



WDREF NEWSLETTER

FROM THE FACILITATOR



❖ Jenny Ludtke

Lord Jesus, who traveled with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we are on a journey as well. Be with us on the way that we may know you in the scriptures, in the breaking of the bread, and in the hearts of all whom we meet. Amen.

I am so delighted to be working with you once again as your facilitator. I am also delighted that Adele Svetnicka has said yes to be my support as co-facilitator. We are blessed to have Sue Devine-Simon continues serving for an extra year as treasurer, with the support of Stephanie Rottier, and Gwen Neis continuing as our secretary. This year is make or break for WDREF. We have come to a point in our history where all of our visioning needs to become action. To that end, you will be seeing several concrete efforts with much more immediate benefit to our local organizations. WDREF will also be working on some internal things, including a strong focus on improving communication on all levels. Here's where you are going to see immediate payoffs this year.

1. The **retreat** is looking beautiful. Follow the example of Jesus, who takes time away to pray. There will be insights for mind and soul, quiet time, adoration, confession, and Mass each day. (Save the dates: Monday, October 30 and Tuesday, October 31...but don't worry! It's done in time to get back for Trick or Treat!)
2. The **convention**, Building Blocks of Discipleship, in November 2018 has several intentional additions/improvements:
 - a. We are fairly certain that our keynote presenter will be...I can't tell you yet, but you'll be really pleased! A possible structure for the keynote presentations is to have one on the 'how to' of our theme, one on the theology, and one on future trends.
 - b. In order to make networking (something that is consistently valued) more practical, there will be a session of round table presentations (ideally 4 from each diocese...three parish catechetical leaders and one diocesan staff person). It's kind of the 'speed dating' feel—you get 15 minutes at a table to get handouts, hear best practices, and ask questions, then switch to a new table. After the even, all resources will be shared on the WDREF website.

- c. We are exploring a LiveStream option...either one of our keynote presentations being sent out to those unable to attend the convention, or pulling in a single presentation from a speaker we can't afford to those attending the convention.
- d. Drawing from the wealth of our Catholic tradition, there will be a variety of prayer experiences, perhaps even an intercessory prayer team.
3. The possibility of grants from WDREF to local organizations (maybe even to parishes). This would allow local organizations, who know the needs of their own people, to provide a speaker or experience they couldn't normally afford. While still in the 'idea' form, the intention is to have grant applications and guidelines available within the next few months.
4. Three regional offerings of the Called and Gifted process. One will be offered in the LaCrosse Diocese in cooperation with their diocesan office and local organization; two additional central WI locations will be determined. The cost to local organization member attending these workshops would be subsidized by WDREF.

My friends, we have some work ahead of us, but the fruits of our efforts will be sweet and long lasting!
Venerable Solanus Casey, pray for us.

Yours in Christ, Jenny Ludtke

May you be blessed by the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Ps 115:15

Springtime greetings

Another 'school' year done

Is it time to gear up

For VBS fun?

Maybe your ministry

Is for adults – young and old,

Who yearn for a deeper faith

More formation? – They're sold!

It's time to wrap up,

Organize and prepare,

And even compile those evals

If you dare!

Mission Trips, VBS,

Youth groups and more,

Faith around a campfire

Even Jesus likes S'mores. ☺

There's downtime and still deadlines
Does the list ever end?
Here's hoping you can breathe easier and
Enjoy some summer time with family and friends.

May you enjoy summer refreshment and rejuvenation in the midst of your summer work and commitments.
May God bless you and sustain you in your ministries.

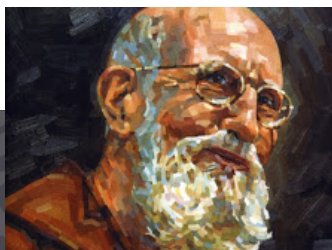
Peace be with you,
Adele

P.S. Be sure to check out the info inside! New goals, Save-the-dates, News from the Madison diocese, and more!



HELLO FROM MDREO (MADISON DIOCESE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ORGANIZATION):

THE FOLKS FROM THE DIOCESE OF MADISON SAY HELLO! WE'VE JUST FINISHED OUR PROGRAM YEAR WITH SOME BEER, BRATS AND BASEBALL. BUT AS WE SPEAK THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE IS LOOKING TO NEXT YEAR. WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO HAVING MORE OF US JOIN IN THE WDREF RETREAT IN OCTOBER, AND HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE AS WELL!



NEWS ABOUT OUR PATRON:

Pope Francis will beatify Wisconsin-born Capuchin Father Solanus Casey

Pope Francis advanced the sainthood causes of Wisconsin-born Capuchin Father Solanus Casey, five religious, four laypeople and two cardinals, including Vietnamese Cardinal Francois Nguyen Van Thuan. The pope approved the decrees during an audience May 4 with Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes.

Father Casey (1870-1957) was known for his great faith, humility and compassion and for his ministry as spiritual counselor. He gained a popular following during his lifetime, with healings attributed to his intercession both before and after his death.

He was the sixth of 16 children of Irish immigrant parents. He was born on a farm near Oak Grove, Wisconsin, and as a young man worked as a logger, a hospital orderly, a streetcar operator and a prison guard before entering the Capuchins at age 26.

He was ordained in 1904 as a "simplex priest," one who is unable to hear confessions or preach dogmatic sermons because he had not performed very well in his studies. He carried out humble tasks in the monastery and, while serving in Yonkers, New York, Father Casey was assigned to be the friary's porter, or doorkeeper, a ministry he would carry out for the rest of his life.

He was known to be gentle, approachable and genuinely concerned for people as he had unique insight into people's needs and how they fit into God's plans.

He was declared venerable in 1995 and Pope Francis' approval of a miracle attributed to his intercession was the next step needed for his beatification. Another miracle, after his beatification, would be needed for him to advance to sainthood.

<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2017/05/04/pope-francis-will-beatify-wisconsin-born-capuchin-father-solanus-casey>

CONVENTION 2018

‘BUILDING BLOCKS OF
DISCIPLESHIP’

HOLIDAY INN & CONVENTION CENTER....STEVENS POINT, WI

November 5-6, 2018



Mike Patin...John Agnotti...Sr, Lynn Levo...Bob McCarthy...John Roberto...Stephen Binz...Dr. Robert Wicks...Fr. Ronald Rohlheiser...Sr. Johanna Paruch...Celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church...Job: The New Testament, a musical production by John Agnotti...Prayerful celebrations of Mass...these are just some of the speakers and highlights of the **81st Annual Conference** sponsored by NCCL in Dallas, Texas.

This year's theme, *Transformative Leadership*, focused on personal transformation on Monday by helping the attendees reflect on their personal prayer life and personal relationship with Jesus. My favorite speaker was **Dr. Robert Wicks** with a keynote presentation titled, *Riding the Dragon: Strengthening Your Inner Life in Challenging Times*. He reminded us of the importance of maintaining a healthy perspective; avoiding the dangers that lead to unnecessary stress; knowing the 4 "voices" we need in our circle of friends to have balance and courage in life (the prophet, the cheerleader, the harasser, and the inspirational/spiritual friends); improving self-awareness; and developing a rule of prayer (Eucharist, rosary, reconciliation, reflection, and scripture). He challenged us to learn to really learn a Gospel and then he shared how he remembers the Gospel of John highlighting one thing from each chapter.

Tuesday's theme was *Imagination—Prophetic Communal Transformation*. **Fr. Ronald Rohlheiser** opened the day as our keynote speaking on *Imagination: Seeking a Prophetic, Paschal, and Romantic Imagination*. Fr. Ron stated that we have had 60 years of great theology and since Vatican II we have been strong intellectually, but it seems we no longer find ways for people to fall in love with the Church. He posed the question, "What kind of imagination is now needed most within the Church and faith circles?" He then proposed six different kinds of imagination within the Church — Intellectual, Romantic, Emotional, Analogical, Prophetic, and Paschal — using examples in the Church to highlight each one.

We ended our day with **Sr. Johanna Paruch, FSGM, Ph.D.** speaking about the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* before our 25th Anniversary of the Catechism celebration. I loved and appreciated how she showed us how the pillars of the catechism are evident in both the Old and New Testament.

Creed	Shema, Deuteronomy 6:4	"teaching of the apostles" Acts 2:42
Sacraments	Passover, Exodus 12	"in the breaking of the bread" Acts 2:42
Morality	Ten Commandments, Exodus 20	"living together in community" Acts 2:42
Prayer	Psalms	"and praying together" Acts 2:42

Wednesday was focused on *Vision—Articulating a Catechetical Future*. **Dr. Hoffsman Ospino** kicked off the day and it ended with a panel discussion featuring **Dr. Hoffsman Ospino**, Assistant Professor of Theology and Religious Education at Boston College's School of Theology and Ministry; **Margaret Marijasevic**, Executive Director of the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership; **Dr. Kristen White**, Coordinator of Catholic Educational Engagement at Catholic Relief Services; **Fr. Thomas P. Gaunt, SJ**, Executive Director of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate; and, **Bishop Emeritus Sylvester Ryan**, Diocese of Monterey. All reminded us of the importance of reading the signs of the times and the crucial responsibility we have in doing so. The better we understand the present the better we can imagine the future of catechesis. The statistics

were sometimes mind boggling but reminded us that we need to develop cultural competencies and to use our resources to evangelize and catechize immigrants as we address their social, cultural, and spiritual needs.

Mark your calendars and put next year’s conference in your budget as it right next door in Chicago beginning Tuesday, May 29 – Saturday, June 2.

Becky Thompson, NCCL Representative

FOR YOUR INFORMATION....

Jenna Ripp, CRE at St. Bernard parish in Middleton, WI has been making twine knotted rosaries since 2010. Previously she was the youth minister at St. John the Baptist parish in Waunakee and working with the Confirmation candidates there inspired her to start her own sort of “business.” While there, she made each of the Confirmandi a rosary with a medal on it of their chosen Confirmation saint name. In trying to give Confirmation candidates meaningful gifts to not only commemorate their Confirmation, but also help them foster a life of prayer, she started selling her handmade rosaries to parishes for their students. She has an online shop through Etsy, called “To the Heights: Catholic Goods.” There you can explore the different options of rosaries. Rosaries can be made with or without a medal. You could choose to add their saint medal or a medal of your parish’s Patron saint. Also, in an effort to make it an affordable option for parishes, she does offer bulk pricing (simply contact her about that option). Please visit her Etsy shop – www.etsy.com/shop/totheheightsgoods or email her totheheightsgoods@gmail.com



RETREAT 2017
'DEEPING OUR COMMUNION WITH GOD'

- ❖ **OCTOBER 30-31, 2017**
- ❖ **ST. ANTHONY SPIRITUALITY CENTER**
MARATHON, WI

Submitted By: Mary Lynn Hendrickson

Takeaways from “The New Evangelization Summit”

Based out of Canada, the New Evangelization Summit—a two-day speaker-packed presentation of Catholic practices for effective evangelization—took place on May 12-13 this year, encompassing more than 5,000 Catholics in North America, representing 39 cities and 30 dioceses. Madison was one of those cities and dioceses. While an immense crowd gathered in Ottawa, in person, to hear the summit’s impressive lineup of speakers, a group of about 30 congregated at Holy Name Heights to plug in as one of the event’s many “satellite sites” participating via live-streaming video. Now in its third year, the summit featured the following speakers and their messages for 2017:

Micheal Dopp: Intro and “Our Lady and Our Mission.” Dopp, the summit’s founder (and founder of Mission of the Redeemer Ministries) focused on Fatima, seeing as this weekend was also the 100th anniversary of Mary’s appearances there. We should never ever overlook the importance of prayer, says Dopp, nor how important the simple-but-powerful witness that a life of holiness is. He called Mary “the star of the New Evangelization.”

Peter Herbeck, “Empowered to Evangelize” and “Simple Truths About How to Share Your Faith.” Michigan-based Herbeck, director of missions for Renewal Ministries, gave two talks that were largely inspirational in nature. His message: God always chooses the small and weak to save the world—and it’s critical that we radically surrender to the Holy Spirit. Some favorite quotes from him: “The answer to the dark mind is the Light of the World.” And: “A disciple should never be surprised when the world acts worldly.”

Sr. Miriam James Heidland, “Evangelizing from the Heart.” Sr. Miriam gave a stunning witness talk that highlighted the twists and turns in her own life of conversion and faith. (Worth the price of buying these videos, info below, in all honesty.) A former collegiate athlete, she emphasized the importance of play in keeping our busy lives balanced and as a jumping-off point in ministering to the busy kids and families we encounter in our parishes: “Play is the recreation that brings us beyond ourselves and into joy.” Other great lines from Sr. Miriam: “When the true God comes close, the more human and luminous we become...God’s desire is to bring us to the fullness of our humanity.” Using Caravaggio’s two paintings of the Last Supper—one luminous and one dark, one painted before he killed a man and one painted after—Sr. Miriam noted that “suffering that is not transformed is transmitted.”

Fr. Michael White and Tom Corcoran, “Make Church Matter.” The dynamic duo best known for their book *Rebuilt*—chronicling the transformation of their Maryland parish from a stagnant one into a vibrant one, though not without stops and starts—emphasized the importance of focusing on what our true mission is, as spelled out in the Great Commission (Matthew 28), “Go and make disciples.” If your parish’s aim is simply to improve your programs and increase attendance, it sets you up for failure: “It creates consumers,” says Fr. White. “When you create consumers, the people you serve are never satisfied”—leading to parish staff adding even more responsibilities to their plate and becoming burned out. “When we lose our ‘why’ we lose our way.” The point, added Corcoran, is to make disciples—change lives in such ways that they themselves go out and spread the good news, much like the Gerasene demoniac in Luke 8:38 who, after being healed by Jesus, wanted to tag along with him and the other disciples. But instead Jesus urged him to stay where he was and tell the local people what God had done for him. The man did, and when Jesus returned to that shore later on, we hear that there were crowds to greet him. (Note, says Corcoran: Jesus initially goes to Gerasene for *just one person*—they cross over in a boat, heal one man, and then leave.) Three key parish strategies from White and Corcoran: (1) Change your focus from church people to unchurched people. (2) Prioritize the “weekend experience” for busy people who decide to darken the door of a church instead of understandably opting to sleep in or lounge poolside on a Sunday morning—being sure to greet people, early and

often, as they arrive and focusing on the 3 M's (music, message, ministers) to make sure that hymns, homily, and helpers all offer something meaningful during their time at church.

Patrick Sullivan, “The Languages of Evangelization.” Founder of Evango Catholic Ministries and an upcoming Catholic parenting course called *Me and My House*, Sullivan gave a talk on what amounted to a “love languages”—if you know Dr. Gary Chapman’s popular work on that subject—approach to evangelization. The point is simply this: there are three well-known ways to draw people closer to God—through beauty (creation, works of art, etc.), truth (i.e., proofs for God’s existence), and goodness (the simple witness of people’s lives of holiness and self-sacrifice). Don’t waste your time and energy with elaborate philosophical arguments if the person you’re encountering is already naturally attracted to beauty. Or: Maybe it won’t be the holy lowly example of St. Teresa of Calcutta that will inspire someone—maybe it’ll be St. Thomas Aquinas’s proofs for God’s existence, instead.

Meghann Baker, “Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.” Baker, known for her work with Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO), basically explained why the message and method of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is so effective. She reviewed the “three pillars” of the approach—Bible, prayer, and liturgy—and explained how the *mindfulness* of working with various elements helps “put children into the mystery of Christ.”

Bishop Robert Barron: “Finding the Nones: How to Get Our Young People Back into Church.” As he’s apt to do, the ever-popular Bishop Barron of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries emphasized the three avenues of drawing others to God (also noted above): Truth, beauty, and goodness. He focused, though, on truth—noting how the “new atheists” are active on social media and have a huge influence on youth. Also, truth gets at the three main reasons that, according to a Pew Research study, Millennials say that they choose “none” as their religious affiliation. Barron focused on these reasons and then countered each argument as the misconception that it is. Namely: (1) Science disproves religion. *Barron slams “scientism” as the reduction of all knowledge, even rational knowledge, to the scientific method. He also pointed to famous scientists who were also priests.* (2) Religion is just a wish-fulfilling enterprise, “pie in the sky before you die.” *The real wish-fulfilling fantasy is atheism, counters Barron. If there’s no God and no moral criteria, it’s totally my life and I can live it any way that I want.* (3) Religion is behind most of the violence in our world. *The Encyclopedia of Wars estimates that 7 percent of wars are linked to religion; secularist ideologies have caused more bloodshed, especially in the 20th century.*

For more information on the New Evangelization Summit, and to purchase resources—including the talks given at each of the summits of the last three years—visit <https://www.newevangelization.ca/>

Submitted by: Mary Lynn Hendrickson

Adaptive Catechesis: A Hands’ On Approach

One chilly day in January, MDREO hosted a program day that featured speaker Michele E. Chronister, author of both *Taking the Lift to Heaven: The Pocket Guide to Adaptive Ministry in Your Catholic Parish* and *Handbook for Adaptive Catechesis: Serving Those with Special Needs*. Her wisdom, however, knows no season. Among other things, Chronister notes, “all good catechesis is adaptive”—most effective when tailored to children’s and adults’ learning styles and situations in life. Think RCIA, for instance, and how impossible a one-size-fits-all approach is. Thus, the idea of tweaking our parish programs for those with differing cognitive and physical needs isn’t a stretch at all. Nor should we view such ministry as “us helping them.” In fact, there is no “us and them” insists Chronister—we are all supposed to “minister to” and “be ministered to” in the kingdom of God, no matter our abilities, by virtue of

our baptismal calling and “our fundamental dignity because we are all children of God.” Our worth is based on who we are, not what we’re able (or unable) to do. Some of the best takeaways from Chronister’s session were practical tips on celebrating the sacramental life—not just preparing those with special needs for their first encounter with the sacraments, but appreciating anew the power of these extraordinary encounters with God’s grace. A few tips regarding the Sacraments of Initiation:

Baptism. Realize that it’s often at a prenatal stage that parents are preparing themselves for the challenge of bringing a “special needs” child into the world. And so be sure to really amp the church’s message of welcome that comes in preparing for this sacrament—knowing that such families may have been advised by doctors and loved ones to terminate their pregnancies or are wondering and worrying whether they are truly up to the “burden” of bringing such a child into the world. Let all families know that they are not alone. (After all, notes Chronister, sometimes it’s a subsequent accident or illness that causes a disability—not always something that people are born with.) And be sure to stay in touch with them following baptism, especially if their baby’s medical diagnosis means that they are candidates for lots of surgeries and therapies that can make it hard for them to keep up with what’s going on at the parish.

Eucharist. Special needs kids need preparation, too. There’s nothing about their disability that automatically makes them more holy or more precious to God than the rest of us—again, it’s our dignity that does that. Share with them the basics, like where the sacrament comes from (the Last Supper) as well as other biblical stories that pertain. Whether they are verbal or not, hearing impaired or not, do your utter best to share with them the reality that they are receiving Jesus—not merely bread. When in doubt of whether or not they truly grasp the significance, always err on the side of their right to receive the sacrament. And: practice, practice, practice! Chronister notes that special needs can often come along with physical limitations and accompanying emotional challenges, like extreme anxiety. If such a child wakes up and starts to have a meltdown on their First Communion day, calmly coach parents that it’s perfectly okay to postpone till the following weekend. Chronister also told the story of practicing repeatedly with a nonverbal young man whom she was prepping for Eucharist, using unconsecrated hosts in their practice sessions and wondering if he was “getting it”—especially when he kept making his displeasure with the taste and texture known. All doubt was washed away, however, the day he experienced the sacrament for the first time: the sheer joy that overtook the young man’s face was breathtaking.

Confirmation. Keep it simple. Build on anticipation. Teach a simple version of the Holy Spirit prayer, and pray it with them with real feeling: “Come, Holy Spirit! Come, Holy Spirit! Come, Holy Spirit!” Share the biblical story of the Pentecost and be creative in describing the gifts of the Holy Spirit, doing hands-on things like wrapping representations of each into little gift boxes.

*For more strategies on adapting sacramental prep and choosing quality materials to help with ongoing adaptive catechesis—Chronister lauds such mainstays as the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Program, the new adaptive program from Loyola Press, SPRED, L’Arche/Emmanuel, and also Catechesis of the Good Shepherd—be sure to visit her resources-packed website: www.takingthelifttoheaven.com It should be noted that MDREO’s program day was made possible in large part due to a grant from our diocese’s own *Apostolate to the Handicapped*, a good reminder to think/work collaboratively with other ministries and diocesan departments for a common cause.*