Hello Parents:

As we look forward to the 2023-2024 Religious Education year, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of you for your cooperation and support. This past year, our religious education program proved to be successful, thanks to the support of: you as parents, to your children and to our dedicated teachers. The students were, as always, great to work with. The sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation were beautifully celebrated. Many of you expressed your appreciation for a very spiritually-uplifting experience. And we thank-you for your positive comments.

Planning has begun for the 2023-2024 year. This will be an exciting year for our Religious Education Program at St. Pio of Pietrelcina Parish as we will be including more with a Youth Ministry Program that will add additional opportunities for the children and their families to grow in their faith together by participating in several events that are designed for just that purpose. Our program will include:

* **Monthly Children’s Liturgies**
* **Family Events**
* **Student Service Projects**
* **Home Family Lessons**
* **Parent/Student Classes**

This year, St. Pio’s Religious Education Program will continue to include family participation. Your role as the primary educator of your child’s faith will *continue* to be a powerful witness as well as give a solid spiritual foundation for not only your child(ren), but also for the entire family. Parents will be invited to attend classes with their children so that each child can continue to build a strong, family supported faith foundation. Class schedules will remain as last year, however, for grades 7 & 8 there will be 4 classes during the year that will be offered on Tuesday evenings only as the program has been changed. Those class dates will be sent out in August so that you can plan accordingly. The plan is to have all of the students in each grade attend those classes as a whole grade group. Those lessons will involve parent involvement as well. More details will be sent out to the parents of each grade.

Weekly participation at Mass is an *expected* requirement of our Religious Education Program. In the midst of very busy schedules, we ask our families to commit to weekly worship. Attendance at weekly or by-weekly religious education classes in the absence of weekly worship means that your child is engaging in *half* of St. Pio’s Religious Education Program, because Sunday worship themes will be carried over each week into the classroom curriculum. *We invite you to make the time and make the commitment to worship weekly as a family if you haven’t already done so.*

Please return the registration forms as soon as possible for the 2023-2024 year. Parent/student meeting are scheduled (below) in order to familiarize parents and students with the scope of the 2023-2024 Religious Education Program at St. Pio, along with expectations. This looks to be an exciting year as we reduce class-time for our students and subsequently, provide more multi-media, on-line and family-focused possibilities for mastery of the principles of our Catholic faith for each grade.

All religious education classes will be held at the St. Vincent de Paul Church campus.

* **Grades K-8, will meet in the school**
* **Grades 9 and 10 will meet in the lower level of the parish office building**

**Payment is expected at the time of registration. The price of the materials has increased, however, the fees have not. We are trying to keep the fees reasonable, so we ask you to be sure to include the fee with the form. Registration Forms should be returned as soon thus, choice of day and time will be at a first-come basis. The deadline for registration is September 15, 2023 as classes will begin in October.**

Parent /student meetings will be held in St. Vincent de Paul Church for the purpose of presenting the scope and expectations of our sacramental program. Students, accompanied by at least one parent are expected to be in attendance. I ask that you all make the effort to attend as there will be discussion regarding the upcoming events as well as new program information. The meeting schedule is as follows:

* **Grades 1-6, Monday, August 28 @ 6:30pm**
* **Grades 7 & 8 Monday, August 28 @ 7:15pm**
* **Grades 9 & 10, Tuesday, August 29 @ 6:30pm**

Thank you in advance for your continued support and cooperation. As a parent, you *continue* accompany your child(ren) on his/her/their spiritual journey. As a parish, our future rests in the hope that families return to church, practice their faith on a weekly basis and assist their child(ren) in discovering the part that his/her/their faith plays in the larger faith community of St. Pio of Pietrelcina.

God’s blessing for safe and restful summer.

Carol Silva

Director of Religious Education