



THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION

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Tuesday, August 4, 2026
Memorial of Saint John Vianney, Priest

Dear Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption Parish School of Religion Families:

I hope this letter finds you and your family well and having a splendid summer. It's hard to believe that classes will resume for your children in less than a month, and our Parish School of Religion (PSR) in just over a month!

I truly look forward to this upcoming PSR year as I continue to get to know more families and be part of the faith formation journey here at the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption. Our children are not the future of the Church but by virtue of their baptism are part of the Church here and now. So, it is important that we together-- parents, clergy, and catechists, combine to pass on the great treasure of our faith and witness to it by our Christian example in daily life. As we know, our culture competes for their full attention and bombards them with many messages that stand at odds with our call to become saints! As we all persist on our way to become saints, St. Mary's clergy, staff, and catechists, are here to help you, the primary catechists of your children.

PSR will continue to take place on Sunday afternoons from 12-1:15 p.m. at the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption Faith Formation and Evangelization Center on the Emerald Campus. This allows our families to still be able to attend any of our 3 Masses: Sat. at 4:30 p.m., Sun. at 8:30 a.m., or Sun. at 10:30 a.m. and allow our families and catechists that need to attend the 10:30 a.m. Mass to arrive on time to start PSR at 12 p.m. The Emerald Campus continues to allow catechists and students to have a space that is theirs to be fully utilized and for the continuation and expansion of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

We are excited and blessed to be continuing our Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) program for pre-K through 3rd grade. We will be offering both a level I atrium and a level II atrium again this year. I am just thrilled to share that one of our newly initiated Catholics, who came into the Church this past Easter, has gone through the CGS training to be a level 1 catechist and we warmly welcome her as our newest Catechist. Also, our current level II catechist has started her level III training and we hope to be able to open up the level III atrium for 4th – 6th grade in the 2027-2028 programming year.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a Montessori-inspired spiritual formation where children encounter Jesus, developing a personal relationship with Him, assisted by a certified catechist. An atrium refers to the beautifully prepared environment (space/room) filled with carefully-constructed hands-on materials that "incarnate" the mysteries of our faith. Authentically Catholic, CGS is grounded in Scripture and Liturgy, orienting the child to participation in the life of the Church.

As we continue looking into expanding our Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program, we will be looking for more individuals who might be interested in learning more about the program and even possibly receiving training. We are blessed to have received a grant through the St. Mary Foundation to help aid in the cost of CGS training. If you or anyone you know might be interested in learning more, please reach out to me. Or if you are interested in receiving a tour of an atrium please reach out to me and I would be happy to schedule a time.

Our PSR orientation for parents and students will be on Sunday, September 20th at 12 p.m. at the Emerald Campus, 324 Gay Street, Lancaster, OH 43130. If you are not able to attend, please reach out to me and we can schedule a one-on-one to go over the information. Registration will again be online this year and **there is an early bird tuition discount if registration is submitted through August 23rd.** Also, this year you are able to pay online. However, if you prefer to pay by cash or check we will continue to accept that as well. Please see the parish website, recent bulletin, or your email to register.

Please register by Sunday, September 2nd, so class lists, and all medical information can be prepared and available to the teachers and we can order the proper materials for each group. Tuition checks may be made payable to “St. Mary” and returned to the Saint Mary Rectory. Thank you in advance for your prompt cooperation in this matter. If you are having trouble registering and/or are experiencing financial hardship, please reach out to me; we have scholarships available.

The full PSR calendar and sacramental preparation calendar, including sacramental parent meetings and form due dates is expected to be finalized in the next week (with the exception of Confirmation date we have not heard back yet from the bishops office when that will be) and will be found on the parish website and emailed to all PSR registered families, as well as copies provided at the orientation meeting. Especially sacramental families, those of you who have a child in second or eighth grade, once the calendar is available, please copy the sacramental preparation calendar onto your family calendar so you can be sure to attend the important parent sessions. If your child, for whatever reason, is “out-of-sequence” with his/her sacraments, I ask that you please contact me as soon as possible so we can meet to discuss an appropriate plan of preparation for the coming year.

Msgr. Eilerman, our catechists, and I are very excited about working with your children this coming year! Thank you for trusting us to work with you and your family. Please be assured of my prayers for you and your families.

Sincerely in Christ through Mary,

Miss Shana Leonard
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