

Thanks For Survey Responses

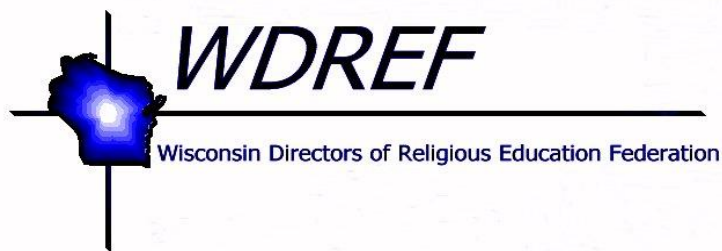
Jenny Ludtke and Adele
Svetnick: Co-facilitators

Thank you to all who provided responses to the WDREF google survey this past fall! Your thoughtful comments gave us some good food for conversation at the last WDREF board meeting. Some insights confirmed our own impressions, and others helped us discern where more energy needs to be invested.

One of the more common comments pointed out the disconnect between WDREF's mission and people's awareness of it. Clarity in communication certainly continues as a priority! Another common thread was how important it is to continue promoting professionalism in the field of parish catechetical ministry through networking and support.

We look forward to sharing more with you in the months to come, including at the convention in November.

And now we need to see if we can work on signing Fr. James Martin, Mark Hart, Bishop Barron, Matt Maher



“WDREF promotes excellence in ministry through ministerial and professional development, advocacy, and support for Parish Catechetical Leaders.”

Summary of May 7-8 Board Meeting

The moment that the first scoop of dirt is shoveled out for a new building project is significant. For WDREF, May 7-8, 2018 could prove to be such a moment.

After several years of conversation, during which we have wrestled with questions such as what is the purpose of WDREF, is it still relevant, what benefit does it provide, and should it even continue, it seems that a step forward has been made.

At the May meeting, several past board members joined the conversation about the future of WDREF. Through conversation, silent prayerful discernment, and listening to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, the following proposal surfaced:

WDREF remains a viable leadership body. At this point we have simplified our activities to the convention, retreat, and communication, while remaining responsive to other possibilities. We plan to initiate dialogue with a broad range of lay ecclesial ministry organizations concerning affiliation.

At the meeting in August, the Board is excited to spend time considering how best to share this proposal and the process by which it was created, and facilitate the engagement of all five local organizations in moving forward.

Loving God,

We know that you are with us and you guide all that we are about to do. We are ready now to follow the path you lay for us and to recognize your Word within and among us. Amen.



or Stephen Colbert to lead our retreat in 2019 (great suggestions, everyone!)

God Bless you and your ministry,
Jenny Ludtke and Adele Svetnicka, Co-facilitators



WDREF Convention Grant

The WDREF Convention Grant application is now available.

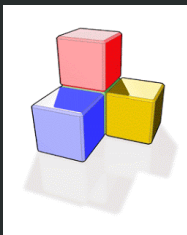
This grant can be used to offset the cost of attending the November 5-6, 2018 WDREF convention in Stevens Point. Members of the local organizations of DARE, Mareda, MDREO, ProCLAYM and SUMMIT may apply.

Applications are due by

September 30, 2018

You can find the form on our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/177795928925598/>
or contact Jennifer Ludtke at jkennifer@stamadison.org



Farewell, Good and Faithful Friends!

Three people are completing their time on the WDREF board: Lynn Meyer (DARE), Adele Svetnicka (SUMMIT), and Sue Devine-Simon (Mareda). All three of these women have gone above and beyond – taking on additional leadership roles, staying on the board to maintain continuity during times of transition, and moving beyond their comfort levels in order to do what needed to be done. Many heartfelt thanks for the blessing of their presence!



Front row (Seated) – Adele Svetnicka (SUMMIT), Gwen Nies (SUMMIT), Sr. Jovita Winkler (guest, Diocese of Madison – past WDREF board member), Jennifer Ludtke (MDREO), Jon Metz (Mareda)

Standing: Jackie Aune (SUMMIT), Anne Stemper (ProCLAYM), Ann Fons (guest, Diocese of Milwaukee – past WDREF board member), Nicole Heit (president, MDREO), Lynn Meyer (DARE), Sue Devine-Simon (Mareda), Ann Sirianni (ProCLAYM), Dawn VanDorf (chair, Mareda)

Back row: Becky Thompson (NCCL representative), Erik Gyr (guest, Diocese of Madison – past WDREF board member), Gary Pokorny (Archdiocese of Milwaukee), Dennis Vlasik (Mareda)



A Note From: Chris Cardin

First and foremost, a great man, Jack McBride, taught me when I first started in ministry that it was critical to prioritize reading, plus to schedule it daily. Let me tell you that it is a great piece of advice even when you're knee deep in life. It has been a great blessing to me ever since, but most essentially this past Lent and the loss of my baby brother, Robin.

Presently, reading "Lord, Have Mercy: The Healing Power of Confession" by Scott Hahn. I've used many of his thoughts with parents during meetings for sacramental prep. His book has brought me to a deeper understanding and knowledge of Jesus in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I'm becoming more focused on God's Love, Jesus' Sacrifice and the role of the Holy Spirit in my life. God's mercy is everywhere. The greatest gift is that Christ is Risen and in the grave no longer. Scott's book helped me seek guidance and encouragement in a new direction and perspectives through confession. The book offers reflection in scripture, and the theology of doctrine has deepened my own seeking out of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and being in-tune with God's will.

For the past couple of years "The Word Among Us" has been on my daily list. I loved last month's issue on the Holy Spirit. It helped me deepen my understanding of the Blessed

SEAN CALLAHAN: CEO OF Catholic Relief Services
Leads of the 2018 NCCL Conference

Read the following two reflections from Ann Fons and Laura Smyczek from the Mareda organization:

Ann writes:

Sean's presentation was a great way, to kick off the conference. He shared powerful, personal stories of encounters -- with Prítí in India, with 2 young migrants tidying up the border of Bosnia, with a young woman who walked for two months from Somalia to Kenya in order to provide a future for her children (one who was born after arriving at the camp), with the man in bed #9 at the Center for Dying in Calcutta, and with the woman scavenging in the refuse dump. In order to encounter others we need to be open, to take risks, to be vulnerable, and to hear others. We must keep our eyes and ears open and be ready to speak when needed. In addition, Sean reminded us that sometime we just need to pray! Pope Francis himself said that is it not an option for us to encounter and be a missionary disciples to the poor--to those on the fringe, and when we reach the fringe -- we already find Jesus there.

Laura writes:

"The Grace of Encounter: Transformative Solidarity"

How do we know when God is calling?

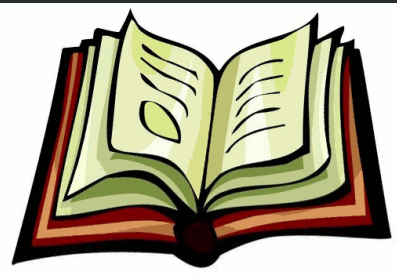
We hear a lot of noise in our world. We're called to encounter. Encounter means to open yourself, take risks, be vulnerable, and to hear the calls of others. Missionary discipleship: The disciples were so imperfect (sleeping on the job, lying/denied Christ, doubters, people like us, but they were followers. What they knew was that it wasn't about them. It was about Him. That's what gave them strength. They didn't have all the answers, but they knew who to follow.

It's sometimes easy, when we work for the Church, to say that we've got a pass. This is what it means to be a Christian, a Catholic, a catechist-- we're supposed to do this. Being a Christian is the same thing as being a missionary. Proclaiming the Gospel with one's life is the primary goal of our lives. It is not an option. Jesus calls us all, excluding no one. We should ask ourselves, what does it mean to evangelize to the poor? Freeing them from their oppression. Jesus is the liberation of God. He became poor to enrich us with his poverty. Being a catechist is difficult. The kids didn't love to come to class, but they did love to hear the works of the Church. But they learned that the Corporal Works of Mercy are what we do or should be doing. As parents, we're catechists. We need to show kids the example of what that is, and get over the noise that's out there. Some of us try to block out the noise, and we often don't say things when we should. That's our calling. We need to be out there and be an example. Sometimes, it's better to take a different approach and pray, rather than getting loud about the injustices in the world. Storm heaven with an army of prayers, said the Missionaries of Charity. We should be open to the encounter, then stop and listen when we encounter those in need. We need to see Jesus in disguise, and then invite them into the Church. Do we do that in our lives? Sean Callaghan lives in Baltimore, where there are lots of opportunities for encounter.

Trinity and the mystery outside of our human knowledge! This mystery of the Holy Spirit keeps re-shaping us as humans on our earthly journey. Reading is a critical part of deepening our knowledge and the need to make it part of our professional schedule. In closing a great prayer from St. Augustine of Hippo:

*“Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may be holy.
Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too may be holy.
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I may love all that is holy.
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy.”*

Enjoy a great book this summer...it is refreshing to read for pleasure!



They called a “cease fire,” in which they prayed for the 200+ people who had been killed that year in Baltimore. We don’t know when we will encounter, but if we open ourselves, we can touch many more people. We think we’re being bold by trying to reach out to refugees now, but Pope Francis took in 3 Muslim refugee families to live with him. So it’s really not that bold of us. When asked why he took in 3 Muslim families rather than Christian families, he said, “I didn’t ask.” It didn’t matter if they were Christian, Catholic, or Muslim. He reached out. He was open to encounter. We must reach out and help them. We need to show dignity to them. Migrants have no rights. We’re separating families, because we’re scared of letting them into the country. They’re being abused (Ahmed in Jordan). Refugees (a widow in Ethiopia) are opening their homes (huts) to other refugees in the camp, if they have nowhere to stay. Are we doing the same?

Ebola in Western Africa: They wanted their families to be treated with dignity. They wanted people to know the fear they had for their families. CRS needed courageous people to go in. The biggest thing was a dignified burial. If you wash the body, you get infected. The government couldn’t stop it, so they asked the faith-based organizations to help. They listened, and it didn’t stop until people stopped to listen. They started washing their hands and protecting themselves.

In Calcutta, Sean went to see what the Missionaries of Charity do. The Center of the Dying is set up next to a temple near the Ganges River. Mother Teresa’s house is right next to that. She was caring for the sick and dying, and so people protested and wanted them out. The police commissioner went to check it out. He said he would throw them all out, as soon as your brother, your mother, your sister, replace them and take care of the people inside. He was open to listening and seeing and hearing. He fed and cleaned up dying men, and then the man he was caring for died. The sisters were so joyful. He didn’t feel blessed, but the sister told him he was blessed because he got to see his face before he saw the face of God. He had to take the body to the crematorium, where they left the bodies on the sidewalk outside, until they’d have time to cremate all the bodies that had no money to pay for it. A woman scurried to go through the piles of refuse from the Center for the Dying.

John 21:

The disciples are out in a boat, and they’re trying to fish, catch nothing. They look to the shore, see Jesus, and told him they hadn’t caught anything. They throw out the net again, and it’s full of fish. We think we’re doing the encountering. It’s not us, or CRS, that’s encountering. When we do encounter, it’s not about us. It’s about the Lord, and that we be that instrument. It’s not from our doing, but from His doing. Are we opening ourselves and freeing ourselves from that ego and say I’m a good Catholic. Instead, say I am a vessel and I am doing what I am called to do by God. When we look in the mirror, we might not see what’s there. How do we come to terms with who we are, if we’re not encountering people who need help. Pass beyond what is familiar, to the beyond, where humanity is most wounded. We continue to seek an answer to our purpose in life. Instead, give our lives to Him. Jesus became the fringe. We need to go to the fringes. Jesus is already there, in the hearts of our brothers and sisters, in their wounded flesh, in their troubles, in their profound desolation.

How do we know when Jesus is called? Is calling us? That’s not the questions. The realization is that He is always calling. The question is: Are we ready to answer and follow?



First Lay Ecclesial Minister Certified from Green Bay Diocese
Submitted by Gary Pokorny, Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Pam Fischer was recognized at the banquet as a newly certified Catechetical Leader. Pam serves at St. Thomas the Apostle in Newton, in the Diocese of Green Bay. She participated in the national certification process, and having demonstrated the required competence, education, experience and skills, she was certified by NCCL and the Alliance for Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers. Congrats to Pam as the first nationally certified parish catechetical leader in our state.



The rep council meets two times a year face-to face. Once in the fall and one in conjunction with the annual conference. On Tuesday at our Rep Council meeting we provided feedback on priorities and possible projects based on the results of the ENDS policies survey as the board looks forward to new goals. Two aspects of the organization that were discussed were access to resources and information and membership growth. The question asked was what the difference between resources and information is. There seems to be an abundance of “resources” on-line but suggested that NCCL could supply more timely resources, for example, how to respond to school violence. The discussion surrounding membership was not only how do we maintain or grow membership but how do we move our members from merely “paying” to “Playing.” Other items that were discussed was the difference between strategic planning versus strategic visioning and that the Board of Directors would be meeting this summer in Washington, DC to vision and develop a plan for the coming years. Keeping all this in mind, we were asked to discuss at tables what charisms are needed as we discern nominations for at large board members next fall.

Each day during the conference a business meeting was held so all members could be present. The following are the various committee reports:

The Membership Committee reported that the membership in NCCL grew by more than 560 Parish Catechetical Leaders since January, due to the new upgraded diocesan membership.

Product Development: Catechetical Leadership magazine was launched in digital format this week. Members can login to nccl.org and access the current issue. ***The Effective Catechetical Leader*** series is now available in both English and Spanish! Authors include Green Bay's, Julianne Stanz, Tom Quinlan, Joe Paprocki, Adrián Alberto Herrera, Jayne Ragasa-Mondoy, and Donna Toliver Grimes. In addition to the books, there are now downloadable worksheets, a mobile app, and powerpoint slides to assist with using the books to support and form catechetical leaders. ***Echoes of Faith -- Emmaus Edition*** has a new online platform, updated methodology, and new and newly edited video segments. NCCL designs and produces the pins for Catechetical Sunday.

The Leadership Committee facilitated the election of the new candidates for the Executive Committee. The slate of officers elected were Denise Utter (president), Jayne Monday (vice president), John Gaffney (treasurer), and Elsa Hayes (secretary).

The USCCB Update: Michael Steier presented the annual update from the USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis. Bishop Robert Barron is the new chair and during its first meeting articulated his two goals: Understanding and attending to the “nones” and catechist formation. The search is underway for a new executive director and associate director for evangelization and catechesis. Catechetical Sunday materials have been delayed due to the transition of the chair. Theme and artwork are available but not articles or resources.

Themes:

2018 Enlisting Witnesses for Jesus Christ

2019 (working theme) We don't want to loss you: preventing youth from becoming unaffiliated.

Websites:

In addition to the www.nccl.org website that offers organizational information and resources, there are NCCL content websites that may be of interest:

Catholic Family Faith at www.catholicfamilyfaith.org

21st Century Evangelization at

www.21stcenturycatholicsevanglization.org

Also, you can find archived Adult Faith Formation webinars at

www.nccl.org/webinar

The last news shared with the NCCL members was that because of the expense of rental in Washington, DC, NCCL will be moving. The two-person staff will move to a WeWork space. Please be aware that a new address and phone number will be announced.

***Submitted by Becky Thompson, Parish Catechetical Leader
Rep and Gary Pokorny, Diocesan Rep***