

If you want to talk with someone about returning to the practice of the Catholic faith, please contact us, using the information below. Our parish representative will be in touch with you soon.

If you don't want to speak with anyone right now, please join us for Mass and pick up a bulletin. Look at our parish activities and choose a place to start that is right for you. We look forward to seeing you.

Let us pray together to God for guidance. Your response to this invitation could be the first step to a new beginning in your life.



Saint Bernadette Catholic Church

7600 Old Keene Mill Rd.  
Springfield, VA 22152  
703-451-8576  
officemanager@stbermpar.org

An invitation for You.  
We Miss You.



Have you been away from the Catholic Church?

Has it been a while since you've joined us for Mass or any other parish activities?

Do You Have Questions Like These?

- + Is my own spirituality enough, or do I need something more?
- + What am I missing by not actively practicing my Catholic faith?
- + I have been away from the Church for a long time. Is it too late to return?
- + A lot has changed in the Church. Can I really get caught up?
- + What if I disagree with some of the Church's teachings?
- + What if I am divorced? Or married/remarried outside of the Catholic Church?

+ I feel guilty about my past. How can returning to the Church help me?

+ I left the Church because I was hurt. Why should I return now?

If you are asking these or similar questions, you may be hearing God's loving call to return to the active practice of your Catholic faith. We can help you find answers. Our Catholic community cares about you.

We miss you!



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Masses: Sat. 5pm; Sun. 7:30, 9, 11, 1pm (Spanish) & 5pm. Mon and Thurs 6:30am and 9am, Tues, Wed and Friday 9am, Sat. 8am. Confessions: Sat. 3:30pm or by appointment.

## We Miss You

The full, active, and joyous participation of every Catholic is a precious gift to our faith community. As long as anyone is inactive or alienated from the Church, the Church remains incomplete. We want all our brothers and sisters to return to the Church, so we can support each other on our common journey of faith. Here are some reflections on that journey that you may find helpful.



## Growing Spiritually

Faith is a gift from God that strengthens our spiritual life and inspires us to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. Living fully in Christ means that we find a community of faith and enter into a fruitful relationship with others in the Church. The unique gifts we have been given are meant to be used for the good of others as well as ourselves. In turn, the gifts of the whole church community strengthen, support, and challenge us to grow in the abundant life that Christ promised to all of us. We need each other.

## Being Away

It doesn't matter how long someone has been away from the practice of the faith. The return of any Seeker at any time brings great joy to God. Through God's grace, the person returning can develop a deeper and stronger faith.

## Catching Up

The Catholic faith is a rich treasury of teachings and Tradition. Even the most learned among us does not know everything. Hopefully, lifelong Catholics continue to read, study, and attend adult faith formation classes to grow in their faith. Anyone who wants to "catch up" will be right at home with us.

## Church Teachings

In his preaching and teaching, Jesus showed the way to freedom and happiness in God's love. The teachings of the Catholic Church guide us to follow Christ so we may grow in holiness and one day be united with God forever in heaven. In its teaching ministry, the Church prayerfully studies and hands on the fundamental truths of faith, as expressed in Scripture and Tradition. If you have questions about church teaching, we invite you to talk with a priest or other knowledgeable person.

## Divorce and Remarriage

Divorce alone does not exclude anyone from the sacraments. Catholics who are divorced may participate fully in the life of the parish community.

For Catholics who were married or remarried outside of the Church, each situation is unique. The best way to understand these situations is to speak with a parish representative to learn what is necessary to return to the sacraments and become active in the Catholic Church again.

## The Joy of Forgiveness

The Church constantly teaches that Jesus is our Savior, who came not to condemn, but to save and to set us free. In the sacrament of penance or reconciliation, Christ forgives sin, dissolves guilt, and sends the repentant person away with a joyful heart.

## The Hurt of the Past

The Church is made up of imperfect people on a journey to the fullness of life in Christ. If you have been hurt by a church leader or member in any way, we seek your forgiveness. We believe that you can find healing through the sacraments and through the compassionate support of our faith community.

## Other Considerations

You may have questions about your faith or about the Catholic Church that are not answered here. If you would like to explore a topic further, a parish representative will be happy to talk with you.

Help us reach out to you. We miss you.



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