



# Leaven

The Newsletter of the  
Religious Education Office



At the Diocesan Religious Education Office, one of our most reliable methods of communication with parishes is email. In fact, the diocese itself has recognized the importance of this method of communication by requiring every church to have email access of some kind, minimally for the pastor. Any emails coming from the diocese will have the @dioceseofjoliet.org ending to the address. We ask that you take the time to read these messages. Also, please let us know if your email address changes. There is a form included in this month's *Leaven* for you to fill out and return to us that we can use to check the accuracy of the information we have on file for you.

We have also learned that some parishes set their email servers to filter out any emails with the @dioceseofjoliet.org ending. In these cases, emails will appear to us as having been sent, but the end-user at the parish will not receive them. If you believe you are experiencing problems receiving emails from us, please call us. We will check to be sure your email is correct on our list. If it is, we will then ask you to check with your computer service person to make sure your email server allows emails from the diocese.

We thank you for your cooperation in this important matter, as it will help us provide you with important and timely communications. Should you have any questions please contact Brian Topping at (815) 727-6411 or btopping@dioceseofjoliet.org.

## Technology Rentals for Parish Events

Brian Topping

The Diocesan REO Media Center has been renting equipment to parishes, beginning years ago with filmstrip projectors. That tradition continues today with many different types of equipment, from multimedia projectors to portable sound systems to lighting to screens and stands. Here is how the Technology Rental program has helped one parish:

*"I needed audio and visual equipment for a dance and for a series of retreats that really needed to have professional quality to it. I knew that rental from a local business would be pricey and that the parish wouldn't afford an investment to buy the equipment we needed. The diocesan office, with a call, let me know what equipment was available and even helped me set up, run through and test the equipment before I brought it back to the parish. There was a wide variety of equipment for meeting just my need and I would encourage anyone else to use them as well."*



Matt Krumdrick  
Director for High School RE  
and Youth Ministry  
St. Elizabeth Seton, Naperville

**Youth Ministry Halloween Event at St. Elizabeth Seton in Naperville, made possible in part by Media Center Equipment rentals.**

For more information on Technology Rentals, please contact Brian Topping.

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**FEBRUARY  
2006**

## UPCOMING CLUSTER MEETINGS

Please attend your local cluster meetings for assistance, support and information. The next meetings will be as follows:

**Directors of Adult Faith Formation -**  
April 27, 2006 - 12 pm  
SCPC, Romeoville

**Ford-Iroquois CRE Cluster -**  
May 5, 2006 - 6:30pm  
Location - TBA

**Joliet-Will DRE Cluster -**  
May 18, 2006 - 10:00am  
St. Paul the Apostle,  
Joliet

**Kankakee-Grundy DRE Cluster -**  
March 9, 2006 - 1:00pm  
St. Paul, Peotone

**Northeast Dupage DRE Cluster -**  
March 2, 2006 - 10:00am  
Carmelite Retreat  
Center, Darien (2 Days)

**Special Needs Cluster - TBA**

**West Dupage DRE Cluster -**  
March 9, 2006 - 10:00am  
SS. Peter & Paul,  
Naperville



# *A Time To Sow*

**Tom Quinlan**  
*Director*



I took the Myers Briggs Test about 15 years ago, but only vaguely remember the results. What I recall in great detail, because it was an intriguing insight for me, was that the results predicted that I would be a life-long learner. At the time I rather doubted that. Over the years I've come to see that I need to be regularly challenged, be it intellectually, emotionally, spiritually. Something inside me desires the grace of personal growth that such formation can offer. And, interestingly, the more often I have challenging, growthful experiences, the more comfortable I am seeking further formation.

I am grateful for this impetus toward continued growth, for the humility that constantly reminds me how much I have yet to learn, and for the desire to be an ever greater gift to those I am called to serve. It is from God, I believe, and it demands that I always carry myself in a "work-in-progress" posture. I like to say in talks that our graduation day from growth in our faith life is not Confirmation, but rather death! I hope that I will always be able to live out that conviction.

As I look back at the end of 2005, I am conscious of what fantastic leadership formation opportunities I have been exposed to. Why, just in the first couple weeks of December, I was privileged to reflect upon the spirituality of the male person with Fr. Richard Rohr, spend two days immersed in a consideration of the Catholic catechetical reality in our current culture, and attend a young adult exploration of the meaning of Advent and Christmas with Fr. John Cusick. What wonderful, growthful experiences they were! I am certain that each of these formational experiences will enrich my ability to lead and serve from my position as diocesan director.



I share this about myself out of a wish to evoke from each of you an introspective consideration of yourself as a work-in-progress. As a catechetical leader, you are charged with inspiring growth and facilitating learning in others. As one who forms others in Catholic faith, you first should recognize a hunger, a holy longing to enter ever more deeply into the mystery of God in Christ and to engage in experiences that satisfy that hunger. Symbolically (as one who leads by example) and substantively (as an expert with knowledge and training), you must be a dynamic, life-long learner, a seeker of truth, beauty, mystery and grace, if you hope to have any real chance to be impactful upon the parishioners you serve. Hasn't it been true in your own life, that those who have had a transformative influence on you have had an aura, an energy, a wisdom that was abundant and flourishing?

Perhaps all of us experience fatigue, frustration, distraction and disheartenment in our ministry. We lose sight of what we have been called to do, who we have been called to be. We allow outside influences to erode our core convictions and clutter our spirit with noise and junk. And sometimes, it's just that we find ourselves too busy with all the good things we do to take the time to nurture the gift of faith that God has blessed us with. It can be as true for parish leaders as for others when it is said, "The road to Hell is paved with good intentions".

*(continued on PAGE 3)*

Prayer has a remarkable restorative aspect for those flagging in body, mind and spirit. Prayer, when given the time and space and quiet to do its grace, can re-center one. It can refuel our spiritual fire and fill us with a desire to learn and grow and do in a way that is holy and healthy. Other gifts of the Church are at our disposal to nurture and nourish are roles of leadership. We are invited to encounter the Scriptures, both through personal and inter-personal reflection. In the Sacraments, we have Christ's rich fare to feed us and orient us toward the good. Christian service brings us a joy and a refreshed perspective that says, "It's not all about me."

As Lent approaches, I would like to invite you, especially if you are not feeling particularly focused or energetic in ministry these days, to take care of yourself, to do what you need to in order to reconnect with your God-given call to ministry and catechetical leadership. This is certainly a foundational prerequisite to being a joyful and effective parish leader. And Lent is a wonderful time to drink deeply from the well that is Christ.

And looking beyond, into the Easter Season, summer and next year, I want to encourage you to tap into that sense of personal and ecclesial mandate to learn and grow. I hope that you will begin to seek out avenues for meaningful, life-giving faith formation for yourself. Perhaps in dialogue with your pastor, friends, family...possibly a spiritual director, you can

When we are life-long learners, constantly opening ourselves to new ways of encountering ministry, others, ourself and God, we bring an expertise to our leadership that is attractive and inspiring to others.

discover what you are in need of, personally and professionally, to find a renewing vibrancy in your ministry. (I certainly hope that your parish's budget will value and support the essential nature of your ongoing formation!) Remember also that Helen Johnson, who oversees leadership formation, and indeed, the entire REO staff are available to assist in developing a plan for your formation.

Leadership demands many things of us, and I would suggest that ongoing formation is the first among them! When we are life-long learners, constantly opening ourselves to new ways of encountering ministry, others, ourself and God, we bring an expertise to our leadership that is attractive and inspiring to others. And our Church today so desperately needs this kind of hope-inspiring leadership.

Christ has called each one of us to labor by his side in building the Reign of God. We are critical players in serving God's plan for the world! We must be ready to continually renew ourselves if we hope to participate in the great renewal of our Church that is poised to begin!

## Youth Ministers Gather for Annual Retreat



Youth Ministers gathered January 12th for their Annual Winter retreat held at the Public Landing in Lockport. This year's theme was a mini sabbatical, at which the youth ministers were encouraged to look at how they stay spiritual and how they keep healthy in their ministry to the young people. The day was lead by Ben Weisse, diocesan Director for Youth Ministry in Madison, Wisconsin.

## YOUTH MINISTRY CLUSTERS

### Senior High Youth Ministry Cluster

(Aurora, Bolingbrook, Lisle, Naperville, Oswego)

March 9, 2006

St. Raphael, Naperville  
2-4 pm

### Junior High Ministry Cluster

(Aurora, Bolingbrook, Naperville)

March 7, 2006

St. Dominic, Bolingbrook  
3:45 pm

### Joliet Cluster Youth Ministry

(St. Paul, St. Jude, St. Ray, St. John, St. Mary Nativity, Holy Family, St. Bernard Homer Glen, Sts. Cyril & Methodius)

We meet on the first Monday of the month (location varies, every month different parish).

### South of the Border Cluster

March 22, 2006

Christ the King, Lombard

\*\*All meetings begin at 10:00am

### "GOOD NEWS"

If you have any "good News" to share, such as weddings, births, anniversaries - Let us Know!

E-mail all information, including pictures to [jlange@dioceseofjoliet.org](mailto:jlange@dioceseofjoliet.org). We will include as many as possible providing we have the space.

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Lenten Resources for Children, Youth & Families

Joyce Donahue

In the last issue of *Leaven* we discussed how to make Lent "real" for children and youth by using good resources. Here are just a few of the many good places to explore for activity and craft ideas with a Catholic "flavor."

**Books:**



**Glavich, Mary Kathleen, SND**

*A Pictionary of Lent: Facts and Activities from A to Z for Grades 3-6*  
E.T. Nedder

**Johnson, Elizabeth M.** - *The Catholic Kid's Guide to Stewardship*,  
Silver Burdett Ginn Religion

**Kielly, Shiela D.** - *Advent & Lent Activities for Children: Camels, Carols, Crosses & Crowns*; Twenty-Third Publications

**Nussbaum, Melissa Musick** - *Bible Stories for the 40 Days*; Liturgy Training Publication

**Pflaum** - *Totally Lent* series available for primary, Grades 4-6, Grade 7 & up

**On the Web:**



**[www.myfriendmagazine.com/games/printablegames](http://www.myfriendmagazine.com/games/printablegames)**

Pauline Books & Media, downloadable games and activities for late Lent, Passiontide

**[www.mhschool.com/benziger/program/ktg/menuspring](http://www.mhschool.com/benziger/program/ktg/menuspring)**

Benziger, Kitchen Table Gospel for Spring

**[www.faithfirst.com](http://www.faithfirst.com)** - RCL - click on Lenten Resources

**[www.liguori.org](http://www.liguori.org)** - Liguori - put "Lent" into search - booklets, family resources, etc.

**[www.osv.com](http://www.osv.com)** - Our Sunday Visitor -click on Celebrate Lent!

**[www.webelieveweb.com/gather.cfm?page=lenten](http://www.webelieveweb.com/gather.cfm?page=lenten)** - Sadlier - *Gather in My Name*,  
Lenten Event

**[www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org)** - Saint Mary's Press - Lenten activities for teens, click "Search", and put in "Lent"



**Timely Mentions from Tom Quinlan...**

**Tom's Letter to First Eucharist Parents is an insert to this issue.**

For those of you involved in First Eucharist preparations, I have included (as in past years) a letter of support and encouragement to parents. It is an important opportunity for me to be able to communicate with parents across the diocese at this important, crossroads moment. To all DRE/CREs and all principals, I am most grateful for your allowing me this annual means of reaching this group of parents. Please note that the letter has been reformatted. It can also be located and downloaded from the REO website, both in English and Spanish.

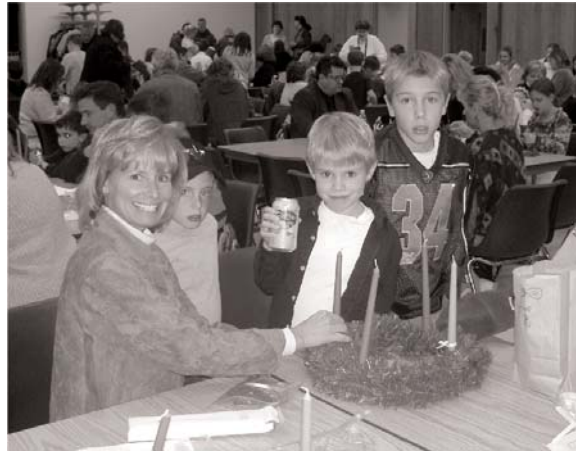
**Diocesan Grants Available for Catechetical Purposes.** Two funding sources from the Catholic Education Foundation are:

- *Leaders for the Future*, which offers significant funding for current catechetical leaders in the diocese to pursue graduate studies. Anyone considering a masters degree in a subject that will serve their catechetical ministry should explore this grant opportunity. For more information, go to [www.dioceseofjoliet.org/edfoundation](http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/edfoundation)
- *Religious Education Grant*, which makes available initial seed money for parish, cluster or regional catechetical initiatives. To learn more and to download an application, simply go to [www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo/funding.asp](http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo/funding.asp). You can contact Tom Quinlan with questions. Application deadline is May 1st.

## Generations of Faith News

### Spring Conference

The Center for Ministry Development will be hosting a spring conference, "Becoming a Church of Lifelong Learners" for all Generations of Faith parishes on Thursday, June 1, 2006 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The conference will be located within the Diocese of Joliet with the specific site to be determined. The cost is \$35.00 per person, which includes lunch and a copy of the *Generations of Faith Sourcebook* (2006, Twenty-Third Publications). Please contact Brian Topping for more information.



**Families make Advent wreaths at St. Patrick parish in Yorkville**

### Third Round of Generations of Faith Training Announced!



Due to the interest expressed on the part of many parishes, the Center for Ministry Development has agreed to offer a third and final round of Generations of Faith training for Diocese of Joliet parishes. This training is open to parishes that have never been a part of Generations of Faith training before and to parishes that signed up for or began the training in round one or two, but never completed it. Registration fees for the training are covered by the Lily Grant. The parish pays for the Generations of Faith manual only. Dates for the training are March 3rd, April 19th, and June 2nd. Please contact Brian Topping as soon as possible if your parish is interested in joining or if you need more information. A minimum of six parishes is required for this training to move forward.



**Nativity pageant held at Holy Trinity Parish, Westmont in December**

### Rally Day 2006

"JUST LIVE IT" is this year's theme for Rally Day on Sunday, March 5th at St. Mary Immaculate in Plainfield for 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. We will have a number of activities, talks by High School students, a Christian band, pizza and ice cream. The day will begin at 12:30 with registration and conclude at 5:45pm. There is also an option for your parish group to attend the Life Teen Mass at St. Mary's at 6pm.



John Lamperis will be our Keynote Speaker for the day. John is a 54 year old DRE, Jr. High Youth Minister, and father of seven from St. Peter Parish in Geneva. John holds a Bachelor's degree in Applied Behavior Sciences from National Louis University and is a graduate and instructor of the Joliet Diocese Pastoral Leadership Program. He is a certified Catechist teaching Jr. High religious education for the past 12 years and is a retreat facilitator for both Jr. High and Adults. John is also the author of "*Respect Life Ministry*", and publisher of "*Fax of Life*" and "*He Is Always Near*".

Contact Paul Mach in the REO for more information, flyer the January edition of *Leaven* or on our website [www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo](http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo).

## Evaluation of Religious Education Texts Resumes



The Evaluation of Religious Education Texts will again be available in late spring. We appreciate your patience while this project has been delayed.

If you wish to assist by reviewing materials, please contact Joyce Donahue. We especially need youth ministers to look at high school level materials.

## Need Assistance?



Please know I am available to assist you in developing a plan that will help meet your formational needs and goals. Contact Helen Johnson at 815-727-6411 ext 261 or [hjohnson@dioceseofjoliet.org](mailto:hjohnson@dioceseofjoliet.org)



**HEAR YE,  
HEAR YE !!!**

**2006-2007**

Contract Renewal Materials for "returning" parish catechetical leaders will be available in February. Watch for an email indicating when the information is available on the website.

Are you retiring?  
Changing ministries?  
Changing parishes?  
Please let the REO know of your plans. Contact either Helen Johnson, Catechetical Associate for Leadership & Formation or Tom Quinlan, Director of the REO.

If you know of someone who is interested in securing a parish catechetical ministry position advise them to contact Helen Johnson at 815-727-6411 ext 261 or [hjohnson@diocese-ofjoliet.org](mailto:hjohnson@diocese-ofjoliet.org).

**Diocese of Joliet Judged To Be in Full Compliance by the USCCB Office for Child and Youth Protection**

Tom Quinlan

The headline says it all, doesn't it?

I want to thank those of you in each parish who worked diligently to implement the safe touch curriculum this past fall throughout our diocese! There are so many who made this achievement possible.



It was a near-heroic diocesan-wide effort to offer training to our children and youth on how to keep themselves safe from sexual abuse. And indeed, when all was said and done, tens of thousands of our minors were able to receive quality training on this subject. (The few remaining ones will be trained within the early weeks of 2006.) In addition, parishes were able to invite parents to participate in training sessions and provide parents with materials to assist them in their conversations on the subject with their children. All this occurred while parishes continued to appropriately screen and train catechists and all who relate in ministry to minors on the tragedy of sexual abuse.

When the Dallas Charter came out, it made a covenant between the Church and our society. It committed the Church to never again be a part of the systemic problem of child sexual abuse, but rather to be a proactive, aggressive partner in forging a solution to this broad and tragic reality. In the Dallas Charter, the bishops of this nation committed to a zero tolerance approach to child sexual abuse and promised, at whatever cost, to make children safe in all relationships to the Church.

We can be proud to have been given the challenging responsibility of implementing the measures called for by the Dallas Charter. We, as a catechetical community (as always, I fully include our Catholic schools in this regard), should be gratified to know that because of our efforts, children are safer from the evil of sexual abuse, and that more of us adults are capable of recognizing predatory behavior. We should have no doubt that these efforts have, and will continue to have, a real and significant benefit in the lives of children who might otherwise have fallen prey to victimization.

As your diocesan director, I am profoundly grateful and proud of you and what you have been able to achieve! And it is my privilege to extend the gratitude of Sr. Judith Davies and Bishop Imesch, who know well that much time and effort has gone into keeping our end of the Dallas Charter promise.

I commit to you that our office will do all it can, going forward, to communicate as promptly and fully as possible as we continue to meet all expectations of the Office for Child and Youth Protection.

**SACRAMENT POLICY REMINDER**



Please remember when planning preparation and dates for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist for 2006-07 that policy in the Diocese of Joliet is that all parishes **MUST** offer preparation and the opportunity to celebrate First Reconciliation **BEFORE** celebrating First Eucharist.

Last spring Bishop Imesch requested this of all parishes beginning in 2005-06, so if your parish has not yet made this change, we ask that you plan to do so for next year. Note that this is not a mandate for all children to celebrate the sacrament. It is to be the decision of the child's parents when he or she is sufficiently mature for a first confession.

The order of these sacraments is part of the Code of Canon Law and the preference of the church, as affirmed in recent liturgical documents. Please contact Joyce Donahue or Tom Quinlan if you have any questions regarding this matter.



# NCCL Conference & Expo

Arrives in Chicago  
April 30 - May 4, 2006  
Hyatt Regency O'Hare Hotel  
Rosemont, IL.



## THE PLACE TO BE!

COMPLETE REGISTRATION BY  
MARCH 31, 2006  
[WWW.NCCL.ORG](http://WWW.NCCL.ORG)

A Great Opportunity for Young Adults to  
Explore Catechetical Leadership

Paul Mach

For all of us concerned about bringing young people into our ministry, NCCL has some exciting news! The 2006 NCCL Annual Conference in Chicago is reaching out to people in their 20's and 30's with an unprecedented opportunity. Here's the deal and how you can participate:

Up to 25 young adults (under the age of 40) will be permitted to attend the Annual Conference '06 as invited guests of NCCL. They will be awarded a special pass, which will allow them to attend the keynotes and the learning sessions. The value of this award is \$219.00. This award does not include travel, hotel, meals or any other expenses. They will be able to attend all sessions throughout the week at no cost. To be considered candidates

- Should have some catechetical ministry experience
- Cannot have been employed professionally in parish/diocesan catechetical ministry
- Must be able to incur all costs related to attendance beyond conference registration
- Must be nominated by their diocesan director

To submit candidates for consideration simply e-mail Paul Mach ([pmach@dioceseofjoliet.org](mailto:pmach@dioceseofjoliet.org)) with the name(s) and contact information (include e-mail address) for candidate(s) and a brief description of their current employment, their ministry involvement, and their interest in professional catechetical ministry. Please mention if the candidate is only able to attend for a portion of the week. The deadline for submission of candidates is **February 14, 2006**. Invitations will go out no later than March 1st.

Please consider this wonderful opportunity to help the NCCL encourage the next generation of catechetical leaders. Let's send the word out that talented, committed and faith-filled young Catholics are wanted at our NCCL Annual Conference in Chicago.

YLC 2006  
"NO FEAR, Our  
Shepherd is  
Near!"



Promotional and Registration Materials for YLC 2006 are now on the REO web page ([www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo](http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo)). If you are not able to download the materials, please contact the REO and a hard copy will be mailed to your parish.

Also available soon will be a promo video/dvd about the event. Copies can be checked out from the Resource library.

## REO Calendar

**February 16, 2006**

Parish YM Meeting  
SCPC, 10am - noon  
Contact: Paul Mach

**February 23, 2006**

REO Board Meeting,  
SCPC, 10 am to noon  
Contact: Tom Quinlan

**February 23, 2006**

Adult Faith Association  
Meeting, SCPC  
12:30 - 2 pm

**March 5, 2006**

Rally Day  
St. Mary Immaculate,  
Plainfield; 12:30 pm  
Contact: Paul Mach

**March 16, 2006**

Cathedral Day - Schools  
10am-12:45pm  
Contact: Joyce Donahue

**March 18, 2006**

Cathedral Day - REP  
10am - 12:45pm  
Contact: Joyce Donahue

**March 23, 2006**

REO Board Meeting,  
SCPC, 10 am - noon  
Contact: Tom Quinlan

**April 6, 2006**

Parish YM Meeting  
SCPC, 10am-noon  
Contact: Paul Mach

**April 27, 2006**

Adult Faith Association  
SCPC, Noon - 2:30 pm

**April 30 - May 4, 2006**

NCCL Spring Meeting  
Rosemont, IL  
Contact: Tom Quinlan

**May 18, 2006**

Parish YM Meeting  
SCPC, 10am - noon  
Contact: Paul Mach

**May 25, 2006**

REO Board Meeting  
SCPC, 10am - noon  
Contact: Tom Quinlan

## Catechist Initial Formation Days sponsored by the REO



Would you like to host a Catechist Initial Formation Day at your parish for 2006-2007? The program begins at 9:00 am and concludes by 1:00 pm. The following dates are tentatively scheduled:

September 2006: 9th, 16th, 23th & 30th

October 2006: 21th, & 28th

November 2006: 4th & 11th

January 2007: 13th & 27th

If the answer is yes, please contact Helen Johnson, 815-727-6411 ext 261 or [hjohnson@dioceseofjoliet.org](mailto:hjohnson@dioceseofjoliet.org) as soon as possible.

## Young Adult Ministry

*(For those in your 20's and 30's)*

### Is your Parish interested in hosting Theology on Tap this summer?

Theology on Tap will be held this summer for four weeks in July beginning Sunday July 9th. If your parish would like to consider being a host site contact Paul Mach in the REO. We will work with you to get you started. This event may also be done by a region of parishes. This is a great way to reach out to the 20 and 30 year olds in your parish.

## Struggling to keep your head above water? Why don't you S.W.I.M. to the Border?

Art Sheridan III

On the S.W.I.M. to the Border experience, we will take the time to let our youth meet with another culture face-to-face. The S.W.I.M. to the Border mission is a weeklong event where we will travel to Vicente Guerrero, Mexico, via San Diego, CA. We will spend some time in formation to get to know each other as well as explore the issues surrounding immigration and Mexican life. Time in Mexico will be spent working with Los Embajadores in coordination with the Franciscans.

Days will be spent doing community service work and cultural learning opportunities will be sprinkled throughout the week. We will spend a portion of each day in prayer and reflection. This is the time to think about what we are doing and the impact it has on us.

I know you already do these things in your work with the youth. I hear stories all the time from my students about their adventures and learnings with their youth groups. The S.W.I.M. to the Border experience is meant to be an addition to the activities you provide and not a replacement for those events. Working together we can provide opportunities to plant mustard seeds of hope filled with the potentiality of life-changing actions. I invite you to look into the S.W.I.M. to the Border experience for yourself as a chaperone and your youth as a sign to the world that the Joliet Diocese cares about people of other cultures and is willing to stand together and make an impact on the world.

For more information, contact Art Sheridan (III) at [asheridan@mothermcauley.org](mailto:asheridan@mothermcauley.org) or Art Sheridan (Jr) at 815-834-4072



Christ himself intends. Today's catechetical leader should be in and of the world, at the same time he or she constantly filters the messages of American consumer culture through the lens of the gospel, so that catechists and those catechized can learn to do the same. Then, and only then, will the gospel message stand a chance of having the kind of impact on the culture that who participate and confront the culture, not those who fear it serve the gospel's best interests these days.

Second, in the broader sense of inculturation beyond ethnicity, catechesis in the American culture of today presents a challenge that needs to be met by catechists and leaders who are immersed in American popular culture. This needs to be to such a degree that they are comfortable using its dominant language and symbols to assist catechesis. People

An example of this recently surfaced during one of my own catechetical sessions. I was a substitute catechist for a group of children from the Hispanic community who all speak English, but whose primary experience of the liturgical year is through the Hispanic culture and customs. When I asked what the Three Kings did, they tried to tell me that the Three Kings bring toys to children. Since this has not been my "Anglo" experience, I countered with the liturgical and biblical answer that the Kings brought the baby Jesus gold, frankincense and myrrh. Only later did I have an "oops moment" when I found out that in the Mexican culture, *Epifania* is celebrated with the Kings bringing toys to children.

First, if a parish is ethnically diverse, ideally, leadership and catechists should be chosen from among those who are immersed in the culture. The dilemma, then, is for those parishes with persons in leadership primarily from the dominant "Anglo" culture who are charged with catechesis of persons from other ethnic backgrounds. Somehow, those leaders and catechists need to become more immersed in the culture of those they teach.

As with all catechesis, the methodology relies on the persons of the catechist and the catechetical leader. These should reflect the cultural diversity and be "well-rooted in their cultural environment" at the same time they are persons with a "profound religious sense" who are able to use the cultural customs, popular devotions and symbols of the culture of those being catechized. Where does that lead us?

For the writers of the document, it is "both-and", not "either-or". The "integrity and purity" of the gospel must never be compromised or distorted, yet we must recognize who is being catechized and use "culturally appropriate catechetical methods, tools and resources."

One of the greatest challenges to catechesis in the 21st Century is how to make the message of Jesus Christ accessible to persons living in our contemporary culture while remaining true to the gospel's original character and the intent of the Church. The *NDC* meets this challenge head-on, with some firmly stated principles. (sec. 25.F, pp. 82-83)



THE NDC: INCULTURATING THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE

Joyce Donahue

**"To Become an Effective Leader for Others, First Learn To Lead Yourself."**

From *The Leadership Wisdom of Jesus* by Charles C. Manz

Within the next few months we will be entering into the time of year that requires our discernment regarding our plans and goal for the next ministry year (2006-2007). This process offers the opportunity to develop a personal and professional growth plan. As an aid to that task, look over the January and February Formation Wheel material and identify one or two areas that you would like to focus on in the upcoming year. As the ancient saying goes, the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

If you would like some assistance in developing the personal & professional growth plan, please feel free to contact me. I welcome the chance to be of service to you.

(Continued from Page 3)



The ongoing formational needs of lay ecclesial ministers can change over the course of a long career. Those beginning in ministry may need extra advice and encouragement to face the new situations that test their abilities and calling. Those more experienced may need spiritual renewal, if ministry has become routine or tinged with a certain weariness, tedium or even cynicism. Those entering a new area of ministry may need some review in all four dimensions of formation in the context of the new ministry. Those nearing retirement may find rejuvenation through being asked and helped to become mentors for those newer in ministry. Whatever the situation...ongoing formation is a must!

*(Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, USCCB, December, 2005)*

While on some occasions lay, religious, deacons, and priests need to address issues unique to their own states of life and the implications of those issues for their ministry, experiences of ongoing formation that include all ministers can help build the relationships that are key to collaboration in ministry.

Ongoing formation, which strengthens ministerial identity as well as enhancing ministerial skills, is not a luxury to be pursued when time and resources allow, but is rather a permanent necessity for every ecclesial minister lay or ordained. No lay ecclesial minister should feel excused from taking part in it; failure to do so represents neglect of a significant ministerial responsibility. Optimally, bishops require ongoing formation of all lay ecclesial ministers; their pastors or supervisors expect and encourage it; and their local communities support it.

*(Ongoing Formation of Priests - Washington DC, USCCB, 2001)*

The fact that persons should never stop growing interiorly, the dynamic nature of the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, the process of continual conversion and growth in apostolic love, changes in culture, the evolution of society and constant updating of [pastoral] methods, all mean that [lay ecclesial ministers] should keep themselves in a process of ongoing formation during the whole course of their service. *(Guide for Catechists, no. 29, The Basic Plan for Ongoing Formation of Priests - Washington DC, USCCB, 2001)*

Although the four elements of formation (human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral) have been addressed separately, they must be integrated as a unified whole in the person of the well-formed lay ecclesial minister. The actual practice of ministry is a powerful occasion for integration. Theological reflection upon such ministry practice makes possible a process for constant growth, deepening each of the aspects of formation-human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation.

INTEGRATING THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF FORMATION AND ONGOING FORMATION

Helen Johnson

- Methods of providing formation for others
- Leading of community prayer and preaching
- Pastoral skills for evangelization care of the sick and dying, etc.
- Family mission and family perspective
- Effective relationship and communication skills
- Collaboration
- Discernment of the signs of the times
- Gift discernment and volunteer ministry management
- Change and conflict management skills
- Basic counseling skills
- Culture and language studies
- Administration skills
- Leadership and organizational development
- Applicable civil law
- Ministerial code of ethics

Pastoral formation includes the following areas:

(continued from page 2)



**Pastoral Formation**  
Pastoral formation cultivates the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that directly pertain to effective functioning in the ministry setting and that also pertain to pastoral administration that supports direct ministry.



In addition to an understanding of the traditions of our Christian brothers and sisters, lay ecclesial ministers also need an understanding and appreciation of the other religions present throughout the world and increasingly in our own society, including but not limited to Judaism and Islam. Catholic formation makes a clear distinction between ecumenical dialogue which has as its goal full ecclesial communion and inter-religious dialogue which has as its goal mutual respect, collaboration, and peace.

- Three key elements to this ecumenical dimension are:
- **Hermeneutics**, which entails learning how to distinguish between the 'deposit of faith' and the ways these truths are formulated, so that one can determine whether different theological formulations are complementary rather than contradictory.
  - **The hierarchy of truths**, as articulated at the Second Vatican Council and subsequently further developed. This helps Catholics to understand the faith in its proper structure and relations, present the faith to others in right proportion and balance, and intelligently compare Catholic and non-Catholic doctrines.
  - **The fruits of ecumenical dialogues**, which are the agreed statements that have been formulated since the Second Vatican Council and have set forth the common ground we share with other Churches, continuing points of disagreement, as well as the progress toward improved mutual understanding.

Lay ecclesial ministers have a role in implementing the commitment of the Catholic Church to the restoration of unity among all Christians. Therefore, they should be well acquainted with the Catholic principles on ecumenism as set forth in the Second Vatican Council's, *Decree on Ecumenism (Unitatis Redintegratio)*, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity's *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, and Pope John Paul II's encyclical, *That They May Be One (Ut Unum Sint)*. Recommendations and guidelines given in the study document *Ecumenical Formation of Pastoral Workers*, prepared by the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity will also be helpful.

This dimension of intellectual formation is particularly important as our society becomes more pluralistic and more secularized. For Catholics, dialogue, both ecumenical and inter-religious, is an inherent dimension of evangelization. This does not mean, of course, that dialogue is a means of proselytism. With fellow Christians, it is a means of both preparing for common witness to Christ in the world and of removing obstacles that prevent full, visible unity of the Church, for which Christ prayed. (Catholic Evangelization in an Ecumenical & Inter-Religious Society, Washington DC, USCCB, 2004)



- Canon law
- Spirituality
- Pastoral theology
- Moral theology and Catholic social teaching
- Liturgical and sacramental theology
- Church history
- Dogmatic theology (includes the Trinity, Christology, ecclesiology, and Christian anthropology)
- Scripture and its interpretation

The core elements include:

Intellectual formation should be as broad and deep as possible, with exposure to the vast range of topics and subjects that constitute Catholic theology. It should be balanced and integrated with a "discernible and coherent unity." (Program for Priestly Formation, 5th Ed, 8th draft - Washington DC: USCCB, 2005)

*Intellectual formation seeks to develop the lay ecclesial minister's understanding and appreciation of the Catholic faith and Tradition. It consists chiefly of study of the sacred sciences but draws also upon a wide range of other disciplines: philosophy, literature, the arts, psychology, sociology, counseling, medical ethics, culture and language studies, business administration, leadership and organizational development, law, and so on. While the sacred sciences are the main focus here, we recognize the value of these other disciplines and encourage their study and use whenever relevant for effective ministry.*

**Intellectual Formation**



In this issue the remaining two areas of formation for lay ecclesial ministers (intellectual and pastoral) will be addressed. Formation for lay ecclesial ministry is a journey beyond catechesis into theological study. A sound knowledge of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* should be achieved. However, lay ecclesial ministers need more than thorough adult faith formation; they need proper theological study that builds on and goes beyond the work of catechesis. Theology delves into the Church's faith in a scholarly way, interpreting it according to the witness of the Scriptures and Tradition and making it understandable to the times. Authentic Catholic theology is always done within the Church.

Lay ecclesial ministers should engage in theological study for the sake of a broadened and deepened faith and a better-grounded, informed ministry. As much as possible, the range, depth, discipline, and vigor of Catholic theology, past and present, as understood in historical and cultural context, should be studied. Thus, one's faith, spirituality, and pastoral practice can be strengthened, and one will become a theologically well-formed ecclesial minister ready to meet the needs of ministry today. (*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, USCCB, December, 2005*)

**FORMING LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTERS - CONTINUED**

Helen Johnson

