

Envisioning the Future of Faith Formation in Your Congregation - Part 1

By John Roberto

Imagine faith formation today in a church community. A variety of high-quality faith formation programs for grade-school children, youth, and adults are offered throughout the year. The children's program consists of weekly classes and occasional special activities and events. The youth program is a mix of confirmation classes, youth meetings, service projects, and special events and trips.

Adult programs include courses on a variety of topics, seasonal presentations like a Lenten series, and small group Bible study. Family programs are offered several times a year to connect families with the celebration of the church year seasons. In the summer, children and their parents participate in a Vacation Bible School program, while young people are engaged in service projects and mission trips locally and across the country. Milestones and sacraments provide opportunities for faith formation at baptism, first communion, receiving the first Bible, and confirmation. For people interested in becoming Christian, there is a yearlong process of faith formation to prepare them for baptism and joining the church.



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Envisioning the Future of Faith Formation in Your Parish: John Roberto Returns to Our Diocese on June 9th!

I'm asking each of you as catechetical directors...and everyone on your parish staff whose ministry relates to faith formation...to be sure to register for Envisioning the Future of Faith Formation in Your Parish. Having heard John Roberto last spring at a national forum, I am certain that your ministry and your parish will benefit greatly from this opportunity to hear from and engage one of the best minds in our nation in the field of catechetical ministry. It is exciting to have him coming to work with us for a day!

My hope is that parish staffs will use this day for leadership formation and attend as a group. That would be an ideal way to take full advantage of this valuable opportunity. See the inserted registration form in this issue and register your parish today.

Don't miss this very special chance to benefit from the extensive research, expansive vision and practical suggestions that John Roberto provides. This day will help us to plan for successful ministry in the years to come!

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A Time to Sow

Tom Quinlan, Director



Recently I had the honor of introducing the speaker at a DuPage catechist evening of formation. I took the opportunity to ask all the catechetical leaders present to stand and receive the warm appreciation of the catechists gathered. Needless to say, there was long and enthusiastic applause.

I wish I could do the same for each of you. I wish I could arrange for you to feel, if even for a moment, the gratitude of the catechetical ministers you lead and train, form and care for. Perhaps you get to experience this from time to time. Perhaps your catechists and others are gracious in letting you know how they value your patience and kindness and support.

Whether you lead faith formation that serves children, families, youth or adults, know how grateful I am. As one who previously directed parish child and adult formation ministries, I know well the challenges that come with the privilege of parish leadership. Staying true to the budget. Holding people accountable while remaining pastorally sensitive. Putting in long hours and not always feeling appreciated. Being the voice of advocacy for something that is right but not popular. Finding a way to manage the periodically unreasonable expectations of parents.

You and I know that there are countless blessings and graces that come with catechetical leadership. The privilege of helping people grow in their understanding and their experience of Catholic faith is beyond measure and makes all the trials and frustrations ultimately worth it.

Still, our roles in parish ministry can feel weighty, especially by this time of the year. There is an intensity to the rhythm of the fall and again in the winter, especially for those leading children's faith formation in our religious education programs and schools. By March, some feel frazzled and worn down. This can be expected. Catechetical leadership is important business and to do it ardently and conscientiously demands our very best.

I hope you will take opportunities this Lent to nourish your soul and care for yourself in all manner, just as you seek to care for those in your parish...not to mention those in your family and in your life. Take advantage of days of reflection or perhaps even a true retreat if you can. Give yourself the gift of quiet time to pray, journal, walk in the spring sunshine and celebrate the goodness of life in ministry. Participate in the sacramental and liturgical rites of this holy season. Stay connected at your core to the God who invites you this day to love and serve his Church.

And so, on behalf of the many whom you touch with Christ's truth, love and joy, permit me to give you a standing ovation...a most heartfelt expression of gratitude for who you are and all that you do. I am extraordinarily proud of our talented and committed collection of catechetical leaders gathered by our Lord in the Diocese of Joliet!



Tom

“Envision” continued from pg 1...

It is a huge undertaking for the church and their faith formation leaders to provide this level of faith formation programming. But is it enough?

Even though the community is very positive and supportive of faith formation and the great work that is being done, there is a feeling among the leaders that something is missing. They are working harder and providing more programming but not achieving the impact they desire. They wonder why teens leave the church after confirmation. Why are parents bringing their children to classes but not to worship on Sunday? Why do some families get involved only when they are celebrating a milestone or sacrament? Why don't more adults participate in the adult faith formation programs? Where are all the people in their twenties and thirties? Why do parents have their child baptized and then never return to church again? How can we reach the new ethnic groups that are moving into our community? How can we reach those who have left the church?



The pastor, staff, and faith formation leaders see the changes occurring in their church, in their community, and in the world, and wonder what the future holds for them. If present trends continue what impact will they have on the future of the church? What will happen if the church doesn't respond to the challenges, if faith formation is not aligned well with the life situations and the spiritual needs of people today and in the future? The pastor, staff, and faith formation leaders feel that the pressing demands of the present preclude the possibility of imagining the future of faith formation in their church. Yet they must envision the future and design new initiatives to provide vibrant faith formation for all ages and generations if they are to thrive as a church community.

Does this sound familiar? Over the past two years I have been leading an initiative, Faith Formation 2020, to help leaders envision and design 21st century faith formation in their congregations. While no one can definitively map the future of Christian faith formation, there are tools that congregations can use to interpret their current reality and envision the future. Scenario planning is one of those tools and, through the Faith Formation 2020 Initiative, we have developed four scenarios that leaders can use to discuss, interpret, envision, and design the future of faith formation in their congregations. The four scenarios express a range of possible futures facing congregational faith formation over the decade from 2010 to 2020.

Scenario #1 – Vibrant Faith and Active Engagement: The first scenario describes a world in which people of all ages and generations are actively engaged in a Christian church, are spiritually committed, and growing in their faith.

While no one can definitively map the future of Christian faith formation, there are tools that congregations can use to interpret their current reality and envision the future.

Scenario #2 – Spiritual but Not Religious: The second scenario describes a world in which people are spiritually hungry and searching for God and the spiritual life, but most likely not affiliated with organized religion and an established Christian tradition.

Scenario #3 – Unaffiliated and Uninterested: The third scenario describes a world in which people experience little need for God and the spiritual life, and are not affiliated with organized religion and established Christian churches.

Scenario #4. Participating but Uncommitted: The fourth scenario describes a world in which people attend worship and church activities occasionally, but are not actively engaged in their church community or spiritually committed.

Imagine what faith formation could look and feel like in your congregation if you are responding to the challenges and opportunities in each scenario. Imagine the life of your congregation in 2020 if faith formation addresses the spiritual and religious needs of all ages and generations in each scenario.

In Part 2 and 3 of this series I will describe each scenario, offer questions to stimulate your reflection, and suggest practical ideas and resources for responding to the scenario.

John Roberto can be reached at jroberto@lifelongfaith.com and online at www.lifelongfaith.com and www.faithformation2020.net.

A Look at Effective Leadership Research

By Tom Quinlan

What does research today tell us about effective leadership? Are there qualities that help to define effective leadership?

In the book *Strengths Based Leadership* (by Tom Rath and Barry Conchie, published by Gallup Press, 2008) four key leadership qualities are identified. They are:

The ability to... **Build Trust**
 Offer Compassion
 Provide Stability
 Bring Hope

Of these, can you guess which is the most important? Look at the end of this article to see if you picked the right one.

Focusing on one's strengths, rather than one's weaknesses, has become an emphasis in effective leadership study in recent years. Research confirms that building on strengths produces better outcomes for individuals and institutions.

I invite you to consider what your strengths are and how you can utilize them for greater effectiveness in ministry and in life. And I encourage you to explore how well you are doing in bringing *trust, compassion, stability* and *hope* to those you lead and serve. To do such self-analysis accurately and honestly, you may want to elicit input from others who know you and experience your ministry in action. (A suggestion for the brave: Don't only ask for feedback from people you are close with.)

The Gallup website (www.gallupstudentpoll.com) has more on this and related topics. And, as for which of the four leadership qualities that seems to preeminent: It's *hope*. How well do we (and our parishes) do at fostering a sense of hope in our parishioners? This is a great question to focus on, personally and at a parish staff meeting or day of formation.



Deadline Reminder: Ministry Grant Applications Due April 15th

The deadline for submitting grant applications is a bit earlier than in the past. It's April 15th. Please be in touch with Paul Jarzembowski, Paul Mach or myself to answer any questions or to assist you as your parish prepares a grant proposal and submits the application. We'll be happy to talk to you.

Thanks to the generosity of the Diocesan Catholic Education Foundation, an additional \$5,000 is available for disbursement to parishes submitting proposals meeting grant program criteria. A total of \$30,000 is available for the two catechetical and evangelization grant programs of the diocese!

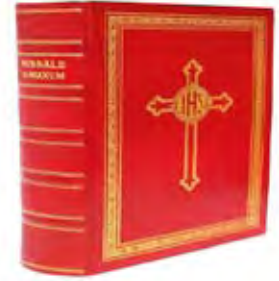
You can access all information regarding these grant programs and learn how easy it is to apply by going to <http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/edfoundation/ministrygrants.asp>. The greater task is in imagining an appropriate ministry initiative that has sufficient parish support to proceed to the grant application process. Don't delay in beginning this process!

The Roman Missal: The Changes are Coming

Part 1 – The Power of Words

By Joe Paprocki, D. Todd Williamson

As we begin our exploration of the upcoming new Missal changes, let's take a look at a few helpful analogies. For starters, consider a draft of the Declaration of Independence, which reveals a mysterious smudge of ink that has long baffled historians. Apparently, Thomas Jefferson changed his mind about a word and erased it while the ink was still wet. Scientists recently discovered that the word he erased was "subjects," which he replaced with "citizens." This one word re-defined the people of the American colonies. Words have the power to change lives and even alter the course of history.



On a less dramatic note, think of the last time you tried to select a greeting card for a special occasion. No doubt, you pored over the words of numerous cards, looking for just the right words to express your sentiments. Words can have a profound impact—for better or for worse—on our significant relationships. In the same way, words play a very important part in our relationship with God. Catholics worship using both words and sacrament (sign, symbol, ritual). The words we use in worship—which will be affected by the new Missal changes—are chosen carefully so as to best express our understanding of and relationship with God.

Some of these words we Catholics use in worship date all the way back to the time of the Apostles. For example, the words of Jesus, at the Last Supper, have been part of our Eucharistic celebrations for 2000 years. Most of the other words that make up the prayers and texts of the Mass have been culled together over a period of as many years, including texts that are relatively new—formulated in the 20th century. In all of this, one thing remains clear—these words have power!

“These words tell us what we believe about ourselves, about what God wants for us and from us, and about how we are to live in the world.”

They have the power to form us and to shape us as Catholics. These prayers tell us what we believe—about God, about Jesus Christ and about our relationship with God. These words tell us what we believe about ourselves, about what God wants for us and from us, and about how we are to live in the world. The words with which we pray have the power to change us and to transform us.

New Missal changes will impact our life of worship.

Think about it—we hear these words week after week, season after season, year after year. When you look at it, it is easy to see that these words are efficacious—that is, they have an effect on us! They have an effect on our faith! They have an effect on our lives! It is the old adage of the Church, as it is expressed in Latin: *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi*. That is, our prayer shapes our belief! Thus, the words with which we pray are no small matter! With the coming of the English translation of the 3rd edition of the Roman Missal (Advent 2011), some of the words we use at Mass will be changing. In upcoming articles, we will continue to explore how the new Missal changes will impact our life of worship, inviting us to delve deeper into the Mystery of the Eucharist that is at the center of our lives.

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Looking for Resources for Roman Missal Formation for YOUR Parish?

Visit the official Diocese of Joliet resource page at <http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/romanmissal.asp> to find online resources, programs and products for implementation, and entire websites devoted to the Roman Missal, Third Edition.

Note: there is a link to a page for resources for Children and Youth on that page, or you can access it directly at <http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo/RomanMissalChildYouth.asp>

Special Needs: How Do Families Know They Can Be Served?

By Joyce Donahue

Do you have children or youth with disabilities in your religious education programs? Are they included in your sessions whenever possible, or do you have a special program or session just for them? If the answer is “yes” (and it really should be) are you confident that all parents of those with disabilities in your community know about it?

I am not just talking about families who are active in the parish, or even those who regularly attend Mass. Chances are they know about you. (Or, not?) What about the “hidden” families – “inactive” Catholic families living with a child with disabilities, who may not feel welcome, or feel they can sit with their loved one through an entire Mass because the children might be disruptive? Are you confident they know they are welcome and that your parish wishes to partner with them to help form their child in the faith?

If you are not so sure, maybe it's time to look at how you get the word out. Ask if your local doctor's office or hospital (especially Catholic ones) will allow you to put a brochure in their waiting area describing your religious education programs in general – and highlighting that children with disabilities are welcome. Make sure information can be easily located on your website. Then, look at other ways you might be creative – maybe call up the local newspaper to do an article on how your program helps those with disabilities. You might ask parishioners to identify neighbors who may be in that situation and invite them, or to pass the contact information to you. I am sure you can think of some strategies to evangelize and welcome those who may not realize that they can indeed be served.

Watch for information about a survey soon about how you are serving families of those with disabilities – we need to update our information, so we will be asking!

To share a best practice, ask a question, or discuss how your parish should serve those with disabilities, contact Joyce Donahue at 815-834-4066 or jdonahue@dioceseofjoliet.org



Knights of Columbus – Partners in Special Needs Ministry

Norris Freedman, representing the Bishop James E. Fitzgerald Council of the Knights of Columbus from Downers Grove, recently presented some of the proceeds of candy-sale fundraising to Joyce Donahue for the REO. Funds received from the Knights are used each year to provide additional curriculum resources to assist parishes with catechesis of children and youth with disabilities.

We are grateful that Knights around the diocese are very active in their support of diocesan ministry to those with special needs. The Religious Education Office also receives an annual donations from s the Braidwood Council, and is grateful to the Joliet Council for providing the food and preparing it for the annual Bishop's Mass with Persons with Disabilities. The Mass for 2011 is scheduled for October 16, at Holy Family Catholic Church, Shorewood.

Children's Religion Texts are to be Consumed... for the sake of Children and Parents

by Tom Quinlan

I would like to provide parish directors and coordinators of religious education programs in our diocese some thoughts and direction regarding the use of children formation texts. Particularly, my focus here is on the question of "consuming" the text versus using the text for more than one year and by more than one child.

The vast majority of children's Catholic formation texts are designed for them to be used by one child. They are meant to be written in and personalized, to strengthen and reinforce the learning experienced by the child. They are intended to be brought home for use by the child and parent(s) in family review and faith sharing.

As a former parish catechetical leader, I can anticipate two reasonable arguments for not consuming the texts in this manner. The first, obviously, is cost. By reusing the same text for multiple years, there is a cost savings to the parish. And second, by not sending the books home each week, the catechists can be assured that all children have their texts for the session. (Inevitably, if texts go home, not all children will remember to bring their text every week. This is a reality I am familiar with.) Neither of these rationales for keeping the texts on site and reusing them from year to year should win the day, however.

Our focus should be on doing all that we can, within the already limited parameters of parish religious education, to facilitate the greatest and deepest learning experience for our children. We know that children are educated and formed more effectively when they are engaged actively in the learning process, including those activities that are called for in the consumption of the text. From the first act of writing one's name and other information in the text onward, more effective faith formation is facilitated when the text is consumed.



Parents, as we continue to appreciate, are absolutely pivotal in the faith formation experience of children. We must do all we possibly can to bring the learning experience in parish religious education home for continued discussion, sharing and modeling in the home! We must do much more than simply send the child home with the text, but without this, we are greatly undercutting the possibility of family formation. When we do not send the text home, we are sending home instead the message that the parish is responsible for forming the child in faith and that the parents need not be actively involved in the process.

Of course, this is exactly the opposite of what we should be doing in today's environment. Not only are we greatly hindering the parents' involvement in their child learning, we are missing a valuable opportunity to provide the parents an opportunity to be revitalized in their own faith understanding and practice through their children.

Cost and practicality are reasons for leaving the children's texts safely on the shelf between sessions. But something is amiss when these issues trump providing the most impactful faith formation process possible. It is because we must keep the faith development of our children and families unambiguously as our first priority that I urge in the strongest terms that parish religious education programs (and Catholic schools) use Catholic formation texts in the manner they have been designed. They should be an active tool in the formation process both in session and at home.

Permit me to finish with a direct suggestion to those parishes concerned about an increased cost. If the cost of consuming texts cannot be borne, fully or partially, then simply factor this into the tuition/fee increase for parish faith formation for next year. To charge \$10 less for religious education and not use the text as it should be used is a misalignment of priorities.

I would be most happy to discuss your program's or school's situation and explore how to take positive action in this regard.

Creating and Communicating Expectations For Catechists: Be Proactive!

By Tom Quinlan

At DRE cluster meetings of late there have been some good conversations about the role of catechist and the expectations that should be attached to the role. I've really enjoyed learning how many of our fine catechetical leaders have found a way to entice...encourage...cajole catechists to participate in ongoing faith formation as well as lesson planning.

(I would like to invite any DRE/CRE who feels they have a good system in place for the care and formation of catechists to be in touch with me. Perhaps they can share their approach with all of us in future issues of Leaven.)

As I listen to the reality of catechetical leaders, I am sensitized to the challenge today of finding people open to becoming a catechist. It certainly seems more difficult than it was ten years ago... and it was no cake-walk then!

Of course, catechetical leaders of child programming are not only responsible for finding "warm bodies", as they say, to cover all the sessions. They are charged with determining whether an individual is an appropriate candidate for such ministry. There are personal gifts (such as a living faith, sufficient maturity and well-being, an ability to relate to young people, a willingness to work within the framework of the program, etc) that a leader must be able to discern in a candidate.

Beyond this, the catechetical leader is responsible for supporting (lesson plans, resources, counsel) and forming the catechist in the manner called for in the General Directory for Catechesis (knowing, being and doing).

In the cluster conversations I've been present for I often hear how difficult it can be for directors and coordinator of religious education to have strong participation in the various means of faith formation (parish, program, cluster, diocesan) made available to them. This is an important area of tension for our leaders in the diocese and one that should be a continuing point of concern and exploration.

We must continually hold up catechist formation as a primary responsibility for the DRE/CRE and an expectation for the catechist. I don't believe it is ever OK for a parish leader to lead with an attitude of "they just won't come to anything." We must be continually problem-solving and creatively considering an array of options for effective and sustainable catechist formation.

As a former parish director of religious education in the northwest suburbs, I found it important to provide catechists a covenant each year. This catechist covenant would detail what was being asked and expected of them in their role as catechist. The first year I developed this catechist covenant, I explained it to the entire group of catechists in the spring. This way everyone was on the same page as to what I was asking of them in their role for next year, as well as why.

From that point on, I made this catechist covenant a part of the interview process for new catechists. I wanted to



Several hundred catechists gathered at St. Petronille in Glen Ellyn in February to hear Lee Nagel at the annual DuPage Catechist Institute. Lee, who is executive director of the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership, delivered a rousing and engaging presentation on the Eucharist to help celebrate the Year of the Eucharist in the Diocese of Joliet. He also facilitated a well-attended DuPage DRE/CRE retreat while in town.

proactively discuss these points with them so that they always knew what would be asked of them upfront. (We would also talk about how the parish would serve them.) Doing so set the understanding and tone for the relationship between myself and the potential catechist. It lessened the likelihood of misunderstandings later and it broadened the catechist's appreciation for the role.

So, what are some elements that I included in this catechist covenant? Things that should be understood as part of the deal when being a catechist...

- **Prayer:** Be a person of prayer, for yourself, the children and their families.
- **Sacramental Life:** Actively practice Catholic faith within the context of parish.
- **Preparation:** Take sufficient time to ready yourself for the session.
- **Arrival:** Be in position to greet each child in a calm and welcoming manner.
- **Environment:** Attend to and care for the physical setting of the session.
- **Parents:** Connect with parents and try to foster a cooperative relationship with them.
- **Flexibility:** Being well-prepared means you can pay attention to dynamics and modify a lesson as appropriate.
- **Collaboration:** Relate to and share with other catechists (especially in that grade).
- **Ongoing Formation:** Continue one's own faith development in accord with the parish plan for catechist formation.
- **Communication:** Share ideas, needs, concerns, etc., with the grade-level coordinator and me.

In the catechist system I inherited and maintained as DRE, catechists understood that monthly gatherings (for prayer, formation, lesson-planning and fellowship) were part of the deal. Leaders who don't currently have such an understanding in place should know that creating such a culture will take time and patience. As the saying goes, Rome wasn't built in a day. But growing a highly-functioning system for the care and formation of catechists is job one for any catechetical leader and deserves careful attention.

I encourage DREs/CREs to consider developing and sharing a covenant of some sort with current and then prospective catechists. Create one that expresses the parish's holistic understanding of the role of catechist. Catechists will find it helpful. And you will find it easier to hold them accountable to an appropriate standard, if necessary, down the road.

For One Who is Exhausted

When the rhythm of the heart becomes hectic,
Time takes on the strain until it breaks;
Then all the unintended stress falls in
On the mind like an endless, increasing weight.

The light in the mind becomes dim.
Things you could take in your stride before
Now become laborsome events of will.

Weariness invades your spirit.
Gravity begins falling inside you.
Dragging down every bone.

The tide you never valued has gone out.
And you are marooned on unsure ground.
Something within you has closed down;
And you cannot push yourself back to life.

You have been forced to enter empty time.
The desire that drove you has relinquished.
There is nothing else to do now but rest
And patiently learn to receive the self
You have forsaken in the race of days.

At first your thinking will darken
And sadness takes over like listless weather.

The flow of unwept tears will frighten you
You have traveled too fast over false ground;
Now your soul has come to take you back.

Take refuge in your sense, open up
To all the small miracles you rushed through.

Become inclined to watch the way of rain
When it falls slow and free.

Imitate the habit of twilight,
Taking time to open the well of color
That fostered the brightness of day.

Draw alongside the silence of stone
Until its calmness can claim you.
Be excessively gentle with yourself.

Stay clear of those vexed in spirit.
Learn to linger around someone of ease
Who feels they have all the time in the world.

Gradually, you will return to yourself,
Having learned a new respect for your heart
And the joy that dwells far within slow time.

To Bless the Space Between Us, John O'Donohue

(This poem was submitted by Lee Nagel)

Family Faith Formation - A Mission of Love

By Denise Utter

Jesus charged us with the mission: "Go and make disciples." We do not have to cross oceans, travel to other continents, or minister to strangers in strange lands, though God may very well call some of us to do this. Instead, most of us will be called to spread the gospel a little closer to home - passing the faith on to the next generation. Mother Teresa said, "Each person's mission is a mission of love...begin where you are, with the people closest to you."

Parenting really is at the heart of Jesus' command for discipleship. There is no greater mission. When parents ask for baptism for their child they accept the responsibility of training that child in the faith. The early Christians, and the Israelites before them, understood this traditional perspective of family faith formation from its biblical origins:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words... in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise." (Deuteronomy 6:5-7 NRSV)

We must remind parents of this call. Studies reveal that parental involvement in a child's faith formation increases not only a child's identification with their faith as they grow, but the commitment to and practice of that faith as they reach adulthood. Unfortunately, according to recent studies on youth and religion, we are failing miserably at "making disciples" of the next generation. Today's young people are not hostile toward their parents' religious faith; they just don't much care one way or the other (Smith and Denton).

In her book, *Almost Christian*, Kenda Creasy Dean says "the religiosity of American teenagers must be read primarily as a reflection of their parents' religious devotion (or lack thereof) and, by extension, that of their congregations." She goes on to say that "since the religious and spiritual choices of American teenagers echo, with astonishing clarity, the religious and spiritual choices of the adults who love them, lackadaisical faith is not young people's issue, but ours." After reviewing the results of the National Study on Youth and Religion, Dr. Christian Smith says that, religiously speaking, "we get what we are." These studies affirm what leaders in faith formation already know: families tend to approach religious participation, like music and sports, as an extracurricular activity, a good well-rounded thing to do, but unnecessary for an integrated life (Dean).

We met lots of parents at our opening sessions this year. I talked with parents about the difficult task of raising children in the Catholic faith in this postmodern culture. One parent voiced what so many of our parents have said at one time or another:

"I feel an obligation to pass on this faith. My parents gave it to me, so I should give it to my children, but it doesn't feel comfortable. I don't do it easily; I'm not even sure how to answer the kids' simplest questions. I don't go to Mass, I don't go to church at all, but I don't want to cheat them out of all that stuff."

This father admits that he is not eloquent when it comes to "faith stuff". He doesn't have much room for faith in his life right now, but something inside him tells him that he wants this for his children.

We tend to blame parents for the situation we find ourselves in, but we must accept some of the responsibility as well. For decades, the Church has encouraged parents to drop off their children, to hand them over to the experts, who know more, can teach better, or at least - have the answer keys. Now, as we tell parents that they are "the primary educators of their children" in all matters of faith, it's no wonder they balk. If a parent received their faith formation 20 years ago, if they attended CCD every week for 8 years, they have the equivalent of ten days of education in our faith. We've heard this before, but how is that supposed to last a lifetime? If a parent has been away from the Church, they haven't even had the liturgy to nourish their faith. They haven't had the faith community to support them.



Father & Daughter participate in recent intergenerational Parish Mission at Christ the King Parish Lombard showing how families can share faith in the parish setting.

Why aren't they in Mass? Parents give reasons that go beyond busy Sunday schedules (with work, sports or a day of rest). Some parents struggle with a Church that has been deep in scandal for over a decade. Others struggle with a Church that won't recognize their marriage. Many struggle with the Church's teachings on one issue or another. We talk about Catholics Coming Home, but many of the Catholics we need to invite back to Mass, never really left; they're just across the hall, dropping their child off at Religious Education classes. How do we personally extend that invitation to them?

There is no easy solution, but there is one good place to start. Communication. We need to talk to parents, and to each other. We need to create a network that supports family faith formation. We must empower parents, encourage them to embrace this rich faith, and equip them to train their children. To do so we must have a clear understanding of our faith and our culture. This postmodern generation is larger and more diverse than any generation before it (Rainer and Rainer). In the next issue of Leaven we'll take a look at our postmodern generation and their parents.



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Denise Utter is Director of Religious Education at St. Jude, New Lenox, an intergenerational learning parish. She is also consultant for the diocese for intergenerational ministry.



Diocesan Media Center

Time to consider budgeting monies for Media Center Membership. One membership per parish will supply everyone in their parish ministries access to the over 6,000 items: a precious collection of VHS and our growing collection of DVD's available for use through the year, shipping options extra. See: <http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo/videoLibrarySearch.asp> for all information about using media - for reference, for obtaining CVLI licenses, for suggested resources on various promotions like; Year of the Eucharist, Vocations, Scripture, Children, Prayer, Peace and Justice and so much more. The Media Catalog online provides help with the collections, all information available on items, web resources and down loads. Have a collection at your parish, we can fax or mail you missing guides! Visit the Media Center web site, you'll be surprised what you will find - and that service is free!

<http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo/mediaservices.asp>

Thank You!
 a special thanks to all of those who trained children and youth to prevent sexual abuse, in accordance with our safe environment policy. Together we are helping keep children safe.

Religious Education Office



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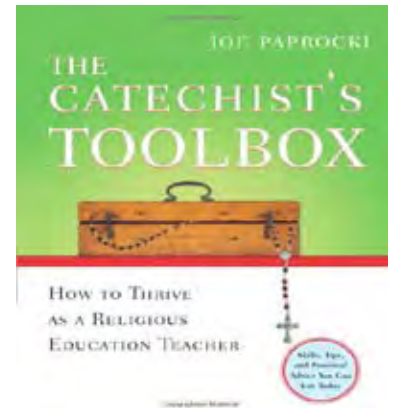
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"Missal" continued from p.5

READ ADDITIONAL ARTICLES ON THE ROMAN MISSAL AT <http://www.loyolapress.com/roman-missal-changes.htm>

Joe Paprocki is the author of several titles including the bestselling book *The Catechist's Toolbox*. Joe blogs about his work as a catechist at *Catechist's Journey*. D. Todd Williamson is the current Director of the Office for Divine Worship of the Archdiocese of Chicago.



Elsewhere Around the Diocese....

Bread Broken but Multiplied: A Conference for the Divorced and Widowed
Brother Loughlan Sofield, S.T.

Saturday, April 9, 2011

St Charles Pastoral Center, Romeoville

9:00 a.m. check-in – ends with Vigil Mass at 4 p.m.



Brother Loughlan is an internationally renowned retreat and group leader, Senior Editor of *Human Development* magazine, and the co-author and author of many books. Known for his deep understanding of the human condition he is able to bring people together and help them to come to a more hopeful understanding of their life's journey. His talks will weave together the Eucharistic experience with one's journey through transition and loss and will also include a sensitive reflection on forgiveness.

The requested donation is \$35. For registration information, call or email The Center for Family Ministry at 815-838-5334 / familyministry@dioceseofjoliet.org

Peace Day – Way of the Cross, Way of the Immigrant
Prayer, Meditation, and Meal

Fr. Ed Shea, OFM

Friday, April 15, 2011

St. Charles Pastoral Center, Romeoville

6:30-9:00 p.m.



Fr. Ed Shea has been a pastor with numerous years of service in predominantly Hispanic communities. He is currently serving on the Provincial Council and Director of Formation for the Franciscans of the Sacred Heart Province and is a popular speaker and retreat leader.

\$20 registration fee, \$15 for seniors, students. Register by calling 815-834-4028, or via email: jenruh@dioceseofjoliet.org

For more information, contact Sr. Lisa Polega, 815-834-4036
lpolega@dioceseofjoliet.org