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We pray this letter finds you well and enjoying the beautiful weather with your family!

Living as a Catholic family in the world has always been tough, but today it seems like it is harder than ever. Then, add a pandemic on top of that... what to do?! We don't want "faith formation" to be another thing that stresses you out or that takes you away from your family.

This past year has been a challenge, as the world changed very quickly. We have all had to look at things differently, thinking and rethinking the path forward. Without the use of parish facilities or at home classes forced parishes all over the island to step back and really examine our faith formation programs. One thing was agreed upon, what we were doing in the past doesn't work in today's world.

Our goal is noticeably clear: offering a dynamic faith initiative involving the entire family that focuses on joyfully living out our Catholic Faith and striving for Heaven.

That is going to mean different things for each family. Looking at what we have done well in the past, and the new opportunities technology affords us, we hope to be able to accommodate every family with a meaningful experience.

Your faith and relationship with Jesus must be something you desire. We do not want the religious formation of your children and family to be another box to check or task to complete. Our experience, and statistics, show us that one hour a week of academic-style religious programming does not meet the mark in transferring the faith. One hour a week cannot deliver what a lifetime of family faith routines will. The conclusion of a study titled, *Growing Up Religious*, by Robert Wuthnow said this: "Effective religious socialization comes about through embedded practices; that is, through specific, deliberate religious activities that are firmly intertwined with the daily habits of family routines, of eating and sleeping, of having conversations, of adorning spaces in which people live, of celebrating the holidays, and of being part of a community." Therefore, to foster this "effective religious socialization," we have decided to intentionally unlink our initiative from the traditional academic style and calendar.

We want to meet you where your family is at. For some, it will be working together as family. Others, in person classes, some children will meet virtually at 'off' days and times, and still others will have a little bit of everything. Whatever your situation, family involvement will be an important component.

It is imperative this year that you complete your family registration and placement cards so that we can ensure that we are a part of your family, not a burden that gets you to a sacrament. We're excited about our 'new normal' in the best of ways!

Peace to you and your family,

Director of Family Faith Formation