

MARY, MOTHER OF GOD PARISH  
AT  
HOLY ROSARY CHURCH

*RELIGIOUS EDUCATION HANDBOOK*

## **Vision Pray of Mary, Mother of God Parish**

Jesus, we are your people. We praise you as Savior and Lord. Deepen our commitment to you, your church, and each other.

Let us all share more actively in spreading the good news of God, present among us. Help us reach out to those who have not yet experienced the joy of participating in parish life.

Inspire us to seek justice and peace for all members of our parish family and beyond. Assist us in living Your Gospel of compassion and love in service to those in need. Mindful of our many blessings, we are especially grateful for your gift of our parish family ... a family dedicated to Mary, Mother of God, her spouse, Joseph, and our beloved saints, Anthony, Vincent, Stanislaus and Stephen.

Lord, send us Your Spirit, make us alive as we have never been. Let us celebrate together and place our hope in You.

Amen

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The purpose of the Religious Education Program is to teach the children about their Catholic Faith, the Word of God and the importance of living as Jesus did. The program strives to develop a sense of belonging in the parish community for the children and their families. The importance of participation, especially in the Celebration of the Eucharist, is stressed. It is our hope to make a strong and lasting connection with the children and their families so that as they grow, their faith will grow with God and Church being an important part of their lives.

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## **ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS**

All public school students in Grades One through Eight may register by having their parents fill out a registration form. Registration times are announced on the Parish Bulletin. Students may also register at the Parish Office or at regular class times.

Any student who attended Religious Education Classes and whose name is on the previous year's class list and has not registered is given a registration form at the first Religious Education Class in September. Students are asked to return their registration form the following week.

Registration Fee is \$20.00 for each student. Checks may be made payable to Mary, Mother of God. It is always best to send any fee in an envelope with your child's name and grade on it.

Other fees for the Religious Education Program are: First Reconciliation/First Eucharist Program (Grade 2) \$25.00. This fee covers the cost of the two textbooks that the children use. Children in Grade 2 do not pay the \$20.00 registration fee.

Confirmation fee is \$55.00 and is only collected the year that the students receive the Sacrament. The first year of Confirmation preparation, the fee is the \$20.00 registration fee.

### **CLASS TIMES/ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

On Sunday, classes will begin at 9:30a.m. and conclude at 10:45a.m. There is a Mass at 8:30a.m. or a Mass at 11:00a.m.. All students and their families are encouraged to attend Mass each week.

Students in Grades 1-5 will gather in the lunchroom in the lower level of the school. Their teachers will meet them there to go to class. No student is allowed in a classroom without a teacher. Students in Grade 6-7 will meet in the school Chapel for an opening prayer and announcements. Their teachers will meet them there to go to class.

When students are dismissed they will come out the side or back door of the school and exit through the driveway. Please meet your children there. Please do not double park on William Street. It causes a traffic jam since people are coming to the 11:00a.m. Mass. If your child is suppose to meet you at one of the corners, please let us know so they can be accompanied by an adult. Students remain with Mrs. Purcell or one of the teachers until you arrive.

On Tuesday, classes will begin at 2:45p.m. and conclude at 3:45p.m. Any student who comes directly from school will be met in the area between the school and the rectory. All students will report to the lower level of the school. Teachers will meet students there and take them to class. Please note that the first floor of the school is rented to NHS for use as a school for Autistic Students. It is important that we do not disturb them when we arrive for class.

Dismissal on Tuesday is at 3:45p.m. Students will exit through the side or back door of the school and exit through the driveway. Please do not double park on William Street. It creates a traffic jam and is dangerous for the students. Please park on the street or in the parking lot next to the Church. If your child is suppose to meet you at one of the corners, please let us know so that an adult can accompany them. If you are late, your child will wait with Mrs. Purcell or one of the teachers.

If public schools dismiss early because of winter weather, there will be no class that day. Sunday classes are held unless the weather is severe. You can check on the parish website: [www.marymotherofgodparish.org](http://www.marymotherofgodparish.org).

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Students are expected to follow the same rules as they do in school to insure the safety of all students. Respect for others is especially important. Each teacher will set up classroom rules with their students.

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## **DISCIPLINE**

A student will be corrected by the teacher if there is a problem. If the problem becomes serious, the Director will intervene and the parents will be contacted. A parent should notify us if there is a problem about which we should be aware.

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## **COMMUNICATION**

Notices are sent home on a regular basis with the children. The parish bulletin and website also contain information. Informative handouts are sent home regularly. Please take time to read them. It offers you another opportunity to talk to your children about God and Religion. A calendar is sent home with the children. You will be notified of any changes. Mrs. Betty Ann Lucas will contact you by phone about Children's Liturgies, attendance or information needed. Letters are also sent through the mail to keep you informed.

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## **HOMEWORK**

If your child is given homework, please help them complete it. Always ask about what they learned in class. Going to Mass is a weekly assignment. Learning prayers, the Commandments, the Sacraments, doing good deeds or completing a worksheet may be assignments given. Please encourage your child to complete assignments.

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## **TEACHERS**

Our teachers are volunteers and have devoted their time to helping children learn about their faith. In accordance with Diocesan policy, all of our volunteer teachers have Act 34 Clearances in order to work with your children. Remember that you, the parents, are your child's primary teachers. We cannot teach them all they need to know about their faith in one class each week. If you would like to help with this program, call the parish office at 342-4881.

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## THE SACRAMENTS

### FIRST RECONCILIATION

The Sacrament of Reconciliation, also referred to as Penance or Confession, is received for the first time by students in Second Grade. All Sacrament Preparation Programs require two years of instruction.

Therefore, in order to receive this Sacrament and Eucharist, children must complete the First Grade course of study, which teaches them about God, the Church, their prayers and other basics of our faith. Students must be baptized and present a Baptismal Certificate for our records. If the child was baptized in one of our North Scranton Churches, a certificate is not required since those records are available to us.

Parent Meetings are held as part of this program. The children will be required to attend some of these meetings. Parent Meetings will be approximately one hour and will be held four times throughout the school year after the 11:00 a.m. Mass. Two meetings are held for each Sacrament.

We will also hold a First Reconciliation Activity Day for these students on a Saturday morning. Parents are welcome to attend this session.

First Reconciliation is celebrated the first Saturday in Lent.

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### FIRST EUCHARIST

The Sacrament of Eucharist, also referred to as Holy Communion, is also usually received in Second Grade. Attendance at Mass is the best way to help prepare the children for this Sacrament of receiving Jesus Body and Blood.

First Eucharist preparation includes a text, First Eucharist Activity Day, parent meetings and practices.

The Celebration of First Eucharist is held the day before Mother's Day at 11:00 a.m.

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Please note that if a child repeats First Grade in school, he or she also repeats First Grade in Religious Education Class.

## CONFIRMATION

Confirmation preparation is also a two year program. Confirmation is celebrated every two years. Students in Grades Seven and Eight receive Confirmation. Students must attend and participate in class and other Confirmation activities for the two years or they will not be permitted to receive this Sacrament. Confirmation students are permitted no more than three absences during each year of preparation, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

The requirements for the Sacrament are: a Sacrament Information Sheet, Baptismal Certificate, twenty hours of service, a Saint Report, attendance and participation in all facets of the program (class, liturgies, retreats, service and practices). Students must attend Mass each week and exhibit knowledge of their faith. Sponsors are asked to attend one class with the student during the year of the celebration of the Sacrament. Each student and at least one parent meets with the Confirmation teacher for an evaluation before the Sacrament of Confirmation is celebrated.

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## ATTENDANCE

All students are expected to attend class regularly and to be on time. Please send in an excuse for a class missed. If a student is going to be absent, you may contact the Parish Office at 342-4881 to notify the teacher. If a child arrives late, he/she should go directly to their class. If a student misses two classes in a row, the parent will be contacted.

Classes are held on Tuesday from 2:45 p.m. until 3:45 p.m. for Grades 1-5. Classes are held on Sunday for Grades 6-7-8 from 9:30 a.m. until 10:45 a.m.

Students in Grades 1-5, who are unable to attend the Tuesday class because of family circumstances, may make special arrangements to attend class on Sunday from 9:30 a.m. until 10:45 a.m.

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## **CHILDREN'S LITURGIES**

Special Masses for the children and their families are held throughout the year. A schedule of these will be sent home with your child. We hope you will participate in as many as possible. We are always looking for adults to help in planning and carrying out these special liturgies. If you are interested in being part of the Children's Liturgy Committee, call Betty Ann Lucas at 348-2117

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## **PRAYER SERVICES**

A Prayer Service is held for each class during the school year. The schedule will be sent home with your child. Parents and friends are welcome to attend the prayer services, which are held in the School Chapel. These services are conducted during the last fifteen minutes of class time. On Sunday, that would be from 10:30a.m. until 10:45a.m. and on Tuesday from 3:30p.m. until 3:45p.m. Please take this opportunity to come and pray with your children.

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## **CHILDREN'S CHOIR**

All children of our parish are invited to join the Children's Choir. The choir is under the direction of Mrs. Mary Therese McKane. The choir practices one hour each week and sings once a month. This choir sings at all the Children's Liturgies.

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## **BIBLE SCHOOL**

Bible School is held each year for one week during the summer for students in Preschool through Grade Four. Students in Grade Five and above are volunteer helpers. It is an enjoyable week for all, learning more about God and having a lot of fun. Parents are encouraged to help out if they are able.

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## **Children's Liturgy of the Word**

Children's Liturgy of the Word is held during the 11:00 a.m. Mass each Sunday. Children of preschool age up to age 7 are dismissed from Mass after the opening prayer. They go to the sacristy with Mrs. Betty Ann Lucas and do the readings of the day written for children and activities for children. The children return to their parents after the petitions.

## **Youth Group**

The High School Youth Group meets regularly with Father Edwards. Students in Eighth Grade and above are welcome and encouraged to join youth group. Activities include Religious instruction, service activities and trips as well as just fun things to do. Check the parish bulletin for further information.

## **Family, Faith and Fun**

This is an intergenerational program for families including parents, children Grandparents and even babies are welcome. We gather, at least twice a year, for prayer, a short lesson, art activities and of course, food. We always make something the family can take home. This program was begun last year with Grade One families and will continue to build each year. This year, 2011-2012 will be for families of Grade One and Grade Two. All members of the family, children of all ages, are invited to come. This is a family program. Watch for more information during the school year.

## **RCIA**

RCIA is the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults. If you were baptized and never received any other sacraments, or if you would like to become a Catholic this is for you. Sister Therese Mary is in charge of this program. If you have any questions, please call the Parish office.

**SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM**

The Sacrament of Baptism is celebrated on the last two Sundays of the month. Parents should call the Parish Office to make arrangements for the Baptism of their child. Parents are required to attend a Baptismal Preparation Program.

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**SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE**

Couples should begin making arrangements for their marriage in advance in order to complete the requirements. Call the Parish Office to make an appointment with Father Edwards.

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**VISITATION OF THE SICK**

Hospitals are visited each week. Communion is taken to Allied Skilled Nursing on Saturdays at 2:00p.m. and Allied Rehab on Mondays. Communion is taken to the homebound on Sundays after 9:30a.m. or on First Friday after the 9:00a.m. Mass

Please let the parish know if you have a family member in need of these services. If you would like to help out in this ministry to the sick, please call the parish office.

## What are the Precepts of the Church?

The precepts of the Church are intended to assist Catholic Christians in living a moral life nourished by the sacramental worship of the Church. The precepts represent the *minimum* that Catholics should do if they wish to truly walk closer with Christ and discern His call in their lives.

So what precisely are the minimum requirements of participation in the sacramental life? The Church provides us with five precepts (which can be found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraphs 2041-2043):

1. ***“You shall attend Mass on Sunday and holy days of obligation.”*** Every baptized Catholic is called to celebrate the Eucharist with the Catholic community on Sunday, which is the day of Christ’s resurrection. They are also required to attend Mass on designated holy days. These holy days of obligation are the feasts of Mary as Mother of God (Jan. 1), the Ascension (40 days after Easter), the Assumption (Aug. 15), All Saints (Nov. 1), the Immaculate Conception (December 8), and Christmas (Dec. 25).
2. ***“You shall confess your sins at least once a year.”*** Every baptized Catholic is required to receive the sacrament of reconciliation –which continues the work of Baptism – at least once a year, in order to more worthily receive Jesus in the Eucharist.
3. ***“You shall humbly receive your Creator in Holy Communion at least during the Easter season.”*** This precept was issued at a time when many people abstained from receiving Holy Communion because of feelings of unworthiness. The Church recognized that such reverence and piety can be a good thing, however Christ tells us that “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him” (John 6:56). For this reason, every Catholic who is in a state of grace should receive Holy Communion at least once a year.
4. ***“You shall keep holy the holy days of obligation.”*** The fourth precept is intimately connected with the first. It reminds us of our duty to participate in the liturgical celebration of those feasts which “honor the mysteries of the Lord, the Virgin Mary, and the saints” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 2043).
5. ***“You shall observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence.”*** This precept helps us to remember the importance of penitential practices, which help us to prepare for the celebration of the Eucharist. This includes specific days in the liturgical year (such as Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all the Fridays in Lent), as well as the mandatory fasting before going to Mass on Sunday (1 hour before receiving Holy Communion).

**Mary, Mother of God Parish Information**

**316 William St.**

**Scranton, Pa. 18508**

**Phone (570)342-4881**

**Our Staff**

Pastor: Father Cyril Edwards

Assisting Priest: Father Martin Gaiardo

Pastoral Assistant: Sister Therese Mary Dougherty, IHM

**Mass Schedule**

Saturday 4:00p.m.

Sunday 7:15a.m.

Sunday 8:30a.m.

Sunday 11:00a.m.

**Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)**

Saturday 3:15p.m.

**Daily Mass**

Weekdays except Wednesday and Saturday  
in the School Chapel at 7:00a.m. and 9:00a.m.  
Check the parish bulletin for weekly schedules.