

# **St. Joseph Parish and Sanctuary, Ottawa, ON**

## **Guidelines for Pastoral Letter/Reference Acquisition**

### **To those requesting a pastoral letter, Catholic reference, or requesting the completion of a reference form from a Catholic School Board:**

Most of you requesting are either student teachers or present teachers. Our children need inspired and inspiring adults in their lives and we at St. Joe's wish you all the best.

**Your request will not be considered until you have been an active and registered member for the community for at least 4 months.** That time clock starts when you introduce yourself to the Coordinator of Young Adult Ministry and Faith Formation, either in person or via email/phone, and begin regularly participating in the community. We are asked by many to provide a pastoral letter so this memo outlines the expectations of the community, as well as the process.

The process of Pastoral Letters can be tricky. One on hand, we know that we will be meeting and interacting with many young adults that we may not otherwise meet, so that was the good news. On the other hand, administering the process for pastoral letters can sometimes feel like a game or merely perfunctory, and that is not an aspect of faith formation that inspires us or our faith community.

#### **So, what to do?**

If you are already involved at another parish, please seek your pastoral letter from them.

If you are a present and active member of St. Joe's, this should be easily completed.

If you are new to the community, or returning to the parish, welcome.

#### **Steps in applying for a Pastoral Letter:**

### **1. Introduce yourself to the Coordinator of Young Adult Ministry: Andrew Pump**

During the school year, I am available at the 7:00 PM University Mass on Sunday. I regularly attend the 9:30 AM morning Mass on Sunday as well. I am also available in my office at the Parish. Please make an appointment with me via email ([apump@st-josephs.ca](mailto:apump@st-josephs.ca)) or by phone (613-233-4095 x 235) to ensure I will be available.

### **2. Start attending weekend Mass at St. Joe's**

Being involved in a parish involves worshipping with fellow parishioners. Attend Mass regularly at St. Joe's if you are not already doing so. If you will be out of town or at a placement, find a parish in that city to attend while you are away from St. Joe's. This is not about appeasing God who is keeping track of who is going to Mass. This is about our own need to gather together in prayer and community each week to remember who we are and more importantly WHOSE we are. For those attending at St. Joe's, there is a red binder at our Welcome Table at the church entrance where those seeking a future pastoral letter are expected to mark when they attend Mass at St. Joe's. It may seem juvenile, but it is the only sane way for us to keep track of Mass participation when working with so many students.

### **3. Attend a monthly parish Young Adult event**

We have programming all year long. You will be added to the young adult email list when you first meet me so you will always know when these events are happening. Keep track of what events you attend and when.

#### **4. Volunteer at least once a month**

You can help at the St. Joe's Supper Table, you can help with the Children's Liturgy program, or other service ministry. This does not have to be through the parish but should be helping out those marginalized or vulnerable. Keep track of what volunteering you do and when.

#### **5. Attend the monthly gathering for Student Teachers and Teachers**

Each month during the school year, some of our parishioner teachers host an evening for student teachers and teachers to come together to share the intersection of teaching and faith. Keep track of the meetings you attend.

**6. A note for non-students:** If Ottawa is your home (or your home for now), you must also register with the parish and decide how you will contribute financially to the community. Parish Registrations forms and information on making financial donations to the parish are available at the Welcome Desk at Mass or at the Parish Office on weekdays. It's your community, and your time, talent and treasure is welcome!

#### **7. Submit your application for a Pastoral Letter**

After 4 months of being engaged in the parish and fulfilling the requirements above, you can then submit your request. The request form is available online.

It is your responsibility to keep track of all these requirements. More importantly, we hope you continue to stay engaged with your own faith life.

We know that some of you have come to the parish for the soul purpose of obtaining your letter. It is the hope of this community that your faith life will be supported and inspired in new ways at St. Joe's. We have all struggled in our faith lives and God knows and understands this. They say the opposite of love is not hate, it is indifference. Let us vow to not be indifferent about our own faith journeys.

By the way, these letters seem to be requested from school boards more often these days, so be prepared. Get registered and get involved with a parish, wherever you live, and this will not be an issue.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss any of this further, contact the Parish Office.

Peace and many blessings.

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