

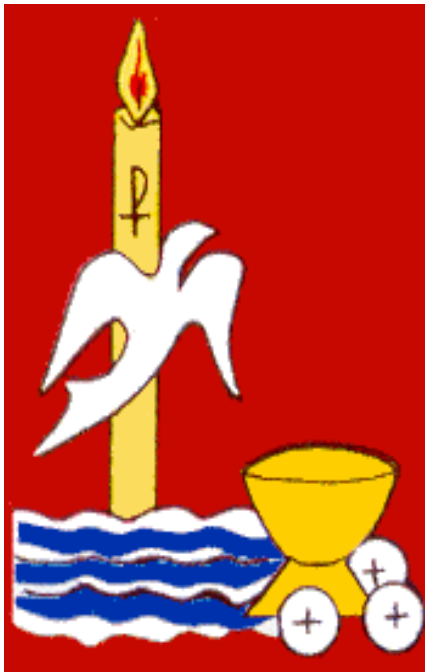
CENTERPEACE 03/17/09 – 05/15/09

*An E-Resource for the Catechists and Catechetical Leaders
of the Diocese of Pensacola – Tallahassee
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Faith Engaging Blog! – Now live on diocesan website.

Please help spread the word. Bishop Ricard initiated a blog on Ash Wednesday to serve as a new venue for sharing concerns, hope, dreams, ideas and insights as we journey together in faith. To read and participate in the blog, log on to the diocesan web site www.ptdiocese.org and click on the link in the center of the homepage. Postings will be added weekly – or more often – so check back often. The list of folks who will be writing for the blog shows on the lower left side of the blog. It's a list that is growing. If you have suggestions for authors or topics, please contact Peggy Dekeyser at dekeyserp@ptdiocese.org.



Prayer Of Thanksgiving on the Occasion of the Easter Vigil

We give thanks, O God! Today we have discovered anew the presence and power of your Spirit. Your Spirit has preserved us as a People of God throughout history. Your Spirit has inspired prophets and preachers, setting fire on this earth. Your Spirit has led us through the dark night of tragedy and crisis, opening us to receive your love. We pray that this Holy Spirit will give us the courage to speak truth, purify us of all prejudice, strengthen us when we are weak and weary, and grace us with joy as we walk the journey of our call to discipleship. Amen.

Forming Catechists: Mission Critical Task!

As you plan next year, consider making Level I certification one of your top priorities for all your catechists in Pre-K through 12 programs, parish youth ministry, adult faith formation, and Ministry of Initiation (RCIA and Baptism Ministries)

We cannot give what we do not have. While the experience of the Good News in the catechists' lives integrates what they teach, knowledge of the Faith and the ability to transfer that understanding to the child or adult in formation is essential.

The staff of Christian Formation again will offer a selection of workshops, prayer experiences, day-long immersion topics and conferences to assist you in accomplishing the goal called for by USCCB: certification for catechists, parish Catechetical leaders and Catholic school teachers.

Please let us know what topics, dates and times, and speakers will work for you and your people. Staff is available to work with you on site to develop a plan for achieving the goal of Level One Certification for all who teach in the name of the Church in your parish.

Together, guided by the Holy Spirit, we bring the Gospel to life in the lives of those we serve.

- **Level I (Basic Level) 20 hours of formation**
- **Level II (Intermediate Level) plus 30 hours**
- **Level III (Advanced) plus 39 hours**

Lilies from the Field - Parishes Using the Faith Formation Resource During Year of Faith Engaged



From Kathleen Hoffman, CLEM, director of religious education, Holy Spirit Parish, Pensacola... "We've used it during Lent as a form of Adult Continuing Education. We program several sessions: (1) Tuesday mornings from 9am to 10am with Scripture Study; (2) a parish study night on Thursdays from 7pm to 8pm; (3) the Men's Bible Study on Friday Mornings from 7am to 8am. Although sessions are scheduled during targeted study times, the Eucharist events are open to the entire parish. It feels like a Lenten mission with six weekly sessions. When I teach the session, I go straight from the book. When Monsignor teaches, he uses the book as a guideline and adds his own experiences, thoughts, etc. We did not order copies for each participant, but instead used the ones we received as a Leader's Guide. Our participation has been really good at all three offerings. The Friday Men's Group session runs between two Masses offered during Lent. This helps increase participation."

From Christine Stockstill, DRE at Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Panama City... "We use this as a lecture series/small Christian Community study. We have had two sessions, on Mondays from 7:00 - 8:00pm, with 20-30 people at each session. We will continue this series throughout Lent. Father Brown is supplementing the series with the Catholic Update pamphlets."

From Marilyn Austin, DRE at Resurrection Parish, Destin,

"We have four small faith groups using the Eucharist program (two daytime and two evening). The mixed groups range in age from 22 to late 70's. The group leaders and hosts say it is easy to use and share responsibilities. The discussions are very good. They are enjoying it."

From Pia Elsesser, CRE at Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Niceville... "We are using 'Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Faith' much like we used "Renew" materials. Our small group has an average of 15 attending consistently. If we stay 'on topic,' we can complete the Session in about 1 1/2 hours. It has been an awesome opportunity to learn from one another. We offer the sessions at noon on Wed. so we get the input of many of our 'wisest' members of the parish. Some of the comments shared at our last session. 'I am grateful for the insight and openness of all the group members.' 'I am thankful to know that I am not alone in my feelings and thoughts.' This has offered many of us the opportunity to explore the changes in the Mass and the reception of the Eucharist (post Vatican II) and how these changes have made the Eucharist more personal and intimate. Many liked the sacredness shown the Eucharist (pre Vatican II). We all agree that reading the Scriptures in advance is a great way to prepare our heart and mind for God's message to us."



Advice to Graduates from Pope John Paul II: Never Alone!

"We wonder and ask, why?

Why am I here?

Why am I alive at all?

What must I do?

None of you is alone in posing these questions...

In the first place I say this:

You must never think that you are alone in deciding your future!

Second, when deciding your future, you must not decide for yourself alone!"

* Fr. Karol Wojtyla, future John Paul II on biking trip with youth group, 1954.

Lenten Calendar Rich with Lives of Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things for God and His People



March 19 St. Joseph...Although Gospel accounts tell us very little about him, we know he was a faithful Jew who, with Mary, presented Jesus in the temple. Tradition understands him to have been a carpenter. What a model for foster and adoptive fathers! **Action for Intergenerational Catechesis:** Send a letter, card or e-greeting to your father or to someone who acted as "father" to you.

March 21 St. Benedict...Developed a Rule that is the foundation for Christian community life. He died in 543 A.D. at Monte Cassino, Italy. His feast day is on July 11, although it is celebrated on March 21. The Rule reveals Benedict's love for his brothers, his love of Christ and his desire that his monks, and us by extension, follow Christ's way to eternal life. **Action for Adult Faith Formation Groups:** Pray from the Rule and the Psalmist -"Let us open our eyes to the light that comes from God, and our ears to the voice from heaven that every day calls out this charge: If you hear his voice today, do not harden your hearts." (Prologue 9 and Psalm 95:8)

March 25 Annunciation...On this day we recall the appearance of the angel Gabriel to Mary heralding the coming of the Messiah. With her fiat, Mary agrees to God's will and makes the Incarnation possible! **Action for Intermediate Grade Religious Education:** Read the account of the Annunciation, Luke 1:26-38, Act it out. Then act it out as a parable in our time, remembering that we consider Mary to be an adolescent. How can your students or children grow in their trust of God, as Mary did?



Two Ideas for Living With The Lectionary: (1) Break open the Word at your next parish meeting. (2) Plan 15 minutes a day with the Word. Here are reflection questions for Sunday Gospels, March 22 through May 17.

March 22 4th Sunday of Lent John 3:14-21
What does it mean to you to believe in Jesus?

March 29 5th Sunday of Lent John 12:20-33

What does Jesus mean when he says in today's Gospel that "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit?"

April 5 Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion Mark 14:1 - 15:47

What names or titles of Jesus are found in today's Gospel? What do the titles tell you about who Jesus is?

April 12 Easter Sunday: Jesus Lives John 20:1-9

What are the qualities of "a beloved disciple?"

April 19 2nd Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday) John 20:19-31

In the Gospel, the disciples proclaim, "We have seen the Lord!" Think of the events and people in your life that help you to say, "I have seen the Lord."

April 26 3rd Sunday of Easter Luke 24:35-48

"You are a witness to these things." How do you "witness" to the reality of Jesus in your life, in your work, in your family?

May 3 4th Sunday of Easter John 10:11-18

Describe the attributes of the Good Shepherd. Describe the attributes of a good leader in today's culture. What are the differences?

May 10 5th Sunday of Easter John 15:1-8

How do you understand yourself to be called to live the Good News that if you remain in Christ, you will bear "good fruit?" What will the pruning cost you?

May 17 6th Sunday of Easter John 15:9-17

"Love one another as I have loved you." When did you feel loved by God? What was it like?

Point of View...

Characteristics of a Great Leader in Pastoral Ministry

The diocese is the beneficiary of a wonderful gift of time and talent. Quint Studer with several of his employees has volunteered to share their expertise in leadership excellence and customer satisfaction with the pastoral center and several parishes in the diocese. The Studer Group is nationally recognized as a driving force in the quality improvement of non-profit organizations, including hospitals, hospices, and school systems.

As part of this initiative, we offer the following ideas on leadership excellence and characteristics of leaders from the USCCB document, "Stewardship: A Disciples' Response." This version of the characteristics of leadership was further refined for parish use by the pastoral council of St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Community, Apopka, Florida.

- **Belief:** As leaders, we must exhibit absolute trust and confidence in God and live out the Gospel as a way of life.
- **Prayer:** We can never pray enough. There is always room for growth in discipleship and leadership. The guidance of the Holy Spirit will make

recommendations we create as pastoral leaders so much easier, so much more authentic.

- **Spirituality:** Spirituality is the style of a person's response to Christ before the challenge of everyday life, in a given historical and cultural environment. The disciple's response is a call to a life of stewardship. The steward leader receives God's gifts gratefully, tends and cherishes them responsibly, shares them in justice and charity, and returns them to God in abundance.
- **Planning** - Keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, we should examine our goals and plans with foresight and anticipation. Organization is the key to success.
- **Communication** - In a spirit of frankness and humility, every parishioner needs to know the who, where, when, what, and why of the consultative bodies' vision and goals for the parish.
- **Hospitality:** From their collective heart, good stewards say nothing as often as "Welcome." Everyone has something to contribute. Everyone is needed. Everyone needs to be made to feel as such.
- **Consensus:** Stewards do not have a vote. The good to be done should be ultimately obvious to everyone through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The progress of all meetings follows this general outline: pray, discuss, listen, pray, reflect, pray, reach consensus, pray.
- **Inclusion:** Include everyone in the invitation to participate. Recognize the unique contributions that every member can make. We are all members of the Mystical Body of Christ. As good stewards, we celebrate our unity in Christ.
- **Gratitude:** Your Mom was right. Never, never forget to say "Thank you." As a pastoral leader, "thank you" to God and others should be a natural, everyday prayer. Every gift of time, talent or treasure - no matter how great or small - calls forth an expression of gratitude.
- **Vision:** Approximate the attitude of the early Church. Expect nothing less than everything. What an outpouring of stewardship those first Catholics must have accomplished:

"The community of believers was of one heart and one mind...With great power the apostles gave their witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all." Acts 4:32-33