

HORIZON

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

Issue #40 May 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



Evangelization: Mission of the Church

Pope Paul VI, in his important document, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, strongly emphasized that "evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the church, her deepest identity. She exists to evangelize". We live in a culture today where the message of the Gospel falls on deaf ears and hardened hearts. Our world has become so secularized that even those with faith live and act in a manner that says that "I do not need God", or that He does not exist. Pope Benedict XVI said: "The real problem at this moment of our history is that God is disappearing from the human horizon and, with the dimming of the light which comes from God, humanity is losing its bearings, with increasingly evident destructive effects. We must lead men and women to God, to the God who speaks in the Bible. This is the supreme and fundamental priority of the church and of the successor of Peter at the present time."

As Church within our Small Community faith-sharing groups, we are called to be counter-culture. We must take a stand to:

- defend the dignity of each human person with respect which includes life from birth to death, the homeless, the unemployed, the immigrant;
- strengthen family life, the vital cell of society;
- defend the divine institution of marriage between one man and one woman;
- resist the pressure to entrust religious faith to the subjective;
- reduce the concept of morality and truth to private opinion.

Some actions steps to be taken:

- Write to our State and Federal legislators concerning the above issues by joining the New York State Catholic Conference www.nyscatholicconference.org **Join the Network and Take Action.**
- Many of the programs on TV, video games, songs are so violent that young people see them as "almost real". Our culture has become a culture of violence and death. Write to Senator Charles Schumer and Senator Kristin Gillibrand to speak out against violent crimes among individuals, in our families, and in our country.
- Know and understand the moral teachings of the Church e.g. the healthcare issues (meaning of federally funded abortion, importance of correct language to provide essential conscience protections, and provisions of healthcare for the immigrant workers and their families) of the Health Care Bill recently passed. The website www.usccb.org is an excellent resource for understanding these issues



Why Catholic?

The beautiful feast of the Ascension on Thursday, May 13 reminds us that we have the same message from Jesus Christ that He gave to His disciples that we are "witnesses to these things" (Luke 24:47). "Witnesses to these things" means proclaiming the message that Jesus had to suffer and rise from the dead. On Easter Sunday, we renewed our Baptismal promises. Our profession of faith pledges us, with the power of the Holy Spirit, to continue the mission of Jesus to all people. A way to strengthen our call to evangelize the world is through prayer.

All are invited to attend the **Why Catholic? Faith Formation Workshop: Prayer: Many Methods, One Purpose.** Anne Scanlan, RENEW International, will share with the small community faith-sharing groups ways to improve prayer in times of dryness, to overcome distractions and obstacles to prayer, and suggestions of how to listen to the Spirit more attentively. The invitation is open to all parishioners and friends of your faith-sharing groups. The Registration for the Workshop will be due on **Friday, May 7.** Facilitators are to give the numbers to the Coordinator in your parish.

I recently sent out a questionnaire for you to answer and send back. Your input is helpful in deciding our next direction for the Small Community faith-sharing groups in the parishes. Please respond as soon as possible.



Year for Priests

What a joy-filled experience as we celebrated the ordination and installation of Bishop Terry R. LaValley! The jubilation of this wondrous occasion during this Year for Priests was experienced among the Bishops, priests, religious, and laity. So many have said, “We now have one of our own!” “This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice in it!” The way to show our joy and gratitude is to continue to give support through prayer and service to our Bishop. As our new Shepherd begins to lead his flock to holiness, let us pray for him that he may have the wisdom and strength to continue the mission of the Church. His call and his responsibilities are great!

The Diocese will celebrate the close of the Year for Priests on the Feast of Corpus Christi on Sunday, June 6th at St. Mary’s Cathedral. Bishop LaValley will celebrate the 11:00 Mass followed by adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Procession of the Blessed Sacrament will begin at 2:30 followed by light refreshments. Let us show our gratitude for our priests by coming to the *Cathedral* to pray for them.

The Gift of Marriage



The meaning of marriage has taken on a whole new meaning in our culture today. Living together before marriage and sometimes children before marriage can create tensions following marriage. When couples do receive the sacrament of Matrimony, how do they understand the grace of the sacrament? What is their relationship to one another like? What is their relationship to God? Through the sacrament of Baptism, we are in relationship with the Trinity, the most perfect community of love. The Trinity is three distinct Persons but One God. Their “oneness” is not a strangling oneness but a mutual bond of love that interrelates with the Other. This is also true of a good healthy marriage. Married couples are joined together to become one. Their lives together are not rigid, but flexible, allowing each to be who he and she are meant to be. They are interdependent and share each other’s lives while coming together as one. In order for the relationship to grow, they put the good of the other ahead of the other so that the relationship of love and life can grow. The grace of the sacrament enables and empowers the couple to share their love that overflows into children. The grace of the sacraments helps them through the joys and the sufferings of life. The married couple are sacraments to each other, not only on their day of marriage, but every day of their married life. Frequent reception of the sacrament of Penance, participation at Mass and receiving Holy Communion every Sunday renews and strengthens the marriage covenant. Let us pray for our married couples and families, especially our young couples, that they may find Jesus Christ in the center of their lives.

Tips for Evangelization

1. Do people know that we are “with Jesus” by our proclamation, by our words and the witness of our daily lives?
2. Despite the challenges of our materialistic and secularist culture, we are still called to be disciples and missionaries. Foster those friendships with those whom you are able to share your faith.
3. Our Baptism is a call to continue the priestly mission of Christ to preach, to teach, and to witness the faith. We carry out the mission in our everyday lives by leading good Christian lives:
 - To show courtesy, concern and respect for your co-workers;
 - To perform your work well;
 - To radiate the joy of Christ with a cheerful and positive attitude;
4. If you encounter questions and challenges to the Church’s teachings, you can provide a reasoned response by suggesting:
 - Consulting the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* or *The US Catechism for Adults*;
 - Search for the answer on www.usccb.org or www.vatican.va or www.dioogdensburg.org.

RESOURCES

Faith Sharing Groups

The God of Our Deepest Longings: Seven Biblical Meditations by Fr. Peter van Breeman, SJ weaves a picture of what it means to be Jesus' light in the world, and to live in personal peace, without fear. God wills for us to live within Him. Each chapter offers a selected reading, questions to share, other Scripture references, and a closing prayer. (www.amazon.com offers a less expensive price).

We Live To Know, Love, and Serve God by Fr. Oscar Lukefahr, CM explains Section III of the *Catechism* with stories and examples to flesh out the Church’s moral teaching in today’s world e.g. abortion, social justice, and God’s plan for marriage. The book includes questions for study and reflection, and practical activities to help us “know, love, and serve God” (\$12.99). Also **We Pray: Living God’s Presence** by Fr. Oscar Lukefahr (\$12.95) www.liguori.org.