

There is a Season...turn, turn, turn

- 1 There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
- 2 a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
- 3 a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
- 4 a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
- 5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
- 6 a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
- 7 a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
- 8 a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Change is inevitable. We start as infants and change quickly into toddlers, teenagers, and eventually adults. Our bodies change. Our hair changes. For many, our health and teeth also change. Even how we live has changed. Today we have electricity, cell phones, computers, and the beloved indoor plumbing.

There is a time for everything. In our former years, when Church was the apex of all we did and dictated our social calendars, everyone was available for Mass on Sundays and Christian Formation. Even the name Christian Formation has developed and changed over the years, from CCD to Sunday School to Religious Education to Faith Formation. We went from memorizing the Baltimore Catechism and having answers to most faith questions (head knowledge) to learning faith through experiential opportunities (heart knowledge); today we strive to combine both heart and head knowledge.

Some things have never changed, however. First and foremost is God, who always was, always is, and always will be; God, whose love never fails; God who **IS** truth and love. Second is the Church teaching and understanding that parents are by word and example, the primary teachers of the faith, their children's first catechists...the most important people who share and model their faith...the leaders of their families.

For many reasons, it is important as a parish to recognize what remains the same and what changes are needed over time. One major change coming to our Fall 2020 formation is how we help parents fulfill their role as their children's first teacher. Parents are so vital in the passing on of our faith that the Church refers to the family, to the home, as the Domestic Church: "the first school of Christian life and 'a school for human enrichment.'" The Catechism of the Catholic Church emphasizes this by titling the paragraphs **The Duties of Parents**. Here it states "parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children." It adds that "parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God."

It is our job as Church, as the people of St. Patrick's, to walk alongside parents and guardians in their responsibilities, offering guidance as families navigate this faith path. Beginning this Fall, we will be fulfilling our role as companions on this journey by offering Parent-led Catechesis Christian Formation as the only formation model. What does this mean? This means that rather than families dropping their children off for class every week, **parents** attend class once a month. Parents learn the material and then teach their families at home during times convenient for the family. This means that families have more time together...more **quality time** together. This means that parents grow in their own faith while accompanying their children, modeling that we never cease learning, especially in our faith. This means that when your children come to Church for review sessions, meetings can be structured using a more social & engaging method. In addition, this means that families can gather together and pass on the faith in their own homes within their already created circles.

St. Patrick's piloted parent-led catechesis this year. Over twenty families are already participating in this model. These parents join together once a month for their lesson of the upcoming topics. Opening in prayer, the month's lessons and tips families have found that work for them are discussed along with the occasional struggles and alternative suggestions. One consistent comment from families is how much their children really enjoy the lessons and learning together as a family...even some of the early teens are taking initiative by asking parents to work on the lessons together.

While God remains constant and unchanging, to everything else, there is a season...the new season in Christian Formation is Parent-led catechesis....turn, turn, turn.