



Gatherings Reflections

Dear PCLs (DREs) and Youth Ministers,

April 7, 2016

**From the Religious Education &
Adult Faith Formation Office**

Bryan Reising

breising@dnu.org 507-233-5323

<http://www.dnu.org/religious-education/>



**TASKS OF CATECHESIS:
PROMOTES A MISSIONARY SPIRIT
THAT PREPARES THE FAITHFUL
TO BE PRESENT IN SOCIETY**

by Bryan Reising

Evangelization

As mentioned last month, the mission of the Church is to evangelize. We are the Church, so this is our primary task. And how do we evangelize? With our witness of life, otherwise known as our everyday actions, plus our attitude, and our words. We have this missionary spirit at home, at work, in the marketplace, and everywhere we are.

Evangelization includes all dimensions of the Ministry of the Word: proclamation of the Gospel, otherwise known as the kerygma; catechesis; theology; the homily; and even one's own personal story of faith. Of course, the foundation is the kerygma where the salvation in Jesus Christ is proclaimed - the Paschal Mystery is announced, invitations to faith and conversion are made, and opportunities to respond in faith are there.

Evangelization by Actions

Blessed Paul VI said in *Evangelization in the Modern World*, "Such a witness is already a silent proclamation of the Good News and a very powerful and effective one. Here we have an initial act of evangelization" (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 21) He goes on to say, that through this witness of life, these everyday actions, it may lead to further questions where words are necessary. It says in 1 Peter 3:15: "Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope."

Evangelization by Attitude

Pope Francis explains that we are to evangelize with joy, "An evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral! Let us recover and deepen our enthusiasm, that delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that we must sow... And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the good news not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ." (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 10)

Evangelization by Words

Sometimes people express evangelization with their life, and they believe that is sufficient. Yet, if words are not expressed, then we can echo St. Paul's letter to the Romans: "But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? And how can people preach unless they are sent? As it is

written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring [the] good news!' But not everyone has heeded the good news; for Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed what was heard from us?' Thus faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ." (Romans 10:14-17)

So from the words of St. Paul, words are important for people to respond in faith. So all the more important is for each of us to experience an encounter, a deep encounter with Christ where we listen to the words of salvation, the proclamation of Good News in Jesus Christ, the Paschal Mystery – the heart of the Gospel – the kerygma. It is the very thing we experience during Holy Week and Easter. This is central to our faith. And after such an experience, we need to come to know these words so well that we can proclaim it to others. And then we can invite others to this encounter with Christ.

Evangelization and Other Ecclesial Communities

In the fifth task of catechesis, *Preparing the Christian to Live in Community*, covered last time, it does mention the ecumenical community in the *National Directory for Catechesis*. It is important to understand this dimension of community and to understand our ultimate goal of becoming one.

In addition, there are certain areas of common ground regarding evangelization. The Scriptures and the Nicene Creed are areas we hold things in common with various other ecclesial communities, other Christian traditions. We need to recognize these commonalities. We also need to clarify any misunderstandings they have of the Catholic faith as well as any misunderstandings we have of them. Leadership and theologians are doing their part and more and more regular parishioners are also doing their part as well in building trust and dialogue.

Other areas we can do together: pray together and work together to build a world of care (charity) and justice.

Evangelization and Interfaith Relations

We Catholics have profound respect of other faith traditions outside of Christianity. Dialogue here is very important to create a culture of peace and a culture of life. There may be opportunities to share the Good News of salvation with them, but not through proselytizing (meaning coercion or manipulation), but through the deepest respect of

their faith tradition and sharing what is important to us out of love.

Like with other Christian traditions, we can pray together (in some circumstances) and we can work together to make it a better world. For example, the works of mercy can work for any faith tradition.



Parable of the Sower

I share with different groups around the diocese regarding a vision for evangelization. I first share with them the Parable of the Sower. This scattering of the seed over a broad area is what I call everyday evangelization or spontaneous evangelization. This can be with evangelization by actions, attitudes, and words. But as my dad would tell me, we need to organize our farming efforts over the long haul to maximize the yield. So we take out the rocks out of the soil, pull the thorny weeds out of the soil, and plow up the hardened ground so all of the soil can be good soil.

Preparing the Soil

So taking out the rocks, pulling the thorny weeds, and plowing up the hardened soil are all a part of this preparing the soil. This analogy fits well as the first steps in this vision or process of evangelization which includes social outreach, meaning our acts of charity and justice to our neighbors and others in our lives. Sometimes, this means to listen to their needs, their stories.

It also includes missionary outreach which Pope Francis addresses. "I want to say, with regret, that the worst discrimination which the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care. The great majority of the poor have a special openness to the faith; they need God and we must not fail to offer them his friendship, his blessing, his word, the celebration of the sacraments and a journey of growth and maturity in the faith. Our preferential option for the poor must mainly translate into a privileged and preferential religious care." (Evangelii Gaudium, 200)

And with this social and missionary outreach, we invite them, perhaps to the RCIA, perhaps to a process for Returning Catholics, perhaps to an evangelization retreat. Those who accept the invitation, who are touched and intrigued, we do

some further preparation for them. With the RCIA, we invite them to the pre-catechumenate. With the Catholics we miss, we prepare them to that process of returning Catholics. With nominally active and active Catholics, we invite them to some gatherings to prepare them for the retreat experience.

Planting the Seed

The Planting of the Seed is the opportunity to hear the message of Good News, be invited to faith and conversion, and for them to respond in faith and conversion. For those in the RCIA, this opportunity is the catechumenate stage and the Purification and Enlightenment stage that culminates to receiving the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil. For returning Catholics, the process of returning Catholics includes that proclamation of Good News which culminates with the Sacrament of Reconciliation and their return to the faith. For the other Catholics, an evangelization retreat provides opportunities to listen to the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ, to be invited to renew that faith, and the opportunity to respond by renewing the Sacraments of Initiation.

These all are needed and powerful experiences to help transform the lives of all, to begin their life in a new way as intentional disciples of Christ.



Nourishing the Plant

Nourishing the Plant is the follow-up to such experiences. Just as the early followers “devoted their lives to the apostles’ instruction (catechesis), to the breaking of bread (Eucharist) and the prayers, and to the communal life” and included a commitment to help those in need, so are we to do the same. We nourish our faith through lifelong catechesis, through prayer – both individual and together, through the Eucharist and Reconciliation, through community (family, small Christian community, parish and so on), and through our concern for all who are in need and to create a better world for all. These four dimensions of the life of the Church nourish our faith so that we can share the fruits effectively.

Sharing the Fruits

And where do we share the fruits? Where do we share our gifts and talents, our treasure and goods, our time? And with these, where do we evangelize? We evangelize and share these fruits in our homes, in our parishes and other entities of Church, and in

the world (our neighborhoods, our work, the marketplace, our cities, states, nations, and the world – even in God’s creation as we care for all that God creates).

So with this last task of catechesis, *Promoting a Missionary Spirit that Prepares the Faithful to Be Present in Society*; we are to share Christ, his love, and his message with all persons we encounter. Catechesis that includes the kerygma, the very person of Christ proclaimed, does this so that Christ’s presence is in every corner, every area, with every person.

MOMENTS OF MERCY...

The Diocesan Church experienced a Day of Mercy on April 3 at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. Perhaps this can inspire parishes, Area Faith Communities, and Catholic schools to do the same: to select a special Day of Mercy filled with opportunities to reach out to those in need, catechetical moments, and a Holy Hour with the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Perhaps this summer’s VBS can have elements of mercy! Perhaps your parish festival can have moments of mercy!

Share your ideas to inspire others in the diocese! Contact me, Bryan Reising, at breising@dnu.org.

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

Gathers for the Year

9:30 gather; 10 a.m. start – 3 p.m.

St. Aloysius Jubilee Center in Olivia

302 S 10th St. (unless otherwise noted)

- **Monday, April 11** – Gather in Olivia – We will continue our journey through the Parish Catechetical Leader Formation Workbook. Contact Cindy (507-233-5325 or cblickem@dnu.org) to RSVP by Friday, April 8.
- **Monday, May 9 – Spring Fling** - Max’s Grill in Olivia – *Bishop LeVoir will present. Theme: Merciful Like the Father and The Parish Catechetical Leader, the Youth Minister, and the Pastor.*

RCIA Gathering

On Tuesday, April 12 RCIA coordinators and teams are invited to gather from 1:00-4:00 pm at the Church of St. Catherine in Redwood Falls. Issues important to you may include:

- How to create an evangelizing environment in your parish so that more parishioners are more apt to invite their friends, family, and neighbors.
- How to make public the various rites within your AFC and parish.
- How to involve the people of your parish and AFC more with the RCIA process.
- Considerations for year round RCIA.
- How each stage of the RCIA can be done more effectively.
- Consideration for those who are baptized in another ecclesial community and joining us in the fullness of the Catholic Church.
- Do you have initial interviews? Make sure you have paperwork done in a timely manner in case there are marriage issues.

Please RSVP to Cindy by Friday, April 8.

Riverbend TEC

Together Encountering Christ retreats for adults and youth: July 30-August 1 in New Ulm at Cathedral
To sign up, contact: riverbendtec@gmail.com to receive an application.

Parish Visits

Bryan Reising will be on the road again this catechetical year starting in September of 2015 for some parish visits (twice a month). He will visit on the day of your Faith Formation. This will run through May of 2016.

Please contact him to figure out a date that will work for you or he may contact you for that visit as he lines up his schedule. He will not get to all places during the catechetical year, but he would like to get to all regions and most area faith communities. Keep in mind, that Bryan recognizes that this is a very busy day for you. So don't feel you have to give him special treatment. If you have time to meet with him that afternoon, that would be great, but don't feel obligated. He can always meet with you on another day or through a phone call. The main idea for this is to look at what is happening that can benefit other parishes and area faith communities.

What will happen with these visits? The following are some possibilities: an observation of your faith formation during the time of instruction, perhaps an in-service with your catechists, or even a catechetical presentation as a guest catechist for adults, youth, or children.

Keep in mind that this is not an audit, but a visit to observe and be of service. He will have an assessment tool to benefit your catechetical ministry. Discuss with your pastor or pastoral administrator a good time to arrange a visit. Contact Bryan to arrange a date and time: breising@dnu.org or call the Office of Religious Education and Adult Faith Formation, 507-233-5324.

Parish Visits 2015-16:

September 23 – Holy Cross AFC, New Ulm
October 14 – Christ the King AFC, Tyler, Ivanhoe
October 28 – St. Joseph in Lamberton
December 6 – St. John in Appleton (Micronesian Community), Marshall (Hispanic community)
December 9 – St. Peter in Canby
January 13 – St. Edward in Minneota
April 6 – St. Michael Milroy

I have openings for more future visits!

University of Dayton's Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF)

Be a part of these online learning opportunities! This is a great gift for your catechists

**Cycle 4: May 22 – June 25, 2016
(Registration: Apr 6; Closes May 18)**

- [A Vision for Catholic Youth Ministry](#)
- [Autism in Faith Formation \(SN 4\)](#)
- [Bible Basics](#)
- [Catholic Beliefs](#)
- [Catholic Teaching on Chastity, Family Life, and Human Sexuality Education](#)
- [Church History 1](#)
- [Communication and Community](#)
- [Conscience](#)
- [Creative Methodologies: ADHD in Parish Life - Pastoral Implications \(SN 3\)](#)
- [Disabilities in Parish Life: An Overview \(SN 1\)](#)
- [Ecclesiology: Beginnings of the Church](#)
- [Faith and Human Development](#)
- [Faith Formation for Adults with Special Needs \(SN 5\)](#)
- [Foundations and Vision for Adult Learning and Faith Formation \(AFL 1\)](#)
- [Images of Jesus](#)
- [Introduction to Catechesis](#)
- [Introduction to Christian Morality](#)
- [Introduction to Paul's Life and Letters](#)
- [Introduction to Practical Morality](#)
- [Introduction to Prayer](#)
- [Introduction to Scripture](#)
- [Marianist Studies: Leadership](#)
- [Marianist Studies: William J. Ferree, SM: Social Justice](#)
- [Marianist Studies: Social Justice](#)
- [New Testament](#)



- [Old Testament](#)
- [Our Hearts Were Burning](#)
- [Pastoral Approach to Culture](#)
- [Poverty in the U.S. and Around the World](#)
- [Prayer and Worship with Adolescents](#)
- [RCIA](#)
- [Sacraments](#)
- [Spirituality in Adult Learning and Faith Formation \(AFL 6\)](#)
- [Study of The Joy of the Gospel \(Evangelii Gaudium\)](#)
- [Survey of Catholic Doctrine](#)
- [Survey of Catholic Social Teaching](#)
- [The Parish Nurse: Facilitating Wholistic Health Through the Lifespan](#)
- [Theological Reflection: Key to Connecting Faith and Life](#)
- [Vocation to Ministry](#)

For new students to register for VLCCF:

<http://vlc.udayton.edu/profile/agreement.php>

For returning VLCCF students to register for another course: <http://vlc.udayton.edu/register/>

VLCCF has certificates for catechists, for ministry leadership, for youth ministry, for adult faith formation, and social justice. Encourage your catechists to get the Certificate for Catechesis. If some of you want a closed course on a particular course, please contact Bryan Reising.

For further information and discussion of further ideas, call 507-233-5324; breising@dnu.org.

Cost for the 3-Week Seminar is \$40 and the five-week course is \$50. Certificates are \$20.

Scholarships are available: Web site for the Hilary and Elizabeth Mohr Catechist Fund for scholarships: <http://static1.squarespace.com/static/55844033e4b0b4466f11c152/t/55db2f84e4b05c60e8774f35/1440427908543/MohrScholarship-CatechistFormationFund-ApplicationFo>

Office for Religious Education, Diocese of New Ulm: <http://www.dnu.org/religious-education/>

Catechetical Planning

For those who are catechetical leaders, Bryan Reising can provide a closed course on "Designing a Parish Catechetical Plan." Other catechetical leaders who have taken this three-week seminar found it very helpful in looking at all aspects of planning for catechesis for their AFC or parish. Please contact Bryan at breising@dnu.org if you are interested.

NIKA-another online learning opportunity for those in the Diocese of New Ulm



NIKA Catholic Catechetical Institute (NCCI) exists to make Jesus Christ better known and better loved. It offers faith-filled college level continuing education for non-

traditional students and adults who are seeking to deepen their faith life. The course aims primarily at personal faith formation (intellectual and spiritual) and secondarily are helpful to those seeking classroom applications. Faith formation is the primary emphasis because the faith-filled person will be more effective in communicating faith and making Christian disciples than the unconvinced technician who has not developed a consistent prayer life. "A theologian is one who prays..." Enjoy continuing education from the convenience of your home. Free online presentations for continuing education as well as mini-courses have begun. For further information, <http://www.nikacatholic.com/>

Religious Education Safe Environment Compliance Reminders

Thinking ahead to the summer, it is important to make sure your volunteers for Vacation Bible School and Mission Trips have all the safe environment requirements completed. Make sure they signed the Safe Environment Policies A and B. Make sure they completed a background check. And make sure they are signed up to receive the initial VIRTUS training. Thank you for your cooperation in our efforts to keep our children and youth safe!

VIRTUS Trainings

Protecting God's Children for Adults

A complete list with the most updated information can be found on the diocesan Web site:

https://www.virtusonline.org/virtus/reg_list2.cfm?heOrgID=25411&theme=0

Mohr Catechist Formation Fund...

A Gift for You, Your Catechists, Your Youth Team Members, Your Teachers of Religion

This scholarship fund is a great gift for your catechists, teachers, youth ministry team, and many of you! You can receive scholarships for Faith Formation Day and other catechist formation opportunities, opportunities outside the diocese, online courses through the University of Dayton's VLCCF (Virtual Learning Community of Faith Formation), and even some college courses on faith formation. Please submit your applications soon! An application is on our Web site:

<http://static1.squarespace.com/static/55844033e4b0b4466f11c152/t/55db2f84e4b05c60e8774f35/1440427908543/MohrScholarship-CatechistFormationFund-ApplicationFo>



Interested in a Bachelors or Masters in Theology, Religious Education, Pastoral Ministry, Parish Administration, or Canon Law?

St. Mary's University of Minnesota:
<http://www.smumn.edu/undergraduate-home/areasofstudy/theology/theology>. (They offer BA in Theology, Religious Education, Pastoral and Youth Ministry; they also offer a Graduate Certificate in Canon Law)

St. Paul Seminary Graduate Program for Lay People: <http://www.stthomas.edu/spsod/graduate/degree/mare/> (this includes an optional online distance learning degree. Their degrees include an MA in Theology, Pastoral Ministry, and Religious Education).

National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL) Membership – This Is for All Catechetical Leaders

Join NCCL and receive *CL (Catechetical Leader) Magazine*, weekly every Monday, discounts on resources, and information on the national conference and regional workshops! The cost of an individual regional membership to NCCL is only \$75. This is only \$6.25 a month. Use the Mohr Scholarship Fund for this opportunity! For further information about membership, check out the Web site: www.nccl.org

ADULT FAITH FORMATION
Word on Fire: The Mystery of God
Who God Is and Why He Matters

What do we really mean by "God?"
 Atheism is on the rise. Skeptical thinkers like Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, and Sam Harris vigorously attack belief in God as irrational or, even worse, dangerous. The so-called New Atheism has

attracted millions of young people thanks to bestselling books such as *The God Delusion* and *God Is Not Great*. How should Christians respond? How can we turn the tide of secularism and draw people back to God? In this new six-part film series and study program, Bishop Robert Barron reaches into our rich intellectual tradition to teach us how. Using the insights of St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Pope Benedict XVI, he uncovers a clear yet sophisticated understanding of what we mean by "God." Who is God? And why does he matter? Watch this series and you'll not only learn the answers yourself, but also you'll discover how to share them with others – especially those who no longer believe. This film and study program are now ready to be ordered: <http://mysteryofgod.wordonfire.org/>

Parish Catechesis Question

Do you do any social outreach and missionary outreach in your AFC? Do you provide renewal opportunities? Do you have ecumenical and interfaith opportunities?



2016 Dates for Parish Catechetical Leaders (DREs) and Youth Ministers			
Mon, April 11	PCL/YM Gathering	9:30 gather, mtg 10 am – 2:30 pm	Olivia, St. Aloysius Jubilee Center
Sun, April 24	Junior High Rally	1-6:30 pm	Dassel-Cokato High School
Mon, May 9	PCL/Youth Minister Spring Fling – Bishop LeVoir	Noon – 4 pm	Max's Grill, Olivia
July 24-28	Young Women's Discipleship Camp	Sun 6 pm – Thurs noon	Schoenstatt on the Lake, Sleepy Eye
Aug 1-5	Young Men's Discipleship Camp	Mon 11 am – Fri 6 pm	Schoenstatt on the Lake, Sleepy Eye
Sat, Sept 24	Faith Formation Day	8 am early bird Mass; 9-2:30	Leifeld Hall & Cathedral High School, New Ulm
Check out Riverbend TEC! For more details and an application check out the Web site: http://riverbendtec.org July 31 - Aug 2, 2016 - New Ulm			



From the Youth & Young Adult Ministry Office

Kevin Losleben

klosleben@dnu.org

507-233-5327 <http://www.dnu.org/youth/>

THE ART OF PROMOTION PART II: DO IT AGAIN

Last month we talked about the personal invitation and the usual denial that follows. This week we're going to talk about the personal invitation again.

[Before I go on, though, I'd like to mention that while group invitations are certainly a part of the process, the likelihood of gaining interest in an event is slim. Techniques that can help in this matter are personal testimonies for the event, a promotional video, and an attractive advertising flyer/poster. The last one is important not so much because a flyer alone will convince youth to want to go to an event, but because it could certainly deter them from wanting to go.]

If you'll recall, last month we asked Billy-Bob after religious education class if he would be interested in going to the Great Catholic Event Thing. He told us his second cousin's birthday is two weeks after the event and that's a little too tight for the 'ole schedule. You tell him that if he changes his mind, he should let you know.

Now, if that's the extent of the promotion, Billy-Bob is not going to go to the Great Catholic Event Thing. This is not like an RSVP invitation, where you ask once, get a response, and move on. This is a sales pitch in the sense that you believe in what you are "selling" (namely, an experience of the Faith that is hopefully transformative or edifying) and that the person you're pitching to will benefit from it. So, regardless of what Billy-Bob's first answer was, it is certainly worth following up with him. This is the second aspect of the "art of promotion:" persistence. Don't be discouraged if the first offer is denied. It could very well be that Billy-Bob wants to go, but has some other hesitation he isn't communicating: his peers are not going, he doesn't want to be labeled "churchy," his parents can't afford it, etc.

One strategy is to take away the obstacles. If money is an issue, figure out if there are scholarships available either at a parish level or diocesan level. If it's a matter of peers not going, ask a group of youth who are friends and who would not judge each other if one expressed interest in such an event (use a little positive peer pressure!).

Another strategy might be to appeal to authority. If an older peer whom many respect went to such an event, mention that: "Do you know Joe Cool?"

"Yes," he says.

"He went last year and loved it," you say.

"Really?" he asks.

"Yeah, I think you'd really enjoy it, too."

It might be helpful to hand Billy-Bob and/or his group of friends a registration sheet or something they can take with them and discuss with their parents. If there seems to be a little more interest, follow up again. If there seems to still be a lack of interest or an all-out "no," it may be time to drop it and try again next year. If one of the friends in the group seems interested, maybe follow up with that person. Who knows, if they go and love it, they'll probably convince the others to go next year.

When it comes to the "art of promotion," the most important step is to actually do it: promote the event, particularly through personal invitation. The second most important step is to do it again: take away potential obstacles and follow up. The simple fact remains, however; if an event isn't promoted beyond a flyer on the parish bulletin board, likely no one will attend.

Junior High Rally - April 24, 2016 Dassel-Cokato High School

Come hear the hilarious Nic Davidson talk about why he became Catholic. Sing along with the up-and-coming Catholic band: The Alex Street Band. Praise Jesus in adoration after Mass with Bishop LeVoir. Doors open at 1:00 and ends at 6:30 p.m.

Discipleship Camps 2016 Young Women's: July 24-28 Young Men's: August 1-5

Schoenstatt-on-the-Lake, Sleepy Eye

Be sure to check out the promo videos at <http://www.dnu.org/young-womens-d-camp> and <http://www.dnu.org/young-mens-d-camp>. Online payment and registration is now available!

NET Team

Keep in mind if you want the NET Team to come to your parish this fall. They will be available for **nine** retreat days, October 23-November 2. They are booked for Sunday, October 23 and keep in mind they usually have Mondays off. See www.dnu.org Youth & Young Adult Ministry Office for application form. www.dnu.org/net-retreats