



Formation Wheel

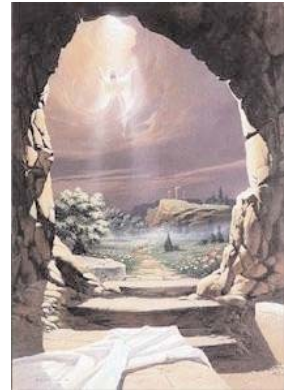
*IN SERVICE TO THE MASTER:
KNOWING...THE CATHOLIC FAITH WELL*

Nancy Dunn

As promised, in this month's issue we will focus on the *knowing* dimension of the Catechist Certification Program, *In Service to the Master*.

The *knowing* dimension is based on the four pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Creed, Liturgy and Sacraments, Morality, and Prayer and Spirituality, and the fifth area identified in the GDC, Scripture.

Why is the *knowing* dimension so critical to the faith formation of a catechist or catechetical leader? We speak with more conviction and passion of things that we understand clearly, can articulate well and personally embrace. For instance, maybe there was a movie or book that really impacted you. As you shared this experience with someone, you probably spoke of some particularly memorable scenes in the movie, maybe the cinematography or the actors. And as you did, your enthusiasm became more and more tangible—and your audience began to feel your passion. Bam! You grabbed them!



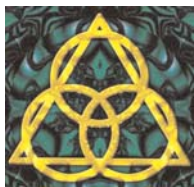
The better you know the concepts within each of the five components of the *knowing* dimension, the more successful you will be in grabbing your audience. The Spirit working through you will light something in the souls of your audience.

“The better you know the concepts within each of the five components of the knowing dimension, the more successful you will be in grabbing your audience.”

The requirements for the knowing dimension for a foundational certificate are 20 hours. Hours need to be evenly divided among the five dimensions. This ensures that a catechist will explore more deeply all four pillars of the Catholic Church as well as spend some time in Scripture study, the “soul of all theological study.”

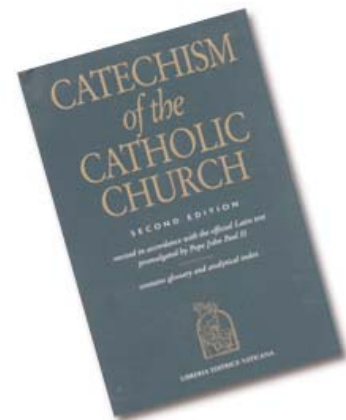
In a recent conversation with Tom Quinlan, Bishop Sartain shared his desire that catechetical efforts in the diocese represent authentic Church Teaching. And after two-thousand years of theology and doctrine, there is SO much to know!

Let's look at each pillar and a select few, not all, of the components of their study.



The Creed – core beliefs of the community

- †God, the Creator of all that exists
- †Faith as a response to God's call
- †Jesus Christ as the fullness of God's revelation
- †God as Trinity



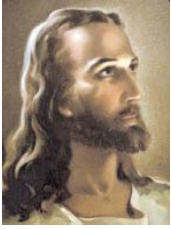
Liturgy and Sacraments – signs and symbols

- †The centrality of the Eucharist in the Church
- †The meaning of ritual
- †The nature of liturgy
- †The relationship of liturgy to the Paschal mystery
- †The relationship of the seven sacraments to the fundamental experience of human life

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(Knowing...Continued from Page 1)



Morality— how we live as followers of Jesus Christ, who described himself as, “the way, the truth and the life.” (John 14:6)

- †Human dignity and community as the foundations of the moral life
- †The delicate relationship between objective moral truth and subjective or personal responsibility
- †The nature, origin and degrees of sin
- †The nature of conscience and the process of information one’s conscience
- †The implications of the Beatitudes for daily life (social justice)



Prayer and Spirituality – our relationship with God. Prayer is place within the context of one’s spirituality; the name given to the entire life lived in response to God’s call.

- †The basic dynamic of prayer as listening and responding to God’s call
- †Mary as the perfect model of acceptance and response to God’s call
- †The various prayer forms through which we make our response to God
- †The Our Father as the bedrock of Christian prayer



Scripture – the “soul of all theological study”

- †A general overview of the Old Testament and the New Testament and central themes
- †The importance of context when reading the Bible
- †The biblical themes of covenant and freedom
- †The source of the bible’s holiness

Resources

Video Training

- Echoes of Faith – The Catholic Faith I
I Believe/We Believe
- Echoes of Faith – The Catholic Faith II
Liturgy and the Sacraments
- Echoes of Faith – The Catholic Faith III
Catholic Morality
- Echoes of Faith – The Catholic Faith IV
Prayer and Spirituality
- Echoes of Faith – The Catholic Faith V
Introduction to the Scriptures



Echoes of Faith or any video curriculum can be used in a small group setting (a few catechists meet at someone’s home) or as an in-service offered to a larger group through your faith formation ministry.

Additional Videos/DVDs



We Are Sent, Eucharist and Our Living Amen—LLWX0083

Eucharist: God’s Way of Embracing Us—SREX0095

Eucharist, The Source and the Summit—SREX0093

Meaningful Conversations about prayer—Praying with the church’s Words—PSXX0139

Meaningful Conversations about prayer—Praying with Scripture—PSXX0138

Meaningful Conversations about prayer—How and Why We Pray—PSXX0136

Where Jesus Walked (Scripture)—SBCX0066

Please check the REO website <http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo/> Media Center, for a detailed description. Contact Jeanne Pirc, Media Librarian at (815) 727-6411 x267 or at jpirc@dioceseofjoliet.org for rental information and availability.

Parish/Parish School Sponsored Programs

Look to your parish and parish school adult faith formation programs and activities as a resource. There are many extraordinary opportunities in parishes across the Diocese. Check out neighboring parishes online bulletins for adult faith formation opportunities.



NEW YEAR'S CHALLENGE: AM I EMBODYING CHRIST IN MY MINISTRY?

Joyce Donahue

A number of years ago, the pastor of the parish in which I was ministering, at the end of the Easter Vigil, thanked the parish liturgical ministers and me personally for our roles in making that celebration a success. When he laughingly suggested that I had been “running around like a chicken with my head cut off” I was dismayed. Did I really look like that?



I was moved by that to take stock and make some serious changes – both interior and exterior. Over time, with prayer, I have become somewhat more trusting of the Holy Spirit and less frantic about details. I admit this has been a struggle, and that God is not finished with me yet!

Did you ever stop to think how you look to others? In ministry, this is very important, since how we carry out the tasks of our ministry should reflect the care and compassion of Christ and the community. Any perception that a minister is rushed, inaccessible, too busy to take time to listen, working in a “silo” mentality, or rigid about rules, for example, can do serious damage to how the people we serve perceive the parish and the Church as a whole.

If you are like many busy parish ministers, you may not have had time and energy to give that much thought. Why not use the relative lull of the post-Christmas New Year to take stock and engage in some personal growth? When we take time to evaluate how effective we are at inviting and awakening people to the love of God and the message of Jesus Christ, our ministries (and our spiritual lives) can only improve.

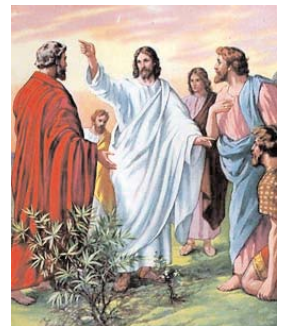
Below are some reflections to help you do just that. I suggest you read the quotation and then reflect, pray and perhaps even journal about your responses.

PART I: SPIRITUALITY

Are you the best disciple of Jesus Christ you can be? Personal discipleship is what makes ministry most effective. When we get caught up in “doing”, and forget to “be” we can lose sight of Jesus. Something I once read in an article by Sr. Joan Chittester, OSB, so impressed me that I copied it years ago and put it up on my wall. It strikes to the heart of who we are as ministers:

The function of a vocation is to be seized by Jesus, to have a relationship with Jesus, not to do a task.

For Personal Reflection: What has my relationship with Jesus been lately? Do I pray regularly? Do I feel Christ’s presence and action in my life? Where?



PART II: HEART

Are you authentic? Does your ministry mirror your heart? Monica Brown, in her thoughtful book *Embodying the God We Proclaim* (1996, Resource Publications) raises the central issue of where our ministerial heart lies:



Do we have the heart for ministry that Jesus had? More basic than that is the possibility that we may have lost our heart, neglecting it, even casting it aside in our well-intentioned pursuit of professionalism and administrative proficiency. Worse still have we betrayed the heart of our ministry in being less than authentic in our relating, not only to those to whom we minister but to our own colleagues and co-workers? Are we, in our contemporary ministry, becoming less recognizable as Jesus’ disciples? ...Are we more caught up in providing services than in attending to those we encounter? (p. 9)

For Personal Reflection: Do I truly regard my work as ministry after the model of Jesus? Am I “authentic?” Do people see only my work, or do they see the face of Christ through me? How can I be more attentive to those I encounter and less preoccupied with what I do?

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PART III: SERVICE

Are you a servant-leader after the model of Christ? To be outward-focused, to think of the needs of those we serve before our own is challenging. Those empowered by spiritual gifts to serve in ministry must realize that they are disciples called to help other disciples in their community to realize their own dignity and calling to holiness and service. The recent document *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, (USCCB, 2005) says:

The call to ecclesial ministry adds a particular focus to the Christian discipleship expected of all the baptized. Their call, however, should not foster an elitism that places lay ecclesial ministers above or outside the laity. Like Jesus they are called to serve and not to be served. They are to use their gifts and their leadership roles always for the good of the Church, equipping the community for every good work and strengthening it for its mission in the world. (p. 26)



For Personal Reflection: Do I see myself as a servant of other disciples in my parish community? How have I succeeded or failed to help them understand their dignity as disciples and their role in the mission of the Church to spread the Gospel?

PART IV: LOVE

Do you love the people you serve as Jesus did? An article in the Winter 2006 issue of *Church* magazine by Ellen Rufft called "Love is Blind—Or is It?" suggests that ministers need to love those they minister to and among as unconditionally as God does:



If we desire to follow the injunction of Jesus to love our neighbors as ourselves or live an even more difficult mandate, i.e., to love our enemies, it would seem that we must be blind. Jesus encourages us to strive to imitate God, whose love is indiscriminately gracious. To do so, we must learn to have a blind eye to others' demographic characteristics and choose to love them despite their religion, color, sex, cultural origin, etc. What such a choice demands of pastoral ministers is obvious. We must be as caring and attentive to those who are appealing to us as to those who are not. We are called to love without prejudice those who are different from us, those whose personalities rub against ours, and those who don't like us!...

For Personal Reflection: Do I really try to love everyone I encounter in my ministry? Who are the people I find hardest to love? How can I discover and treasure what God loves in them? Can I commit to loving instead of judging the people I serve, even when it's not easy?

CONCLUSION

Being pastoral is a never-ending challenge. When we are truly grounded in a healthy spirituality of ministry, involving our own discipleship, a commitment to embodying Christ, servant-leadership and above all, love, we are better ministers, better representatives of our faith community and more in tune with the role we play as ministers. By remembering to reflect, we open ourselves up to change, growth and ultimately to fulfillment of our destiny in Christ.

The Whole Parish Faith Formation article on "Why Make the Switch?" will appear in next month's edition of Formation Wheel. Contact Brian Topping with any questions.

*"Do you love
the people you
serve as Jesus
did?"*

