

FR. BRAD HAGELIN

PASTOR

My dear Kirkland Catholics,

I wanted to share with you some exciting news, explain why I believe Youth Ministry is crucial today, and ask for your prayers. There's almost no way to overstate the impact "the Alaska trip" had on the youth of my last parish. A week of fun, outside of cell-service range, but also with Mass every day, adoration most days, and confession on-demand. [My first pastor's column ever was a recap of last year.](#) The Holy Spirit unfailingly showed up in different but powerful ways each year we did this trip. "Amazing" and "life-changing" are the two most common ways youth would characterize the trip when they returned.

Many became involved with youth group moving forward, which would not have otherwise happened for a lot of them without the relationships they formed with peers and adult leaders in Alaska. This is important because my observation is *youth-group-involved-kids* fall away from the faith at a much lower rate in college and young adulthood than youth who even attended a Catholic high school but never became involved in youth group at their parish (or never went to Alaska in the case of my 11 years at St. Luke). It is important for youth to have faith-filled adults (other than their parents) in their lives who they feel a strong connection with. Studies have shown a very strong statistical correlation between faithful, non-relative adults in a youth's life and a youth embracing the faith when they reach adulthood (google "Sticky Faith" for more info). Youth ministry at both campuses will endeavor to create this atmosphere to support parents in raising their kids in the Faith.

The exciting news *is*, together with Fr. Chad Green who was vicar at HFK for a couple years not too long ago, we are offering the Alaska trip to HFK/SJV senior high youth along with St. Luke and Christ the King Youth (where Fr. Chad is pastor). Incoming high school freshman up to incoming college freshman are eligible. We will be going to St. Therese's camp in Wasilla, Alaska outside Anchorage. We realize this is a late offering because - despite concerted efforts since late December - we only finally were able to lock down dates with a camp. If you would have liked for your child to go but it is not possible because of other plans, we promise to do our best in the coming years to get dates out sooner.

If you have a high schooler, I encourage you to encourage your teen to consider. In 8 years doing this trip, I don't believe we ever had a single kid regret going, and it was transformational for a majority of incoming juniors and seniors. If you do not have kids in this range, I still have a special ask. Will you please pray for the youth in our parish family? Since COVID we have seen a significant decline in youth ministry involvement, and I believe this must change. We know the challenges they face in terms of Faith today, and **they are our future**; so please simply pray for all the youth in our parish family, and the success of the SJV Trek and the Alaska Trip this summer.