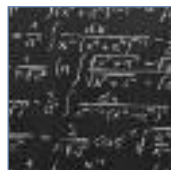


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FOUR GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

Anne Roat



National Conference For Catechetical Leadership



Dear NCCL Members,

By the time you read this issue of *Catechetical Leader* our 74th Annual Conference and Exposition will be over. We will have gathered in Las Vegas and networked, shared, celebrated, and learned about our catechetical ministry. I am sure that

the time we spent together will enrich each one of us for many months to come!

Currently, your board of directors is busy planning for their June face-to-face meeting in Washington, DC. We will be spending four days tackling the work of the conference. It will be a time of marathon meetings and late nights. I expect the whole board to be energized, challenged, exhausted, and renewed by the time we finish.

One of the important items that we will be working on is the implementation of the NCCL Strategic Plan, which will be guiding our conference for another year. The board initially began formulating the plan in June of 2009, the Representative Council finished the plan in November of 2009, and the committees have been busy getting the action items accomplished since then. While the complete strategic plan can be viewed on the NCCL website, I want to highlight the four goals that will continue to guide our conference for the immediate future.

Goal One: To promote the centrality of adult faith formation in catechetical ministry. This goal is a natural one for our conference. As religious educators we know the necessity of making sure we have well-formed adults in our Catholic Church. Part of the action items that will flow from this goal will be promoting *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us*. The document is eleven years old and still has not been fully implemented in many of our di-

ces and parishes. With this goal NCCL will endorse OHWB in all areas of catechetical ministry.

Goal Two: To provide members with ready and on-going access to resources and information. One of the most important services NCCL can provide for its members is to give them access to timely and relevant resources for their ministry. A number of outstanding

publications that NCCL produced in the past will be revised and updated. This goal also will focus on giving our members venues for enhanced networking opportunities.

*We have a lot of work ahead of us!
Please get involved.*

Goal Three: To deliver outstanding professional development through the NCCL Annual Conference. The Annual Conference is NCCL's chance to provide formational sessions and experiences for all our members. The conference liturgies can model and highlight the richness of our Catholic tradition. This goal directs the Annual Conference Committee to concentrate on giving our members the best adult faith formation possible.

Goal Four: To increase membership participation. This goal is not about increasing membership—although ultimately it will. This goal is about getting our members involved in their organization. NCCL is a member-driven organization and so we must provide our members with any opportunity to participate. We will be doing this through technology, social networking, and our forums.

Whew—we have a lot of work ahead of us! We can and will get it done with your help. Please get involved. Please help. Call or e-mail me to volunteer.

God bless,

Anne
President, NCCL

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“RECEIVE WHAT YOU ARE”

Leland Nagel



When I was growing up, I would hear people say, “Catholics are great as long as you don’t need help Sunday morning when they’re on their way to Mass!” There was some good in that because everyone knew it was important to “attend” Mass. There is also a bit of irony as just the week before all had been sent forth from the Mass “to love and serve the Lord.”

Hundreds and thousands of books have been written on the Eucharist and while I have read a great many, I have yet to scratch the surface.

I do remember reading once when people approached Saint Augustine for communion, instead of saying, “The body of Christ,” he would declare, “Receive what you are.” Those four words reminded me that in the Eucharistic prayer, the priest asks that “we...may be filled with the Holy Spirit, and become one body, one spirit in Christ.” That is precisely what we are sent forth to do.

If one engages in full, active, conscious participation in the liturgy, he or she will leave both full and satisfied; however, if one merely attends Mass I fear that person may only be ready for a nap. Those who actively engage are nourished at the table of the Word, fed at the altar of sacrifice (Word made flesh), and blessed with the sign of the cross. If anyone should be ready to wash the feet of the poor, it should be an engaged Catholic coming out of Mass.

A unique understanding of “full, active, conscious” participation in the liturgy was offered by Capuchin Father Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher of the Pontifical Household, in his second Lenten sermon of this year, given in the presence of Benedict XVI and the Roman Curia. Here is his reflection.

“Let us try to imagine what would happen if also the laity, at the moment of the consecration, said silently: ‘Take, eat, this is my body. Take, drink, this is my blood...’” “A mother of a family thus celebrates her Mass, then she goes home and begins her day made up of a thousand little things. But what she does is not nothing: It is a eucharist together with Jesus! A [religious] sister also says in her heart at the moment of consecration: ‘Take, eat ...;’ then she goes to her daily work: children, the sick, the elderly. The Eucharist ‘invades’ her day which becomes a prolongation of the Eucharist.”

We are indeed sent forth to sacrifice ourselves; we are to do it out of love. This is the sacrifice that is understood when Jesus said, “My flesh is food for the world.” Some take these words literally. I know of a catechetical leader who serves soup and bread to the catechists and their families before the weekly religious education classes. It’s a Eucharistic act of love. I know of a catechist who brings sandwiches because four of her “students” come to faith formation directly from sports practice and they are starving. It’s a Eucharistic act of service.

Knowing “man does not live by bread alone,” there are catechists who take the time to write back weekly to each student in response to the students’ reflections on the question of the week. Another act of Eucharistic love. There’s a catechetical leader who sends every individual in the faith formation program a birthday card. It’s a Eucharistic act of service.

So many catechists and catechetical leaders gave us what they are: Eucharist! Now it is our turn.

Many of us are in this ministry because we received from these and many more catechists and catechetical leaders who gave us what they are: Eucharist! They discovered the value of celebrating Eucharist on a regular basis. They knew that like the bread and the wine, they too would be transformed into the body and blood of Christ. In that transformation, they would go forth joyfully to love and serve the Lord. And we were the ones who benefited.

Now it is our turn. It is we who are being sent forth. As we approach the altar at communion and the priest raises the host and says, “The body of Christ” we hear the words of Saint Augustine, “Receive what you are.” I pray that you and I will be a worthy sacrifice for a world hungry for the Bread of Life, a world starving for the love of God. What we do in washing the feet of the poor is a Eucharistic act of love and service. ■

EUCHARIST AND DIVINE PEDAGOGY

by Mary Ann Clarahan, RSM



Pedagogy is a term that many in the field of education are familiar with. In modern English this word refers to the whole context of instruction, learning, and the actual operations involved therein. Diverse scholars in the past century have contributed numerous theories as to the way learning takes place. Among them are John Dewey, Paolo Freire, Jean Piaget and Maria Montessori.

Catechists also speak of another approach to learning that forms not only the mind, but one's heart, relationships and worldview—a *divine* pedagogy. The *General Catechetical Directory* makes a strong claim that all approaches to catechesis should reflect the divine pedagogy used by God in revelation, adapting divine language to human learners.

Scripture abounds with examples of God's self-revelation through creation, words, deeds, persons and human events. Recall God's initial appearance to Moses in the burning bush, the cloud by day that led the Israelites through the desert, the Exodus event that would forever establish God's covenant relationship with a people, or the searing divine words delivered through the human voice of prophets such as Jeremiah. Of course, God the Teacher's greatest act of self-revelation was the incarnation, life, ministry, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. And what about in your life? Can you name ways in which you have experienced God's self-revelation of love in the everyday—a personal relationship, the birth of a child, a line from Scripture, or a beautiful sunset?

The focus in this learner-centered pedagogy is to present the faith in understandable ways more likely to touch the hearts of people in their fundamental experiences of life. It is in light of divine pedagogy that John Paul II understood the objective of catechesis to be not only knowledge of, but communion with Jesus Christ, leading to profession of faith in the trinitarian God. An apprenticeship to Jesus promotes adherence to

his person and to discipleship as a way of life. A process of catechesis, therefore, that takes its lead from divine pedagogy indicates an overall school of faith that is lifelong, promoting ongoing conversion to Jesus Christ.

To nourish a faith that demands to be known, celebrated and lived, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* declares that the liturgy is "the privileged place for catechizing the People of God" (CCC 1074). Catechesis that appreciates the experience of the liturgy as a locus of God's self-revelation aims to "initiate people into the mystery of Christ (It is 'mystagogy.')

 by proceeding from the visible to the invisible, from the sign to the thing signified, from the 'sacraments' to the 'mysteries' (CCC 1075).

A divine pedagogy forms not only the mind, but one's heart, relationships and worldview.

In explaining how the liturgy makes present the invisible reality of God's saving activity, the *CCC* notes that "... a sacramental celebration is woven from signs and symbols ... their meaning is rooted in the work of creation and in human culture, specified by the events of the Old Covenant and fully revealed in the person and work of Christ" (CCC 1145).

Acknowledging the dynamic of God's self-revelation through signs, symbols, and actions, the *Catechism* goes on to state that seen with the eyes of faith and permeated with the Holy Spirit, these cosmic elements, human rituals, and gestures of remembrance become "bearers of the saving and sanctifying action of God" (CCC 1189) and the action of those who offer worship to the Holy One (CCC 1149). In other words, the church's liturgy uses the "stuff" of everyday life such as water, wine, bread, oil, storytelling, bathing, eating and drinking, friendship, suf-

fering, sickness, death, light, and darkness. Through these media, God continues to reveal the mystery of total self-giving love in space and time, transforming our very lives.

EUCARIST AS THE SOURCE AND FOUNDATION OF CATECHESIS

The Second Vatican Council rightly proclaimed the Eucharist as *the source and summit of the Christian life*. All the church's activities are directed toward its celebration and it is the font of grace that gives meaning and power to all that she does. As John Paul II reminded us, the Eucharist contains the church's entire spiritual treasury. Through its celebration, the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true church. In celebrating Christ's paschal mystery, we, the church, participate and enter into our own mystery.

As the center of the church's life, Eucharist is therefore the source and foundation of catechesis also. In this celebration divine pedagogy is at its peak. Through the human language of symbol and rite, God takes the initiative to reveal a mystery to be believed, celebrated and lived. Christians gain not only knowledge of Christ, but intimate communion with him with the whole Trinity. The stories of God's saving activity throughout history are not only proclaimed, but actualized today. For, in the rhythm of the liturgical year, Christ's paschal mystery unfolds in time, celebration, and individual lives. By God's grace, we are formed and transformed into a community of believers whose logic is that of self-giving love. And the church continues to express and discover its identity as Christian. The potential result is a Eucharistic vision that becomes the very logic to interpret and live life.

In recognition of this powerful mystery, our only response can be that of praise, thanksgiving and awe. John Paul II once wrote that he longed to "rekindle this amazement at the Eucharist." What can help us to be more attentive and reflective to this unfolding mystery so that it echoes not only in the mind but in one's heart and moral conduct?

EUCARIST: SCHOOL OF GRATITUDE, HOLINESS, COMMUNION/SOLIDARITY

Bishops of the fourth century such as Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose of Milan, John Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia provide some leads. They were master catechists who relied heavily on the divine pedagogy experienced in the liturgy. Their method was known as *mystagogy*, that is, they used the

recent experience of liturgical celebration of the new and already baptized as a starting point for their catechesis. By asking the participants to reflect on their experience of God in word, rite, and assembly, they deepened their grasp of the paschal mystery and its relationship to daily life. For them, liturgy was catechesis.

Taking his cue from the *mystagogue* bishops of the early church, Benedict XVI, in his encyclical on the Eucharist, *Sacramentum Caritatis* urges pastors today as well to commit themselves to a *mystagogical* catechesis "by which the faithful are helped to understand the meaning of the liturgy's words and actions, to pass from its signs to the mystery which they contain, and to enter into that mystery in every aspect of their lives." While we know that the primary purpose of Eucharistic liturgy is to worship God, let us also explore it as a *school* of gratitude, of holiness, and of communion/solidarity.

SCHOOL OF GRATITUDE

The word *Eucharist* comes from the Greek—to give thanks. What occasions provoke "thanks" in your life? Perhaps it is for a gift given, a small kindness received or simply the gift of another's presence. In each of these circumstances, the response of giving thanks entails recognition of another's initiative. For what do we give thanks in the celebration of the Eucharist?

We might start with the very act of *gathering*. Have you ever arrived early in your parish church for a Eucharistic liturgy? Who did you notice gathering for the celebration? Perhaps families big and small, the elderly and teenagers, the well and infirmed, those of various races and languages, playful or

*As the center of the church's life,
Eucharist is therefore the source and
foundation of catechesis also.*

sleeping or crying children, strangers and friends. What was the occasion? Maybe it was Sunday Eucharist, a wedding, funeral, or a liturgy closing the school year.

Who gathers us? It is God's initiative and summons that gather this particular assembly. "From age to age you gather a people to yourself." And why? Is entry based on merit, social status, ability or age? Dan Schute's lyrics give us a hint: "Gather the people! Enter the feast! All are invited, the greatest and least. The banquet is ready, now to be shared. Join in the heav-

enly feast that *God has prepared.*” God gathers the living and the dead, the young and old, rich and poor, bishop and child, the joyful and sorrowing and those whose stories only God knows. We gather in Jesus’ name with our lives as they are. Here we approach the table of the Word and Eucharist to do just what the word signifies: to give thanks and praise for the divine initiative of self-giving love that is pure gift.

For what am I grateful in my life? Reflecting on this answer, we jog our memories. One image used in reference to the Eucharist is *memorial*. Through the Scriptures proclaimed and Eucharistic prayer of blessing prayed we remember God’s saving activity throughout salvation history. The Liturgy of the Word recalls the stories of how God acted in the lives of a people who were both faithful and unfaithful, who desired to know God in the very core of their being, in times of darkness and light—not unlike ourselves. The Gospels makes visible God’s word made flesh, the Christ story, a renewed message of hope. These texts from the past proclaimed in our assemblies today weave patterns of meaning for a new age in which God’s story offers an alternative way to live and view my story, our story. Memory becomes proclamation: “Thanks be to God!”

In the Eucharistic prayer, bread and wine gather us in and invite us: “Lift up your hearts!” We present that which we have already received from God—the gifts of creation and that of our own lives. “Let us give thanks and praise!”

In rehearsing the words and deeds of Jesus at the Last Supper, we celebrate the memorial of our redemption. We, God’s people and ministers, recall his passion, death, resurrection from the dead and ascension into glory. Now making memory, these saving events become events once again in this celebration, in our lives, with transforming grace. And from the many gifts God has given us we offer the bread of life and cup of salvation. The text of the Eucharistic prayer bears witness that this same Jesus Christ, formerly given by God as an historical body raised from the dead, is received by us today as sacramental body and blood—a gratuitous gift: “We do well always and everywhere to give you thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

SCHOOL OF HOLINESS

At the turn of the millennium, John Paul II reminded us that all pastoral initiatives (including catechesis) must be set in relation to the universal call to *holiness*. This call, rooted in our baptismal identity, is addressed to each person and to the Christian community as a whole. So, how do we grow in holiness?

Training in holiness requires a Christian life grounded in prayer. Liturgy, especially the Eucharist, immerses us in the trinitarian shape of Christian prayer addressed to the Father, through the Son and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Eucharistic Prayer III reminds us that holiness does not originate in us, but in God: “Father, you are holy indeed, and all creation rightly gives you praise. All life, all holiness comes from you through your Son, Jesus Christ the Lord, by the working of the Holy Spirit.”

Dispositions of thanksgiving, praise, adoration, contrition, intercession, listening, and ardent devotion are formed over time.

A word very much akin to holiness is “sacrifice.” Stemming from the Latin, it literally means to make holy, and implies a self-offering. Celebrating the Eucharist as a true and proper sacrifice begins not with us, but with the self-offering of the Trinity. Their relationship with each other and us, in time and eternity, is characterized by total outpouring love towards the other, as revealed by Christ’s self-offering to the Father on the cross. When we participate in the sacrifice of the Mass with Christ, the Spirit takes our experiences of the cross, lifts them up to the Father, and unites them with the sacrificial offering of Christ in the liturgy. We enter into the very life of the Trinity and pray that not only the gifts of bread and wine, but that we may be made holy and transformed to become a holy and living sacrifice. Robert Kreuz’ Eucharistic hymn, “Gift of Finest Wheat,” attempts to express this reality: “You give yourself to us, O Lord, then selfless let us be/To serve each other in your name in truth and charity.”

For this reason we begin every Eucharistic liturgy with the sign of the cross, and we pray “in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” To truly live as a holy people who follow and are identified by the cross we unite our prayer with the Trinity of love. But being honest with God and ourselves, we have to admit that not all our days and ways are holy. Calling to mind our failings in love and mindful of God’s mercy, the penitential rite graces us with the humility and courage to pray: “I confess to almighty God and you my brothers and sisters that I have sinned ...” and call upon God’s mercy.

Through our week-in and week-out encounters with God in liturgical prayer we have the opportunity to grow in holiness. Dispositions of thanksgiving, praise, adoration, contrition, intercession, listening, and ardent devotion are formed over time until the heart truly “falls in love.” Full, conscious, active participation in the Eucharist with our bodies implicates an internal conversion of heart—gift of the Trinity.

SCHOOL OF COMMUNION/SOLIDARITY

Communion—union with—always involves another besides myself. Religious writers throughout the centuries have reflected on Eucharist as both a source and manifestation of communion with God, the church and the world. We don’t do this alone. Think how often we *hear* a form of this word *communion* in the celebration of Eucharist. The preface that begins each Eucharistic prayer ends with an invitation to join in praise *with* all the angels, archangels and whole company of heaven to sing: “Holy, holy, holy...” Later on in the Eucharistic prayer we join our praise in *union with* Mary, the apostles and all the saints. And finally in the doxology, all creation joins in giving glory to God... “through him, with him and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit.”

Now think of how often we *act* in communion with others in the Eucharistic liturgy. We *gather* for worship as the Body of Christ, head and members. Within the *intercessions*—the Prayer of the Faithful—we place before God not only our own needs but include those of government leaders, the poor, the sick, the dying and we pray: “Gracious God, hear us.” In *the communion procession*, with many whom we noticed gathering at the beginning of Mass, we approach the altar to receive and be in communion with the Body of Christ.

At the end of Mass, the *concluding rite* states our mission: “Go in peace to love and serve the world.” The Eucharist not only provides the interior strength needed for this mission, but is also its plan. This encounter with the Trinity, constantly intensified and deepened in the Eucharist, issues in the church and in every Christian an urgent summons to witness in solidarity and evangelization. John Paul II set the bar high for this plan when he wrote: “We cannot delude ourselves: by our mutual love and, in particular, by our concern for those in need we will be recognized as true followers of Christ. This will be the criterion by which the authenticity of our Eucharistic celebrations is judged.” Communion forms us in ways of solidarity.

*Participation in the Eucharist
forms and transforms us in the
divine pedagogy of gratitude,
holiness and communion.*

Participation in the Eucharist, through the language of symbolic word and rite, forms and transforms us in the divine pedagogy of gratitude, holiness and communion. It teaches us that what we do in the liturgy as in all of life, is because of what *God* does in and among us. Through this wondrous sacrament of love, we are enabled and impelled to live God’s justice in the world as the Body of Christ. Go, therefore, and teach all nations! ■

Mary Ann Clarahan, RSM, has worked in various pastoral and academic settings in both Rome and in the United States. She is assistant professor of liturgy and catechetics at The Catholic University of America.

Eucharist: A Short History

In Church years, we're very near the beginning of the Council's reforms.

by Alfred McBride, O. Praem.



It is a very human trait to treasure the last words of a dying person. In the case of Pope John Paul II, his encyclical *The Church of the Eucharist*, published in his final year, aptly captures his desire to awaken in the Church a new appreciation of the Eucharist.

"I have been able to celebrate Holy Mass in chapels built along mountain paths, on lake shores and sea coasts; I have celebrated it on altars built in stadiums and city squares. This varied scenario of celebrations of the Eucharist has given me a powerful experience of its universal and, so to speak, its cosmic character. Yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world. It unites heaven and earth. It embraces and permeates all creation (*The Church of the Eucharist*, 8).

In this issue of *Catechetical Leader* we respond to Pope John Paul's eucharistic desire with this reflection on six stages in the history of the Eucharist in the Western Church.

1. FROM PASSOVER TO EUCHARIST

Whatever changes and variations occurred in history, the Church has always preserved the core ritual. Early Christians viewed the Last Supper from the viewpoint of the Passover meal. It was held in an "Upper Room," a place often used for rabbinic Scripture discussions. The apostles would have seen a short-legged table surrounded by cushions where they would sit. On the table was a bowl of saltwater in memory of the tears shed during the slavery in Egypt. A dish of bitter salad recalled their crushing slave days.

Early Christians viewed the Last Supper from the viewpoint of the Passover meal.

A container of mashed apples, raisins and plums coated with cinnamon looked like the bricks they made. Platters of unleavened bread stood next to the large Cup of Blessing filled with wine. A roasted lamb (part of a lamb sacrificed at the

Temple) symbolized the sacrificial quality of the meal and recalled the blood of a lamb on their doorposts that saved them from the avenging angel in Egyptian times.

Jesus opened the meal with a psalm that praised God for his mighty deeds of salvation in the Exodus. Then he took the bread, gave thanks for it and, breaking tradition, followed this with new words: "Take and eat. This is my body that will be given up for you." This bread was now his body. It would be given up, that is offered on the cross. Pause for a moment to consider what the apostles might have felt and thought at participating in the first Eucharist in history.

At the end of the meal, Jesus took the Cup of Blessing filled with wine and instead of making the usual toast he again broke tradition and said, "Take and drink...This is my blood... It will be shed for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins." Once more Christ referred to his forthcoming passion where he would shed his blood. As they drank of the one cup and ate of the one bread they experienced their unity in Christ. Finally, Christ gave them and their successors the power to celebrate Eucharist: "Do this in memory of me." They all sang a psalm and Jesus went forth to his saving death and resurrection.

In this event Jesus gave us the sacraments of the Eucharist and the ordained priesthood.

2. FROM MEAL TO WORSHIP

Gradually the apostles and their successors developed the Eucharistic celebration into the structure that endures to this day. They first named it the "Breaking of the Bread" but soon they saw the need to separate the rite from a meal, both because of abuses at meals (1 Cor 11:17-22) and because they wanted a more prayerful setting for this act of worship.

This development was reported by a late first-century document, the *Didache* or "Teaching of the Apostles." Eucharist was moved to Sunday in memory of Christ's resurrection. In place of the meal the early Christians created a Liturgy of the Word somewhat modeled after synagogue prayer that included readings from Scripture, singing of psalms and an instruction.

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Around the words of institution they added prayers of thanksgiving, praise and intercession. By the year 150, St. Justin Martyr tells us that the basic structure of the Mass was already in place. These Eucharists were held in people's homes up until the year 313.

In place of the meal the early Christians created a Liturgy of the Word somewhat modeled after synagogue prayer.

On Sunday there were two readings by a lector, a homily by the priest, then the Eucharistic Prayer and the distribution of Communion. And yes, there was a collection—for widows, orphans and others in need! The threefold roles of bishop, priest and deacon were already in place in the first century.

Our Second Eucharistic Prayer today is brief and simple, and owes its inspiration to a similar one composed by Hippolytus of Rome in 215. It is clear that the basic form of the Eucharist occurred very early and has remained remarkably durable for 2,000 years.

3. THE GROWING BODY OF CHRIST

The year 313 was a turning point for Christianity. Persecutions suddenly ended. Constantine gave freedom to Christians and spent great sums of money building basilicas for Eucharistic worship. Modest house churches gradually ceased to exist.

Stately ceremonies suitable in a huge church emerged. Processions, courtly movement in the sanctuary, metered chant (composed by St. Ambrose) and sung litanies that galvanized the voices of thousands, incense and bells, kissing sacred objects and the use of genuflections became a pattern to accompany the ancient structure of the Eucharist.

After 313 was an inevitable evolution, organizing an empire-size Church.

The celebrants wore clothes worthy of a Roman senator. Their robes eventually came to be called vestments, since they were retained long after fashions changed. The simple plates and cups of house worship became elaborate chalices and patens. This was an inevitable evolution due to social acceptance, organizing an empire-size Church and, indeed, ecclesial prosperity.

This era witnessed the rise of extraordinary bishops, known now as Church Fathers, such as Augustine and Chrysostom, whose homilies were rich in theology and pastoral in application. Their genius was to work out theological development in the context of the light generated by the Eucharist and the prayerful hunger and faith of the people. Their theme was “The Body of Christ [Eucharist] builds the Body of Christ [Church].”

4. THE EUCHARIST BECOMES DISTANT FOR MOST

The widespread appearance of the stunning Gothic cathedrals in medieval Europe signaled a resurgence of faith. The colorful religious processions for feasts of saints, the enthusiasm for pilgrimages to holy shrines, the birth of new religious orders led some subsequent historians to call these centuries the “ages of faith.”

Medieval people compensated for their estrangement by asking the priest to hold up the host.

But alongside these events were troublesome declines in active participation in the Mass. The removal of the assembly from participating in the Eucharist was dramatized by screens of stone or iron that hid the choir and altar from public view. The monks and priests conducted their corporate liturgy away from the assembly. The Mass remained in Latin, even though people began using their local languages for most things in their lives. When the people complained of the Mass's remoteness, they were given side altar Masses where the priest faced the wall and prayed in Latin.

The people compensated for their estrangement by asking the priest to hold up the host for their view and adoration: “Hold it higher, sir priest!” Meanwhile, Berengar of Tours taught that Jesus was not really present in the host, which was only a symbol of his presence. The Church repudiated his views at Lateran IV in 1215 by affirming Christ's Real Presence and introducing the concept of transubstantiation (the substance of bread becomes the substance or “being” of Christ) to support this doctrine.

Because many Catholics had ceased receiving Communion, the Council also mandated going to Communion at least once a year at Easter time. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament became popular along with other forms of popular piety.

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5. REFORMATION AND THE TRIDENTINE MASS

It took the Church 28 years to gather its energies and open the Council of Trent in 1545 to deal with the Reformation. The Council Fathers called for a renewal of the liturgy. In 1570 Pope Pius V responded to this call with what would be a standard book for the celebration of Mass for the Western Church. Everything in his decree pertained to the priest celebrant and his action at the altar including the Liturgy of the Word. The participation of the people would be devotional rather than liturgical. The Mass text was in Latin. (This sturdy Tridentine Mass [named for Trent] endured up to Vatican II.)

In the Baroque period, the church was a throne room and the assembly, the audience.

The Jesuits introduced Baroque architecture in which the choir stalls, screens and walls were removed. The distance between altar and assembly was shortened so that only an altar railing separated them. The altar was placed against the wall, which was lavishly decorated from floor to ceiling. The tabernacle rested on the altar and above it was a niche provided for exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

A soaring pulpit was situated near the middle of the Church indicating the importance of a sermon but not a homily. This worship space glowed with self-confidence and triumph. It suited the mood of this Counter-Reformation. The church was a throne room and the assembly, the audience. They were treated with the music of Palestrina, Haydn and Mozart. The Protestants had Bach, but also sang hundreds of new hymns triumphantly.

Sadly, most Eucharists were “Low Masses,” generally without music and which the assembly attended in silence. Catholics turned to new schools of spirituality to satisfy their spiritual longings: the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, the Carmelite schools and that of St. Francis de Sales.

Eventually, in the 19th century, it became clear that a return to the sources of the liturgy was needed.

6. MASS IN THE ERA OF VATICAN II

The first document approved by the Fathers of Vatican II (1962-65) was the *Constitution on the Liturgy*. But a century before this the stirrings of liturgical change had begun. Benedictines had begun to revive earlier liturgical practices, such as Gregorian chant (from the sixth century), and were studying the roots of Christian liturgy and the ways all Christians once

had participated. Pope Pius X (1903-1914) encouraged the use of Gregorian chant, frequent Communion and lowering the age for First Communion to seven years.

Pius XII's *Mediator Dei* (1947) lent powerful impetus to the liturgical movement. In 1951 Joseph Jungmann, S.J., published *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, that revealed the complex history of the Mass. In the United States, St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, supported the cause for liturgical change through its magazine *Orate Fratres*, “*Let us pray, Brethren*” (now called *Worship*). Their roster of writers included all the movers and shakers who rallied the Church in America to the cause.

In other words, the groundwork was firmly laid by patient scholarship, hundreds of meetings and countless articles by the time Vatican II assembled. With relatively little debate and very small opposition, the *Constitution on the Liturgy* was approved by the Council Fathers 2,147 favorable to 4 opposed. The sonorous words of the *Constitution* reached a high point when it declared, “The liturgy is the summit to which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows” (10).

In the last part of the 20th century the application of the document began. A number of changes were introduced. The priest now faced the people. Vernacular languages replaced the Latin. People shook hands at the greeting of peace. The congregation was asked to participate actively in the Mass, to sing and pray at various times.

People were invited to receive Communion either in the hand or on the tongue and to stand at its reception. They were offered the chalice so they could communicate under both species, the eucharistic Bread and Wine.

A century before Vatican II, Benedictines had begun to revive earlier liturgical practices.

Laities and religious could serve Communion as extraordinary ministers. Married deacons appeared, to assist the priest at Mass and to preach homilies. Entrance processions were added. People brought up the gifts at the presentation of the offerings.

Priests abandoned what some called the “fiddle-back” chasubles for robe-like replacements. Mass readings provided a three-year series of Scripture in which large sections of the Bible would be heard. Homilies, which had become lectures or announcements on most anything, were expected to explain Scripture and apply it to everyday life.

Church architecture became functional and minimalist in decoration, a sign of the times. Instead of the long “shoe box,” a wider auditorium model appeared. Guitar Masses surfaced and new hymns were composed, leading to many arguments about taste and suitability.

None of this happened without some anger and discomfort. Some experimentation went over the top. But in fact the amazing thing is how little disturbance actually happened. The dreams of the liturgical movement were fulfilled and expanded upon. People are realizing that they can enrich their spirituality mainly from the celebration of the Eucharist.

What’s striking is that the significant impact of all this is yet to be experienced. In Church years, we’re very near the beginning of the Council’s reforms.

EUCCHARIST: ALIVE AND DYNAMIC

One conclusion we can draw from this sketch of the history of the Mass is that changes in the liturgy, whether large or small, have been occurring since the Last Supper. The basics

have never changed, but the details, decisions by Church authority and the attitudes of the participants have undergone modifications and development.

In this sense the celebration of the Eucharist is a dynamic and living reality. While a constant diet of experimentation is not healthy or desirable, a loving attention to the quality of the divine celebration is a necessity. We certainly need to avoid frivolity, but we also need to avoid stagnation.

The noble core of the Eucharist from the Upper Room to an urban cathedral or a village church has withstood the tumults of history—and always will. For this we praise and thank God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. ■

Rev. Alfred McBride, O. Praem., is a priest of the Norbertine Order and a widely known catechist through his books, articles and TV programs. He holds a diploma in catechetics from Lumen Vitae, in Belgium, and a doctorate in religious education from Catholic University of America. He has been named one of the most influential religious educators of the 20th century.

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Looking Back on Las Vegas

by Christina Flum





Opening liturgy

In our last issue, I gave lots of details of my plans for the NCCL Conference as well as what I hoped to do with a few days before the NACMP and NCCL conferences began. You do know what they say about the best laid plans, right? I was not quite so energetic when I arrived in Vegas!

Saturday The NACMP group gathered in the meeting room and began their day with prayer. Richard Drabik from the University of Dayton gave the first workshop—“Digital Story-telling and How to Storyboard a Concept.” It is an interesting way to do planning of a project or event. I look forward to reviewing the process when the PowerPoint is posted on the NACMP website. The afternoon workshop, “Social Networking,” with Jeff Stutzman from Cleveland, Ohio, followed lunch.

Sunday Eighty NCCL participants attended Eric Groth’s talk on “Using Media Technology in Ministry.” RCLBenzinger provided lunch for the Representative Council members before our meeting. The Leadership Discernment Committee led us through a process to elect two at-large Board members. We moved through our agenda quickly. All information discussed at this meeting was then given to the full membership at the membership meetings during the conference.

After liturgy, Our Sunday Visitor Curriculum Division hosted a reception for all attendees. Attendees enjoyed a wonderful variety of foods and beverages. It was the perfect opportunity to greet colleagues from around the country for the first time this year.



OSV luncheon

Monday First Time Attendees Orientation and committee meetings began at 8 A.M. NCCL is a membership-driven organization; these committees are the people that help get and keep projects running. All 622 attendees gathered in the ballroom at 9:15 for a welcome to Las Vegas and opening prayer. Allan Figueroa Deck, SJ, delivered the first keynote address of the conference: *Catholic Identity and Diversity: Forming Catechists for the 21st Century*. Fr. Deck indeed gave us an in-depth understanding the current landscape, including the challenge of maintaining one’s cultural understandings of God while being immersed in an American culture of church.

Our Sunday Visitor Publishing invited us all to brunch after the keynote. Each of us received a book as a gift and we were treated to a delicious meal. After lunch there was a parade to the exhibit hall and it was opened with great fanfare. There were two showcases by different publishers after lunch as well—a great opportunity to hear about new products available for our use.

Carole Eipers started the afternoon with her keynote address. She wove poetry, music and prayer into her inspiring presentation, asking us to consider these questions: Is catechesis an oasis amidst diversity? If so, how can we learn to expand the experience? If not, what is hindering us? After her presentation the exhibits were open until 6:00 P.M.

The conference continued with a 6 P.M. business meeting for the Forum of Catechesis for Hispanics with refreshments sponsored by Our Sunday Visitor Curriculum Division as well as a 9 P.M. meeting for young adults hosted by Charis Ministries.

Tuesday There were two Publisher Showcases before we gathered for morning prayer at 9:15 in the ballroom. Carmen Marie Nanko-Fernandez gave the major address: “Catechesis: Traditioning Our Catholic Diversity.” This address challenged us with these questions: How does a catechist become a broker of culture? What can a catechetical leader do to create an environment that supports diversity and gives evidence of their conscious commitment to “embrace the rich cultural pluralism of all the faithful”?

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Bill Dinger (l) and Frank Dinger (r) present the F. Sadlier Dinger Award to Carole Augustine.

After the learning sessions box lunches were available and there were two sets of “roundtables.” Roundtables are small-group discussions of programs, processes, or materials that the facilitators have found to be very useful to their ministry.

At 2:30 P.M. we gathered into our constitutive forums. So what is a Forum Gathering? It is an opportunity for all diocesan directors, diocesan staff, and parish catechetical leaders to gather with their own constituencies for a presentation and discussion relevant to their particular ministry.

At 7 P.M. the doors opened for the annual Sadlier Event! They had beverage stations set up around the room and served a lovely sit-down dinner. Carole Augustine from Baltimore received the F. Sadlier Dinger Award for her service to Catechetical Ministry. After dinner we danced the night away—it was a great time!

NCCL Welcomes New Board Members

At the NCCL Annual Conference, the Representative Council voted to fill the seats of two at-large members of the Board of Directors.



Karen Pesek is director of the Office of Religious Education and safe environment coordinator for the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, a home mission diocese in southern Missouri.



Mary Jo Waggoner is the diocesan director for the Office of Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry for the Diocese of San Diego.

The two retiring Board members, whose terms have expired, are Dr. Chela Gonzalez and Mr. Thomas Quinlan. NCCL members join in expressing their appreciation to Chela and Tom for their dedicated work on the Board and commitment to NCCL.



Ed Gordon receives the NCCL Catechetical Award.

Wednesday Exhibits opened at 8 A.M. and members were invited to attend our second business meeting. At noon we celebrated with the Awards Luncheon. The delicious sit-down lunch was followed by the presentation of the awards. Edmund Gordon, from Wilmington, Delaware, received the NCCL Catechetical Award and Sr. Janet

Schaeffler received the Distinguished Service Award.

ValLimar Jansen presented the final major address. She wove the basic tasks of catechesis and “10 Lenses: Guide to Living and Working in a Multicultural World” (by Mark Williams) with song and story and got us up from our seats in prayer and song. I and many others left the address with a renewed passion for the journey of faith, hope and love!

After the general session the exhibitors held drawings for gifts and the exhibit hall was officially closed. We then had an opportunity for provinces to meet. What is a province meeting? It is an opportunity for all those from specific areas of the country to gather and hear about the Representative Council meeting and discuss happenings in each province as well as to decide where the group is going for dinner after liturgy!

Thursday Bishop Leonard Blair, NCCL’s episcopal advisor, celebrated liturgy in the Prayer Room. This was followed by more rounds of learning sessions. We began packing up the registration room and saying goodbye to those who had to leave early. The end is always bittersweet. While we look forward to going home, it is difficult to say goodbye for another year to colleagues and friends from around the country and Canada as well. The planning committee had one final meeting before going home—or to the Post-Conference Skills Session. It was a great opportunity to debrief the week and make notes for next year. |

Christina Flum, publicity chairperson for the 2010 NCCL Conference & Expo, is director of catechetical ministry for the New Albany Deanery Aquinas Center in Clarksville, Indiana. |

Voices from the Conference

This year I had the opportunity to attend the NCCL Conference in the little-known city of Las Vegas. I had the good fortune of receiving the NCCL scholarship which made my trip possible. I must admit, however, it was here that my Vegas luck ended, failing to extend to the tables! That, however, is another article.



The real jackpot was the entire event, with its theme of *diversity*, and my ability to both sharpen my catechetical skills and meet many colleagues from

around the country. **From the beginning, we were given poignant reminders that we are all living our own diversities, and we must all work to welcome others in a great variety of situations.** For me, this theme effectively set the tone for the entire event, which was jammed with a tremendous variety of opportunities to discuss contemporary issues of ministry and share best practices, various stories, and of course some laughs with fellow catechetical leaders. It was an experience for which I am grateful and one I will not soon forget.

Philip A. Franco

Director

Office of Faith Formation

Diocese of Brooklyn



Presence is the word that I am taking away from the NCCL Conference. I

appreciated being in the presence of other catechetical leaders who inspire me to continue in ministry by sharing their passion for reaching the people they serve. Taking a moment to dialogue and be *present* to and with my peers in their 20s and 30s on Monday night energized me to go out and invite others my age into leadership. Most importantly, I was reminded of our call both in our daily lives and in our ministries to share the *presence* of Christ within us and in our lives with others. I am leaving the

Voices from the Conference *continued*

NCCL Conference with a commitment to be present to others and to help them connect their faith and daily life.

Becky Eldredge

Charis Ministries
Watkinsville, Georgia



The NCCL Conference in Las Vegas brought directors of religious education and other catechists together to discuss how the future of catechesis and its teachings will be greatly influenced by the richness of the different cultures that catechists serve through their ministry. Based on conversations from attendees, I'd say the sessions were enlightening and informative, and the energy was great! **I am inspired by the catechists' motivation and passion for the work that they do.** With NCCL's catechetical mission at the forefront, the challenge continues to be how the collective efforts of catechists through the national organization respond to current and relevant issues so that NCCL shapes the future of catechetical ministry in the church.

Vernon Love

Marketing Specialist
USCCB



This NCCL Conference was my third and the best yet! It was also my first time serving on Representative Council, representing the North American Forum for Small Christian Communities (NAFSCC). I met many new people and rekindled long-time friendships. With evangelization, small christian communities, infant baptism, RCIA and adult faith formation as my key areas of interest, **I found all the sessions offered something of value to me—whether to affirm me in my ministerial roles or to stretch me to grow in new ways.** The Diocesan Staff Forum format was ideal and enriching. Thanks to all who worked so intently in planning this conference!

Diane Kledzik

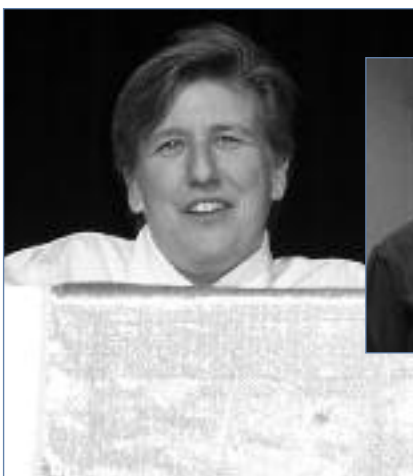
Associate Director of Evangelization and Adult Faith Formation
Diocese of St. Petersburg



Sister Janet Schaeffler receives the Distinguished Service Award from Russell Peterson.



Executive Director Lee Nagel



Carmen Marie Nanko-Fernandez



Anne Roat with Anthony Marchia, 2011 Conference Chair



Carole Eipers with Lee Nagel



CATECHETICAL UPDATE

A publication of the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership

APPRENTICESHIPS FOR OUR NEXT GENERATION

NOTRE DAME'S ECHO PROGRAM OFFERS ONE MODEL

Echo is a partnership program between the University of Notre Dame and dioceses around the country to form a new generation for catechetical leadership. While obtaining a master's degree from Notre Dame, the young persons serve a two-year apprenticeship in a parish under the guidance of a mentor DRE. The church in America, the local diocese, the parish and the participants all learn and grow through this unique program. It is a gift to the church.

—Ed Gordon

Director of Religious Education, Diocese of Wilmington



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Where Church Meets World

by Pat Millea



It is the nature of the Catholic life that we work at the crossroads of the church and the world—and this can be quite a busy crossroads. Since the first Pentecost, the church has struggled in its relationship with the world, and since the day of my baptism, I've struggled with the same relationship. Being a youth minister in a suburban Catholic parish invites me to address that reality, and the path that led me there was full of God's preparation.

This path brought me to something called Echo—a graduate program in theology at the University of Notre Dame specifically intended to shape people for ministry at the intersection of church and world. Echo seeks to do the unique, if not the revolutionary—to form lay catechetical leaders for parish ministry.

Were it not for this intentional formation, this “life on the brink” would have swallowed me within a matter of months. Anyone who works in catechetical ministry knows the struggles that can come with pastors (demanding and/or apathetic), parents (overbearing and/or invisible) and youth (overwhelmed and/or lost). And anyone who works in parish ministry also knows the temptation toward cynicism and despair in the midst of these struggles between church and world. But I've been blessed with mentors who helped me understand the church in the face of the world and view the world through the lens of the church.

Mentors have helped me understand the church in the face of the world and view the world through the lens of the church.

So here I am—a Catholic man, husband, youth minister, and (God willing) future saint. And here I am, a man who loves Dave Matthews Band, Notre Dame football, a cold beer on a hot summer day, and BBQ ribs. In the same moments that my wife and I take out the trash and do the dishes, we build up our domestic church and work on the stuff of salvation. In the same moments that I ride a roller coaster with high school students, I'm helping them understand their value in the heart of God and the glory to which they are called. When I speak to

our parish youth about the mercy of God or the mystery of the Real Presence, I'm struggling to engage those mysteries in my own life.

The *Catechism* tells us that “just as God's will is creation and is called ‘the world,’ so his intention is the salvation of men, and it is called ‘the Church’” (CCC §760). It

strikes me, then, that the church can be simply defined as “the world at its best.” It follows that saints are nothing more and nothing less than children of God at their best—fully aware of their deficiencies and fully confident in God's grace. So maybe the true goal of catechesis isn't to work at the crossroads of the church and the world; maybe our best goal is to work toward a merging of these often divergent paths, so that in the fullness of time and the fullness of grace, our world might rise to the beauty and communion of church. ■

Pat Millea is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and the Echo graduate program in theology and catechesis. He lives in Minneapolis with his wife, Kenna, currently serves as director of youth ministry at Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church in Edina, Minnesota. He can be contacted at patmillea@gmail.com.

Bridging the Ideal and the Real

by Lauren Ellis



I spent one sunny winter Saturday morning at the parish exercising my creative abilities by making balloon animals. I researched how to make the twists and practiced dogs, swans and swords. However, when it came time to put what I'd learned into action, most of the

underprivileged children from the local school district, who were attending the annual Christmas wish party, put on by our St. Vincent de Paul Society, were not impressed. So a new line was quickly added to my growing résumé as an apprentice catechetical leader—the ability to improvise new balloon animals. On the spot, I started making everything from a spider to a shield to a penguin. For anyone involved in parish ministry, it's just another day.

The road to parish ministry involves many turns. I, like many of my peers, believed that I might be able to reach that goal only by following paths we had seen modeled, such as after retirement from another profession or growing into the role through volunteerism. I studied theology to begin my journey but was unsure of the next step. The Echo program offered a solution to a predicament that had been brewing in my own mind: How do I apply my academic studies to a real world in which the average Catholic family is increasingly distanced from the doctrinal, liturgical and communal life of the church?

Echo aims to create a workforce of “bridges” between the idealism of academia and the messiness of parish life by confronting these gaps directly. Each week brings a new reason to remember

my training and apply it to a range of current situations, even at a new parish. It is one thing to know the doctrine regarding the sacrament of marriage, but it is quite another to adapt that information and write a jingle for first graders or comfort a couple who had no idea their long-term civil marriage without a dispensation impacted their reception of Eucharist.

The Echo program's spiritual direction and community life allowed me to process my experiences with others who were encountering the same challenges, albeit under different circumstances, in their own parishes, all in a spirit of prayer.

When a task or situation loomed large, my mentor carefully guided me through steps that taught me to look for underlying issues and how to discern appropriate responses. As a novice, the process gave me that all-important third party point of view, which helped train me to see

the big picture. It is the layers of support that build the foundation for a life of service to Christ.

I doubt anyone is completely prepared for either the challenges or the joys—sometimes found in the same instance—that are a part of parish ministry. However, I do know that I am able to appreciate both because of the skills and knowledge I took away from the University of Notre Dame's Echo program. ■

Lauren Ellis completed the Echo program in 2006 and is currently serving as the director of children's and adult formation at St. Catherine of Siena in Carrollton, Texas. She can be reached at lellis@stcatherine.org.

It is the layers of support that build the foundation for a life of service

Catechetical Update Is Now Available Online

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Addressing the Work Within

by Kenna Millea



There is a great temptation to deal first with the pressing matters of ministry, then the important. “Performing triage” is how my husband describes it. While it is true that certain moments call for that mindset, it is also true that it will not sustain a ministry for long. The more time that passes from my last dip in the wellspring, the less attentive I am to God’s voice in and around me. How can I give what I do not possess? Without fail, I find that when my ministry falls into a pattern of responding to the urgent first, and (one hopes) the important second, it is a reflection of how shortsighted my own formation of heart, mind, and spirit have become.

Each morning I have lofty intentions to arrive calmly at my desk and commit the day’s tasks to paper, placing them in order of significance. Ideally I then pray and spend time visioning about the ministries entrusted to me. Next, I carefully consider how these pertain to the tasks of catechesis and the gifts I bring. I dig in and finally get to work. It is embarrassing to admit how seldom this happens in a month.

The reality is that I come barreling into my cubicle with thoughts racing, scrolling through emails while half-way listening to voice messages. As I whiz through the workroom and gather the remains from last night’s faith formation class, I have already forgotten about creating my prioritized list. The day takes off and I have left behind much of what called me to this ministry: collaboration for a Jesus-centered goal, accessing truths both mysterious and transcendent. When did ministry become more administra-

tive and less creative? When did ministry become more about protocols from distant authorities and less about inspiration from the Spirit? When did I become stale, disillusioned, narrow?

In that moment, I am grateful for the lessons learned during my graduate studies. The Echo program at the University of Notre Dame opened wide a world of support and formation. Echo invites men and women to join in the church’s mission of handing on the faith. Students seek a masters degree in theology concurrent with full-time parish ministry. The value of the program is not only its academic rigor or comprehensive curriculum, but its commitment to on-going formation of the catechetical leader. Thanks to the empirical wisdom of Echo’s creators, I learned early and often that healthy, happy, holy ministers take time for their own professional and spiritual formation. It saves me on many a frenetic Monday.

The formation of a catechetical leader is a life-long process. There will always be ways to stretch and grow myself and the programs under my purview—just as there will always be distractions which conveniently serve as scapegoats when I neglect myself. My need for continuing formation challenges my human tendency to submit to the busy-ness of life. The work is never done: both the work in front of and within me. ■

Kenna Millea is the elementary and adult faith formation coordinator at Saint Ambrose of Woodbury Church in Woodbury, Minnesota. She lives with her new husband, Pat, in Minneapolis.

I learned early and often that healthy, happy, holy ministers take time for their own professional and spiritual formation.

TIME TRAVEL FOR CATECHETICAL LEADERS

Reclaiming Catholicism: Treasures Old and New.
Edited by Thomas H. Groome and Michael J. Daley. Maryknoll,
New York: Orbis Books, 2010. Paperback, 250 pages, \$22.00.

Reviewed by Tish Scargill



A popular plot for a book or movie involves a passionate scientist, usually a curious bystander, and a complicated machine. Sometimes the machine looks like a chair, or a phone booth, a car, or—in a just recently released movie—a hot tub. This machine has the capabilities of transporting travelers back in time. Once the travelers step out of the machine into this new time period, they encounter characters and events of their history. Often the time travelers' contemporary dress and language confuse the residents of the past, and many times the visitors change the course of history with their interactions.

Editors Thomas Groome and Michael Daley have created a time travel vehicle with their book *Reclaiming Catholicism Treasures Old and New*. Through a collection of essays written by numerous Catholic theologians and scholars, Groome and Daley have compiled an anthology, transporting the reader back to the Catholic Church preceding the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). The book is organized into three parts: Perspectives, Personalities, and Practices. These essays, while short in length (3-5 pages), give the reader context to critically reflect on what has been lost or gained through the Second Vatican Council. Like the time traveler, the reader has an encounter with a culture and language that varies from what the reader may know to be today. In most time-travel stories, the travelers eventually return to their own time periods. So, too, the reader of these essays is challenged to return to contemporary times, embracing treasures old and new.

Pope John XXIII used the word “aggiornamento,” updating and renewing the church, when he described the vision of the Second Vatican Council: “An opening of the window to let in fresh air.”

The reforms of the council were “reclamation of convictions and practices from the early Christian communities,” writes Tom Groome in his introduction. The Rite of Christian Initiation is one of these earlier practices. Unfortunately many Catholics did not connect these earlier traditions with what they had known, and for many “felt the rug had been pulled out from under them.”

In Part I: Perspectives, the editors begin by reflecting on their own childhood, religious education and popular devotions of the time. While Tom Groome reflects on growing up in an Irish Catholic family, memorizing the *Butler's Irish Catechism*, and eating no meat on any Friday throughout the year, Michael Daley shows us another view. His is the view of someone born after 1965, someone whose religious education and liturgical practices included pop culture icons like Led Zeppelin and Bart Simpson. Michael represents many of our contemporaries, whose early formation was during a time of experimentation in both education and liturgical reforms.

In his essay titled “The Church: Catholicism Before and After Vatican II,” Richard P. McBrien states that he is a product of the pre-Vatican II church. Born, educated, trained, and ordained all before the Second Vatican Council, he challenges those who are nostalgic for the way things were. “Pre-conciliar Catholicism can and should serve as the wellspring of spiritual growth and wisdom for Catholics today.” He goes on to say that although many good things should be renewed or transformed, there are some that should not.

In Part II: Personalities, essayists share wisdom from great voices of the past such as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Thomas Merton, Fulton Sheen, Mary Perkins Ryan, and Dorothy



continued on page 18

Day. Like the traveler who has been transported back in time, the reader is invited to spend time with characters of the Catholic tradition, some who embraced the fullness of the church and others who challenged it.

In Part III: Practices, the authors write of various church practices surrounding the sacraments, the rosary, Mary, contraception and Lent. Richard Rohr, OFM, in “Catholic Eucharist, before and after Vatican II” says about Christian religion, “It is now much more a transformative system than merely a belonging system or an external belief system.” Tom Groome addresses faith formation from the *Baltimore Catechism* to Total Community Catechesis, in his essay, “Questions and Answers—Again—from the *Baltimore Catechism*.” He reminds the reader that the *Baltimore Catechism* played “a minor role in nourishing people’s faith.” It was through family, neighborhoods, parishes, and schools that people shared and learned faith.

Many times, in catechetical circles, there can be a division as to which voices the catechetical leader listens to. Often there can be a sense of loss when talking about the pre-conciliar years, as if all things would be new again if we just returned to the days of old. On the other hand, too often there is deafness when it comes to embracing what once was.

What I appreciate in this book is that it shows respect and fondness for the traditions, while challenging the reader to step into the 2010 world with a new appreciation as to how we got here. I understand the fondness many have for the church they grew up in the 1950s, but I also appreciate the reform of the liturgy and our understanding that each of us are called to be full, active, conscious participators who share in the mission of the church.

I understand that while some people can still quote the answer to a particular question from the *Baltimore Catechism*, today’s catechetical approach starts with the heart and leads to the head. On the other hand, have we lost some of our Catholic identity, certain devotions and practices, to a culture of apathy and lack of imagination? If I were to travel back in time, what would I choose to re-embrace and bring into the present?

Anyone in the field of catechetics or liturgy or interested in church history will find this an interesting read. Over forty contributors have shared insight and food for thought. As well as those mentioned above, authors include Mary C. Boys, SNJM; Donald Cozzens; Thomas Rausch, SJ; Ronald Rolheiser, OMI; Bishop Robert F. Morneau; Mary E. Hines; Kate Dooley, OP; and many more. |

Tish Scargill is director of catechetical ministries for the Diocese of Monterey.

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Explore and Experiment: Faith Formation and Social Networking with Young Adults

by Caroline Cerveney, SSJ



Young adults are into social networking! Why do I say that? The Pew Research Center on February 3, 2010, released their report on Social Media and Young Adults. As I read the report, what quickly stood out for me was this:

Although the number of adults who use social networking websites has grown rapidly over the last several years, adults as a whole remain less likely than teens to use these sites. As of September 2009, 47% of online adults used a social networking website, compared with the 73% of teens who did so at a comparable point in time. The percentage of adults who use online social networks has grown from 8% of internet users in February 2005 to 16% in August 2006 to 37% in November 2008. On a typical day in 2009, just over one-quarter (27%) of adult internet users visited a social networking site.

Right. Once more our young adults are involved in areas that we are unfamiliar with and/or hesitate to step into. I'm not going to ask why. I am going to ask—*why not?* Why not use social networking tools for faith formation with young adults? That's where they're at.

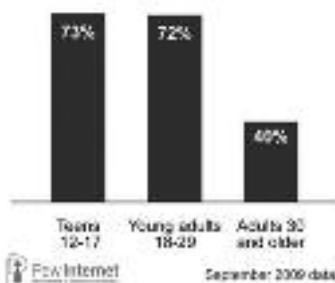
I once heard a story by a friend of mine who was on Lake Michigan on a cold winter day, just when members of the Polar Bear Club arrived. As he stood by and watched, every last member jumped into the cold frigid water and swam! Laughing and cheering one another on! Afterwards he said, he had this wonderful insight. All he did was stand by and watch—a spectator. He realized that if he was going to make a difference with others, he had to jump into their world, instead of standing by and watching.

So, my friends, I invite you to jump into the social network world—but not necessarily into Facebook or MySpace. I'd like to introduce you to Ning Social Networks. Why? You can create a “sacred space” just for your audience. And you can create it in seconds. The description at the bottom of the home page

says, “So easy, it just works. Get your Ning Network up and running in less than 30 seconds.”

To introduce you to this space, I invite you to join *Young Adult Faith Formation* at <http://yafaithformation.ning.com>. It is a private network, so only those who are members and are approved to join this network will be part of the discussion. Look for the “join” link—usually in the upper right hand corner. Or, if you are having difficulty in signing on, send an email to c.cerveney@verizon.net and in the subject area type in “YAFF NING Network member.”

Teens and young adults converge in enthusiasm for social networking sites



What can you do in this space? Try posting a question. Find a good video and embed it in the video section. Share what you are doing with your social network or thinking of doing with your network with others. Just get comfortable with using the tool to carry on an online conversation with one another. Our young adults are very comfortable in doing the online conversation. Those of us who are the “digital immigrants” are just now catching up with the tools that our “digital natives” have been raised with. It takes

a little practice before we just jump in to use the tool.

Of course, when you are ready to create your network, just go to <http://www.ning.com> and you can create your own network just by clicking on the “Create a Ning Network” button. If you need further background about *how* to do this or further information about NING, go to one of these sites:

- **Create Your Own Social Network**—<http://personalweb.about.com/od/easyblogsandwebpages/a/createning.htm> (Here you will find the steps you need to create a Ning network.)
- **Seven Things You Should Know About Ning**—<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7036.pdf> (A great two-page article that covers a scenario: What is it?, Who's doing it?, How does it work?, Why is it significant? What are the downsides? Where is it going? What are the implications for teaching and learning?)

continued on page 21

Celebrating the Spiritual Expressions of Today's Young Adults

by Theresa A. Thibodeaux



“Where are they?” “How do we get them back in the pews?”

These are the pointed questions relating to young adults (defined as 18-39 year-olds by the U.S. bishops) that I am most often challenged with. I’m challenged on two levels:

First, for the last two and a half years I have had the privilege of serving as the coordinator of young adult ministry for the Los Angeles Archdiocese. Second, I self-identify as a young adult—one on the cusp of both generation X and the millennial generation. Consequently, I have different reasons to reflect on the place where young adult life meets Catholic identity.

Necessarily, the questions evoke a variety of responses in my heart. First I ask myself, “Well, where are we?” I know firsthand that my regular Mass attendance, the most commonly recognized expression of Catholic identity, has become less of a regular practice as my young adulthood progresses. “Are we just lazy and self-absorbed?” “Do we no longer care about this very rich and life-giving tradition?” Maybe. Perhaps, though, we are living our catholicity beyond the confines of physical church walls, in self-created communities more attentive and responsive to our particular needs.

How do we embrace the young adults we encounter in our daily lives, just as they are?

ENGAGING DUALITY

When I reflect upon my personal relationships with some of my dearest friends who identify as Catholic, I hear a common story echoed. They find themselves caught in the tension of living out the call in their hearts, without wanting to be fully identified with an institution that at times can be a force of oppression. Fr. Ronald Rolheiser, in *The Tidings, Southern California's Catholic Weekly* (February 5, 2010), wrote an article entitled, “An Open Letter To Those Who Don't Go to Church.” When describing the church he notes, “It is a far-from-perfect expression of God's love and mercy, and it is a far-from-perfect expression of God's love as much as it reveals it. It has been, and remains, a vehicle both of grace and sin. How do we get past its dark side?” (Check out www.ronrolheiser.com—his column is syndicated.)

I have found that many young adults choose vocations that help engage this duality on a daily basis. Ninety percent of the

young adults I associate with have committed their lives to teaching and ministering in Catholic schools, inner-city schools and in positions of public service. Many are raising wonderful children with incredible intentionality while trying to navigate through the financial demands of being young adults and living in an increasingly costly world—a world in which many times our church fails to be a companion.

In 2002 I received a grant to go on an Ignatian pilgrimage in northern Spain. During one of the homilies I heard there, Fr. David Flemming, SJ, said, “Our God has an incredible sense of humor! Look around! What is a hippopotamus? An alligator? A giraffe?” If all of these creatures can live and move and have their being in the very different ways in which they are created, how can we as human creations do the same?

THE WRONG QUESTIONS?

These reflections lead me to believe that maybe we are asking the wrong question altogether. Maybe, “getting them back in the pews,” is not our primary goal at all. Maybe the question is, “How do we move towards them?” How do we embrace the young adults we encounter in our daily lives, just as they are? Can we share our expres-

sions of catholicity so as to more easily recognize and affirm the ways in which they are Christ in the world? Jesus asked us to come and follow as we are, as only we can. There were no stipulations about the ways this love was to be expressed; rather, the emphasis was simply that love to this degree *is* expressed.

I imagine our God takes delight in the many ways we commit to that expression. Here we are offered an incredible opportunity to engage with our young adults. We can help them see God alive in a tangible way in their day-to-day realities by honoring their daily practices. This is the missing piece.

MOVING TOWARD YOUNG ADULTS

We can include young adult liaisons in our pastoral planning, not as token gestures, but in ways that take seriously the wisdom of their gifts and experiences. We can be intentional about our RCIA, marriage, and baptism preparation processes, realizing that eighty percent of those in attendance are young adults. We need to capitalize on the times when we do see

young adult faces, in order to listen openly to their needs. If we help them to see that we are listening with arms open wide, that we are willing to take seriously their concerns and perspectives, not expecting them to simply conform to “the way things are done,” we might have a chance to re-expose young adults to the incredible gift of our Catholic community. We have all been or at one point all will be young adults. Recognizing that each generation is born into an ever-changing world affecting the way they see and move about in it is critical for the life of our church.

Let’s move towards our young adults. Let’s celebrate rather than condemn the young mother who is doing her best to raise her child and hold a full-time job. Let’s celebrate rather than

condemn our brothers and sisters who find themselves without homes . . . Let’s commit to more regularly opening the doors of our churches as temporary places of warmth and rest. Let’s celebrate rather than judge our family members who struggle with identity issues, addictions, or balancing financial/lifestyle issues, and instead offer them gentle, affirming support.

Let’s work together to build a church where all are truly welcome, where all expressions of faith are recognized and affirmed . . . this is how we’ll make room for the young adults of 2010. |

Theresa A. Thibodeaux is currently the coordinator of young adult ministry and confirmación for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

TECH CENTER *continued from page 19*

- **Using Ning As a Professional Learning Network**—<http://www.slideshare.net/diannekrause/using-ning-as-a-professional-learning-network> (Starts as a PPT presentation and then goes to a quick moving video to introduce you to Ning networks.)
- **Ning**—<https://wiki.itap.purdue.edu/display/Social/Ning> (A Purdue wiki that gives a great overview of Ning, including the meaning of Ning: Developers say the word, which means *peace* in Chinese, was picked simply because it “was short, sweet, and wouldn’t take away from the main focus of our service: your social networks. We wanted you to have domain names that were easy to remember and emphasized what was unique about your network.”)

The digital era we are in is about digital conversations! We have tools that provide new opportunities to us. So, just jump in and “try it” with the focus of learning about Ning. Who knows what we will discover about how to use it with a young adult audience to be mentors with them in understanding and growing their faith. |

Caroline Cervený, SSJ, D. Min, president of Interactive Connections (<http://www.intconnect.org>), specializes in online catechist/ministry formation and the applications of new media to adult and youth evangelization and formation. She would like to hear your comments at c.cervený@verizon.net.



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What's the Deal with Generation X, Anyway?

by Matt Schwartz



I am a Gen X Catholic and I work for the institutional church. An oxymoron I know, but nonetheless I offer some Gen X musings for your consideration.

I was socialized Catholic apart from the church. Gen Xers did not grow up in a homogenous Catholic culture. While this may appear to be a negative, it is the greatest strength of my generation. We were socialized in groups from birth. We grew up, many of us, with the reality of divorce and had no choice but to adapt. We know the power of a welcoming community. We know how to be community. However, the church was just one of those communities, not the only one. Gen Xers are the first generation of American Catholics to be raised Catholic but apart from the institution. In other words, church was a place to worship and maybe to attend school—that's it. In contrast to those growing up in the '40s and '50s, the church was not our lone social outlet. We were not

equipped with Catholic goggles to view the world. However, church (and Catholic school) was a *positive* experience of our childhood. But we've moved on. Church was a necessary part of childhood—like having braces in seventh grade. As parents we will do our best to get our own kids involved in church simply because we know it is the right thing to do.

I don't relate to the term "Catholic guilt." My parents raised me to respect the church but also follow my own informed conscience. Yes, we did go to church every Sunday. Yes, I did have many nuns as teachers in Catholic school, but they were fair-minded gentle women of faith. Since my childhood, church has always been a place of joy, not guilt.

I do not attend Mass because of obligation. I believe my parents will be the last generation of American Catholics who will continue to attend Mass regularly, even as their children do not. For most Gen Xers, Mass attendance is a faith

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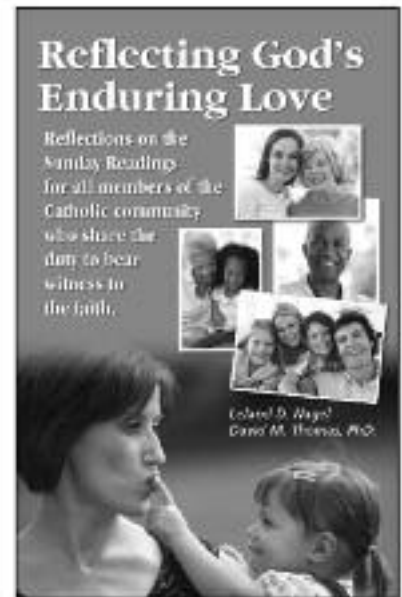
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response, not obligation. My mortgage is obligation; Mass should be joyful worship. Our attendance does not equal relevance. An external event prompts us back to church—a wedding, a funeral, a baptism, an annulment. We are not that concerned about music or preaching. We do not need to be entertained. As in our jobs, we simply want authenticity.

Gen Xers immerse themselves in spiritual enterprises daily and live the Paschal mystery in family, work, life—they just do not have the language to express it. Our Catholic faith has become detached from Mass (and we know the irony of such a statement!). Mass is not a reprieve from daily life. Ritual, sacrifice and prayer are the daily routine of life—we are simply unaware that Mass is a mirror of that life.

My role as parent is primary. Gen X parents are blunt about this: If you welcome and acknowledge my child, you welcome and acknowledge me. Part of the dilemma with our programs is that we view parents as the problem. Parents should have an ally with the parish in the total development of their child, not a competitor. Look at youth sports programs—they are family centered. Parents know what is expected of them when their child is a part of the football team. Parents become a community because they are socialized to be football parents. Too often our religious education and youth ministry programs are youth-

centered. Too often youth are tolerated instead of celebrated. This **MUST** change. Organized sports do exactly what our own programs hope to do: learn, affirm, celebrate, socialize and empower youth to use their gifts.

Bottom line: Gen X Catholics grasp the power of true community; behold the church of their childhood with joy; look for

Mass to speak to them about their daily lives; and regard seriously their role as parents. Isn't that great!

Gen Xers live a Catholicism that is permeable and fluid. Gen Xers engage in a technologically portable and theological transparent Catholicism. Gen Xers know that sometimes the answer is gray. The Catholic faith has always been a relevant part of our lives. We would love to show you what that looks like sometime. ■

***Matt Schwartz** is the director of religious education and youth ministry for the Diocese of Rockford, Illinois. He has been a high school campus minister, theology teacher and coach. He also has served in parish youth ministry, RCIA, Confirmation Prep and as an RE catechist. He and his wife Julie have three children. Email: mschwartz@rockforddiocese.org*

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Summer Ideas for Catechist Formation

by Jo Rotunno



When I was a master catechist in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, summer was often prime time for catechist formation and I'm sure a number of catechist formation centers are still active there today in the summer months—and perhaps in many other dioceses as well. It was a time when schedules could be condensed and catechists who were not teaching in summer programs or planning lengthy summer vacations could concentrate on their own formation. I still recommend the path of full diocesan certification to all who can be encouraged to pursue it.

But what of the many catechists who cannot make that a full time commitment yet? We know that everyone who wishes to assist in the faith formation of others must be concerned about their own ongoing formation as well. Here is an idea for those at the front end of their catechetical careers, or for those who have had more training and are simply looking for a little enrichment in the summer months.

A CATECHIST FAIR

Plan an all-day event at your parish for catechists. You might schedule several of these fairs on weekdays or Saturdays during the summer to accommodate the widest number of catechists. Plan the publicity and décor around a vacation

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theme, such as a beach day, a mountain vacation, or a road trip, even a pilgrimage. Establish points of interest (or rest stops) in various classrooms. Distribute workshop schedules ahead of time so catechists can choose their topics and you can be assured of having enough materials. Have the participants bring picnic lunches and plan for other refreshments during the day, such as lemonade, iced tea, homemade cookies, or even homemade ice cream. Gather a small committee of seasoned and creative catechists and let your imagination roam as you plan the day(s).

Each classroom or station will be focused on a different topic. Each session should be one and one half to two hours in length. Make Echoes of Faith modules the anchor of the day and encourage every catechist to choose at least one of these sessions. You might choose one module from each of the three sets in Echoes—Theology, Methodology, or the basic Catechist set. (Be sure to include the Getting Started module if you have catechists who will be new in the fall.) Have a monitor and VCR available in each classroom and a booklet for each participant who has pre-signed for this module. You or a qualified catechist from your program will facilitate the ses-

sion, and cover at least one or two of the segments in the module, using the booklet/DVD process suggested in the front of the booklet. Since the booklets all include a CD, catechists can then complete the remaining segments and booklet process at home, perhaps pairing with another catechist for periodic discussion. Note: Encourage one or two seasoned catechists who are already skilled in a module topic to attend an Echoes session to serve as mentors to newer catechists. Even if they have already completed a module previously, they may find that the group discussion may explore new avenues of reflection that will enrich them further.

You can fill in the schedule with other topics of interest to your catechists—seasonal crafts, how to ask good questions, or classroom prayer celebrations, for example. Choose presenters from among your very good catechists whom you would like to develop as mentors for others. Close the day with a rousing prayer celebration and your catechists will go home enriched, energized, and looking forward to the year ahead. ▮

Jo Rotunno is director of marketing and electronic media for RCL Benziger. Echoes of Faith is a joint endeavor of NCCL and RCL Benziger.

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Marriage Preparation as a Unique Adult Catechesis Opportunity

By Brendan Murphy



Anyone who has ever tried to plan and organize faith formation opportunities for adults (especially young adults) has experienced anxiety associated with the fear that no one will show up. We drive ourselves crazy wondering how much food to order, how many chairs to set up, and so on. But picture this: It's a Saturday morning and your parish center is filled with 20- and 30-somethings who actually paid to be there instead of sleeping in. You stand before them; their eager, caffeinated gazes locked in on you. Your adrenaline pumps as you seize the moment and launch into your presentation about ... *balancing a check book? In-laws? Transforming "you" statements into "I" statements?*

This seems a little anti-climactic and yet, in the course of any given week, this scene plays out in church halls all over the country under the name of "marriage preparation." Marriage preparation is all too often seen as a "necessary evil"—by both engaged couples and the instructors. In a self-conscious effort to make the day "as painless as possible," many of these gatherings place an emphasis on "life skills" as opposed to uniquely Catholic instruction. By the end of the day the presenter exhales with relief and the couples head home wishing they had their money back (after all, most of them were taught life skills in junior and senior high).

OPPORTUNITY FOR FORMATION

The time has come for us to recognize that marriage preparation is adult faith formation. Indeed, in many dioceses marriage preparation is probably the largest and most concerted adult faith formation initiative taking place. Unfortunately, it is seldom thought of in this way. Recognizing this unique opportunity for adult faith formation is an important step in counteracting the decline in marital and familial spiritual health in our society. In my own Diocese, an average of 91% of couples approaching the church for the sacrament of matrimony are already sexually active and close to 60% of them are cohabiting. Clearly, there is a disconnect between what the church intends by the sacrament and what the average couple intends. What is the appropriate Christian response to such realities?

Choosing to ignore the problem by focusing on non-controversial, non-doctrinal aspects in the preparation process has been popular in the past and still has its devotees. The difficulty, though, is that by ignoring a problem we know to be present, we are actually cooperating in the sinful behavior of the couples "by not disclosing or not hindering them when we have an obligation to do so" (CCC 1868). Instead we are called to teach couples the truth of the church's teaching in a spirit of charity, so that they may administer the sacrament to one another with eyes wide open. At first this may seem daunting; especially in light of how powerful an influence secular culture has on the behavior and attitudes of many couples today. Fortunately, the perception is much worse than the reality.

Four years ago the Diocese of Scranton made a conscious decision to transform our pre-Cana conferences into catechetical sessions on the church's teachings regarding the sacrament of matrimony and human sexuality. We chose Pope John Paul II's "Theology of the Body" (TOB) as the framework for our catechesis due to its comprehensive and personalistic approach to these topics. The presenters recruited for the task were enthusiastic, but cautious—no one likes the feeling of walking into a lion's den, after all. However, the results have been incredible. Far from turning couples off to the church, this new approach has led many couples to make major changes in their behavior in anticipation of entering into a sacramental marriage.

CHANGING BEHAVIOR

Consider the following. Based on our anonymous exit evaluation, on average, 72% of those couples who are sexually active coming into the day say they either plan to or are considering abstaining from sex until they are married. On average, 74% of those who came into the day planning to contracept in their marriage say they either definitely plan not to or are considering not contracepting once they are married. In connection to this, close to 90% of those who attend a conference say that they either plan on using Natural Family Planning (NFP) in their marriage, or are now considering using it in their marriage. Due to such enthusiasm we have had to add a number of public NFP training classes to meet demand the last few years.

At the end of a recent conference one young woman said, “When the instructors began talking about the meaning of consummating your marriage, it got me thinking. I have been raised Catholic and went to CCD until I was in the twelfth grade and no one ever told me *why* to wait. All I ever heard was ‘Sex before marriage is wrong, don’t do it.’ If I knew then what I know now, I would have waited!” An encouraging aspect of such honest responses is that they reveal a positive, and yet discouraging, fact: the average Catholic engaged couple is not *consciously* rejecting the church’s teachings on marriage and human sexuality—they simply aren’t aware of it in any meaningful way.

The situation calls to mind St. Philip’s encounter with the Ethiopian in Acts 8:27-38. The Ethiopian is reading Isaiah, yet when he is asked by Philip whether he understands the prophet, the Ethiopian replies, “How can I, unless someone instructs me?” In the same way, we shouldn’t be surprised by polls showing that Catholic married couples are just as likely as their

non-Catholic counterparts to divorce, contracept, procure an abortion, or use pornography, when we know that most of these couples received less sacramental preparation leading up to their marriage than the average seven-year-old receives preparing for their first Holy Communion. It is even worth pondering to what extent these couples are culpable for their actions, since culpability implies an awareness of moral values.

In his encounter with the Ethiopian, St. Philip seized upon the man’s willingness to learn in order to explain the Faith and open up channels of grace of which he was otherwise unaware. By embracing marriage preparation as an opportunity for meaningful adult catechesis, we, as a church, have the opportunity to do the same for engaged couples. |

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Twice a year the Catholic Book Publishers Association publishes a catalog entitled the Spirit of Books. The spring/summer 2010 edition includes over 125 titles. Here are a few of special interest to catechetical leaders and catechists.

The Catholic Faith & Family Bible

Edited by Marlene Baer
Harper One

The Jesuit Guide to Almost Everything

A Spirituality for Real Life
James Martin, SJ
Edited by Roger Freet
HarperOne

Deeper than Words

Living the Apostles Creed
David Steindl-Rast
Liturgical Press
Doubleday Religion

The Naked Now

Learning to See as the Mystics See
Richard Rohr, OFM
The Crossroad Publishing Company

The Catholic Companion to Jesus

Mary Kathleen Glavich
ACTA Publications

A Planet of Grace

Images and Words from Biosphere One
Written by Bernadette McCarver Snyder
Photographs by James Stephen Behrens, OCSO
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Thea's Song

The Life of Thea Bowman
Charlene Smith and John Feister
Orbis Books

Transforming Our Painful Emotions

A Spiritual Understanding of Anger, Shame, Grief, Fear and Loneliness
Evelyn Eaton Whitehead
James D. Whitehead
Orbis Books

To obtain a copy of the Spirit of Books catalog contact your local Catholic bookseller or St. Mary's Bookstore and Church Supply, Nashville, TN. www.stmarysbookstore.com. For additional information, description, and reviews of these titles, visit www.eCatechist.com

Our members are reading...

Dan Thomas, Director of Evangelization & Catechesis
St. John the Baptist Parish, Tipp City OH.

Things Hidden

Scripture as Spirituality
Richard Rohr
St. Anthony Messenger Press
An unbelievable book that challenges its readers to live a mature Christianity.

An Altar in the Word

A Geography of Faith
Barbara Brown Taylor
HarperOne
Twelve practices necessary in order to live our faith

Wolf Hall

Hillary Mantel
Henry Holt and Co.
Winner of National Book Critics Circle Award and Man Booker Prize Award. The reign of Henry VIII focusing on Thomas Cromwell and Thomas More.

Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life, and Beyond

From Production to Prodsusage
Axel Bruns
Peter Lang Publishing
The book reminds me of Marshall McLuhan's Understanding Media because of its cutting edge quality.

Ken Ogorek, Director of Catechesis, Archdiocese of Indianapolis

The Nature, Tasks and Scope of the Catechetical Ministry

A Digest of Recent Church Documents
Berard L. Marthaler, S.T.D., Ph.D.
National Catholic Educational Association

Proclaiming the Truth of Jesus Christ

Papers from the Vallombrosa Meeting
Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (Editor)
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Micky Zielinski, Director of Catechesis, Diocese of Birmingham

Have a Little Faith

A True Story
Mitch Albom
Hyperion

Featured Author

Sr. Gretchen Hailer, RSHM
Los Angeles, CA
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Sr. Gretchen has been involved in catechesis and media education for over thirty years. She is a frequent consultant and presenter regarding faith formation and communications. Sr. Gretchen is the author of a number

of books, including these:

Media Mindfulness

Educating Teens about Faith and Media
St. Mary's Press (co-authored with Rose Pacatte) (2007)

Echoing the Word

An Introductory, Parish-Based Catechist Formation Process
Paulist Press (2008)

Our Media World

Teaching Kids (K-8) about Faith and Media
Pauline Books & Media (co-authored with Rose Pacatte) (2010)

Websites and Blogs of Interests

The Archbishop Romero Trust
At Home with Our Faith
Busted Halo
Creighton University Online Ministries
Gratefulness
David Steindl-Rast
Janet Schaeffler, OP
Julie Quinn Art
Ron Rolheiser, OMI
The Good Word
America Magazine
Thinking Faith
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Free Books

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Dan Pierson served as the director of religious education for the Diocese of Grand Rapids for seventeen years. He is the founder of faithAlivebooks.com and works with religious publishers in product development and marketing. Contact: pierson.dj@gmail.com