



Leaven

The Newsletter of the
Religious Education Office



FASHION ME a People

The **First National Gathering on Lifelong Faith Formation**
*Presenting the most innovative thinking, practices, and resources
for faith formation across the entire lifecycle*

Thursday January 11 - Saturday January 13, 2007
Grosvenor Resort Walt Disney World, Orlando, Florida

Sponsored by the Center for Ministry Development; In Partnership with Harcourt Religion
Publishers, OCP Publications, and Twenty-Third Publications

Join us for three days filled with:

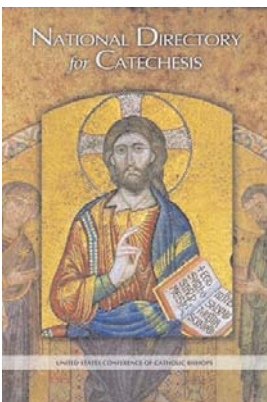
- **general sessions, mini-courses** and **workshops** that present the most innovative thinking, practices, and resources for faith formation across the entire lifecycle, including sessions in Spanish
- **worship** experiences that celebrate and deepen our faith
- **networking** opportunities that connect leaders from across North America

Specially Designed for Parish, School, and Diocesan leadership: pastors, catechetical coordinators and all catechetical leaders, Catholic school principals and teachers, RCIA and sacramental preparation leaders, liturgists and music directors, and coordinators of youth ministry, young adult ministry, adult faith formation, and family ministry.

For more information, refer to the registration insert in this month's Leaven. Please contact Brian Topping if you plan to attend. We hope to see you in Orlando!

The NDC on Structures for Catechesis

Joyce Donahue



In order for catechesis to take place, national organizations, diocese and parishes need structures to support that. The *National Directory for Catechesis* defines how those structures should interact, providing what it calls "principles and guidance." (pp.246-47) A quick summary:

- All levels of organization need to respect the competence of other levels.
 - Catechesis is person-centered and the Christian family is the basic community of faith.
 - Responsibility for catechesis is shared by each member of the church.
 - Clear statements of principals and goals of catechesis are needed.
 - There should be equitable distribution of catechetical resources.
 - Organization should flow from catechetical needs.
- Planning for catechesis is essential.
 - We need to understand the mission of catechesis.
 - We need to understand the cultural backdrop
 - We need to assess resources, identify and prioritize strategies, and set budgets
 - Review and evaluation are essential.
 - Restatements of goals and strategies may be needed.

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A Focus on Young Adult Ministry this month in Formation Wheel...

"Turning On the Light" - by Paul Jarzembowski
(Newest member of the REO)

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**OCTOBER
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 (DAFF)

October 26, 2006

SCPC, Romeoville
12:00pm - 2:30pm

Northeast DuPage Cluster

November 16, 2006

*Bringing Care &
Bereavement in Ministry*
10:00am

West DuPage Cluster

October 12, 2006

Corpus Christi,
Carol Stream
10:00am

November 9, 2006

St. Margaret Mary,
Naperville
10:00am

Ford-Iroquois Cluster

November 9, 2006

St. Edmund, Wateska
6:30pm

Joliet-Will Cluster

October 12, 2006

St. Francis, Bolingbrook;
10:00am

Kankakee Cluster

October 12, 2006

St. Paul, Peotone
1:00 - 3:00pm

November 9, 2006

St. Joseph, Manteno
1:00 - 3:00pm



Tom Quinlan
Director

A Time To Sow



Why do you do what you do? What drives your ministry?

While few of us grew up dreaming of being a catechetical leader, we likely found ourselves coming into our ministry with plenty of idealism and fervor for helping people, building up the parish community and serving God. I hope that your fervor is as strong today as it was when you started. Or that it is even stronger. Of course, you are not the same person as when you started in leadership. You are, we all are, on a natural, inevitable course of personal and spiritual evolution.

Noted author and speaker, Fr. Ronald Rolheiser, in an article that has haunted me (in a good way) in recent months, hopes we are all on a journey of *ministerial* evolution, as well. He asserts that there is a hierarchy of three motives for doing ministry and we should strive toward the highest. They are, in ascending order:

- **Doing Ministry for Self**
- **Doing Ministry for Others**
- **Doing Ministry for God**

Being drawn to ministry because we benefit from it in some manner is not a bad thing. It got us in the door, so to speak. Obviously, however, ministry that essentially remains self-serving and self-focused can never be meaningfully faithful to the model of Christ. Such ministry will, ultimately, prove to be hollow and unsustainable. Simply put, ministry ought not to be about ourself.

Getting past ministerial narcissism and to a place where other people come first is a significant movement in the maturing of the minister. This *Doing Ministry for Others* motivation allows our joy to be the joy of those we serve. We give of ourselves with a compassion and empathy that is authentic. And it doesn't matter whether we receive accolades or gratitude, or even acknowledgement! We invest ourselves in the best interest of others and we don't count the cost.



While people in all kinds of secular helping professions are called to achieve this level of heroism, we as Catholics would locate this generosity of spirit within the faith framework of the *Paschal Mystery*. To some degree we must have died to ourselves if we are now able to live for others. Truly putting others first is a profound and mature posture for any minister.

Still, it is Rolheiser's third level of motivation for ministry, *Doing Ministry for God*, which intrigues and challenges me the most. In this level, Rolheiser notes the potential for something beyond even the most wonderful, altruistic motivation for why we minister. Something of a divine spark lives in all of us, which if allowed to be touched by grace and cultivated in our spiritual practice, can draw us into a relationship of intimacy, surrender and fidelity to the Divine One. And out of that relationship can come a desire to please and serve God that becomes our focal point and the force that propels us forward in our ministry.

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Mother Teresa was such a marvelous example of this! Sure, she did each and every of her acts of charity out of a love for others, but her love for others was super-charged in and by her love for God. *Something Beautiful for God* was not just the title of a book about her life; it was what motivated Mother Teresa in all that she did.

As I ponder Rolheiser's three levels of ministry motivation these days, I am more frequently reflective about why I do what I do. For whom am I doing it? For myself? For others? For God? Do you want to know the truth? Most often it is a mix of two or three of these motivations. And it varies from situation to situation.

Some days I'm connected to wanting to honor God more than anything else. There are times I'm more vulnerable, more emotionally needy, more self-focused. And, of course, there are moments when I am happily caught up in being able to help you or a member of my staff in some regard. At least I am more conscious of my spiritual desire to root my ministry in humble service to God. And hopefully, I am making strides in doing ministry as a way to pleasingly give back to God the gifts of life and ability God has given to me.

Wouldn't it be so freeing if we could eventually get to a place where our ministry was first and foremost about God? Everything else would fall into its proper place. Our power to serve others would flow from the very font of God's love! Mother Teresa and Ronald Rolheiser both have it right...what drives us to do what we do in our ministry can, ultimately, be to do **something beautiful for God**.

"Listen Harder Than You Speak"

That's a line I somehow coined during the summer. I find myself reflecting upon it...and using it in talks quite often. It's not a bad mantra.

In an ongoing effort to make sure that the diocesan Religious Education Office is doing a good job of listening to the hopes, needs and concerns of parishes in the diocese, there are some upcoming events I want you to know about.

- The second in a series of Discussion Forums with me will take place on Friday, November 17th, at St. Jude the Apostle Parish in New Lenox. It begins with prayer at 10 AM and ends by Noon. I invite all parish catechetical leaders to attend. It's a simple, casual opportunity to hear what is on your mind as we strive to move our faith formation ministries forward in the Diocese of Joliet. More information will be sent via email later in the month.
- There will be a joint dialogue and visioning day for the Diocesan Religious Education Board and the REO Staff on December 7th. It will serve as an opportunity for both bodies to get to know one another better and explore together the role for the REO in leading and serving catechetical ministries in the diocese. Not only do I ask for your prayer that the Holy Spirit will guide us in our joint work, but I invite you to communicate to your board representative any sentiments or ideas you may have that could enrich our dialogue in December.

Through the fall and into the coming year, the Religious Education Office will continue to try to explore ways to keep the lines of communication going strong. I hope you know that the staff and I value your insights and thoughts. You are always welcome to call or email us. We love hearing from you!



YOUTH MINISTRY CLUSTERS

For more information
contact Paul Mach
pmach@dioceseofjoliet.org

Naperville Senior High Youth Ministry Cluster

October 12, 2006

St. Raphael, Naperville
2:00pm - 4:00pm

November 2, 2006

Our Lady of Mercy, Aurora
2:00pm - 4:00pm

Naperville Junior High Youth Ministry Cluster

October 3, 2006

St. Margaret Mary,
Naperville
3:30pm - 5:00pm

November 16, 2006

St. Elizabeth Seton,
Naperville
1:00pm - 3:00pm

Joliet Cluster Youth Ministry

October 2, 2006

St. Paul, Joliet
7:30pm

November 6, 2006

St. Paul, Joliet
7:30pm

South of the Border Cluster

(Northern DuPage)

*All Meetings Begin at 10am
at St. Petronille, Glen Ellyn

October 25, 2006

November 15, 2006

December 13, 2006

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Meet the Two New Catechetical Associates on the REO Staff!



Hi! I'm Nancy Dunn, one of the newest members of the Religious Education Office team, the Catechetical Associate for Catechist Formation and Special Projects. I began my service in late August and I am blessed to have been welcomed into this office! This is a collaborative environment, flourishing with women and men of faith who share a common mission: lifelong catechesis. I am thrilled to be here!

A few of the projects I will be involved in are Catechist Certification and the resources to make that happen; developing an assessment process to focus on what in the field; serving the Northeast DuPage Cluster as an REO liaison; assisting parishes in the Contract Renewal and Hiring Process; and as they say, "other duties as assigned!"

My journey to the Religious Education Office of the Joliet Diocese has been one filled with change – change of heart, change of residence, change of careers but most of all a significant change in my relationship with Jesus. Once He got my attention, and not very gently I might add, all things in my life shifted. As I was completing a Masters in Management and Leadership, a move out of state led to a ministry as a catechist which led to a dramatic career change—from IT Project Management to a teacher's assistant position at our parish school and attending Concordia University for my teaching credential.

But it didn't stop there! A move back to Illinois, my final semester of student teaching and a position as a fifth grade teacher for a parish school in the Joliet Diocese. After teaching 5th grade at a Catholic elementary school (I loved it!), I found myself as a DRE and now as a Catechetical Associate for the REO. Believe me when I tell you that once you acknowledge Spirit and then embrace it with little more than your faith, hang on!

I have come to an awareness of how very critical catechist formation is to the foundation of faith formation. The catechist formation I received as a catechist was the catalyst for recognizing my personal call to ministry, and as a DRE, I recognized the hunger in my catechists to "connect" to something more. I feel blessed to be a member of this ministry.

As I begin the work of overseeing Catechist Formation for the REO, I will be looking to you for your insights, wisdom and collaboration.

May God bless you in the harvest days ahead!



Around the nation, adults in their twenties and thirties are not as active in the life of our Church anymore. The millennial generation now emerging from college is even more inactive than "Generation X." This is obviously a critical and disturbing trend. But it doesn't have to be that way, especially here in the Diocese of Joliet.

Before going on, let me introduce myself. My name is Paul Jarzembowski, and I am new on staff at the Religious Education Office working to develop evangelization strategies for ministering to the men and women in our Church in their twenties and thirties.

Before coming to Joliet, I served as the Director of Young Adult Ministry at Holy Family Catholic Parish in Inverness, Illinois, and as the coordinator for a deanery-wide outreach to young adults in the northwest suburbs in the Archdiocese of Chicago. I also currently serve as Acting Executive Director of the National Catholic Young Adult Ministry Association (NCYAMA), which connects and resources dioceses, parishes, and religious orders on young adult ministry issues.

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(Let's Talk...continued from Page 4)

My role in the Religious Education Office will be to help existing young adult ministries build on their successes, and I am very much looking forward to working alongside you and your parishes to evangelize, outreach, and connect with the young adult generation.

This past spring, I was commissioned by the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership to write an article for catechetical leaders on how dioceses and parishes can effectively minister to men and women in their twenties and thirties. In this newsletter, we are sharing that article with you in *Formation Wheel*.

Let's talk. I would love to hear your feedback. What do you think are the best ways we can connect with young adults in their twenties and thirties? How can we make the Church relevant to the emergent generation?

Let's talk. Let's find new and exciting ways to get serious about engaging the men and women in their twenties and thirties in the Joliet diocese: singles, young engaged and married couples, and young couples with children. If you have comments on this, or if you have questions about the article in the Formation Wheel section of this issue of Leaven, or if you would just like to connect with me, please feel free to call me at (815) 727-6411 or email me at piarzembowski@dioceseofjoliet.org.

Youth Ministry Certificate Program

Practices of Youth Ministry explores the development of comprehensive youth ministry through the collaborative sharing of the resources in the community. Rooted in a theological and pastoral vision of community life, this course develops foundational understandings that will assist leaders in setting and implementing a vision for dynamic ministry with youth. This will include skills for advocacy, planning and organizing youth ministry efforts. Methods for collaborative leadership among ministries and within ministry teams will also be developed. **Saturday, October 28 (8:30-6:00) & Sunday, October 29 (8:30-4:00), with Chris Semmel, at Loyola University in Chicago.**



The Certificate in Youth Ministry Studies is a ministry education program for those in ministry with youth, ages 11 to 18, in both parish and school settings. It equips leaders with the knowledge, skills, practical tools and techniques needed for creative and comprehensive ministry with youth.

The program includes eight courses. The primary aim of the program is to promote personal, spiritual, and ministerial growth. The Certificate program is utilized in a number of ways:

- as an integrated formation program leading to a *Certificate in Youth Ministry Studies*
- as an enrichment or continuing education program for veteran leaders
- as a workshop series which can be taken on a course-by-course basis by professional or volunteer leaders

Participating leaders will experience the following benefits:

Confidence. Participants feel more confident in their youth ministry role because they have integrated and applied the most recent and innovative theory and approaches into their own setting and responsibilities.

Competence. The comprehensive sequence of courses provides a solid foundation of theory, theology and practical approaches, which can be applied in any parish or school youth ministry setting.

Credibility. This is a nationally recognized curriculum, offered in over 30 sites and sponsored by over 50 dioceses, whose graduates are in parish, school and diocesan leadership positions all over the country.

YOUTH MINISTRY EVENTS & HAPPENINGS

For more information please contact Paul Mach at 815-727-6411.

Deadline for EAM 8th Grade Evening is October 5th. More Information can be found on our website at www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo/juniorHighDays.asp



Many are planning on going to NCCYM in Las Vegas from November 30th - December 1. Please join us for this very worthwhile conference for youth ministers. More information can be found at www.nfcym.org.



YLC 2007 NOTICE: Mark your calendar for the dates of next years' Youth Leadership Conference - July 20-22, 2007! More information to come! Please visit our website at www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo.ylc.asp for regular updates!



WYD 2008: Please note that we now have information located on the diocesan home page at www.dioceseofjoliet.org. If you believe that your parish will be taking a group on the diocesan trip, please contact Paul Mach as soon as possible



Youth Ministry Gatherings: Upcoming dates - October 19th, November 16th, and December 21st. We meet at the St. Charles Borromeo Pastoral Center in Romeoville

Safe Environment Update



New on the Safe Environment web center:

<http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo/safeEnvironment.asp>

From the "Simplify My Life, Please Department":

"Parent Guide to Preventing Child Sexual Abuse" is now available in a downloadable "handbook format" to make it easy to insert in program handbooks. This is the no-fuss way to get the Guide to every family in your program and with a single sign-off verify they have received both your handbook and the Guide. Scroll down to "Parent Guide Handbook Format" to download this.



Also Available: Parent opt-out letter for review lessons. Click on "Parent Letters" in box on the main safe environment page.



Available through the REO: Protecting God's Children Participant Workbook. If you need quantities of less than the 200 required for a direct order from VIRTUS, we can get them to you at cost. They are \$.65 plus shipping. To order Contact Jennifer Lange at jlange@dioceseofjoliet.org

Has your parish joined the Media Center yet?

The Media Center has recently restructured its membership fees.



Becoming a member is not only easy, but it almost pays for itself! Over the last two years, the REO staff worked very hard to make the Media Center a true multi-media resource for catechetical ministry. With around ten thousand book and video titles, chances are you will find what you need to augment your ministry. Videos are available in twenty-two topical categories and books are listed in eighteen categories.

This year, even the most basic membership allows for the rental of our audio-visual equipment. This provides a huge cost-savings to the parish versus purchasing it new. The equipment includes two rental laptops, eight LCD projectors, three portable sound systems, one large venue sound system, an array of speakers, video cameras, projection screens (including rear projection screens), lighting, and even professional grade "walkie talkies." Two of the eight projectors are newly acquired 5,500 lumen LCD projectors, state-of-the-art, and each weighing only 20 pounds for ultimate portability.

Using Generations of Faith as an example, the Media Center can really benefit a parish. There is enough audio visual equipment for the large group space, each of the age-group specific sessions, plus using the "walkie talkies" to coordinate the event across the parish. Using the book and video library, the parish can choose selections to supplement both the large group session and the age-group specific sessions. This example shows how the Media Center can support catechetical ministry in just one approach. Imagine how it can help with yours! Memberships start at \$115.00 per year. Please contact Brian Topping for more information or visit www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo, click on the link for Media Center.

Bearing Good Fruit: New Adult Resource from NCCL

***Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves.
For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his own face in a mirror. He sees himself, then goes off and promptly forgets what he looked like.
But the one who peers into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres, and is not a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, such a one shall be blessed in what he does. (James 1:22-25)***



New, from NCCL this flexible adult formation program is designed to help adults in your community make the leap from being hearers to doers. This handout-based resource can be used with any group of adults gathered for faith sharing, large or small. The process is Lectio Divina based, leading from reflection on scripture to encouragement of action for social justice.

The format includes prayer, a short Scripture passage, followed by written reflection, which can be shared with the group. Then, more reflection, a story about a person or event related to the reading, followed by reflection on the story and its application. The final page gives content relating the Scripture and the story to everyday life and social justice issues with a closing prayer. The 14 pt. font is easily readable by older adults.

Bearing Good Fruit can be used during any liturgical cycle. It comes in packs of 10, with a Facilitator's guide. Now available is the entire Series A, consisting of six sessions, and the first session of Series B.

For a free PDF sample copy and more information on how to obtain "Bearing Good Fruit" visit www.nccl.org and click on the link under "Bearing Good Fruit."

Faith Formation Curriculum Assessment Tools Online

Joyce Donahue

With the completion of the Assessment Tools, the diocesan Faith Formation Curriculum for children and youth is now fully available for use in parishes and schools.

The **Assessment Tools**, designed to help DRE's, Principals, Youth Ministers, teachers and catechists learn how well students in their faith formation programs are learning, understanding, integrating and practicing their faith are available under two formats:

- **The Checklist** – allows the teacher or catechist to note when a child or youth recognizes a concept and when he or she “masters” it. This is a traditional and familiar approach to assessment. A teacher or catechist can readily determine if a child knows a prayer or can answer a particular question. *(Please note, some elements are never really “mastered” –the understanding of some elements of faith may reasonably be reached at an age-appropriate level, but can certainly develop further during the lifelong journey of faith.)*
- **The Reflection Questions** – which allow the teacher or catechist to determine how well the student integrates faith concepts into life, are designed to be used in a creative manner. While certainly available for use as essay questions in traditional “testing”, they can also be fruitful as questions for journaling, as discussion questions in a group or individual one-on-one format, and more.

Attention DAFF's!

Using Assessment Tools with Adult Faith Formation

Directors of Adult Faith Formation could also make use of these tools. Certainly the checklist on the upper grade level can be useful in evaluating which areas exist for which adults in the parish need more formation. The levels of competence in understanding, knowledge and practice for upper grades are minimums for adult competence. However, we suggest the Reflection Questions may be very useful for adult faith sharing and discussion, for “question of the week” formats, or other creative opportunities.

Check out the tools – they are yours to use! You can access them online at:

<http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo/religionCurriculumProject.asp>

If you have questions, please contact Joyce Donahue at 815-727-6411 or jdonahue@dioceseofjoliet.org.



CHANGE IN DATES!!!

CATHEDRAL DAYS 2007



Due to Bishop Sartain's schedule, Cathedral Days '07 for Grade 5 have been moved to March 15 (for Catholic schools) and March 17 (for parish RE programs).

We apologize to those of you who already had calendars set. Please change your calendar and watch for the registration flyer in next month's *Leaven*.

Inserted in this month's *Leaven*:

- Media Center Brochure
- New Videos Available
- Internet Safety Brochure
- Video Suggestions for November & Thanksgiving
- “Fashion Me A People” Registration Booklet

DON'T FORGET....

The November/December issue of *Leaven* will be delivered in mid-November!

REO CALENDAR

October 13, 2006

EAM 8th Grade Evening
Montini High School, Lombard
6pm-9pm
Contact: Paul Mach

October 14, 2006

Catechist Initial Formation Day
St. Irene, Warrenville
9am-2pm
Contact: Nancy Dunn

October 20, 2006

Leadership Day #1
St. Elizabeth Seton,
Naperville; 8am-3pm
Contact: Brian Topping

October 21, 2006

Joliet/Will Cluster In-Service
SCPC, Romeoville
8am-noon
Contact: Joyce Donahue

October 28, 2006

Catechist Initial Formation Day
St. Joseph, Lockport
9am-1pm
Contact: Nancy Dunn

October 28-29, 2006

Youth Ministry Certificate
Program; Loyola University
Contact: Paul Mach

November 11, 2006

Catechist Initial Formation Day
St. Joseph, Manteno
9am-1pm
Contact: Nancy Dunn

November 16, 2006

YM Gathering
SCPC, Romeoville
10am-Noon
Contact: Paul Mach

November 17, 2006

Conversation with Tom
Location TBA (Will County)
10am
Contact: Tom Quinlan

November 17-Dec.1, 2006

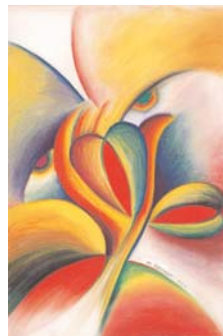
NET Ministries in Joliet
Contact: Paul Mach

November 30, 2006

RE Board Meeting
SCPC, Romeoville
10am-Noon
Contact: Tom Quinlan

Resources Available for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

For all you early planners out there, resources are now available for the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18-25, 2007. The theme is "Open our ears and loosen our tongues." (Mark 7:31-37)



The Week of Prayer was initiated in 1908 by the Rev. Paul Wattson, co-founder of the Society of the Atonement. Its observance has changed over the years, in accordance with developments in the ecumenical movement. A world observance, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is an important expression of ecumenical activity at the local level. The theme and text for each year's observance of the Week of Prayer are chosen and prepared by representatives of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and representatives of the World Council of Churches.

The international texts are developed, adapted and published for use in the USA by the Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute. The GEII invites the collaboration of ecumenical agencies and ecumenists to assist in this project. A variety of resources are available on the website and in print. These include an ecumenical celebration of the word of God, daily scripture & prayer guide and homily notes. Further information and order form is available on the website <http://www.geii.org>

The "Good News" Gets Better

It's not every day that a Catholic newspaper columnist comes along with all the "right stuff"—impeccable credentials, a way with words, equal parts of humor and humility, a keen understanding of Scripture, a compassion for human suffering matched by an uplifting perspective on the eternal joy of faith, an eye on vocations—present and future, a devotion to and respect for family, and much more.



And so it is with unbridled enthusiasm that the staff of the *Catholic Explorer* welcomes the weekly words of wisdom from Bishop J. Peter Sartain, a teacher whose writings will herd, tend and guide his flock in the manner of a loving shepherd.

As leaders of religious education across this expansive diocese, you will want to urge your parishioners to explore the teaching moments found in the bishop's writings. Beyond that, it's time to reacquaint your parishioners with the rest of the good news found inside the pages of the award-winning diocesan newspaper.

Along with your ever-faithful flock, if you have any lost sheep, invite them to graze over the fertile pastures of solid Catholic journalism. Contact Camille, customer service representative, at (815) 834-4062 or camillea@dioceseofjoliet.org. She makes it her mission to welcome all to the *Explorer* family of subscribers. We are here to serve you.

-Mary Breslin, Editor, *The Catholic Explorer*

(NDC...Continued from front page)

The *NDC* goes on to define the role of Bishop, diocese and diocesan catechetical office, with particular attention to their functions both to manage, provide resources, evaluate, inform and collaborate with parish providers of catechesis. (pp. 248-54) That, it would seem, is a working definition of servant leadership, involving providing support and vision in an equal measure.

Each parish, the *NDC* says, should develop its own coherent catechetical plan, reflecting the priority of adult catechesis, taking account the needs of everyone in the parish. Particularly emphasized to make this happen effectively is the need for “truly competent and trained personnel” for ANY pastoral activity (60.A, p 255)



One implication is that pastors and pastoral staff need to understand that catechesis in every parish should be carried out intentionally, with goals and objectives in mind, by people trained to understand the big picture of catechesis. Persons hired or engaged as volunteer catechetical leaders in the parish need more than just good organizational skills and experience as catechists. They should have the appropriate degrees and training, or be

willing to engage in ongoing formation to get to that level. (See policy on catechetical leaders in section I of Faith Formation in the Diocese of Joliet for information on how the diocese currently interprets this need.)

The *NDC* also provides guidance for Adult Catechesis, Family-Centered Catechesis, Home-Based Catechesis – all based on the needs of the community, and the need to provide solid catechesis.

With regard to home-based catechesis, sometimes referred to as home-schooling, the *NDC* states that while parents certainly have the right to provide it, such catechesis needs to be “complete and authentic,” take place in cooperation with parish leadership, and must be the catechesis of the Church (implying NOT the catechesis a parent prefers for whatever reason.) Like all catechesis, home-based catechesis comes from the center of the current teaching of the Church, not from a perceived bias. Parishes need to work with families to make this happen.

Also briefly defined in this section are some very general principles for organizing catechesis of children and youth, and for the baptismal catechumenate and for small Christian communities, as well as catechesis in Catholic and non-Catholic universities, and structures on the national level.

Catechesis for persons with disabilities, which was discussed in detail in Chapter 7, resurfaces here as part of catechesis outside the parish. Working with the parents and caregivers to provide catechesis to meet the needs of the disabled where they are, as well as in a parish setting is important, as is making sure the community connection is not lost. Disabled persons participating in catechesis should never be isolated from the parish community.

To summarize, the *NDC* sees organization for catechesis as important, interlocking and involving all levels of the Church, from the home to the parish program, to the diocese, to national organizations and the worldwide church. All need to respect one another and work together to provide the kind of catechesis which supports evangelization and broadens its implications in the life of the person – helping people become true disciples of Jesus Christ, grounded in Catholic belief, sacramental practice, Christian life and prayer.

“..the NDC sees organization for catechesis as important, interlocking and involving all levels of the Church...”

ATTENTION CATECHETICAL LEADERS!



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Formation Wheel

TURNING ON THE LIGHT

Paul Jarzembowski

There is a severe disconnect between the lives of young adults and the life of the church.

Young adults are voting with their feet. While some researchers estimate that more than 40 percent of Catholics in the United States are between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-nine, anyone who has been to church lately knows that number is misleading.

These young adults may have registered at our front offices when they moved into the neighborhood or when they got married, and some might still be on the books from before they went to college, but the fact remains: they're not in the pews each Sunday. Sure, some may drop by for a friend's wedding or a grandparent's funeral, but they aren't staying longer than the last verse of the last song.



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So it's up to you. With the sad decline in the number of young adult ministry professionals working in the church today, the responsibility to reach out to men and women in their twenties and thirties has now fallen to catechetical leaders, pastoral ministers, and church leaders who interact in any way with young adults.

number of young adult ministry professionals working in the church today, the responsibility to reach out to men and women in their twenties and thirties has now fallen to catechetical leaders, pastoral ministers, and church leaders who interact in any way with young adults.

Making the Church Relevant

There are probably as many reasons why they're gone as there are young adults who aren't returning, but one thread runs through most of what we hear from them: there exists a severe disconnect between their lives and the life of the church.

Ten years ago this coming November, the United States bishops released *Sons & Daughters of the Light*, their only pastoral document on ministry to adults of the next generation. In it, the bishops outlined four key principles for any ministry if it wants to connect with this emerging, albeit absent, generation of Catholic adults:

- 1) Connect them with Jesus Christ.
- 2) Connect them with the church and the Christian community.
- 3) Connect them with the mission of the church in the world.
- 4) Connect them with a peer network where faith is nurtured and strengthened.

The key word in all these principles is "connect." What we observe at the National Catholic Young Adult Ministry Association (NCYAMA) is that now, ten years later, it is those parishes and dioceses that have made an effort to reach out to young adults that have grown and prospered despite the scandal, the shrinking budgets, and the bankruptcies.

Relevance is everything, especially for the millennial and "x" generations. If the church cannot connect with the everyday lives of men and women in their twenties and thirties, our pews will continue to be empty, and we will continue to scratch our heads wondering where they are.

NCYAMA is also finding that making this connection is not *just* the work of young adult ministry professionals anymore. Unfortunately, for various reasons, there aren't even enough young adult ministry professionals working in dioceses or parishes to work with part of the young adult population that does come to church.

In the ten years since *Sons & Daughters of the Light* was published, it has become clear that this document no longer applies just to young adult ministers, but to all of us who in any way encounter adults in their twenties or thirties in our ministries.

"If the church cannot connect with the everyday lives of men and women in their twenties and thirties, our pews will continue to be empty..."

Connecting with Jesus Christ

In the New Testament, Jesus based his public ministry in being relevant and present to the world he encountered. His primary criticism of the Jewish state in which he lived was its blatant irrelevance to the everyday lives of the people of Galilee and Judea.

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Our challenge today is to continue that tradition of relevance.

To make Christ relevant again to young adults...

- Since the primary Catholic way of connecting with Christ is through the Eucharist, make all liturgical experiences speak to the culture and vibrancy of young adults; make them feel welcome and appreciated; offer relevant preaching; invite them into prominent liturgical roles (without the need for advance scheduling); use media, technology, and inspiring music to enhance the worship experience; and be sure to personally connect them with others their age before or after the mass.
- Intentionally invite men and women in their twenties and thirties to Scripture studies where they can discover the Christ of the Gospels. You might also want to use media and film to connect the biblical text with their cultural experiences.
- Offer or point to opportunities for spiritual direction specific to young adults that are flexible enough for young adults' incredibly busy schedules.
- Invite young adults to peer-led retreats where they can re-discover Christ, but also make sure that the retreat experience is short and direct (two days at most), since time is the most valuable commodity for these younger generations.
- Offer adult education programs on specific faith topics of interest to young adults ... but don't call them adult education—good marketing is everything. Keep them short (four weeks, no more) and have plenty of food and drink on hand (since many will make the refreshments their dinner).



Connecting with the Church

In today's culture, the Catholic Church has a bad image. As media is such a prominent aspect in the lives of young adults, it would be hard to find one that has not heard or seen the negative press, and even harder to find one that hasn't been influenced by it. However, in ever-increasing numbers, adults today crave a contemplative spirituality and seek inner peace. It appears that those young adults that do come to churches most often are coming not for Mass and ministry; they are seeking a place to get away from their over-crowded, over-committed, over-stressed lives. Can the church be relevant to that need?

When connecting church to these generations, we must realize and work with these current trends, and be flexible enough to offer them a new image of who we are...

- Host experiences of 'church' outside the stained glass windows: Have liturgy in young adult homes. Plan gatherings with church leaders, local pastors, and guest speakers at bars and restaurants in the area, similar to the successful Theology-on-Tap series around the country.
- Make sure to connect with young adults when they are in our churches for those 'moments of return,' such as weddings, funerals, baptisms, or holiday celebrations. Make them feel welcome and, if and when appropriate, invite them and their friends to other relevant activities. Never pass up these golden opportunities.
- Offer pastoral care programs addressing real young adult issues, including job transitions, adjustment to a new neighborhood, grandparents' deaths, and relationship break-ups.
- Consider partnering with neighboring parishes in offering an effective outreach and ministry to those in their twenties and thirties, as young adult Mass attendance can be fluid (meaning they will attend one church one week, another church the next week, but be back at the first church the fourth week or so).
- Invite young adults to actively plan parish events like parish missions, weekend liturgies, and seasonal programs, giving them an experience of church leadership.
- Offer a seat or two on the parish pastoral council to young adults.
- Carefully reconsider experiences and expectations of young adults who appear for registration and sacramental preparation. (For example, when a young couple comes in to be married, the first question should never, ever be "So, are you registered here?")

Connecting with the World

There is a strong trend in Christian circles today to distance the church from the world around us. However, our Catholic tradition challenges us otherwise. We are called to engage, rather than to dismiss, the world and find God in all things.

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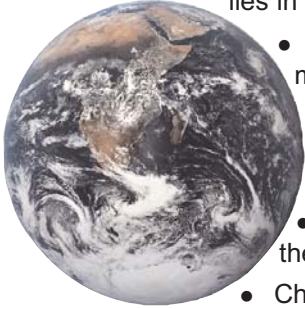


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And young adults are truly a part of this world. Not only is their culture imbedded in the world around them, but they share a generational desire to serve the world. Many of those who do not have a strong connection to a faith community are out there living the Gospel message of self-sacrificial love and service to humanity.

To connect young adults with the mission of the church in the world...

- Offer time-appropriate opportunities (a Saturday morning, a weekday evening, etc.) to serve in the local community, at nearby soup kitchens or nursing homes, or helping out with seniors, children, or less fortunate families in the neighborhood.
- Invite young adults to help plan or brainstorm social justice programs or projects on issues that most interest them.
- The charity, service, and justice efforts of young adults you know who are not active in the church, asking them if there is anything your local parish or diocese can do to support them in their good works.
- Host special workshops, retreats, or speakers that show young adults how they can connect their faith with their work and career experiences.
- Challenge active young adults in the parish or diocese to connect with their friends and peers at work, in their families, or elsewhere, and to invite them to join them at an upcoming activity in connection with their local church.



Connecting with Other Young Adults

In today's culture, with so many opportunities for socializing and networking (from the Internet to the coffeehouse, from the ballpark to the bar), the local church is no longer the place to socialize. Still, adults in their twenties and thirties want to be part of a community of people of their age who share their deeper interests and values.

In the Scriptures, one thing we see Jesus doing so often is eating and socializing, from the wedding at Cana to feeding the five thousand on the mountaintop. He partied with Levi the tax collector and Simon the leper; he dined with Zacchaeus, Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, and he shared a seafood feast with the disciples before and after his resurrection. What we can take from these references is that Jesus' ministry was social.

He brought people together, and so can we...

- If you know young adults who are already active in ministry life (as catechists, as choir members, as readers of liturgical ministers, etc.), invite them to network with their peers through events or small groups; and if a local young adult ministry exists, be sure to invite them to their activities too.
- Connect young adults to a small faith group, on the model of those offered by Renew International.
- Offer programs for specific groups within the larger young adult demographic: collegians, singles, young couples, and new parents (for example, a one-day workshop for singles, a wine-and-cheese night for young couples, or a mini-retreat for college students during a holiday break).
- Identify young adult leaders already active in the parish or diocesan community to form or be part of a ministry and outreach for young adults.

And where there exists young adult ministers (full-time, part-time, or volunteer), it is so necessary to support them whole-heartedly. NCYAMA is made up of many of these individuals who feel alone and unsupported by the larger church community. Create 'synergy' and share resources between your ministry and theirs, finding ways to connect with the young adult generation together.

The work of young adult ministry today is a collaborative effort of all pastoral ministers and church leaders. To ignore this generation and to assume that ministering to them will be someone else's task is no longer an option.

The world and the church have changed a lot since *Sons and Daughters of the Light* was first published in 1996, but the need to be a 'relevant church' has not. We are all called to make it happen, no matter who or what or where we are.

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“One thing we see Jesus doing so often is eating and socializing...He brought people together, and so can we.”

