

Gatherings

Reflections

February 21, 2008

Dear DREs and Youth Ministers:

From the Religious Education Office:

Bryan Reising

Director of Religious Education & Adult Faith Formation
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Preparing and Celebrating the Sacraments by Bryan Reising

Right about now, there are many second graders in our diocese preparing for their First Eucharist. There are many confirmandi preparing for the Gift of the Holy Spirit with the Sacrament of Confirmation. There are adults, and perhaps some younger people, going through immediate preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation that they will receive at the Easter Vigil, March 22 this year. There are parents preparing for the baptism of their child to come or their infant already born. There are engaged couples preparing for the big day of their wedding, but also a lifetime as spouses, who are open to family life. We also pray for those in our diaconate formation and those in seminaries, as they prepare for a life as deacons and priests, so that they will serve the people of our parishes and Area Faith Communities. Catechists, teachers, parents, sponsors, godparents, priests, children and youth, and the entire parish all have a role in preparing and celebrating the sacraments. Let us examine some of the sacraments with its opportunities.

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (and Younger People Too)

The Rite of Election at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm was celebrated on Sunday, February 10 this year. During this ceremony the catechumens (those preparing for Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) become the elect. It begins the season of Purification and Enlightenment for them, otherwise known as Lent. This is the time of immediate preparation as they look forward to receiving the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil. During this season, they focus on Cycle A Sunday readings. They go through the scrutinies, an

opportunity for silent prayer to uncover the weaknesses of the elect and to strengthen and deepen their faith. They receive exorcisms during this time. In addition, they receive the gift of the Creed and the Our Father. Finally, in many places, they have an opportunity for a retreat on Holy Saturday. Even the candidates, those who are already been baptized, have opportunities for immediate preparation. The RCIA team works hard during this time by accompanying them during this season and helping out with the retreat on Holy Saturday. The entire parish shares their support through prayers, cards, and letters to the elect and the candidates.

Encourage families and parishioners to attend the **Christ Mass** at 7:00 p.m. on **March 13** at the **Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm** and the Easter Vigil on the evening of March 22 in their own parish or Area Faith Community to show their support for those initiated into the Catholic faith. If there are no candidates or elect in your parish, it is an opportunity to experience this greatest of all liturgies, to pray for those initiated into the Church around the world, and to renew the Sacraments of Initiation.

First Eucharist

For the second grader, preparation is extremely important. Around this age, it is good to remember that children think concretely. Just as the Paschal Lamb was sacrificed for the Hebrew people to save them from slavery and lead them to freedom, Jesus became the Paschal Lamb for all to save us from sin and lead us to freedom and eternal life. The Eucharist is the living memorial of Christ's sacrifice. That is how much Jesus loves us! The Eucharist also helps them understand that they can more fully participate in the liturgy as a means of worshipping and loving God. Most importantly, but probably the hardest to understand, they learn that bread and wine really become the Body and Blood of Christ. When they receive the Body and Blood of Christ, they share in the life of God and are called to serve God by



helping others. Parents and catechists are encouraged to work together to teach and to prepare children for this sacrament.

When they celebrate this sacrament for the first time, the whole parish can celebrate with them. Through their prayers and even writing notes or cards, parishioners can help to make this day very special for these children. They can also provide a party in honor of the first communicants after mass.

Confirmation

For those who are in 11th grade, preparation is very important as well. According to the National Directory for Catechesis (p. 123), it does the following:

- ❖ Teaches that Confirmation increases and deepens the grace of Baptism, imprinting an indelible character on the soul.
- ❖ Teaches that Confirmation strengthens the baptismal conferral of the Holy Spirit on those confirmed in order to incorporate them more firmly in Christ, strengthen their bond with the Church, associate them more closely with the Church's mission, increase in them the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and help them bear witness to the Christian faith in words and deeds.
- ❖ Teaches about the role of the Holy Spirit, his gifts, and his fruits.
- ❖ Is developmentally appropriate and includes retreat experiences.
- ❖ Includes instruction on the Rite of Confirmation and its basic symbols: the imposition of hands, the anointing with Sacred Chrism, and the words of the sacramental formula.
- ❖ Ensures that parents and sponsors are involved in the catechetical preparation of the candidates for Confirmation.
- ❖ Teaches that the bishop is the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Roman Catholic Church.

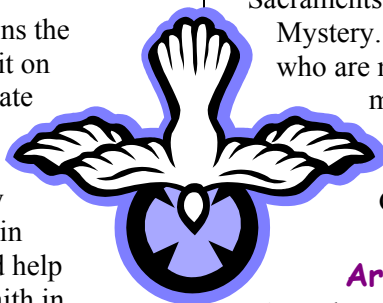
I would also add that it is a time of apprenticeship for ministries, acts of charity, and acts of justice. They discern what gifts they have and receive "on the job" training with these with either their sponsor or another mentor. After they receive the sacrament, the parish can expect them to do this ministry on a regular basis. Encourage the parish community to pray for the confirmandi and to send notes or cards to show their support. If there is room for regular parishioners in the

church, encourage them to be present for the sacrament when the Bishop or the Episcopal Vicar comes to confer this sacrament. Again, parishioners can honor the newly confirmed by organizing a party after the liturgy.

Other Sacraments

As you can see there are some common elements on how parishioners can support and celebrate with those who are receiving sacraments: cards, notes, and celebrating. These can be applied to the other sacraments as well. With the Anointing of the Sick, it is good to send a "get well" card when appropriate, and for those who are dying, a card indicating that we care, love, and are praying for them. However, with the other sacraments, we need to express our joy and support. Sacraments give grace needed for our faith lives, for our healing, and for our vocation in life.

Sacraments help us to experience the Paschal Mystery. It is our opportunity to welcome those who are new, to support those who are confirmed, married, or ordained, and to offer our prayers and concern for those who are sick and those who need to return to God and God's ways of love.



Area Faith Community Missions

Attend and encourage others to attend our Area Faith Community missions in your area! Here are the remaining missions:

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 12-17

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.

- ❖ February 24, 2008 from 1:00-4:00 pm in Marshall at Holy Redeemer;
- ❖ March 27, 2008 from 6:30-9:30 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 6:30-9:30 pm in Benson at St. Francis; and
- ❖ June 7, 2008 from 9:30 am-12:30 pm in Litchfield at St. Philip.

Upcoming Gatherings

On March 10, 2008, we will feature personnel from our newly formed Catholic Charities Office. They will speak to us about crisis intervention and the services that Catholic Charities offers. (Youth Center from 10:00-3:00) **Please RSVP to Cindy Blickem** if you plan to attend 507-233-5325 or cblickem@dnu.org.

Our April Gather **has been changed to Monday, April 21**. Our featured speaker will be Bryan Reising. (Youth Center from 10:00-3:00)

On **May 19 from Noon-4:00**, our **Spring Fling** will feature Joe Paprocki of Loyola Press at the Victorian Inn in Hutchison. He is a specialist on catechesis and author of "The Catechist's Toolbox."

These gatherings are for all catechetical leaders and youth ministers! They are important gatherings for formation, information, and networking. For those who cannot make these Gatherings 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

How do your parishioners support those preparing for the sacraments? How do they celebrate? How will you invite your parishioners, your families to the Easter Vigil?

Bus Accident: St. Mary's, Cottonwood

Along with two Catholic Charity counselors, Sr. Margaret and I joined the parishioners of St. Mary's Parish in Cottonwood and other guests for a special Mass last night (Wednesday, February 20). We remembered the four children who died in the bus accident and prayed for the injured, some who were children who participated in Religious Education at the parish. We witnessed a community who truly loved and cared for each other. After Mass, we listened how much they cared for each other, we held people who shed tears, and we were just present and available to the community. They introduced us after Mass, and we were available to listen. Continue the prayers for this faith-filled, yet grieving community.



From the Youth Ministry Office:

Sr. Margaret McHugh, DSMP

Director of Youth Ministry &

Vocation Awareness

mmchugh@dnu.org

The following would be for anyone who works with adolescents. It is a one-day free teleconference offered in six locations. I highly recommend attendance, especially since we've been dealing with a lot of tragedies involving young lives.

15th Annual Hospice Teleconference

Living with Grief: Children and Adolescents - April 16, 2008

The Hospice Teleconference will focus on the experience of grieving children and adolescents and the ways that hospice professionals, teachers and school administrators, grief counselors, funeral directors, and parents can best support these populations as they cope with loss and grief.

Instructor: Hospice Foundation of America
Location: Rice Memorial Hospital, Willmar
Redwood Area Hospital, Redwood Falls
RC Hospital and Clinics, Olivia
Hendricks Hospital, Hendricks
Tyler Healthcare Center, Tyler
Date: Wednesday, April 16, 2008
Time: 12:30 – 3:00 p.m.
Tuition: No charge
Clock Hours: 2.5

For more information or to register contact:
Jami Lecy-Peters, Minnesota West Community & Technical College, 1593 11th Ave., Granite Falls, MN 56241 320-564-4511 or 800-657-3247

Open your heart for Lent



“Come,” says my heart,
‘seek God’s face,’
your face, Lord, do I seek.” —Ps. 27:8

Catholic author and spiritual writer, Paula Huston, was the guest speaker at our last Gathers on February 4 at St. Aloysius in Olivia. The twenty of us who gathered for her Lenten Reflection had the opportunity to meet a very poised and intelligent woman who "walked the talk" regarding personal spiritual discipline. Paula focused on four spiritual practices especially appropriate for Lent: solitude, silence, fasting, and chastity. Her remarks were based on her book, *The Holy Way: Practices for a Simple Life*, published by Loyola Press in 2003. As part of her speaking engagement, Paula wrote the following article summarizing her talk:

Opening the Heart for Lent

Years ago, I became entranced with the Desert Fathers and Mothers. I admired their austere simplicity, their voluntary poverty, their holy chastity. Most of all, I admired the discipline of their spiritual lives. They did not live haphazardly, as I seemed to do, but intentionally. They made deliberate choices—some of them very difficult ones—in order to free up as much of themselves and their time as they possibly could for prayer. I couldn’t get enough of them, and read everything on desert spirituality that I could find. However, as Kierkegaard once pointed out, it is not enough to admire good people; if our exemplars are admirable, then we should strive to imitate what they do. One day it crossed my mind that I, too, could try to incorporate ancient spiritual disciplines into my rushed and overbooked life. I could begin making space for regular times of solitude, for example—a monthly, half-day walk somewhere, or a stay at a monastery. I could try getting up fifteen minutes early to sit alone in silence. I could skip some meals and, through personal experience, begin to learn about the discipline of fasting. I could begin to practice real hospitality.

At first these experiments on myself were fumbling at best. At their worst, they were fraught with dramatic self-pity. For awhile, the only thing I could focus on when beginning a day without eating, for instance, was how ravenously hungry I was going to be. With enough practice, however, all the secret rewards of the spiritual disciplines began to reveal themselves.

Fasting produces mental clarity and compunction. Silence contributes to the ability to listen and greater compassion for others. Solitude gives us a more realistic picture of who we really are and thus fosters humility. Hospitality helps us live obediently in the present.

Lent is a special time, set aside out of the whole Church year for introspection, repentance, and compunction. As such, it’s a particularly fruitful opportunity for spiritual growth. The ancient disciplines can be a wonderful way to foster that—but only if we actually *practice* them and not, as I did for too long, simply read about them, no matter how admirably. —Paula Huston



Vocation Awareness

Attached please find flyers with pictures and contact information for the young men who are in the seminary studying to become priests and some of the young women who are in formation for religious life. We thought it would be encouraging to see how many young people are answering God’s call to follow Him more closely. Somehow a picture says a thousand words! You may wish to drop them a line or send them a word of encouragement this Lent.

Vocation Fairs

The next Vocation Fair is March 12 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. We found out that the tickets for the Papal Mass in New York have already been distributed and it is no longer possible to participate in that event. However, a limited number of tickets to the Papal Mass in Washington, DC, on April 17, 2008 will be available. I have requested ten tickets for this event. Right now, we are in a “holding pattern” regarding the status of these tickets. If you or any of your young people have any thoughts of going – please contact Sr. Margaret by e-mail (mmchugh@dnu.org). 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. If we do, indeed, get the requested tickets, I will need your name, address and date of birth within a week. These need to be submitted for a security screening.

Jr High Festival
Grades 6-8
April 13 * 1:00-7:00
Canby High School

Please plan to bring a large group of young people! The mailing with registration information will be coming out soon to a key contact person in your parish – keep your eyes open!



Keynote & Break-Out Session with Amanda Vernon



Amanda is a music minister who spreads the good news of *Jesus Christ* through testimony and song. She is a featured artist on two new Catholic compilation CD's, "Catholic Music 2008," and "Catholic Christmas," released by Spirit Wing Records last fall. Orders of these CD's are now being accepted through www.spiritwingrecords.com.

Break-Out Session with Joe Roueche



Joe is originally from Chattanooga, TN. He earned his B.S. in Business Administration from the University of Tennessee and his Master's in Pastoral Theology from Ave Maria University. He has over 20 years of youth ministry experience. Joe served on the road with National Evangelization Team (NET) in 1985-1986 and joined the staff in 1994 to

capitalize on the opportunity to share the Gospel with young people. Joe enjoys white-water rafting, camping and old cars. Joe currently lives in Minneapolis with his wife and three children.

Diocesan Youth Council Application Form

We previously e-mailed the application form to those of you who had e-mail, but since then a change has happened. Due to the Thanksgiving Celebration for Archbishop Nienstedt on May 18, the DYC Selection Day will happen from 11:00-3:00 rather than the previously scheduled time of 1:00-5:00.

WYD Pilgrimage

All of the young people making the diocesan World Youth Day pilgrimage with Sr. Margaret are invited to a planning meeting on March 30 in Wilno from 1:00-5:00 p.m. Sr. Margaret will be contacting everyone directly regarding the details.

Three Places available with St. Anastasia's Parish WYD Pilgrimage

Three people cancelled out of the parish pilgrimage from St. Anastasia in Hutchinson to World Youth Day 2008 in Australia. Alex Barraza is looking for three more pilgrims to complete his pilgrimage group. For more information, call Alex at 320-234-6129 or e-mail at: abarraza@stanastasia.net.

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>



Mark Your Rel Ed / Youth Ministry Calendars for 2008

Mon, Mar 10	Gather for DREs & Youth Ministers	10:00-3:00	Center for Youth Ministry
Mon, Apr 7 CHANGED April 21	Gather for DREs & Youth Ministers	10:00-3:00	Center for Youth Ministry
Sun, Apr 13	Jr High Festival	1:00-7:00	Canby High School
Mon, May 19	DRE Spring Fling	Noon-4:00	Victorian Inn, Hutchinson
Sun, June 1 Sun, May 18	DYC Selection Day	4:00-5:00 CHANGED TO 11:00 am-3:00 pm	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

**Join us in Kansas City, Missouri
for NCYC 2009**

November 19-21, 2009

The National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) is an exciting, biennial three-day experience of prayer, community, and empowerment for Catholic teenagers and their adult chaperones. The schedule includes general sessions and workshops addressing a wide variety of topics as well as opportunities for reconciliation, daily liturgy, and special activities such as concerts, a dance, and comedy club. The thematic park is a unique venue incorporating traditional exhibits with interactive educational and recreational activities.

NCYC began in 1983 following in the footsteps of its predecessor conference, the CYO biennial national convention. In its early days, NCYC was held regionally, one session for each coast. Combined attendance at the regional conferences was a few thousand. In 1991, the two conferences merged into one national event. In the mid 1990s interest in NCYC began to increase. Today, NCYC draws 20,000+ youth and adults for three days of catechesis, prayer, service, and recreation.

The next NCYC will be in Kansas City, Missouri, November 19-21, 2009. More than 23,000 attendees are expected to participate.

NCYC 2009 INTEREST INDICATOR

NATIONAL CATHOLIC YOUTH CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 19-21, 2009

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

*All youth in grades 9-12 in 2009 will be able to attend
with their adult leaders – 21 years of age or over*

At this point in time we would like to know how many people plan to attend from your parish. These are only estimates but please try to be as realistic as possible. We will travel to Kansas City, Missouri, for this event. We will probably leave on Tuesday, November 17, returning late Sunday night, November 22. Cost is still to be determined.

INTEREST INDICATOR FORM – NATIONAL CATHOLIC YOUTH CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 19-21, 2009

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

Estimates: Number of Youth in Grades 9-12 in 2009 that I estimate will attend: _____

Number of Adult leaders that I estimate will attend: _____

Parish Name, Town _____

Contact Name _____

Phone Number _____

E-mail Address _____

Comments: _____

Return to Sr. Margaret or Cindy Blickem **by May 23, 2008** (cblickem@dnu.org)
Catholic Pastoral Center, 1400 6th St. N, New Ulm, MN 56073