



## FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION

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### Catholicism 101

It seems to be a fact of modern Catholic life that most of what we learn about the faith, we learn piecemeal. For many years, my knowledge of the faith was cobbled together from Gospel readings I heard at Mass, quips and stories I got from Catholic relatives, and controversial topics I needed to study so I could defend my Catholic faith in front of friends. Granted, I heard a *lot* of stories from Catholic relatives and did a *lot* of studying. By the time I took a job teaching high school religion after college, I thought I had a pretty good grasp on what Catholics believed.

However, when I sat down to prepare the syllabus, I realized that I was being asked to systematically present the Faith to high school students. I should have begun with the basics and built from there. The problem was that I didn't know what the basics were or how to begin. No one had ever presented the Faith systematically to me. All I had were patches of information that I didn't know how to fit together. For instance, people say God is beyond all knowing; yet, He speaks to us in prayer and makes Himself known. How do these two statements fit together? Additionally, I realized there were missing patches. What did the Crucifixion have to do with my sins? What's an angel? What's necessary to get to heaven? These are basic questions, but I only realized I didn't know the answers when my students asked them. It's hard to know what you don't know until someone points it out.

Over the years, I've worked hard at remedying this for myself. In speaking with many parishioners at Parish of the Holy Eucharist, I get the strong impression many people are in a similar situation. They want to know the faith, but at best they have bits and pieces of it. They might attend classes or small groups to fill in some of those knowledge gaps, but such classes are frequently on special topics. They might walk away with a better grasp of bioethics or the Church's social teaching, but these are not the basics. It gives you enough to guess at the basics of the faith, but not enough to answer it directly.

For that reason, I'm offering a year long course called Catholicism 101 during which we will go through the doctrines of the Catholic Church from A-Z. For those who feel like their grasp of the Faith is hazy, this is a great opportunity. For those who just want to refresh their knowledge of the Faith, I promise it won't be boring. And if it's only particular topics you're interested in hearing about, check the bulletin and come to the classes that interest you.

Classes will meet at all four churches weekly. The fall session will be on the Creed, the winter on the Sacraments, and the spring on morality. I strongly encourage you to register so we can keep you updated. To register, please go to <https://pothe.org/catholicism101>. FMI, email me at [pothe.faithformation@portlanddiocese.org](mailto:pothe.faithformation@portlanddiocese.org).

—Joe Moreshead