

Gatherings

DIOCESE
of NEW ULM

Office of Religious Education
Office of Youth Ministry

Reflections

January 17, 2008

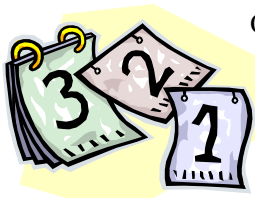
Dear DREs and Youth Ministers:

From the Religious Education Office:

Bryan Reising

Director of Religious Education & Adult Faith Formation
breising@dnu.org

The Liturgical Year by Bryan Reising



Oh how we wish that teachable moments were available throughout the year! And yet they are! Our year, the liturgical calendar, is filled with wonderful opportunities to teach in the classroom, in the parish, and at home!

Advent and Christmastime extends from late November, early December, through mid January. In other words, our liturgical calendar begins with the First Sunday of Advent. Christmas ends, not the day after Christmas Day, but with the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord, which this year is January 13. From Advent wreaths, to Las Posadas, to Christmas pageants, to Epiphany celebrations, to social outreach to those with needs, this time of year is full of many opportunities.

Just around the corner is Lent. It begins with Ash Wednesday, February 6, and runs until Holy Thursday, March 20. With our Area Faith Community Missions, we will be busy, but follow-up opportunities can focus on the Liturgical Year. Those AFCs that have their missions during Lent are prime with follow-up opportunities like retreats, days of reflection, and processes for returning Catholics giving them an opportunity to return. Families during Lent can intentionally do some social outreach (acts of charity) during this time.

During Holy Week, invite families to participate in the various opportunities. Have them take advantage of the communal Reconciliation services taking place in the diocese that week or sometime during Lent. Encourage them to go to Mass on Holy Thursday. After Mass, the

entire family can adore Christ in the Eucharist at adoration after the Holy Thursday Mass. Have them solemnly observe Good Friday through the Stations of the Cross and the Good Friday service with the veneration of the cross. Encourage them to participate at the Easter Vigil Mass to witness and welcome those who are joining us in the Church and to begin the celebration of Easter.

Easter is a time to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus, the Risen Lord. As mentioned before, celebrate this on the Easter Vigil, Easter Sunday morning, and throughout the Easter season! An idea for Holy Week into Easter: use plastic eggs and have a symbol within the egg for the many things we commemorate during this time. For example, on Palm Sunday put a piece of a palm branch or a toy donkey in the egg, Holy Thursday can be unleavened bread or a grain of wheat, Good Friday can be a nail or a small cross, and for Easter Sunday, nothing - the empty egg represents the empty tomb.

By the time the Solemnity of Pentecost comes around, Religious Education is usually finished. This year it is on May 11 – Mother’s Day. Yes – encourage the children and youth to celebrate Mother’s Day with their moms. An idea to celebrate both? The children (if they are old enough) and youth can prepare the meal.

For dessert, have a birthday cake in celebration of Pentecost, the Church’s birthday. At the beginning of the meal, have a meal blessing and a blessing for the mother.

Before eating the cake, have a special Pentecost prayer or “Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts...” and sing Happy Birthday!



Speaking of birthdays, celebrate each family member’s new birthday – meaning his or her Baptismal Day. Also, celebrate the Feast Day or Name Day. For example, my son Andrew’s Feast Day is November 30.

Within Ordinary Time, celebrate various themes according to the readings or the solemnity or feast. For example, on Sunday, June 29, on the feast of the Solemnity of Peter and Paul, say a special prayer for the Pope. Read about the lives of the popes. In addition, say a prayer for missionaries, who like Paul, spread the Good

News to others. Learn about and support those who do missionary work.

These are just a sample of ideas that you can use as teachable moments. The idea is that teaching and learning does not have to stop when classes are over. We have opportunities throughout the year.

Area Faith Community Missions

Attend and encourage others to attend our Area Faith Community missions in your area!

January 19-24

Appleton-Madison-Dawson
Holy Family Area (Clara City-Granite Falls-Montevideo)
Clements-Lamberton-Morgan-Sanborn-Springfield
Morton-Redwood Falls

January 26-31

Arlington-Gaylord-Green Isle, including Faxon
Township-Henderson-Jessenland
Benson-Clontarf-Danvers-DeGraff-Murdock
Nicollet-St. Peter
Litchfield-Manannah

February 9-14

Divine Mercy Area (Comfrey-Leavenworth-Sleepy Eye)

February 16-21

Winsted
Fairfax-Franklin-Gibbon-Winthrop
Holy Cross Area (Lafayette-New Ulm Cathedral-New
Ulm St. Mary-Searles-West Newton)

North Mankato

Spanish at Glencoe Worship Site

February 23-28

Glencoe-Silver Lake
Watkins

Spanish at Sleepy Eye Worship Site

March 1-6

Nassau-Ortonville-Rosen
Jesus Our Living Water Area (Kandiyohi-Lake Lillian-
Spicer-Willmar)

March 8-13

Milroy-Tracy-Walnut Grove
*Spanish at Willmar Worship Site, including Litchfield and
Renville Sites*

March 29-April 3

Light of the World Area (Lucan-Seaforth-Wabasso-
Wanda)
Hutchinson-Stewart
Ivanhoe-Lake Benton-Tyler-Wilno

April 5-10

Canby-Ghent-Minneota-St. Leo-Taunton
Cottonwood-Green Valley-Marshall
Darwin-Forest City
Beardsley-Graceville

April 13-17

Heart of Jesus Area (Bird Island-Hector-Olivia-Renville)
Spanish at Marshall Worship Site

Future Safe Environment Trainings

The following are upcoming dates for Virtus trainings. Remember this is for all paid parish and school staff, catechists, youth ministers, and all volunteers who will be unsupervised with children and youth.

- ❖ January 17, 2008 from 6:30 pm-9:30 pm in Nicollet at St. Paul
- ❖ January 19, 2008 from 9:00 am-12:00 pm in New Ulm at NUACS (St. Anthony Multi-Purpose Room)
- ❖ February 24, 2008 from 1:00 pm-4:00 pm in Marshall at Holy Redeemer
- ❖ March 27, 2008 from 6:30 pm-9:30 pm in Canby at St. Peter
- ❖ March 29, 2008 from 9:00 am-12:00 pm in New Ulm at NUACS (St. Anthony Multi-Purpose Room)
- ❖ April 5, 2008 from 9:00 am-12:00 pm in St. Peter at St. Peter
- ❖ April 26, 2008 from 9:30 am-12:30 pm in Olivia at St. Aloysius
- ❖ May 15, 2008 from 6:30 pm-9:30 pm in Benson at St. Francis
- ❖ June 7, 2008 from 9:30 a m-12:30 pm in Litchfield at St. Philip

Upcoming Gathers

On February 4, 2008, we will feature Paula Huston. She will speak to us about topics from her book, *The Holy Way*. See attached flyer. **Please RSVP to Cindy Blickem** if you plan to attend 507-233-5325 or cblickem@dnu.org.

Upcoming Gathers are March 10 and April 7, 2008. These gathers are for all catechetical leaders and youth ministers! They are important gatherings for formation, information, and networking. For those who cannot make these Gathers because of work schedule or other reasons, please let us know if there is a better time to meet. If we get enough interest, we will periodically offer an alternative date.

Parish Catechesis Questions

What ideas do you give to parents to extend catechesis within the home? Do you give them ideas related to the Liturgical Year?

Mark Your Rel Ed / Youth Ministry Calendars for 2008

Mon, Feb 4	Gather for DREs & Youth Ministers	10:00-3:00	Center for Youth Ministry
Mon, Mar 10	Gather for DREs & Youth Ministers	10:00-3:00	Center for Youth Ministry
Mon, Apr 7	Gather for DREs & Youth Ministers	10:00-3:00	Center for Youth Ministry
Sun, Apr 13	Jr High Festival	1:00-7:00	Canby Public High School
Mon, May 19	DRE Spring Fling	Noon-4:00	Victorian Inn, Hutchinson
Sun, June 1 Tent Sun, May 18	DYC Selection Day	1:00-5:00	Center for Youth Ministry
Thurs-Fri June 19-20	Young Men's Discipleship Camp	Thu 9:30 am-Fri 5:00 pm	Center for Youth Ministry
Thurs-Fri June 26-27	Young Women's Discipleship Camp	Thu 9:30 am-Fri 5:00 pm	Center for Youth Ministry

From the Youth Ministry Office:

Sr. Margaret McHugh, DSMP
Director of Youth Ministry &
Vocation Awareness
mmchugh@dnu.org



“The distinguishing mark of Christians is the fact that they have a future: it is not that they know the details of what awaits them, but they know in general terms that their lives will not end in emptiness.”

-Pope Benedict in *Spe Salvi*

We just finished a weekend retreat on the subject of “hope” with the Diocesan Youth Council. It was their annual retreat that we try to tailor to their needs and that of the youth in general. Afterwards a senior DYC member commented on the weekend, “This was kind of different. Usually when I go to a retreat or a church event, I’m being told what not to do, what to avoid, and about what to be careful of. This time you were telling us what we could do and what we could always do more of... I think that was good.”

Spe Salvi

We were inspired by Pope Benedict’s newest encyclical *Spe Salvi* or (in plain English) “Saving Hope.” In a recent talk, he commented that our young people are growing up in an environment saturated by voices that propose false messages of happiness. He says youth run the risk of losing hope because they’re “orphans of true love--the love that fills life with meaning and joy.” As we reflected on the Pope’s encyclical, far from being a message of “gloom and doom,” we heard the voice of a father describing the virtue of hope in its purest form.

Purpose of Virtue

Aristotle said that the purpose of virtue is to create the kind of person who would make a good friend. If we were to take that same virtue and kick it up a notch or two up “above what is purely natural” it becomes a supernatural virtue. The purpose of a supernatural virtue is to create the kind of person who would make a good friend of God and man.

Value or Virtue

When I was studying education, we heard a lot about “values” (like honesty and patriotism) in the curriculum and how values could be taught even in the public school. It seems the conversation has come to full circle because the word now is “virtues.” “What’s the difference?,” you might say. The difference is huge! Values refer to what we know to be right or wrong. Virtue, instead, is the habitual and joyful practice of what is right. In the book, *Boys to Men: The Transforming Power of Virtue*, Tim Gray and Curtis Martin explain, “Having good values is a fine thing, but the battle of morality is not so much about *knowing* what is right as it is in *doing* what is right. The difference between wanting to do the good and actually doing it is tremendous.”

Theological Virtue

Like the other theological virtues (faith and love), hope has two aspects: first, how we get it and second, what we are supposed to do with it. We receive the theological virtues as free and undeserved gifts of God, but we must live them once we have them.

Sailboat Analogy

Gray and Martin share a great analogy in their book: “Consider the analogy of a sailboat. The finest sailboat in the world can’t sail far without its sails. Even with much wind and good weather, if the sails are not up, the boat will not make much headway. The sails signify our effort, namely the virtues. Conversely, if the boat has excellent sails but no wind, it cannot sail. The wind is like God’s grace. We can make all the effort and preparation in the world, but without God’s grace we will not make much progress in the moral life. Similarly, we can receive the sacraments and pray, but God’s grace will not avail much if we do not act. The wind will pass over the ship without much effect because the sails are not up... God may be present in our lives but, unless we cooperate with His action, we will not reach the destination of eternal life. Success is sailing through the troubled waters of the moral life requires us to rely on God and expend much effort at the same time.”



Hope Defined

Hope moves us towards the achievement of something that is challenging, but possible--either on our own or with someone else's help. As a theological virtue, hope is an expectation, with the help of God's grace of eternal happiness.

Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, # 1817

Hope looks to the future. A man or woman of hope knows he or she is not yet where he or she wants to be, but knows he or she is on the way. Hope allows us to strive with confidence and expectation towards the future good of final happiness: heaven. It is the Christian and only the Christians who can say, "in the end it will be OK."

Dynamic Tension

As human beings we live in a dynamic tension between the "already" and the "not yet." Hope enables us to live this dynamism by gratefully acknowledging all that we have received and confidently looking to the future with expectation.

Pope Benedict's Recipe for Hope

We concluded our retreat by looking at the Holy Father's "recipe for hope." We used the acronym of, "PASJM" and outlined what can help us grow in hope.

- **Prayer** is the most important way to grow in hope. Just telling God of our desires reminds us of God's goodness and His desire to give us what we need. Prayer is both the exercise and guardian of hope.
- **Action:** Hope is like a muscle that grows stronger with each use. Remember the adage, "Use it or lose it!" It takes about 21 days of repeating an action to begin a new habit. Virtue is a habit of promptly and pleasantly doing good.
- **Suffering:** It almost sounds like a contradiction to say that suffering helps us grow in hope. However, for the Christian, hope is not some weak experience of positive thinking. Hope is the rock-solid trust that if we cling to Christ and seek His forgiveness, He will always be faithful to His promises.
- **Judgment:** The thought of standing before the Last Judgment is not something meant to terrify us, but simply to remind us that we are all accountable. Jesus, our Judge, is both grace and justice.
- **Mary** is the Mother of Hope and Jesus is Hope personified. Reflecting on all 174 times that

"hope" is cited in Scripture, we noted that the word was hardly used at all in the four Gospels. Our conclusion was that the Old Testament prophets and psalmists were looking forward in hope to the coming Messiah and the New Testament writers were looking to Jesus as the fulfillment of their hopes. As the First Disciple, Mary bridged the both the Old and New Testament in looking forward to His coming and recognizing Him as the fulfillment of her hopes.

If you'd like to read *Spe Salvi* for yourself, please visit the site:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc20071130-spe-salvi_en.html for the entire text.



Vocation Awareness

Since January 13-19 is Vocation Awareness Week and World Day for Consecrated Life is February 3, the Vocations's Office will be sending out a flyer with pictures and contact information of some of the young women who have entered religious life from our diocese. You can expect this in the mail late January, early February. We also plan to include this information on the dnu.org website under Vocations.

Vocation Fairs

The next Vocation Fair is February 13 at St. Anne's in Wabasso. We will be visiting the school and religious education program. If you would like to join them, please contact Sherry Platez for more information. On March 12, we will be sponsoring a Vocation Fair at St. Anastasia in Hutchinson.



Hope to see the Holy Father in April?!!

As you know Pope Benedict XVI will be the USA April 15-20. A limited number of tickets to this event in New York on April 19-20 will be available. If you or any of your young people have any thoughts of going – please contact Sr. Margaret by e-mail by January 25 (mmchugh@dnu.org). More information will be available that week and she will respond directly to your e-mail. In addition, you must also ask your priest or pastoral leader to write a letter of recommendation for you on parish letterhead and send it to:

Wanda Ubl

Catholic Pastoral Center

1400 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073

**Youth Leader and Teen Training
Lifeline Mass with Archbishop Nienstedt
February 2, 2008**

A dynamic training event for guys and girls to awaken, deepen, and equip you in the faith as leaders both young and old alike. YLT is held **Saturday, February 2, 2008, from 9:00 to 3:00** at **NET Ministries in West St. Paul**. Go out for dinner and come back a few hours later for the Lifeline Mass from 6:00-9:30 p.m. Call **651-450-6833** for more information or to register. You may wish to check with Sr. Margaret if you plan to attend. She will be organizing and accompanying a group as well.

**Diocesan Gathers: Lenten Retreat
February 4, 2008 10:00 am to 3:00 pm**

Our monthly YM/DRE meeting at the Center for Youth Ministry in February will be a Lenten Retreat with Paula Huston. Paula is originally from Minnesota and is a Catholic author. She is a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellow and has published fiction and essays for twenty-five years. She's written Daughters of Song, Signatures of Grace, and By Way of Grace. Her most recent book is, The Holy Way: Practices for a Simple Life. She is a wife, mother, university professor, and Camaldolese Benedictine oblate. The retreat will be based on her book, The Holy Way. **Please RSVP to Cindy Blickem** if you plan to attend 507-233-5325 or cblickem@dnu.org.

**Theology of the Body Retreat
February 16-18, 2008**

Cost is \$75 for the weekend. The event runs from 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 16, to 2:30 p.m. on Monday, February 18. Deadline for registration is January 21, 2008. **The first 100 paid youth will be accepted.** Jamin Harold 320-968-6836, Church of St. John, Foley, Minnesota. info@TOBretreat.com or www.TOBretreat.com

**Lenten Day of Reflection
"Solitude, Stillness, and Silence"
February 14, 2008 9:15-2:00**

NET Ministries is hosting the event from 9:15 to 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 14, 2008. Join them for Mass, teaching, wonderful food, and great fellowship. Come away for a time of personal renewal!

**Pure of Heart - Twin Cities
March 8, 2008 from 10:00 to 4:00**

A fun, faith-filled conference designed to encourage young men and women to discover the gifts that God has stamped on their hearts. Pure at Heart encourages teens to build a life of purity, purpose, and passion.

A number of teens attended this conference last year from New London-Spicer and gave it rave reviews. For more information or to register, please visit:

<http://www.partnershipforyouth.org/pure.html>

Church of St. Patrick, 3535 72nd Street E
Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076

**H.S. Young Men's Weekend Retreat
March 14-16, 2008**

at the NET Center in West St. Paul. The weekend is packed with outstanding speakers, great music, challenging talks as well as Reconciliation, Adoration, and Mass. Hearty meals and cool activities are designed with guys in mind. For more information, contact: 110 Crusader Ave W, West St. Paul, MN 55118-4427, Phone: 651-450-6833 - Fax: 651-450-9984 or visit <http://www.netusa.org>

**Junior High Festival
April 13, 2008**

Please plan to bring a large group of young people April 13, 2008 to the Canby Public High School.

Mime Ministry

During our Gathers meeting in December, the question came up about Mime Ministry. They are not from within our diocese but Karen Eickhoff from Canby volunteered to research the topic and she e-mailed us the following so we could put in Gatherings/Reflections:

Here's that information about the Passion performance. The group from Mapleton, MN, is called the Mime Troop, it's the clown ministry, and they've been doing this for years. They usually do three performances a year -- one on Palm Sunday, one on that Wednesday, and one on Good Friday. They have one scheduled at Mankato Loyola School, Good Counsel, it's scheduled for the Wednesday, I don't know what time, but if someone wanted them to come to their church they could contact Tony Bach at 507-381-8808.

The other group from Big Stone City, SD said they have a real new young group starting this year and decided not to travel with it. Maybe another year.

**"Boomin' Beyond Measure"
March 1, 2008 7:00 pm**

I received a flier from the US Bank Theater at Target Center advertising group sales for tickets to see Tobymac and Jeremy Camp in their "Boomin' Beyond Measure" Tour on Saturday, March 1, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. The tour is sponsored locally by Contemporary Christian radio station KTIS. The tour will also highlight a special guest - Matthew West. Starting price is \$37 for lower level and \$27 for upper level. They're offering \$5 off for groups of 10 or more. For information or group reservations call 612-673-1311 and ask for Lynne or Karen.

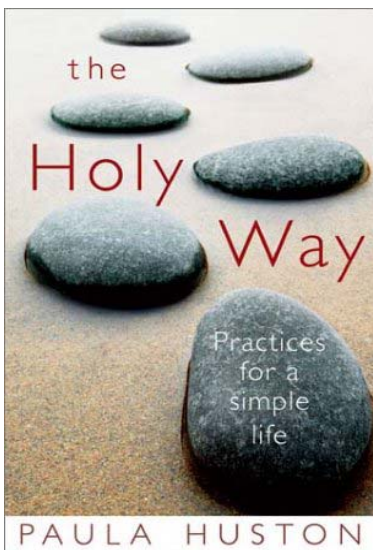
Gatherings – Lenten Retreat
February 4, 2008 10:00-3:00
at the Center for Youth Ministry



Catholic Author Paula Huston

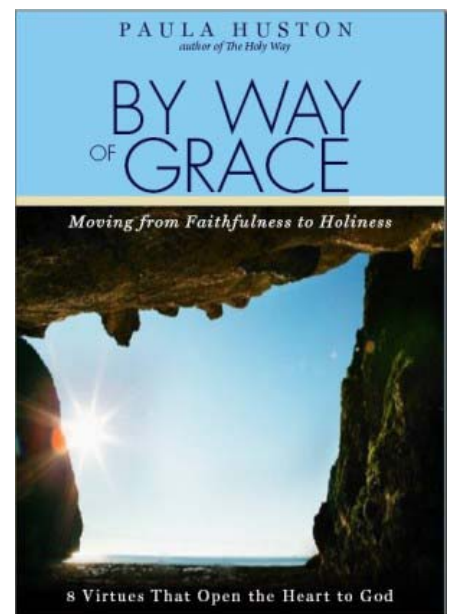
Paula Huston is the author of *Daughters of Song* (Random House) and the co-editor of *Signatures of Grace: Catholic Writers on the Sacraments* (Dutton). Her short fiction has appeared in journals including *Story*, *American Short Fiction*, and *Missouri Review*, and her awards include an NEA fellowship. Her book *The Holy Way: Practices for a Simple Life* is forthcoming from Loyola Press this November.

Recent Publications:



Drawing on the powerful histories of the saints and personal experience, Paula Huston offers practical guidance to pursuing and achieving spiritual simplicity in a chaotic world. In *The Holy Way*, Huston examines a variety of spiritual practices in the Christian tradition that lead to a simpler life.

Each chapter introduces a different spiritual practice, including solitude, purity, and generosity, and explores it through historical perspectives and Huston's compelling personal reflections. From Saint Anthony's chosen life of solitude to Saint Catherine of Siena's strength of conviction, Huston tells stories of courageous faith that exemplify the blessed and transformative power of being alone with God. Although based on Christian philosophies, Huston's strategies are applicable to people of all faiths.



One morning, in a hermitage nestled in California's lovely Big Sur country, Paula Huston read a Scripture verse that she had read hundreds of times before: "Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink." This time the verse penetrated her heart as never before. Much had happened to her in the preceding years: a return to Christianity, conversion to Catholicism, a choice for a radically simplified life, an increasing hunger for prayer and the Eucharist. Now, Huston understood that all of that was just the beginning. God was calling her to a deeper experience of holiness, which would require of her arduous work that led to the simplest surrender.

By Way of Grace is her artfully constructed, gracefully written account of what she learned. The book contends that the spiritual life firmly rests on saints and virtues, and each chapter focuses on how a great saint of the mystical Catholic tradition explains and exemplifies one of the traditional Christian virtues.

[Please RSVP to Cindy Blickem](#) if you plan to attend 507-233-5325 or cblickem@dmu.org.