Grace and peace, dear sisters and brothers!

I was just reading an article based on research by the National Study of Youth and Religion. According to this study, a minority of parents feel that churches are serving their children well. 36% of parents thought churches served their sons well. 41% thought churches served their daughters well. Even worse, 42% of parents felt that sports and clubs did a better job than the church in preparing their children for adult life! On the positive side, children of working class parents, active in church with a professed belief in our God did better in Middle and High School. 21% of church raised children received A’s, while only 9% of less religious students equaled that high grade. Religious children were twice as likely to earn grades needed to enter college, compared to non-religious children. All of this research reminds us to pay particular attention to our youth ministry, to support and encourage our youth leaders, to offer our prayers and any other support that we can. It reminds our youth teachers and leaders of the centrality of faith-formation in our young people. This research also supports our conversations with family members who have only a loose relationship with our church or no relationship with any church. Non-religious children are at a disadvantage in school and in life compared to the children we see every Sunday. This is important because, as I remind our Catechism class, they are the next link of the chain of faith across the generations. They have a crucial role to play if there is to be a church in the future. I also tell our students that our God is faithful and will always provide a faithful remnant, a faithful church. The real question is if they will be a part of that church, faithful in their adulthood? Remember to pray for our youth and for their leaders and helpers!

Blessings, Pr Tim+