



## Youth Leadership Conference - YLC 2006

Mark your calendar for this year's YLC, which will once again be held at Lewis University the weekend of July 21-23, 2006. This year's theme is **"NO FEAR - Our Shepherd Is Near!"**, which is taken from the readings for that weekend. We already have Mike Patin, a very dynamic and energetic speaker from New Orleans coming in as our keynote speaker. Promotional materials will be out very soon, so that you are able to promote and register your youth. Don't miss out on this great opportunity. If you don't have youth ministry at your parish, you are strongly encouraged to consider gathering a few young people to attend as representative of your parish, as a place to start building your youth ministry. For questions contact Paul Mach.

## On the Whole Parish Faith Formation Front



Tom Quinlan

You may or may not be aware that in August, Archbishop Daniel Buechlein, chair of the Committee on Catechesis, issued a letter on the topic of whole community catechesis. (In our diocese, we are terming it "whole parish faith formation". It is a category of faith formation ministry that includes Generations of Faith, but is not limited to it.)

*(continued on page 4)*

**St. Nicholas Visits the Advent family event at St. Anthony Parish in Frankfort**

## Liturgical Catechesis: Lent - An Opportunity for Discernment

Joyce Donahue

Each year, the Church readies for Easter by accompanying the catechumens to the font, engaging in a communal journey of preparation called Lent. During these 40 days, we are encouraged to fast, pray and give alms to the needy - the three "disciplines" of Lent.

Underlying these practices is a spiritual disposition - an attitude that Lent is a natural opportunity to take stock of our lives and consider changes - sort of like "Spring cleaning" for the soul. As we do in preparing for a good confession, we are asked to look at what most separates us from God, self and neighbor. It is a moment when faith and life collide - when contemplation should clearly lead to action.

The Church already has within its tradition a great methodology for achieving this - the Spiritual Exercises and other discernment tools created by St. Ignatius. Why not consider using the Ignatian tradition of spiritual discernment as an aid to your own spiritual house-keeping this Lent - and encourage catechists and other adults (or even teens or young adults) in your parish to do the same?

*(continued on page 5)*

PGS 2-3	Letters from the Director
PGS 2-3	Upcoming Cluster Meetings
PG 3	What the NDC Says About the Catechism
PG 4	CIFD
PG 4	REO Staff
PG 5	Winter Retreat
PG 6	Parish Catechetical Leadership
PG 6	Video Licensing
PG 6	Evangelization Tidbits
PG 7	Lenten Longings
PG 7	"Discerning How We Treat the Lowly Ones Among Us"
PG 7	Cathedral Day Update
PG 7	Youth Ministry Events
PG 8	Lent For Children
PG 8	REO Calendar
PGS 12-9	FORMATION WHEEL - The new formational section of Leaven

**JANUARY  
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 -**  
12 pm, Feb. 23, 2006  
SCPC, Romeoville

**Ford-Iroquois CRE Cluster -**  
6:30 pm, Feb. 9, 2006  
St. Peter, Clifton

**Joliet-Will DRE Cluster -**  
10 am, Feb. 16, 2006  
St. Dominic, Bolingbrook

**Kankakee-Grundy DRE Cluster -**  
1 pm, Feb. 9, 2006  
Maternity, BVM  
Bourbonnais

**Northeast Dupage DRE Cluster -**  
10 am, Feb. 16, 2006  
St. Philip, Addison

**Special Needs Cluster - TBA**

**West Dupage DRE Cluster -**  
10 am, Feb. 9, 2006  
St. Daniel, Wheaton



## *A Time To Sow*

**Tom Quinlan**  
*Director*



As I look out and see the horizon for 2006, there are a couple big, notable events for catechesis in our diocese. The first to occur on the calendar is the coming of the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership Annual Conference to town (Rosemont, actually) at the very end of April and early May. The second is the retirement of Bishop Joseph Imesch and a transition to a new "Ordinary" (a term given to the bishop that heads a diocese). There are many important offerings and happenings scheduled for the year ahead (the 2006-07 REO calendar will be included in the February issue of *Leaven*), but these two events dominate the landscape.

### ***NCCL Conference Here This Spring!***

I have found myself calling the NCCL Annual Conference the greatest show in catechesis, and I am proud and pleased that it will be available to us all this year without having to fly across the country and book a hotel room. I agreed to be on the planning committee to help ensure that it would be here. And having been on this committee now for a year, I have great confidence that the annual conference that Chicagoland hosts will be a truly rich and wonderful experience for all of us. The liturgies and prayer services will be well done, the lineup of major presenters is excellent and the tremendous variety of breakout sessions should satisfy everyone's interests.

I especially appreciate the opportunities this conference provides to meet and network with other diocesan and parish catechetical leaders from all over the country. You will likely come away from the '06 Conference feeling affirmed and energized in your ministry and with an enriched vision of how to provide excellent, effective leadership in your parish. Every year I've attended the spring conference, I have observed that so many local parish catechetical leaders are in attendance and seem to be having a great time, both as proud hosts and as beneficiaries of the experience. This year it's our turn to come out *en masse*, to play host to the national catechetical community, to enjoy being together as a diocesan community and to soak in as much of this outstanding leadership experience as we can during this stretch of days.

Please register now. You will be able to take advantage of a discount made available to leadership of our diocese (a \$20 savings). Make the commitment to invest the time and money into your formation, which will then be, each day, at the service of the parishioners to whom you minister. It will be an investment most well-made, for there is no replacement for parish leadership that is well-formed! Please see the insert for more details regarding the conference and use the registration brochure contained in this issue.

I'll segue from NCCL to Bishop Imesch by telling you that the big conference banquet that all registrants attend will include a really neat moment. Bishop Imesch will lead us in prayer at the banquet and will be honored for his many years of leadership and support for catechetical efforts in the Diocese of Joliet. You won't want to miss what should be a special and heartfelt thank you to our bishop.

### ***Bishop Imesch's Retirement; New Bishop's Anticipated Arrival***

In June, Bishop Joseph Imesch is scheduled to retire. When it comes to support for catechetical ministry, Bishop Imesch has been outstanding. With his deep sense of justice, he (*continued on next page*)

has made it clear from day one that he wants all children and youth, both those in Catholic and public schools, to have meaningful and quality Catholic faith formation. His support for lay ministry is strong and his recognition of the importance of adult formation and evangelization is great.

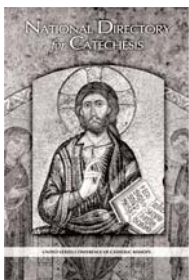
Early in his tenure, Bishop Imesch provided the funding to build an effective diocesan Religious Education Office, with adequate staffing to serve the vision of lifelong catechesis. He has been consistently available to give attention to issues pertaining to catechesis and has been remarkably generous with his time in attending various formation events throughout the diocese. When you add it all up, our bishop of over 26 years has been a true pastor of and a friend to catechetical ministry. Our diocese has come so far from where it was catechetically in 1979, when Bishop Imesch came to Joliet, and we owe him a large debt of gratitude.

At the writing of this, a coadjutor (successor) bishop has not been named. There is, of course, great anticipation as to who our next bishop will be and what kind of leadership and catechetical perspective he will bring. It is expected that the months leading up to June, when Bishop Imesch retires, will serve as a transitional period, with the coadjutor having had the benefit of learning the diocese while serving along side Bishop Imesch. This should allow for a smooth transfer of episcopal authority in June.

I ask that you continue to pray for our new bishop, that he may be filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit so necessary for pastoring our large and dynamic diocese. I ask that we pray for each other, diocesan and parish leaders together, in this time of hope and excitement. For so long we have had Joseph Imesch as our bishop. We are familiar with his thirst for justice for the marginal of our society. We have grown comfortable with his remarkable wit. Soon we have in our presence another bishop, whose gifts and graces will be given to the continued building of this local church. Saying hello while saying good-bye can be awkward. May we use this time of transition well, to make welcome our new bishop and to adequately express our thanks to the only Bishop of Joliet a fair number of us have ever known.

## What the NDC Says About the Catechism

Joyce Donahue



The National Directory for Catechesis, in describing "the criteria for the authentic presentation of the Christian message in the United States at this time in history" refers us squarely to *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Along with Scripture and the NDC itself, the *Catechism* is a key instrument and resource for the content of catechesis. In other words, it is time to dust off our copies and take a fresh look.

The Catechism is described as "an organic synthesis" of the fundamentals of Catholic doctrine and a "sure norm" for teaching the faith. It is not only an "authentic reference text" but a "beautiful collection of the truths

of the Catholic faith." (NDC 71) The NDC calls particular attention to the Catechism's exposition of the "mystery of faith" and of the "mystery of the human person." (72-73)

Intended to complement Scripture, not replace it, the Catechism is at the service of the Word of God and has a role in nourishing catechesis. (74-75)

All that being said, when was the last time you used the *Catechism* or encouraged your catechists or program parents to look at it? Not only should it be a reference any time you, a student or a catechist has a question, but why not take a look in a different light - as a "beautiful collection" of truths. It has been said, for example that the fourth section, on Prayer, can be read as a meditation or a mini-retreat. Or, for an eye-opening look at the priestly role of lay persons at the Mass, look closely at paragraph 901, where it describes how our own offering of our lives along with the sacrifice of the Mass in the Eucharist helps transform the world. Now that's a beautiful thing!

## YOUTH MINISTRY CLUSTERS

### Senior High Youth Ministry Cluster

(Aurora, Bolingbrook, Lisle,  
Naperville, Oswego)

**February 9, 2006**

Holy Spirit, Naperville  
2-4pm

**March 9, 2006**

St. Raphael, Naperville  
2-4 pm

### Junior High Ministry Cluster

(Aurora, Bolingbrook,  
Naperville)

**February 7, 2006**

St. Margaret Mary, Naperville  
3:45 pm

**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

**February 15, 2006**

Immaculate Conception,  
Elmhurst

**March 22, 2006**

Christ the King, Lombard

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

**RELIGIOUS  
EDUCATION OFFICE**

(815) 727-6411  
Fax (815) 722-7361

**Thomas Quinlan**

Director  
tquinlan@dioceseofjoliet.org

**Brian Topping**

Assistant Director  
Whole Parish Faith Formation  
btopping@dioceseofjoliet.org

**Helen Johnson**

Catechetical Associate  
Leadership Formation  
hjohnson@dioceseofjoliet.org

**Joyce Donahue**

Catechetical Associate  
Child Catechesis & Curriculum  
jdonahue@dioceseofjoliet.org

**Rosie Owens**

Catechetical Associate  
Adult Faith Formation &  
Evangelization  
rowens@dioceseofjoliet.org

**Paul Mach**

Catechetical Associate  
Young Adult & Youth Ministries  
pmach@dioceseofjoliet.org

**Pat Dennison**

Consultant  
Rural Catechesis  
pdennison@dioceseofjoliet.org

**Madonna Healy**

Consultant  
Special Needs  
mhealy@dioceseofjoliet.org

**Jennifer Lange**

Office Manager  
jlange@dioceseofjoliet.org

**Jeanne Pirc**

Media Librarian  
jpirc@dioceseofjoliet.org

**Mary Agnes Maloney**

Receptionist  
mmaloney@dioceseofjoliet.org

**Catechist Initial Formation Days sponsored by the REO**

- The final program for this year will be, Saturday, January 28, 2006, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., at St. Charles Pastoral Center, Romeoville. Registration materials are located on the REO web site. If you have any questions, please contact Helen Johnson.
- Are you interested in hosting a CIFD at your parish for 2006-2007? The following dates are tentatively scheduled:



Sept 9, 16, 23, 30, 2006      Oct. 14, 21, 28, 2006  
Nov. 4, 11, 2006              Jan. 13, 27, 2007

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

**(On The Whole Parish Faith Formation Front - continued from front page)**

The letter says that whole community catechesis is becoming increasingly popular and lauds the ways it is effectively transmitting faith, evangelizing people and building community:

*Much of what we have heard gives us the impression that this movement can make some valuable contributions to the life of a parish. We recognize that this approach to catechesis is sometimes used in an outreach to those who are in some way marginalized or even unassociated with the Church. It is also recognized that this type of catechesis can serve to deepen and enrich the faith of the participants and strengthen their sense of being part of the parish community.*

Archbishop Buechlein reinforces the value that parish catechesis be structured in a substantive and systematic way. He then expresses the perspective of the committee regarding the appropriate use of whole community catechesis as a model for parish faith formation:

*We are inclined at this time to advise that whole community catechesis is properly situated when it is introduced as a complementary or supplementary activity to the other systematic programs of religious instruction already extant in the parish.*

An increasing number of parishes in the Diocese of Joliet are developing some sort of whole parish faith formation ministry. There is great variety in how parishes choose to approach whole parish faith formation. The paradigm's flexibility is one of its strengths, allowing parishes to build this ministry according to the parish's own organic reality. And most parishes are finding it to be a source of renewal, with people of all ages formed in new and engaging ways.

The Religious Education Office is continuing to explore local and national developments in whole parish faith formation so that it can assist parishes of the diocese to further understand the challenge and opportunity present within this intergeneration model of catechetical ministry. The diocesan office looks forward to forging an ongoing partnership with those parishes engaged in whole parish faith formation, so that effective and innovative means can deliver substantive and systematic Catholic formation.

Please contact Brian Topping, Assistant Director, for more information regarding whole parish faith formation.

**(Liturgical Catechesis - continued from front page)**

These same techniques can enhance the RCIA experience of those preparing for Easter sacraments as well.

It is certainly true that most people do not have time to make an extended retreat, usually recommended for the full Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. However, certain practices from the Exercises can be fruitful when used by adults with busy lives.

A good place to start is with one of the classic books on Ignatian discernment - *Weeds Among the Wheat - Discernment: Where Prayer and Action Meet* by Thomas Green, SJ, from Ave Maria Press. Green works you through "preparing the soil", "sowing the seed" and "a mixed harvest" - leading to a spiritual maturity of discerning love within community.

A more recent book on the subject is *Inner Compass, An Invitation to Ignatian Spirituality*, by Margaret Silf, from Loyola Press. Silf shows how to use the practices of Ignatius to help answer the spiritual cries "Where am I? How am I? Who am I?", "So, What Went Wrong", and "Why Don't You Answer My Prayers?" She steps the reader through recognizing attachments and working toward detachment.

Actually, you don't need to read a whole book. The following descriptions of two simple Ignatian prayer methodologies are adapted from Appendix L of the 2005 diocesan *Faith Formation Curriculum*.

The steps of Ignatian prayer in the Spiritual Exercises are very simple. They consist of:

1. Quiet yourself
2. Naming a desire you have - the reason for the prayer
3. Exercise the imagination through a visual meditation on a Scripture story (see below)
4. Apply the senses - savor the parts of the experience that provoked the strongest reactions

Afterwards, there should be a colloquy - a prayer conversation with a member of the Trinity or with Mary, relating the experience back to the desire. This step may continue later with a spiritual director.

Ignatian visual meditation begins with Composition of Place - placing oneself in the scripture story, by imagining how it looks, feels, smells and sounds. This can be done alone after reading a Scripture, by viewing a painting of a Scripture story subject, or can be guided by a leader or conducted in groups.

A second Ignatian spiritual practice, that of the Examen, or examination of conscience, may prove fruitful in Lenten practice. Usually, it is best to do this at the end of the day. It has five steps:

1. Quiet yourself
2. Pray for the grace to see clearly, understand accurately and respond generously.
3. Review in memory the history of the day (week, month) looking for concrete instances of the presence and guidance of God, and the activity and influence of evil. (Pay attention to strong feelings associated with experiences and encounters).
4. Evaluate those instances in which we have either cooperated with God or yielded to the influence of evil. Express gratitude and regret.
5. Plan and decide how to collaborate more effectively with God, and how, with God's help, to avoid or overcome the influence of evil in the future.

Ignatian resources on the web:

[www.sacredspace.ie](http://www.sacredspace.ie) - Interactive prayer website of the Irish Jesuits, with daily meditations focused on discerning prayer.

[www.findingGod.org](http://www.findingGod.org) - From Loyola Press - click on "Resources" then "Prayer and Spirituality."

[www.marquette.edu/cis](http://www.marquette.edu/cis) - Marquette University's Ignatian Spirituality Center -- click on "Links" to access many online spirituality resources

[www.prayerwindows.com/ignatian.html](http://www.prayerwindows.com/ignatian.html) - Use art to enter into Ignatian prayer



**There is Still Time to Register for...**

either of our great late-winter "Spring Break" half-day retreats with Lee Nagel.

Lee will lead a session for catechetical leaders on **Friday, January 20** at the St. Charles Borromeo Pastoral Center, and a second opportunity at Maternity of the BVM in Bourbonnais on **Saturday, January 21**, for catechetical leaders and catechists.

Both events fun from 9 am - noon, with an option for lunch. For more information, call Joyce Donahue at 815-727-6411.

Register online by visiting the REO web page at [www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo](http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo).

Don't miss this!

## Parish Catechetical Leadership



- Contract Renewal Materials for "returning" parish catechetical leaders will be available in February.
- Please inform the REO of all position openings in parish catechetical ministry as soon as possible. Contact either Helen Johnson, Catechetical Associate for Leadership Formation or Tom Quinlan, Director of the REO.
- If you know of a qualified person seeking a parish catechetical ministry position advise them to contact Helen Johnson at 815-727-6411 ext 261 or [hjohnson@dioceseofjoliet.org](mailto:hjohnson@dioceseofjoliet.org).

## Important Information About Video Licensing



Brian Topping

The Media Center has received many calls from parishes asking if it is okay to show movies to their classes. The real question is what does a parish need to do in order to show movies to public groups of people, such as classes, legally? The bottom line answer is that parishes need a license to show movies to public groups legally. While some movies are made specifically for public viewing and come with a license to that effect, most movies are produced for private viewing, normally thought of as personal, home use. Feature films fall under this category. In order to show movies for private use only, parishes need to acquire additional licensing.

There are two ways parishes can acquire additional licensing. One way is to contact the studio that produced the movie. The other way is to purchase an annual membership in a company that provides licensing on behalf of production studios. The Motion Picture Licensing Corporation ([www.mplc.com](http://www.mplc.com)) and Christian Video Licensing International ([www.cvli.org](http://www.cvli.org)) are two companies that provide this service to organizations such as churches. Purchasing a license from these companies covers a church to show movies from the production studios they represent. It is possible that a license from MPLC or CVLI will not cover every license studio. Icon, the studio that produced *The Passion of the Christ*, is an example of this.

One last dynamic about licensing is important to mention. Licenses typically cover the facility at which videos will be shown. The size of the facility, the number of viewers, and the frequency of viewing all may have a bearing on license cost. Temporary licenses are available for parishes that take groups offsite and show videos at locations, such as retreat centers. For more information about video licensing, visit one of the websites listed above, or contact Brian Topping at (815) 727-6411.



## Evangelization Tidbits



"The laity can also feel themselves called, or be called, to work with their pastors in their service of the ecclesial community, for its growth and life, by exercising a great variety of gifts and ministries according to the grace and charisms which the Lord is pleased to give them." *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 73.



## Good News!

**Samantha Catherine Miserendino was born on November 23, 2005 to Dave Miserendino (Youth Minister-Our Lady of Mercy, Aurora) and his wife, Rhonda. She weighed in at 7 lbs, 8oz. and was 19.5 inches long. Mom and baby are doing good. Congratulations to all of the Miserendino Family!**

## Lenten Longings

Rosie Owens

Now is the time to plan for Small Christian Communities during Lent. Here is a suggested timeline:

**December** Begin praying for the success of Lenten Small Christian Communities.

**January** Encourage current SCCs to meet for six weeks during Lent and to invite new members to join their communities.  
Select and invite parishioners to be facilitators of new Lenten communities.  
Begin publicity.  
Keep praying.

**February** February 4-5 - Invite parishioners to join a Lenten Small Christian Community at all Masses.  
February 6 - Order *Lenten Longings* from the REO.  
February 6 - Organize communities.  
February 17 - Meet with your Small Christian Community facilitators and distribute *Lenten Longings*. Pray for your participants and facilitators.

**March** Mid March - contact community facilitators to touch base and offer support.  
Encourage new communities to continue meeting after Lent.  
Keep praying.

The Religious Education will be bulk ordering '*Lenten Longings, Cycle B*' from RENEW International. *Please see the insert for details.*

For a free sample of *Lenten Longings, Cycle B* check out:

[www.renewintl.org/Resources/Pages/Lenten%20Longings%20B%20download%20pgs.pdf](http://www.renewintl.org/Resources/Pages/Lenten%20Longings%20B%20download%20pgs.pdf)

## Discerning How We Treat the Lowly Ones Among Us

By Joyce Donahue and Madonna Healy

As we prepare for Lent, it is a perfect time for parishes to reflect on how well they treat some of the "least" of God's people. People with special needs - "disabilities" some would call them - certainly qualify as vulnerable. As we listen to the Lenten stories about Jesus' healing ministry, we need to be reminded of the connection between Jesus' behavior and how we are called to respond in a similar way to people in our parish communities. Ours is a church striving for inclusion, not exclusion. While it may push some of us out of our "comfort zones," the Gospel beckons us to include persons with disabilities in the life of the parish and general society.

In "Welcoming Parishioners with Disabilities," published in 2003 by the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD), "disability" is defined as "the normal and expected outcome of the risks and stresses of the living process." Thus, we are all disabled. Only God is truly "able."

As part of our Lenten call to conversion this year, perhaps parish councils, liturgy committees, religious education committees and others should examine how accessible all programs and resources in their parishes are. NCPD reminds us that accessibility goes beyond just physical access. It includes people with cognitive and sensory disabilities too. It isn't enough to just allow people with disabilities to attend parish functions along with everybody else. The real challenge is to open our hearts and lovingly invite them into a community of real relationships, where their gifts are accepted as well as their limitations. How can your parish find ways for blind, deaf or developmentally disabled children and adults to truly be included in parish celebrations and programming?

For resources for parish study, visit [www.ncpd.org](http://www.ncpd.org).

## Cathedral Day Update



For those participating in the Thursday, March 16 Cathedral Day, St. Raymond's School has graciously agreed to make their gym available for those who wish to have their students "brown-bag" their lunch. Again, due to the lack of kitchen facilities during Cathedral construction, we are not able to offer the customary food items. "Stay tuned" for more updates as we learn what parts of the complex may be available to us for the event.

## Youth Ministry Events

**January 9th** YLC input meeting; St. Irene, Warrenville -1pm

**January 24th** - YLC input meeting; SCPC - 7pm

**March 5th** - Rally Day (see enclosed flyer)

## REO Calendar

**January 20, 2006**

Winter Retreat for  
Catechetical Leaders, Lee  
Nagel, SCPC, 9am-Noon  
Contact: Joyce Donahue

**January 21, 2006**

Winter Retreat for  
Catechetical Leaders, Lee  
Nagel, Maternity of the  
BVM, Bourbonnais  
9am-Noon  
Contact: Joyce Donahue

**January 26, 2006**

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

**January 28, 2006**

Catechist Initial Formation  
Day, SCPC, Romeoville,  
9:00a.m. - 1:00p.m.  
Contact: Helen Johnson

**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 p.m.

**March 5, 2006**

Rally Day  
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 to noon  
Contact: Tom Quinlan

## Lent for Children and Youth - Helping it All Make Sense

By Joyce Donahue

How do we communicate the meaning of Lent to children and young people? Although the Church no longer sees Lent as 40 days to feel sorry for poor Jesus, suffering for us sinners on the cross, the resources for a newer view of Lent are sometimes a little hard to find.

Do's for Lent:



- Be sure to integrate all three Lenten disciplines in your programs - prayer, fasting and almsgiving - not just the easily found almsgiving/service projects. Ask yourself when planning for Lent in your program - How will I provide opportunities and resources for additional prayer for catechists and students? How will I help them fast?
- To make Lenten prayer more meaningful, you could try some thing as simple as asking each catechist to begin class with an extended moment of silent or quiet prayer, a guided meditation geared for children, or some other meditative practice that allows children to be still and hear the voice of God. For young children, try *The Ball of Red String: A Guided Meditation for Children* by Marlene Halpin, OP, available through Loyola Press. A good resource for all ages is *Guided Meditations for Children* by Jane Reehorst, BVM, from Harcourt Religion Publishers.
- Yes, you can help children fast during their faith formation sessions. Make sure catechists know that Lent should mean less music and maybe even doing without something that children usually like - some activity, perhaps, that has been used as a kind of "reward" could go away for Lent and return after Easter. Also, specifically request that parents NOT send birthday treats to class during Lent.

Don'ts for Lent:



- Many religious educators fall back on praying the Stations of the Cross during Lent, with little other spiritual catechesis, which is how many of them may have experienced Lent as children. Stations of the Cross are actually NOT appropriate for the early weeks of Lent. Certainly, as Holy Week approaches, have children participate in a good, scripture-based celebration of the Stations. However, wait until the natural flow of the Lenten season calls for it.
- There are many popular Lenten craft projects that may incorporate non-liturgical, non-scriptural symbols. If you have been handing your catechists such crafts, take a moment to evaluate them according to Scripture, Catholic belief and practice. For instance, the "rainbow" (jelly-bean prayer) is not a symbol of Lent. It is appropriate to the Easter season, when we see the Resurrection as a sign of God's promise there will be no more death, parallel to God's gift of the rainbow to Noah. Always question how symbols are used, especially if using projects are from the Internet or not currently provided by Catholic publishers.
- Don't celebrate Easter prematurely. No Easter prayers, parades, egg hunts, or candy baskets should happen before Easter "vacation". Send families forth with an expectation that they will celebrate the Triduum. Save the classroom celebrations for when they return - the Easter Season lasts 50 days, after all - so there is ample appropriate time for treats and parties.

These are just a few suggestions. No doubt you know of other good, creative ways to make Lent real for students in your programs. Don't be afraid to do something different this year.



## Formation Wheel

(continued from page 10)

teaching and the gifts given by Christ. Those called to lay ecclesial ministry can respond if they are aware that the Church is God's love at work in the world, God's offer of salvation uniquely through Christ. This requires in the lay ecclesial minister a sense of gratitude for the Church, which is the gift of God who upholds and renews her.

Love for the Church means rejoicing in what Christ has made the Church and allowing that to shape one's identity. It does not mean that one needs to deny the dark sides of the Church's history nor think that in every circumstance the words and actions of her representatives, including lay ecclesial ministers, have to be greeted with administration.

Lay ecclesial ministers serve as authorized representatives of the local church, so they need to accept this role with fidelity and loyalty and be able to fill it with integrity, fully versed in authentic Church teaching, supportive of it, able to defend it, and present it with clarity. Spiritual formation can help persons discern if this calling is for them, embrace it with joy if it is, or move on in peace if it is not.

- **Devotion to the Eucharist.** In his 2003 book *God Is Near Us*, Pope Benedict XVI (then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger) stresses that the Eucharist in its communitarian and personal dimensions is the heart of the Church. Especially inviting Catholics to rediscover Eucharistic adoration, he uses the words of his predecessor, Pope John Paul II, which were originally addressed to priests but which apply strikingly to lay ecclesial ministers: Let all pastoral activity be nourished by Eucharistic adoration, and may it also be food for ourselves and for all the priests who collaborate with us, and likewise for the whole of the communities entrusted to us. In this practice there should be revealed almost at every step that close relationship between the Church's spiritual vitality and the Eucharist understood in its profound significance (John Paul II, *The Eucharistic Mystery of the Church and of the Priest (Dominicae Cenae)*, 1980).
- **An ecumenical spirit.** A good understanding of the meaning of the Sacrament of Baptism is important for appreciation of the real but limited communion that other Christians and their Churches and communities have with the Catholic Church. This understanding is helped where the Church authorities have recognized the Baptism of other Churches and communities. On the basis of Baptism it may be possible to give, with other Christians, a certain common witness. Prayer with fellow Christians and for the unity of the Church enriches all who participate. Works of service and the promotion of justice are often strengthened when undertaken by members of many Christian Churches.

Spiritual Formation requires discipline and perseverance.

- **Daily prayer and spiritual practices.** Opportunities for lay ecclesial ministers to experience a wide range of prayer forms and styles, including vocal, meditative, and contemplative prayer; use of icons; and practices of family prayer and domestic spirituality is important. These practices should also give expression to the rich range of ethnic or cultural prayer practices and popular devotions present among program participants. Retreats and days of reflection are an essential component as well.
- **Spiritual direction.** Meeting with a qualified spiritual director offers a valuable experience for lay ecclesial leaders.
- **Faith sharing and theological reflection.** Sharing faith provides mutual support and encouragement and builds bonds of community. Theological reflection, which is more systematic and comprehensive, attends to experience in the light of faith, culture, and the teaching of the Church and helps one to recognize the movement of God in their life and ministry.
- **The practice of justice and charity.** Performing corporal or spiritual works of mercy and taking action on behalf of justice, fulfills the Lord's command and deepen their spiritual growth. Prayer and reflection before and after such activities further enhances growth.
- **Studying the lives of the saints.** Celebrating the cycle of the liturgical year, learning about the saints, and praying to them will reveal the shape and pattern of a well-formed Christian character.

There are many things to consider. What are you doing? How are you growing in these two areas? Take time to assess, (the beginning of a New Year is always a good time to reflect & review) then develop a plan and then implement it.



**The first step to becoming an effective leader is to look in the mirror. Master the art of leading yourself and you will lay the foundation for helping others to do the same.**

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



## Formation Wheel

(continued from Page 11)

Nothing can substitute for this true conversion and personal encounter with Christ. Spiritual formation cannot produce it, for it is God's gracious gift; but spiritual formation can teach and help those who seek it, prepare them to receive it, and, when it is given, develop its fruits in their lives and ministry. This dynamic of spiritual growth is an essential component of formation for ministry.

Lay ecclesial ministry has no single spirituality, beyond common grounding in God's word and the sacraments, in the pastoral life and communion of the Church, and in the one Spirit who has been given to all. For "there are as many paths of prayer as there are persons who pray," even as "it is the same Spirit acting in all and with all" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2672). The multiple demands of family and community responsibilities may occasionally challenge some lay ecclesial ministers in their effort to set aside regular time and space for spiritual practices. However, when daily life is lived reflectively with intentionality, it is a school of holiness.

Spiritual Formation calls for:

- **A living union with Christ.** For all the baptized, this union is the goal of their Christian life. For lay ecclesial ministers, it is the ground of their ministry and the irreplaceable source of its authenticity and fruitfulness.
- **Experiences built on the word of God.** Reading, studying, and meditating on and praying with Scripture are core practices for Christian discipleship and are essential for lay ecclesial ministers. Deep attention to the word proclaimed at Liturgy, *lectio divina*, praying of the psalms, and participation in faith-sharing groups can strengthen one's identity and spirituality as an ecclesial minister.
- **Participation in the Liturgy, especially the sacraments.** Celebration and study of the liturgical year will unfold "the whole mystery of Christ" (Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium)(SC), no. 102) and deepen one's appreciation of God's ongoing presence in ordinary time and liturgical seasons. With a spirituality rooted in the Sacraments of Initiation, the minister encounters Christ and his grace in the Eucharist, expresses and grows in faith, strengthens the bond with the Church, and receives nourishment to fulfill the mission. In the Sacrament of Penance, which the minister celebrates often, he or she finds "a personal encounter with the crucified, forgiving Christ," and honors Christ's "right to meet each one of us in that key moment in the soul's life constituted by the moment of conversion and forgiveness." (Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium) (SC), no. 102). Praying the Liturgy of the Hours is another means to unite the lay ecclesial minister with the universal Church.
- **An incarnational spirituality of presence and a paschal spirituality of loving service.** Incarnational love willingly enters into the "joys and hopes, the grief and anguish" (GS, no. 1). of the people of our time, making one as fully and faithfully present to every person and culture as Christ is. Paschal love, which always includes the cross, means that one is ready to sacrifice self so that others may experience God's abundant life, and so that all together, strengthened by hope, may hasten to the Resurrection (GS, no.22).
- **An awareness of sin.** In times characterized by a weakening or loss of the sense of sin, sound spirituality must cultivate the "restoration of a proper sense of sin so that one can hear the Gospel of mercy with grateful joy, genuine repentance, and renewed conversion" (John Paul II, *On Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church Today*, (Reconciliatio et Paenitentia) (Vatican City, 1984), no. 18).
- **A spirituality for suffering.** To minister with those who suffer or whose loved ones suffer, indeed in the face of their own suffering, lay ecclesial ministers need an informed theological view of suffering and a mature spirituality strengthened by faith and hope to be able to face and embrace this mystery of human existence.
- **A Marian spirituality.** Mary perfectly models "a spiritual and apostolic life," dealing with family concerns and tasks, remaining intimately united to her Son, cooperating in his saving work (AA, no.4). "The theological significance of Mary appears in the Church. Mary is the Church in person and the Church as a whole embodies what Mary as a person anticipates." (Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger - now Benedict XVI, *God and the World: A Conversation with Peter Seewald*, San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2002, 353). Devotion to Mary will help the lay ecclesial minister better understand and love the Church.
- **Love of the Church.** We learn to love the Church by looking at her with the eyes of Jesus, "who loved the Church and gave himself up for her" (Eph 5:25). Though it is made up of all of us sinful human beings, Christ has made the Church his Mystical Body. Living by the victory of his Resurrection, the Church is a reality of faith, manifested in the witness of so many martyrs and saints, in the good lives of countless Christians, in the holiness of the

(continued on Page 9)



# Formation Wheel

Human formation, meant to lead lay ecclesial ministers toward greater maturity as adults and as ministers of the Church, includes the following:



## Human Formation

*Human formation seeks to develop the lay ecclesial minister's human qualities and character, fostering a healthy and well-balanced personality, for the sake of both personal growth and ministerial service.*

- **A basic understanding of self and others** that can help lay ecclesial ministers relate more authentically with God and others
- **Psychological health**, marked by integrity, appropriate interpersonal boundaries, and the ability to honor and safeguard the trust that people place in them as Church ministers
- **A mature sexuality**, which cultivates the expression of chastity appropriate to their state of life, understands and respects appropriate sexual boundaries, and recognizes the grave psychological and legal consequences of inappropriate sexual behavior, including harassment and abuse
- **Physical health**, including an overall balance in one's life and ministry marked by practices of wellness
- **Knowledge of one's personal gifts and special charisms** and their relationship to particular ministries
- **Recognition of the traits and abilities one lacks**, leading to the goal of collaborating well with those who have different, complementary gifts
- **Understanding of family systems and dynamics** within the context of the Church's teaching on the role and mission of the Christian family
- **Ability to learn from both praise and criticism**, receiving and assessing both with honesty and equanimity
- **A genuine respect and concern for others**, rooted in the example of Jesus and the Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person
- **Virtues of Christian discipleship**, including the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, as well as honesty, humility, compassion, initiative, courage, vision, energy, hospitality, and Christian joy—all necessary to direct others.

Human formation happens first and foremost through human contact with persons whose example or advice can show one what it means to be Christ-like.

- **Participation in a small faith community.** Small faith communities provide opportunities for support and accountability. Creating, guiding, and supporting small communities within formation programs furthers the work of human formation.
- **Affirmation and critique.** Informal conversation, comments in class and on papers, academic advising, mentoring sessions, and peer review can further discernment and growth on all sides.
- **Periodic feedback.** Peer feedback, simple personality profiles or more extensive psychological testing, summative evaluations, and recommendations can help to discern readiness for ministry.
- **Counseling.** Counseling can be a means of personal growth and problem solving.
- **Fostering of self-reflection and self-awareness.** These abilities can be developed in a ministry setting through journaling, pastoral supervision, and other means.

## Spiritual Formation



*Spiritual formation aims to arouse and animate true hunger for holiness, desire for union with the Father through Christ in the Spirit, daily growing in love of God and neighbor in life and ministry, and the practices of prayer and spirituality that foster these attitudes and dispositions. It promotes and strengthens that fundamental conversion that places God, and not oneself, at the center of one's life. Openness to this ongoing conversion is a prerequisite for fruitful spiritual formation.*

A personal experience in and through the Church of the love of the Father in Christ and through his Spirit is foundational for all ministry, as it is for true discipleship. If ministry does not flow from a personal encounter and ongoing relationship with the Lord, then no matter how "accomplished" it may be in its

methods and activities, that ministry will lack the vital soul and source needed to bear lasting fruit.

**(continued on Page 10)**



# Formation Wheel

## MINISTRY...SERVING THE CHURCH AND ITS MISSION

Helen Johnson

Ministry finds its place within the communion of the Church and serves the mission of Christ in the Spirit. Thus, communion and mission provide the foundation for understanding and doing lay ecclesial ministry. In its broadest sense, ministry is to be understood as service (diakonia) and is the means for accomplishing mission in the communion of the Church. It is a participation in and expression of Christ's ministry. Ministry is diverse and, at the same time, profoundly relational. This is so because ministry has its source in the triune God and because it takes shape within the Church understood as a communion. Ministerial relationships are grounded first in what all members of Christ's Body have in common. Through their sacramental initiation all are established in a personal relationship with Christ and in a network of relationships within the communion of the People of God. The personal discipleship of each individual makes possible a community of disciples formed by and for the mission of Christ.

## FORMING LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTERS

Helen Johnson

In the new resource, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Guide for the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*, USCCB, November, 2005 we hear, "the Church has always required proper preparation of those who exercise a ministry" (See CIC, canons 235 §1, 236, 597 §2). In the same way, CIC, canon 231, states that "lay persons who devote themselves permanently or temporarily to some special service of the Church are obliged to acquire the appropriate formation which is required to fulfill their function properly." Lay ecclesial ministers, just like the ordained, need and deserve formation of high standards, effective methods, and comprehensive goals.

"To set high standards," said Pope John Paul II, "means both to provide a thorough basic training and to keep it constantly updated. This is a fundamental duty, in order to ensure qualified personnel for the Church's mission" (See CIC, canons 235 §1, 236, 597 §2). These words, spoken for catechists (men and women fulfilling a broad range of pastoral duties) in mission lands, can apply as well to the lay ecclesial ministers of our country. Effective formation methods address the whole person: emotions, imagination, will, heart, and mind. It is the whole person who ministers, so the whole person is the proper subject of formation.

The four areas of formation-human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral-which provide a framework for the formation of deacons and priests also provide a framework for lay ecclesial ministers (See CIC, canons 235 §1, 236, 597 §2). Lay ecclesial ministers need:

- **Human qualities** critical to form wholesome relationships and necessary to be apt instruments of God's love and compassion
- A **spirituality** and practice of prayer that root them in God's Trinitarian life, grounding and animating all they do in ministry
- Adequate **knowledge** in theological and pastoral studies, along with intellectual skills to use among the people and cultures of our country
- The practical **pastoral abilities** called for in their particular ministry

In this issue, we will focus on Human Formation and Spiritual Formation. As you read through this section, I invite you to consider in what ways are you engaging in continued formation, for your role as a lay ecclesial leader.