

A Message from Mike.....

Hope you are enjoying this unusually hot, humid summer! Over the summer, one of the projects I have been working on has me re-reading sections of the **National Directory for Catechesis**. It seems that



every time I reread this document different insights come to mind. In the section about catechesis of infants and children, the **NDC** speaks of the crucial role of parents in the faith development of the child. It quotes the **General**

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saying that “in a certain sense nothing replaces family catechesis, especially for its positive and receptive environment, for the example of adults, and for its first explicit experience and practice of the faith” (no 178). The **NDC** goes on to speak about how parents role in the formation of values is irreplaceable. Parents are the most effective catechists of prayer; for they can incorporate prayer into everyday experiences. Also, children love to listen to their parents read to them and tell stories. This gives parents an ideal opportunity to read stories from Scripture or the lives of the saints.

Later, in speaking of formal catechetical programs, the **NDC** mentions that parents, pastors, catechists and teachers need to cooperate closely to ensure that the catechesis is consistent with Christian values lived in the family. It then goes on to say again quoting the **NDC** that “this is an excellent occasion for adult catechesis” (no 179).

This is a great example of how adult catechesis is more than just offering programs for adults and how all other forms of catechesis are oriented in some way to the catechesis of adults (NDC no 48 A). Every catechetical program in some way needs to involve the catechesis of adults. Do you look for ways to involve parents in the various programs for children and adolescence? Are parents given the assistance and guidance to help them in their important role of sharing their faith with their children? Sometimes I think we just presume that parents know what to do

and then we are disappointed when they do little or nothing leaving everything to the Catholic School or Religious Education program. How can this be changed? Maybe if we begin earlier. Are we helping families with small children to begin the process of faith formation before they enroll their children in formal programs?

Maybe, we also need to look at parents involvement as critical or central to our programs and not just an extra opportunity that is nice to do if we find the time. Wouldn't it be great if our programs re-enforced what the children and youth were learning at home from their parents? Or, that the home and the parish /school programs were two sides of the same coin; each helping to form the faith of the child? If this is just a dream, it will remain just that, but if it is our vision then perhaps we can make it a reality.

As you prepare for the sessions to begin this fall, I invite you to consider looking for ways to involve parents in the faith formation of their children. Sharing materials with families, offering a workshop for young families, sending materials home, offering a family catechetical experience monthly, quarterly, or twice a year for all parents (not just for those whose children are preparing for sacraments), or having an open house where parents meet the catechists. I'm sure you can think of other ways to assist parents to fulfill their responsibility of sharing their faith with their children. In doing so you will not only be strengthening your children and youth programs but you will also be helping your parents (adults) in their on-going faith development.

If you need any assistance, contact your local Regional Office.

