

## A Message from Mike.....

In the early spring of 1990, two representatives from Catholic textbook Companies, (Sadlier and Silver Burdett) were discussing their work in our diocese. They decided to come together and jointly sponsor a workshop to help parishes with the selection of parish catechetical texts. The representatives contacted the Department of Christian Formation and in early spring they offered a workshop to meet this goal. Both companies provided lunch for all of the participants. Later in May another company (Tabor) gave an evening presentation on its sacramental programs providing snacks and beverages. The success of these events led to the Department of Christian Formation's development of an annual Book Fair to acquaint parishes with catechetical materials and assist them in the choice of materials.



In 1993, the first Religion Textbook Fair was held in March at two sites in the diocese. It was a great success with the only drawback being the March weather which prohibited some from attending due to icy conditions. This was easily remedied. The next year the event was scheduled in May and its name was changed to Book Fair. Thus the beginning of the current Book Fair.

Since that time the Department of Christian Formation has offered a Book Fair every year for those in catechetical ministry. Catholic publishers are invited to attend, display their materials and give a short presentation (about 20 minutes) about their products. Some of the companies attend every year, while others do so depending on their budget and availability. Most of the participating companies give away samples of their products and/or send samples to those who are interested. The event ends with lunch sponsored by the publishers. Often, during the meal, the companies conduct drawings by which lucky individuals win very nice gift packages. The publishers appreciate the Book Fair because they are able to contact a sizeable number of parishes without spending a large amount of time driving throughout the diocese.

Over the years, some changes have been made to the Book Fair. One major change was, to ask the publishers to highlight a specific element or aspect of their material, such as sacramental preparation. Last year they were asked to highlight how their materials were being adapted to the introduction of the Third Edition of the Roman Missal. Another change that has occurred was in the overall presentations. In the beginning, the presentations were like a sales presentation directed toward those who were considering purchasing an updated or revised version of their catechetical materials or were considering changing to another publisher. In recent years the presentations, while still telling us much about the materials, have become workshops that present ways to creatively use the texts. Many of these creative ideas can be used regardless of what material is being used in the parish. Thus Book Fair has become an event, not just for someone interested in purchasing material but one that is useful for anyone involved in catechesis.

This year the Book Fair will take place on Wednesday, May 23, 2012 at the Crowne Plaza Resort in Lake Placid, NY and on Thursday May 24, 2012 at the Edgewood Resort in Alexandria Bay, NY. The theme will be **Enabling Parents**. The publishers have been asked to talk about ways their materials help to engage parents in the overall parish catechetical endeavors, especially ways to assist them in their role as primary catechists of their children.

Mark your calendars! Take a drive to one of our beautiful areas of the North County. Meet some of the many catechists and their catechetical leaders as well as some of the representatives of the major Catholic publishing companies. Learn some creative ways to help you share the faith with your students. Look over the vast array of materials that the publishers have to offer. Enjoy lunch and the fellowship that will be offered. Rain or shine the day will be most profitable and enriching!!!

