

HORIZON

"From the rising of the sun to its setting let the name of the Lord be praised" Psalm 113:3

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Diocese of Ogdensburg

www.dioogdensburg.org

Office of Evangelization

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Evangelization: Mission of the Church

Church: A Family of Faith

The Season of Advent

As a Church: A Family of Faith, we journey together into the new liturgical year with the seasons of Advent and Christmas. These seasons help us to realize all that God has done for us. The way to acknowledge our gratitude is to celebrate the Liturgy praying the new words with conviction and enthusiasm. Our full, active conscious participation express our unity in faith which underlies the communion in charity which is essential in the life of the Church. Invite a family member or friend to come to Mass with you. There may be some questions asked. You can be a support in answering those questions.

As a Family of Faith, Advent is an opportunity to make time for what is most important in the midst of our busy lives. Even with all the commitments and events that crowd this season, family prayer and faith-sharing can be a great way to prepare our hearts for the great celebration of Christmas. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Go to www.dioogdensburg.org/evangelization. At the top of the page is the Link *Parish Evangelization*. Follow the link to *Seasonal Parish Ideas* for the **Advent Activities-Cycle B**. There are some excellent parish and family activities.
2. There are special saints and feasts that we celebrate during the season of Advent. Take some time to reflect on these saints and feasts:
 - a. St. Francis Xavier—Dec. 3
 - b. St. Nicholas—Dec. 6
 - c. Immaculate Conception of Mary—Dec. 8
 - d. Our Lady of Guadalupe—Dec. 12
 - e. St. Lucy—Dec. 13
 - f. St. Mary DiRosa—Dec. 15
 - g. St. Peter Canisius—Dec. 21
 - h. St. John Kanty—Dec. 23

How did each of the saints witness their love for God for others? What example would lead you to reach out to bring the Good News to someone who is seeking God?

Pastor-Parish Survey—Parish Support for Living and Sharing the Faith

Lay people are an integral part of the parish community. Among them are the Commissioned Lay Ministers. No matter what the status, vocation, age, ethnic background, or gender, we are first and foremost disciples of Jesus Christ. We are all called to evangelize and to be active members in the parish community.

In this Diocese, we have approximately 768 Commissioned Lay Ministers who are actively involved in their parish. The parish survey indicated that the Commissioned Lay Ministers are to some extent or adequately serving in the parish effectively. Many of the parishes already have their Commissioned Lay Ministers as Coordinators and workers in specific parish programs as Liturgical ministers, catechists, facilitators and participants in Bible study and faith sharing, communication, etc. During each month or season, highlight the leaders and the laity from a different ministry e.g. September, Catechetics; Advent, Social Ministers; January, Catholic-school personnel; Lent, Liturgical Ministers; June, Ordained Ministers. Be creative in letting the parish know many people are really involved in a vibrant parish. Another way to encourage parishioners to become involved or reinvolved in parish life is to consider a ministry fair around the feast of Pentecost.

Church Community in Action— Outreach to Inactive Catholics

The season of Advent can be a great opportunity to invite those away from the Church to **Come Home for Christmas**. Some parish suggestions that might be helpful that can be found on www.dioogdensburg.org/evangelization:

1. **Come Home for Christmas Video** www.dioogdensburg.org and on WNYTV-7.
2. **A Call to Come Home Bookmark** www.dioogdensburg.org/evangelization Link Parish
3. **Invitation-Come Home for Christmas** Evangelization/Inactive Catholics
4. **Telephone Ministry** www.dioogdensburg.org/evangelization Link Parish Evangelization/
Practical Parish Ideas
5. **CatholicsComeHome.org** has announced that a new:30 second version of the Catholics Come Home commercial “Epic” will air on a few national TV networks December 17-January 9, 2012 reaching television screens through our Diocese. The website www.CatholicsComeHome/ParishWelcome is an excellent website resource to welcome home those away from the Church. The website provides banners, posters, bulletin announcements, and “Best Practices” for parishes to welcome returnees. There are **Evangelization Cards** to be given to family members and friends of those who are away from the Church. **Magnets**—*CatholicsComeHome.org* are also available to put on the car to welcome Catholics back to the Church. The **DVD** shows the commercials to be used to get the parishioners excited about our role to evangelize and to share the CatholicsComeHome.org website with those away from the faith.

O Mary, Star of Evangelization, enlighten us with the radiance of your Son, walk with us in faith, strengthen us in hope, and unite us in love as we strive to become disciples in mission. We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.



The Gift of Marriage

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, Chairman of the Committee of the Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth said the success of the advertisements on TV aimed at strengthening marriage had been successful in the numbers of people reached. The website www.foryourmarriage.org has been a successful website for families and those preparing for marriage. The US Bishops stressed the sacredness of marriage must be protected; marriage is between a man and a woman. The website www.marriageuniqueforareason.org is another excellent website for couples dating, engaged couples and married couples. The website offers the basics of marriage and the Church’s teaching on marriage.

Catholic Apostolate for Christian Women

Mary Dillenback, a parishioner from St. Mary’s Church, Clayton, is a Regional Coordinator and leading facilitator of the **Women of Grace**, a Catholic apostolate for Christian women that features a number of outreaches including study groups.

Women of Grace (www.womenofgrace.com) was founded by Johnette S. Benkovic. She is also founder and president of Living His Life Abundantly, a Catholic evangelization apostolate with outreaches in television, radio, print, and internet communications. She was a non-practicing Catholic, who experienced a deep conversion back to her Catholic faith in 1981 and discerned a call to share the Gospel message through the media. She is the author of several books including **Full of Grace: Women and the Abundant Life** (St. Anthony Messenger Press), **Grace-Filled Moments (Our Sunday Visitor)** and many other books.

Mary Dillenback is interested in forming faith-sharing groups of women who would like to grow spiritually as a woman in the Church like Mary, the Mother of God, who is the perfect disciple of Jesus. Presently she is recommending the book **Full of Grace: Women and the Abundant Life** as a beginning. If you are interested, please contact Mary Dillenback by e-mail tdillenb@twcny.rr.com.

RESOURCES

Live Advent at Home: Daily Prayers and Activities for Families by Patricia Mathson is a day-by-day book for families for the season of Advent. Each week begins with a reflection on the Sunday Gospel for parents and children to read together, followed by **daily reflections, activities, and simple prayers** for a meaningful and fruitful Advent (Liguori Publications), \$6.99.

Discover Christ: Developing a Personal Relationship with Jesus by Bert Ghezzi and Dave Nodar is a book that leads readers, especially young adults to confront the crucial question of life’s meaning. Some of the questions asked are: What is the meaning of life? Why do I need a savior? Why is the Resurrection important? What does it mean to believe and belong? Why does Jesus matter? The book leads them to embrace the answer found in the New Testament and the Christian community. This book might be a good start to Pope Benedict XVI’s call for a New Evangelization. The book can be purchased through **ChristLife** www.christlife.org or through www.osv.com (\$9.95).