

HORIZON

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

Issue #58 November 2011

Diocese of Ogdensburg

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Evangelization: Mission of the Church

Church: A Family of Faith

A Year of Faith

Pope Benedict has announced a *Year of Faith* that will begin October 11, 2012 --the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council and will conclude on the Feast of the Solemnity of Christ, King of the Universe. The Holy Father will explain the motives, goals and guidelines of the Year of Faith in an upcoming Apostolic Letter that will be published soon. Blessed Paul VI convoked a similar "Year of Faith" in 1967 to commemorate the 19th centenary of the martyrdom of the Apostles Peter and Paul. Pope Benedict wants to link the remembrance of the opening of the Vatican Council II with the memory of Blessed John XXIII who opened the Council. Pope Benedict states, "it would be opportune to remember the beauty and the centrality of the faith, the need to strengthen and deepen it, both at the personal and the community level, and to do this in a perspective that is not so much celebratory, but rather, missionary—precisely in the perspective of the mission *ad gentes* and the *new evangelization*."

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

Some of the parishes indicated on their parish survey that their programs, ministries and resources provided effective evangelization efforts in their parishes. Other parishes said they are difficult to assess or some are more or less than effective than others. Programs are offered in the parish but there are small percentages who attend.

Parishes fulfill their mission statement by developing and maintaining programs that nourish, strengthen, and encourage their members to grow in their faith and provide a means of continual outreach to their parish families. Vibrant parishes have programs that occur at all times of the day and evening.

In the Church's efforts to promote the "New Evangelization" have your Parish Council and/or Evangelization Team:

- Review your parish ministries, activities, and programs. Group similar activities.
- Reflect on these groupings. Why do these programs and activities exist?
- What beliefs or convictions motivate the parish to initiate and support them?
- How are they related to the Gospel message and the fundamental beliefs of the faith?
- Analyze the similarities and differences between programs. Write one statement that reflects why each program should or should not exist in your parish. Reach a consensus about programs best reflects the unique character of the parish.
- Develop a statement that best reflects the parish vision of why the parish exists and what it calls the parish members to do.
- Announce the vision statement to the parish in a celebratory manner.
- Ensure that all future planning and new programming contribute to fulfilling the vision of the parish.

(Handbook for Today's Parish Leaders)

Church Community in Action— Lifting Up Our Hearts

Those parishes that used **Lifting Up Our Hearts** from RENEW International, please fill out the evaluation found on www.pastoral.dioogdensburg.org and send the evaluation back to this Office. Your input would be greatly appreciated.

Some Small Community faith sharing groups continue during the Advent season. There are some excellent resources available:

- **Give Us This Day—Advent-Christmas Reflections**, Liturgical Press is offering \$1.00 a book for 100 copies. This resource offers with the First Sunday of Advent:
 - New texts for the Order of Mass with people’s responses in bold
 - Daily reflections on the Scriptures for Advent and the Octave of Christmas
 - Prayers and blessings for Advent and Christmas
 - Morning and Evening Prayer for each day

I could order copies of this reflection booklet for your parish if you are interested or you may order directly from www.litpress.org

- **Advent Awakenings**—RENEW International(www.renewintl.org) is a seasonal faith-sharing experience with its focus this year on Cycle B—*Take the Time* with an emphasis on the Gospel of Mark (\$6.95). The four week sessions encourage the participants to prepare for Jesus’ coming by setting aside everyday busyness and become more aware of God’s call. The topics are:

1st Week of Advent—Stay Awake *3rd Week of Advent—Great Expectations*
2nd Week of Advent—Prepare the Way *4th Week of Advent—God’s Surprises*

Family Devotion—Blessing the Advent Wreath, Blessing the Creche, Blessing the Christmas Tree, Christmas Reflection for Christmas Eve, and Epiphany House Blessing

- **The Gospel of Mark**—Ascension Press (www.ascensionpress.com) written by Mary Healy is an in-depth study of Mark’s Gospel (\$19.95). Mark’s main focus in his Gospel is discipleship. As a Church: A Family of Faith as the community of believers, we are called to be followers of Jesus Christ. To be a follower is to be a disciple, a “learner” in knowing the person of Jesus Christ and a “learner” of how to be his follower.

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

The Family Life Office—DVD—Family Forum—Families: Become What You Are—a DVD is now available for each of the parishes. The DVD is meant to be used with various ministries in your parish e.g. Pre-Cana group sessions, RCIA, Small Community faith-sharing groups, Parent Meetings for preparation for the sacraments, Family Ministries—Gabriel Project, Natural Family Planning, etc., and Religious Education Coordinators and Catholic School Leaders, etc. Enclosed in the packet is a cover letter to explain the DVD and a booklet with the statements from Bishop LaValley’s talk given at the Family Forum in Carthage and in West Chazy and discussion questions composed by the Offices of Family Life, Evangelization and Youth Ministry.

The Young Adult Ministry is sponsoring a **Metanoia Retreat** on **November 18—20 at Wadhams Hall, Ogdensburg**. *Metanoia* means “turn back”, “conversion” of the mind and heart towards God. The Metanoia Retreat takes 12 people, personally invited, into a place with God that converts their heart, so that their mind can be ready to evangelize to the whole world. Go to www.dioogdensburg.org/youngadultministry to get more information about the Retreat. You can contact Lorraine Turgeon at lturgeon@dioogdensburg.org.

RESOURCES

Handbook for Today’s Parish Leaders by Ginger Infantino provides a firm foundation and many practical tips for current and future parish leaders the tools to help their parishes carry out the mission of Christ e.g. responding the call to serve, developing leadership and collaboration skills, and empowering them to lead (www.liguori.org) \$5.99

22 Steps to a Great Catholic Parish by James N. Reinhardt provides parishes with 22 chapters of practical and doable plan for a particular area of parish life, and then develops that plan in both broad and specific terms. There are questions for discussion and reflection and suggested actions that invite everyone in the parish to make it the best it can be (www.23rdpublications.com) \$19.95.

Magnificat Roman Missal Companion is a step-by-step commentary for the changes in the Order of Mass, including the 4 Eucharistic Prayers, with introductory essays about the background of the Roman Missal, Third Edition (www.magnificatmissal.com) discounts are given for bulk orders.

Praying with St. Mark’s Gospel is recommended for prayer and study as we soon begin Cycle B the first Sunday of Advent. There is a short Scripture passage from the Gospel of Mark and a short reflection (www.magnificat.com) \$9.95.