

HORIZON

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

Issue #37 February 2010

Diocese of Ogdensburg

www.dioogdensburg.org

Office of Evangelization

www.dioogdensburg.org/evangelization

Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSJ, Director

Phone: 315-393-2920

Fax: 315-394-7401

E-mail: elyng@dioogdensburg.org

Why Catholic?

Sister Veronica Mendez, RCD recently presented the Small Community Leader training sessions across the Diocese. She guided the Small Community Leaders with an overview of each of the upcoming sessions in *Christian Prayer: Deepening My Experience of God*. Sister also offered ten building blocks for leading prayer and suggested different ways to pray e.g. using the ancient prayer called *lectio divina*. The Leaders experienced more confidence in facilitating their own faith-sharing groups. Sharing faith through prayer strengthens the faith community in a deeper relationship with God.

The season of Lent is an opportunity for a deeper encounter with the Lord Jesus through prayer, penance, and almsgiving. As the Small Faith Sharing groups begin to reflect on the meaning of prayer, different forms of prayer, sources and ways of prayer, and guides for prayer, it is the hope that they will thirst for God as He thirsts for them.

Lent is also a time to remember the gift of our Baptism. The First Sunday of Lent readings set forth for us the Profession of our Faith. The readings from the Old and New Testament deal with the confessions of belief. From our profession of faith, the gift of faith needs to be rediscovered, to be cultivated, and to be witnessed to. The way to encounter more deeply the profound mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection is to ponder His Word in the Scriptures, especially the Sunday readings, by using an ancient practice called "*Lectio Divina*". Pope Benedict XVI and the Synod of Bishops have strongly recommended the use of this practice of **prayerfully and slowly reading** the Sunday Scripture readings, **meditating** on a word or phrase, **conversing** with the Lord in prayer; **contemplating** the Word, that is, silently listening to what the Lord is saying to us; and finally, **putting into practice** what has come from our prayer.

There are other forms of prayer during Lent that might be helpful in our encounter with the Lord:

- attending the parish mission
- praying the Stations of the Cross
- praying with the IHC students at one of their Living Stations of the Cross in one of the parishes
- participating in the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- praying the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary
- reflecting on the Seven Last Words of Jesus

As Christians, we have received the gift of the Holy Spirit, empowering us to be children of God and brothers and sisters to one another. Through our Lenten prayer, let us go forth to be a leaven to all of humanity bringing peace, justice, and hope to a broken world.



Year for Priests

The Letter to the Hebrews reflects many images of Jesus Christ as the perfect priest who offers sacrifice, the compassionate High Priest who understands our human condition, and Christ acclaimed by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchisedech. Our priests of the Diocese are the "persona Christi", the person of Jesus Christ. During this time of Lent, let us pray for our priests who offer themselves to become an acceptable gift to the Father. Let us pray for more priestly vocations. Teach our young people how to pray. Unless they know how to encounter the Lord, the young people cannot hear the call to serve Him as a priest. Invite young people to consider a vocation to the priesthood. Often, just a simple invitation opens the door to consider the call, e.g. "I see in you the qualities that would make a good priest, and I want to encourage you to pray about it." Talk about vocations and encourage them.

Did You Know?

- There are fewer marriages and more couples cohabitating.
- Cohabitation has increased 1,100% in forty years.
- Over 50% of first marriages are preceded by cohabitation.
- Almost 40% of cohabitating households have children in them.

(Source: www.usccb.org/laity/marriage and www.foryourmarriage.org)

What does the Church say about cohabitation?

Church teaching on cohabitation reflects its belief about the dignity of marriage. Marital love is an image of God's love for humanity (CCC #1604) and Christian marriage is a sign of Christ's union with the Church (CCC #1617). The Catholic Church understands that many young people are searching for a "soul mate" in a marriage partner. They want an intimate and enduring relationship where they can share their deepest dreams and desires. In a misguided effort to achieve his intimacy, couples often enter into a cohabiting relationship. In so doing, they undermine their chances of attaining the very thing they most want. The Catholic Church understands this quest for intimacy, which God himself has placed within the human heart. Sexual expression is a means of achieving marital intimacy, where the spouses are committed to each other and to the marital relationship. The Catholic Church has consistently taught this truth, and social science research now confirms it.

(Source: <http://www.usccb.org/laity/marriage/cohabitation.shtml>).

Action Step

- Pray for young couples who considering cohabitation before marriage.
- If you know a couple who is planning to marry but are cohabitating, how can you make this a teachable moment, an opportunity for evangelization?
- Whether you are married or not, express gratitude for your relationship to someone who has been a special friend in your life.
- Research the <http://www.usccb.org/laity/marriage/cohabitation.shtml> website.

Tips for Evangelization

1. During Lent, pray for those who are away from the Church. Give someone you know a telephone call to tell them you are praying for her/him.
2. Recall the prayers of our Catholic tradition. Teach them to children and/or young people.
3. Volunteer your time to do Meals on Wheels or visit the Nursing Home.
4. Offer to be a sponsor in the RCIA or Confirmation program.
5. Offer to be a greeter at Mass. This is a wonderful way to show our enthusiasm and joy.
6. Attached is a booklet: **When They Come, What Makes Them Stay?** *Practical Suggestions for Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, and Easter Sunday.*

RESOURCES

Suggested Lenten Resources

The Word Among Us www.wau.org

1. **Conversing with God in Lent: Praying the Sunday Mass Readings with *Lectio Divina*** by Stephen J. Binz leads the readers through the steps of *Lectio Divina*. Questions for personal reflection are provided for each of the Sunday readings (\$10.76).
2. **Hope From the Cross: Reflections on Jesus' Seven Last Words** by Cardinal Basil Hume who unwraps a gift that gives hope even in the midst of pain and suffering (\$7.15).
3. **Come Meet Jesus: An Invitation from Pope Benedict XVI** by Amy Wellborn highlights the many ways in which the Holy Father invites his listeners, both inside and outside the Church, to discover the saving, healing, life-giving love of Jesus (\$10.75).
4. **The Joy of Knowing Christ: Meditations on the Gospels** by Pope Benedict XVI are his reflections on the Gospel readings (\$11.95).

St. Anthony Messenger Press (www.AmericanCatholic.org)

1. **Daily Reflections for Lent 2010** by Daniel J. Harrington, S.J. invites the readers to use the *Lectio Divina* method to guide the reader to reflect on the Lenten readings. He suggests how the text may relate to one's daily life and journey with Jesus Christ (\$2.95).
2. **Unlikely Spiritual Heroes** by Brennan R. Hill profiles eight unlikely heroes who saw great injustice, sorrow, and violence in the world and, in their own ways, some small, some universal, sought and created love, justice, peace, and hope for our time. These men and women include Thomas Merton, Helen Prejean, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, Pedro Arrupe, Jean Donovan, Dorothy Stang, Maximillian Kolbe and Karol Wojtyla (\$14.95).
3. **The King, Crucified and Risen** by Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R. helps the reader embrace the mystery of the cross as a fundamental truth and reality of our faith. He offers thought-provoking reflections on Christ's agony, death, and glorious rising for each day of the Lent and Easter season (\$8.99).