling his own desire to spend time learning the faith from his parents, Father Gee has implemented program changes to promote close work between parents and children as they learn the faith. The Catechism explains that parents are their children's first teachers.

These changes encourage parents as teachers and provide them with ongoing support from the St. Rita community. St. Rita Director of Religious Education, Mrs. Betsy Nunn, anticipates a rewarding year ahead, "This new system allows parents and children to take more responsibility for learning the faith. ... I am hoping that the class time will be fun for the kids -- to share and discuss what they have been learning, get to know other kids their age--as well as a time to get extra help



"Religion is not something we impose on children, it already exists in their soul, and they are searching for words for it. We are their guides, helping them to find answers to their many questions."

-- MRS. BETSY NUNN, *St. Rita DRE*

on faith questions and prayers." Mrs. Nunn hopes that high school students may volunteer in each class to help the students individually, on a one-to-one basis while the teacher works with the group as a whole. While Grade 3-6 students attend

their monthly class, at least one parent must attend a parallel session where "one of the priests will meet with the parents to offer a review of the monthly topics, answer questions, give encouragement and so forth." Then parents and students spend time throughout the month studying the faith together, with parents guiding their children as they learn at their own pace. Mrs. Nunn also plans to offer optional "How To" sessions, that parents may attend with their children, to highlight some practical topics such as observing Advent or praying the Rosary as a family.

Reflecting on the role of parents and teachers as guides in religious education, Mrs. Nunn says, "Adults and children should have a shared religious experience; we listen with the child, and pray with them. We give them a time of silence so they can listen to the God who loves them so much, and to talk to Him from their heart. We help them to encounter the wonders of the faith, and let the Holy Spirit guide them in their quest for more."



SAVE THE DATE: Year of Faith Pilgrimage

St. Rita Parishioners of all ages and all walks of life will be making a Year of Faith pilgrimage to the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on October 13th! For more information on this exciting event, see www.arlingtondiocese.org/pilgrimage, or contact coordinator Melanie Matel at melanie.matel@gmail.com.



Save the Date for the 10th Annual St. Rita 5K!

The 10th Annual St. Rita 5K Fun Run & Walk for Education will take place on Saturday, October 19, 2013 at 9am in Four Mile Run Park in Alexandria.

For more information -- or to register! -- please visit <http://www.novaracetiming.com/Race/StRita5k.html>. Sponsorship opportunities are also available-- please contact Lisa McNichols at lisadonofrio@hotmail.com or Jude Prabaharan at jprabaharan@gmail.com.

St. Rita Father's Group FALL KICKOFF!

Join the Fathers Group on September 13th for an insightful and lively discussion led by Fr. Stephen Fields, SJ, Professor of Theology at Georgetown University. The discussion will be on Faith & Reason, a theme from Benedict's papacy. We'll meet at 7:30pm with Mass in the Church, followed by beer and pizza in the Parish Center. Any and all interested St. Rita's fathers are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Seven Steps to A Sacred Space in the Domestic Church



As we put away the summer's sunscreen and flip flops in favor of autumn's backpacks and jackets, we cannot help but mark the change in seasons. But how often to we mark the Church's feast days or liturgical seasons in our homes?

While instituting a new fall routine, consider creating and maintaining a designated prayer space to gather individually or as a family. Establishing such a space is a simple way to keep Christ as the focus of your home.

- 1) Dedicate a small table, shelf, or similar piece of furniture to serve as a prayer table. Ideally this should be placed on the house's Eastern wall, just as a church's altar would be.
- 2) Choose a cross or crucifix for a central focal point, though candles, statues of the Blessed Mother, icons, and prayer cards can enhance the space. (Note: When orienting these items, representations of the Blessed Mother are traditionally on the left side of crucifix from your perspective, so they are on the right side from Christ's perspective.)
- 3) Place a Bible, as well as rosaries and prayer books, close at hand.
- 4) Keep four small cloths on hand to cover your table appropriately for the liturgical season (white, green, purple and red); large dinner napkins work nicely, especially in smaller spaces.
- 5) If there are small children in your home, try to make at least some of the items "kid-friendly." Alternatively, create an entirely different space for the children with sturdy items made of wood or plastic. The children can then participate in changing the display with the feast days and seasons.
- 6) As you set your weekly schedule, check in with the liturgical calendar as well. Retail outlets, catalogs and periodicals succeed in strategically urging us to prepare for the upcoming holidays months in advance, whether it be Thanksgiving, Christmas or Easter. Regularly consulting a liturgical calendar allows us to make the same spiritual preparations.
- 7) Have a written index or single area in your home to keep your religious icons, sacramentals, statues and other religious objects. This will allow you to easily rotate items on your prayer table with coinciding feast days.

LIVING OUR FAITH

Baptisms



- + Quinn Marie Schaefer, August 3
- + Nicolas Del Alcazar, August 10
- + Lucille Virginia Schweers, August 10
- + Austin Eric Co, August 17
- + John Frederic Bauer, August 17
- + Daniel A. Marquy, August 24
- + Brandon A. Chavarria, August 24
- + Elmer Ochoa Fuentes, August 24
- + Kevin A. Ochoa Fuentes, August 24
- + Adelis M. Ochoa Fuentes, August 24
- + Michelle N. Ochoa Fuentes, August 24
- + Conner A. Bergin, August 24

Weddings



- + Jordan J. Callaway & Victoria M. Diaz, August 10
- + Edgar O. Granados & Maria V. Cruz, August 24
- + Robert S. Gorman & Magdalena Pinkowska, August 24

Prayer Intentions

Do you a parishioner who is ill, and in need of prayers? Or a parishioner who is serving in the armed forces, overseas? We will be happy to publish their names so that fellow parishioners can pray for them. Please contact Catherine Feil at catherine.feil@gmail.com or 703.671.0402 to submit prayer intentions to be published in the next issue. Thank you!

Do you have ideas for future items in the parish newsletter, or would you like to submit a feature for publication? All submissions can be directed to Catherine Feil at catherine.feil@gmail.com or 703.671.0402. Thank you!