

School of Faith



One of the areas we are focusing on this year for staff development is called School of Faith. This is composed of 10 half-day sessions during which our staff members are educated in the Catholic Faith. This is the first year that we have participated in this program which is expected to be a three year commitment. We have an instructor that has been assigned to lead us through this program.

The intent is for the religious formation of our staff. You see, our teachers are all trained and have college degrees in teaching the academic subjects to our students, but there is not a formal program that is required of them before they can teach our students the Catholic Faith. The idea behind this program is that in order for teachers to pass on the Faith to their students, he or she must first have a strong personal faith and understand it.

During a typical School of Faith session we start by attending Mass. Next, we have some type of instruction about about the Catholic Faith. All of the instruction is based on either the Bible or the Catechism of the Catholic Church. We participate in large group discussions and small group discussions. We generally have a time for meditation and prayer and some journaling.

Most of our topics have been very basic, but they are very fundamental and important for us as Christians to understand and to be able to explain. For example, in the first lesson we learned about Jesus as God and Lord. This is a very simple, yet powerful concept. We reviewed how Jesus was prefigured and foreshadowed in the Old Testament. We studied His miracles and how they manifest His divine identity and give us confidence in His power to save us from sin. We also learned how Jesus' claim to divinity is very different from what founders of other world religions claimed. And, of course, His life and death make no sense apart from His claim to divinity.

In another lesson we studied how to pray and how to meditate. Most of us like to speak a lot when we pray, but we don't like to listen. We learned how to speak **with** God instead of just speaking to God. So, we learned some different methods of praying and meditating, or reflecting on God's word, with the help of the Holy Spirit. Too often we teach our children their prayers, i.e., what to say to God, but we neglect to teach them how to talk **with** God. This is something we want to teach and model to our students.

In the most recent lesson we studied the Trinity. Now that we have a complete understanding of that we can teach our students about it. Okay, that last sentence was just a test to see if you were really reading this. It is obviously impossible to completely understand the Trinity. It seems to me that every different explanation and analogy about the Trinity is lacking in something. I personally don't understand

the Trinity. I believe in three Persons in one God and I can read the catechism and get some kind of idea about the Trinity, but it really doesn't fit perfectly into any kind of analogy that I've been told about. The same is true of the Incarnation. There are things in our religion that are beyond human understanding. I once heard someone say that there is no way that everything taught by the Catholic Church can be proven true, but that there are good logical reasons for everything taught by the Church. We are not blind fools following a charlatan. Therefore, as St. Peter said, "Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you."

So, as we, the staff at St. Columbkille, continue in our own formation, we hope to be able to pass on to our students the one true faith of the Catholic Church. What could be more important?

In His Service,
Jim Makey, Principal