



## FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION

August 13, 2023

### **The Oratory: Middle and High School Ministry**

My first foray into high school ministry was in 2014 as a Cap Corps Volunteer. I learned that year (and it has been confirmed since) that there are as many theories on what makes a good high school program as the days are long. To be perfectly frank, the multiplication of theories is an attempt to answer the same problem: many of our kids are falling away from the faith during their teenage years and not coming back. Hence, our last chance to offer them solid and lasting foundations is during high school.

I tend to think that the tried and true methods work best: be direct, be honest, be trustworthy. Never say anything you don't mean or don't believe. Don't hide your cards. Be a good person. Ask for the grace to see the kids the way Our Lord does and treat them accordingly. It cuts against some marketing techniques since it means the kids will hear things they may not like. Regardless, it seems to me that it's the best chance we have to teach our teens the teachings of Our Lord. If we don't tell them what Our Lord teaches, they don't know it. But if we teach them in a way that is honest, straightforward, and grounded in charity, they just might hear it.

A great model is the Oratory of St. Don Bosco. While assigned to a parish in Italy, Don Bosco developed a following among the boys of the neighborhood. This following eventually developed into what would be known as the Oratory. The stories that come of it are incredible. It was a home for many young men; in Don Bosco they found a spiritual father who would help them on the way to heaven. It was a place of great joy and sometimes silliness (Don Bosco had a reputation for that). But in the midst of all the laughter, the goal for every activity was heaven. If you read the lives of Michael Magone or Dominic Savio, you'll see that many made it.

We've taken the Oratory as the name of our middle and high school program this year. It will meet every second and fourth Sunday at Sacred Heart in Yarmouth. We'll kick the night off with a quick prayer and some kind of game, followed by dinner, discussion, and finishing with a visit to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. The night will go from 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm. To register, go to <https://pothe.org/middlehighschool>.

—Joe Moreshead