

Dear Saint Timothy Families,

Happy Easter! Christ, our hope, is risen! Alleluia!

The Easter season, which lasts 50 days until Pentecost (June 8), are the most joyous days of the year for us as Christians. We celebrate the gift of the Resurrection and the promise it brings for us, the faithful. We rejoice together and sing the Alleluia, led by the light of Christ which dispels all darkness.

It may seem difficult to rejoice at such a time when we also find ourselves mourning at the death of our Holy Father, **Pope Francis**. Pope Francis offered us an invitation to the great mercy of our Lord. He reminded us to love as we are loved by God, to be merciful, and to live in hope. He emphasized the importance of caring for the marginalized, the role of the youth and family in the world, and the protection of creation. He wrote numerous encyclicals including *Amoris laetitia*: On Love in the Family. I provide you the link as this is a beautiful message to us as parents: https://www.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf

The Pope's funeral is on April 26. All the faithful are encouraged to pray the **Novena in Memory of Pope Francis** beginning on that day. You may consider separating time with your family to unite in prayer each of these nine days beginning April 26 and ending May 4th. I have attached the Novena in both English and Spanish.

We invite you, your family, and friends to join us for a **Memorial Mass for Pope Francis here at St. Timothy** on April 29th at 7:00PM. See flyer attached.

This is a momentous time in the history of the Church. As you are your child's first teachers in the faith, they turn to you for answers and may have many questions. I offer you a brief **timeline below** that follows the death of a Pope that may help respond to some of their questions.

To quote Pope Francis' Easter homily, "Christ is risen, he is alive! ... Let us allow his Word of life and truth to shine in our life." May this grief point us to the joy of the Resurrection, so that our daily life and witness can be a light for all to see.

United in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving,

Annie Seigle

Director of Formation

Timeline and Events After the Death of a Pope:

- Vacancy of the Apostolic See: When the Pope passes away, it's called the "vacancy of the Apostolic See". This means the seat of the Pope is empty, and the Church begins a period of transition. During this time, the College of Cardinals takes on the responsibility of governing the Church.
- Cardinal's Role: The Cardinals are very important people in the Church, like advisors to the Pope. When the Pope dies, they have the special job of choosing the next Pope. The Cardinal Dean, or another Cardinal, calls all the Cardinals together in Rome for this important task.
- Congregations of Cardinals: The Cardinals meet in gatherings to prepare for the election. They talk about what the Church needs in a new leader and most importantly they PRAY for guidance from the Holy Spirit.
- The Conclave: This is when all the Cardinals who are allowed to vote (those under 80 years old) gather in the Sistine Chapel. They stay in the Chapel, separated from the outside world, to focus on choosing the new Pope.
- Voting and Election: Inside the Conclave, the Cardinals pray and vote in secret. If two-thirds of the Cardinals vote for the same person, that person is elected Pope. If no one gets enough votes, they keep voting until someone is chosen.
- Acceptance and Announcement: Once a Cardinal is elected, he is asked if he accepts the job. If he says "yes," he becomes the new Pope right away. The new Pope chooses a name for himself. Then, a special announcement is made to the world. White smoke comes out of the chimney of the Sistine Chapel to let everyone know a new Pope has been chosen! "Habemus Papam! (We have a Pope!)"
- Inauguration: Finally, there is a special ceremony to officially begin the new Pope's time as the leader of the Church.

This process is rich in tradition and guided by prayer. The Cardinals seek guidance from the Holy Spirit to choose the best leader for the Catholic Church.

The election of a new Pope is a significant event for Catholics worldwide.

I hope this explanation is helpful for both you and the children!