

Gatherings

Reflections

March 8, 2007

Dear DREs and Youth Ministers:

From the Religious Education Office:

Bryan Reising

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Sharing the Light during the Easter Season

*Sharing the Experience of Easter for the Parish,
the Catholic School, the Home*

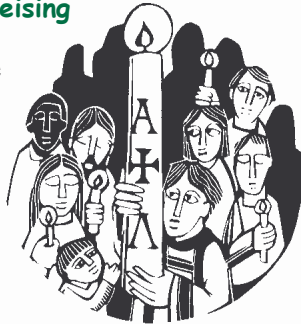
By Bryan Reising

“Light of Christ” proclaims the priest or deacon in song at the Easter Vigil. This light dispelling the darkness is one of the many rich and beautiful images that people experience in a profound way during this great liturgy. How do we get people to this liturgy in the first place?

In addition, how do we break open and reflect upon these liturgies during the Easter season? Let us examine these questions to see how it can increase the faith life within our parishes, Catholic schools and the households of our parishes.

Invitation

The Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA) not only should have an impact upon those who receive the sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil, or those received in the fullness of the Catholic Church, or those who are on the RCIA team, it can influence the entire parish. The parish can provide intentional opportunities for individual parishioners, students within the parish school of faith, Catholic school students, and entire families to meet catechumens and candidates going through the RCIA. Some ideas can include parish festivals, school events, all parish catechetical assemblies, and involvement with parish ministries or social action. In addition, ideas that are more informal can be a family inviting one of the catechumens or one



of the candidates over for coffee or a meal. Perhaps the family or an entire class of students can send out a card of prayer and support. Families can say the names of the catechumens and candidates during the family meal prayer or other times of prayer by the family.

Within these actions, many more people will want to welcome these newcomers into the Church at the Easter Vigil. However, we cannot assume that this will naturally happen. We need to invite all families, all students, all candidates for first Holy Communion and Confirmation, and all parishioners to the Easter Vigil. The pastor, pastoral leaders, catechetical leaders, catechists, youth leaders, and parents are key people who can invite ensuring that this liturgy is not sparsely populated, but overflowing with people. What a wonderful welcome this can be for those coming into the church! Moreover, what a wonderful experience for everyone participating in this liturgy!

Mystagogy

Mystagogy is the period of time for the newly baptized (the neophytes) and those who are new members of the Church to reflect upon the experiences of their RCIA formation, especially the experience of the Easter Vigil. It is a time for them to reflect and learn about the sacraments they received, it is a time for them to live the Gospel more fully, and it is a time for them to become acclimated to the ministries in the parish and to be more involved in society.

Yet, mystagogy can be a time for all us to reflect upon the messages, the images, and the experiences of Holy Week, especially the Easter Vigil. We catechists, parents, teachers, and pastoral leaders need to invite all parishioners, young and old, to reflect upon these experiences.

In the Parish

For those parishes with the traditional parish school of faith and without cutting into too much time into the regular curriculum, take some time to reflect upon the experiences of the Easter Vigil. For those who did not experience the Easter Vigil, it may become a moment of evangelization because the other children or youth

can share their experiences of the Easter Vigil with them. Give them questions like: How was this liturgy different from other liturgies? Describe as much as you can the different things that happened at the Easter Vigil. What is the meaning behind the fire outside (the first fire) and the lighting of the Paschal candle? How many readings were there and which reading do you remember? Which reading had a message for you? Perhaps one of the neophytes or newcomers can come to your class to share their experience.

For those parishes with intergenerational catechetical assemblies or adult faith opportunities, have a special welcome for the neophytes and newcomers. Use part of your session to have people share their own experiences of Holy Week and the Easter Vigil in small groups. Share questions like: During Holy Week or during the Easter Vigil, what had the greatest impact upon you and why? How do you continue the celebration of Easter at home (affirming the many cultures which may be represented in your parish)? During the Easter Vigil, how is baptism and water reflective of the Paschal Mystery? How can you continue to welcome the neophytes and newcomers? How can you continue to invite people to join our Church?

In the Catholic School

If there are any students who came into the Church, have a special party to welcome them. Use the religion class to share about the experience of Holy Week and the Easter Vigil. For those students who are not Catholic but Christian, perhaps give them an opportunity to share their experiences of Easter. Like the parish school of faith, invite the neophyte or newcomer to the religion class to share his or her experience of being welcomed into the community. Share some of the same questions proposed for the parish school of faith.

In the Home

Pray for the neophytes and newcomers during the family meal prayer or at other times. Invite one of the neophytes or newcomers to visit you and share a meal of welcome with them. Share about the experiences of Holy Week and the Easter Vigil during the Easter season at mealtime or car rides. Research and rediscover Easter traditions that your ancestors did or create new traditions to link your faith experiences to your daily life. Incorporate Easter songs and Easter themes to your meal prayer.

When we encourage these activities within our parishes, schools, and homes, we will notice the increase of faith life within our people. We also notice that it will spill over into the other times of the year because the people will want to become actively

involved. It may be a gradual process, but we must allow the Light of Christ to shine in all arenas of Church life enabling more people to encounter Christ and for the Light to dispel the dark corners of our society.

My article will be found in the April issue of RTJ (Religion Teacher's Journal).



Upcoming Gather Meetings at the Youth Center

- **April 16** – Adult Faith Formation with Mary Jo Donahue and Donna Glaser from RCL
Please RSVP to Cindy for a lunch count, 507-233-5325 or cblickem@dnu.org
- **May 7** – CANCELLED

Spring Fling

**Date change to May 21 (was June 4)
Noon to 4:00 p.m.**

Victorian Inn in Hutchinson, Minnesota

Guest Speaker is Diane Hardick of Talimadge, Ohio. She has a MA in Theology and Scripture from St. Mary Seminary and a BA in Religious Studies from Ursuline College. She has been involved in Professional Catechetical Ministry for over 20 years. She is the co-author of “Catechesis: 8 Formation Sessions” published by Center for Learning and is a Consultant for Silver Burdett Ginn’s “Blest Are We” catechetical curriculum. She is a diocesan presenter and a national presenter for Silver Burdett Ginn around the country.

Bishop Lucker Lecture

**Sunday, March 11, 2007 - 7:00 p.m.
at the Hutchinson Event Center
Presenter: Fr. J. Bryan Hehir**

Adult Faith Formation Gathering Wed, March 21, from 10:00 am-2:00 pm St. Anastasia Parish in Hutchinson

Those involved in Adult Faith Formation are invited to a special gathering on Adult Faith Formation. It is our hope that a core group from this gathering can continue to be consultants to Bryan Reising regarding issues like curriculum, Bible studies, small Christian communities, and parish opportunities. This first gathering will be Wednesday, March 21, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. at St. Anastasia parish in Hutchinson. A potluck lunch will be included.

FOUNDATIONS

A Lay Ministry Program

This coming fall, we will begin a new session of FOUNDATIONS, a program for laity to take both theology and pastoral ministry courses. It is our hope that some of these will be certified as lay ecclesial ministers. The faculty at St. Mary's University in Winona will instruct and facilitate the courses. Whether you are a person who wants to be certified, or a person who would like to get a bachelors or masters in Pastoral Ministry, FOUNDATIONS can help you get your feet off to a good start. FOUNDATIONS will meet on a monthly basis throughout the school year. Those who wish to get advanced degrees (B.A. or an M.A.) there will be additional work. Please contact Bryan Reising at 507-359-2966 to let him know your intent on signing up for FOUNDATIONS. Catechists, DREs, Youth Ministers, and others are welcome!

From the Youth Ministry Office:

Sr. Margaret McHugh, DSMP

Director of Youth Ministry & Vocation Awareness
mmchugh@dnu.org



**Happy
St. Patrick's Day!**

St. Patrick and Slavery

The movie, *Amazing Grace*, just opened in select theatres last month. In bold and inspiring terms, it portrays the true story of the demise of slavery in the British Empire. The ad campaign connected with the movie, points to ways in which human beings continue to be sold into slavery throughout the world. Men, women, children, and entire families are still sold and enslaved in the most degrading and dehumanizing situations imaginable. Flash back with me now to the year 450, when St. Patrick penned his "Confessio," an autobiographical account and profession of faith. Slavery was still very much part of that era and indeed, of Patrick's own story. The Confessio begins with the true story of how he is captured off the coast of Britain and sold into slavery in Ireland.

As the story unfolds, we witness Patrick's transformation from a helpless captive to a zealous apostle, evangelist, and activist against human trafficking. In fact, Patrick's only other surviving document, "Epistola ad Coroticum" is a strongly

written letter of reproof to a certain Coroticus, a Welsh prince, who had murdered and enslaved many of Patrick's new Christian converts.

Patrick, as a young Brit "from a good family" had been captured, sold, and enslaved by the Irish with no one to lift a hand to defend him. Now, as Bishop, Patrick becomes a voice for the Irish slaves of the British. The story comes to full circle, but with a different ending. This former slave will never be held captive again nor will he stand by idly and allow others to be enslaved.

St. Patrick and the Reality of Sin

Like St. Augustine in his *Confessions*, Patrick is clear about the reality of sin, beginning with his own. The opening line of the *Confessio* reads,

"I, Patrick, a sinner..."

And lest anyone doubt his resolve and strength in denouncing sin, just read a few lines from his Letter to Coroticus!



St. Patrick and Prayer

What made the difference? How did this religiously indifferent British teen become the fearless Irish evangelist? Patrick speaks of his slavery as a place of conversion and mercy, describing it in the following words,

"And there the Lord opened my mind to an awareness of my unbelief, in order that, even so late, I might remember my transgressions and turn with all my heart to the Lord my God..."

The hardship and solitude of his captivity literally brought him to his knees. A few lines quoted here, describe his prayer:

"After I reached Ireland I used to pasture the flock every day and I used to pray many times a day. More and more did the love of God and my fear of Him and faith increase, and my spirit was moved so that in a day I said from one up to one hundred prayers, and in the night a like number; besides I used to stay out in the forests and on the mountain and I would wake up before daylight to pray in the snow, in icy coldness, in rain..." – 16, *Confessio*

What else characterized his prayer? How was his relationship with God unique and different? As I read through varying accounts of his life, I noted how often he signed himself with the Sign of the Cross. His famous prayer, "The Lorica of St. Patrick" (also referred to as "The Deer's Cry" or "The Breastplate of St. Patrick") repeats this phrase often, **"I bind myself today the strong virtue of the Invocation of the Trinity."** Might the "strong virtue of the Invocation of the Trinity" refer to the Sign of the Cross?

In last month's newsletter I wrote about the power of this apparently simple prayer. I mentioned Bert Ghezzi's book, The Sign of the Cross, where he gives a short history of the Sign of the Cross and goes on to explain how the prayer serves: 1) as an opening to God, 2) a renewal of Baptism, 3) a mark of Discipleship, 4) an acceptance of suffering, 5) a defense against the devil, and 6) a victory over self-indulgence. If the great apostle of Ireland found it necessary to cross himself often in the face of hostility, danger and darkness, why should we hesitate to make the Sign of the Cross often during our day?



World Day for Consecrated Life

February 4, 2007:

Mass for Renewal of Vows

I would like to thank all who were able to attend Mass with me on February 4 at Cathedral and witness my renewal of vows.

Special thanks to Bishop Nienstedt who was the Mass celebrant during his pastoral visit to the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity.

I am very grateful for all the cards, best wishes and prayers. Most of all, I wish to thank those who understood this to be a "vocational opportunity" and provided transportation for young people to attend the celebration. It was also a wonderful witness to see so many women religious attending. What a beautiful celebration and an opportunity to recognize and promote religious life!

Rescheduled Operation Miryam

April 12, 2007 6:00-8:00

St. Pius X Church, Glencoe

Due to unfavorable weather we cancelled the February 28 Operation Miryam and rescheduled it for Thursday, April 12. Please consider inviting young women who are at least open to the possibility of a religious vocation. The event consists of evening prayer, dinner, and sharing with the Bishop and a few sisters. Please contact Jeovana Michels in the Vocations Office at 507-233-5302 or jmichels@dnu.org to register.

Rescheduled DYC Selection Day

May 19, 2007 1:00-5:00

Center for Youth Ministry

Because of schedule conflicts, we have rescheduled the Diocesan Youth Council Selection Day to Saturday, May 19, from 1:00-5:00 p.m. (It was scheduled for June 3). An updated form will be posted on the dnu.org website. Deadline is May 4.

Junior High Festival

April 15, 2007

The Marshall Middle School (old high school building) 401 South Saratoga Street, Marshall, MN 56258 will be the site for the Junior High Festival on April 15, 2007. **The Festival will run from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Please plan to arrive by 10:00 a.m. so we can begin promptly at 10:30 p.m.** Please plan to attend and bring as many youth as you can.

Keynote:

This Festival promises to be exceptionally excellent! **Kara Klein**, Christian singer-songwriter from Louisiana, will be our keynote speaker. She'll be sharing her music and her testimony with the young people. Kara is a beautiful and soft spoken young woman. But her music addresses serious issues like the Terry Scivavo case, abstinence, and the inner demons that plague so many people. She has a number of CDs produced by Heartbeat Records which include: "A Touch of Grace," "I am Home," "The Gift of Christmas," and "Enduring Love: A Rosary for Chastity." For more information about Kara Klein, visit her website: <http://www.karaklein.org>.

Break-out Sessions:

Stephanie Murphy, graduated from Hillsdale College with a BA in English. That same year, she married fellow graduate, Tim Murphy. Together they have five children, four girls and one boy. They live in Northwest Indiana. Stephanie home schooled her children for five years. In 1996, together with Brandi Lee, Stephanie launched *True Girl*, a magazine of faith, life, and fashion for Catholic teens. Stephanie will talk about the meaning of "True Beauty." For more information, visit the True Girl website: www.truegirlonline.com

Sean Dalton is the West Regional Director for Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS). He received his MA in Theology and Certification in Catechetics from Franciscan University in 1998. Sean has eight years of experience in diocesan ministry with the Diocese of Sioux Falls and the Archdiocese of Denver in the areas of youth, young adult, and campus ministry. He also has been a parish youth minister and Director of Camping Ministry. Sean and Jenn live in Littleton, Colorado, with their four children. Sean will be speaking to the guys about "How to Be Spiritually Buff." For more information, visit: http://www.focusonline.org/focus_events/bio/sean_dalton.html

Changing Faces Annual Series: Intercultural Ministry and Hospitality

St. John's University is sponsoring a conference, "Retrieving the Option for the Young: Directions for Theology and Ministry Amidst Latinos/as" on Thursday, March 22, at 7:30 p.m. in the Pellegrine Auditorium. The speaker will be Dr. Carmen Nanko from Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. For more information call 320-363-2839 or visit: www.csbsju.edu/sot or www.csbsju.edu/journey.

Upcoming Youth Retreats

For Young Men

NET Ministries is sponsoring a "Men Arise!" high school men's weekend retreat March 23-25. What's the weekend about? It's about becoming a real man... a man after God's heart. It's about getting answers to the questions deep in every man's heart. The weekend retreat is \$95 per person. For more information, visit www.netusa.com.

For Young Women

The Diocese of New Ulm's Office of Youth Ministry is sponsoring a young women's retreat day on March 25 from Noon-5:00 p.m. at St. Pius X in Glencoe. Our theme is, "True Love or True Lust" and our speakers will be Tessa McKeown and Jessie Collins. The topics will focus on modesty, dating, and relationship skills. Cost is \$5 and will include food. Please call Cindy Blickem 507-233-5325 or Sr. Margaret in the Youth Ministry Office at 507-233-5327 to register.



The next Riverbend **TEC** is March 24-26, 2007 at Holy Trinity Cathedral in New Ulm. For more information, check the TEC website at www.riverbendtec.org.

Senior High Rally 2007 Sunday, October 21, 2007

Please mark your calendars with the date for next year's Senior High Rally. It will be October 21 from 1:00-7:00 p.m. Our Keynote will be the John Flynn Band from Allen, Texas.

Junior High Festival 2008

Jesse Manibusan will be the keynote speaker at the 2008 Junior High Festival on April 13, 2008. Please mark your calendars and spread the word!



NCYC 2007: Columbus, OH November 6-11, 2007

The Office of Youth Ministry will be sending out a separate NCYC event mailing later this week. Among other things, this will include the **Registration Forms**, the **Code of Conduct Form**, and a **Scholarship Application**. The mailing will be addressed to the main NCYC contact person in your parish/AFC. If you don't receive it by the end of next week, please give Cindy Blickem a call at 507-233-5325.

NCYC Scholarship Opportunities

High school youth planning to attend NCYC have the following scholarship opportunities:

- 1) Fill out the scholarship form that will arrive in the mail. This is due to the diocesan office by April 13.
- 2) Design a t-shirt logo for the Diocese of New Ulm (See details below.) Winners will receive a \$150 scholarship towards NCYC 2007.

NCYC Contest for High School Youth:

We are looking for budding artists to help design our NCYC 2007 diocesan t-shirt. The design should represent our diocese and the theme "Discover the Way." Please submit a design with 1 or 2 colors on an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper or on a computer file (jpeg or tiff format) with the logo youth designed for our diocesan NCYC t-shirt by April 30 to Cindy Blickem, 1400 6th St. N, New Ulm, MN 56073, cblickem@dnu.org.

Get a Head Start on NCYC Paperwork!

Just a few suggestions on how to get a head start on NCYC paperwork... First of all, all adults will need to meet Safe Environment requirements for the New Ulm Diocese for the 2007-2008 school year. The best way to get a head start is to have all the adults planning to go sign the **Release Form for a Background Check**. (Note: This is the form that requests their Social Security number.) Every accompanying adult will need to have a background check done before they can leave for NCYC in November. This is nothing new, and knowing that this is required, we can get this out of the way now.

Also, when you receive the NCYC mailing, your first move should be to have both the youth and adults sign the **Code of Conduct Form**. Make a copy for yourself and send us the original. Having this done ahead of time will save you a great deal of trouble later on!

NCYC Information Meetings

Sr. Margaret is scheduling two NCYC meetings (one in April and one in June). The first one is on Saturday, April 28, from 1:00-4:00 p.m. at the Center for Youth Ministry in Renville for any adults who might be chaperoning for the event. We've also scheduled a second meeting for those who cannot attend on the April date. The alternative meeting date is June 3,

again from 1:00-4:00 p.m. at the Center for Youth Ministry in Renville.

World Youth Day July 8-22, 2008

Anyone interested in finding out more information about World Youth Day and/or may wish to join the diocesan pilgrimage July 8-22, 2008 should plan on attending a mandatory informational meeting:

Place: Center for Youth Ministry in Renville
Date: Sunday, April 22, 2007 – 2:00-5:00 p.m.

A down payment of \$300 is due by that date. The itinerary and remaining payment schedule as well as any other FAQs will be announced at that time.

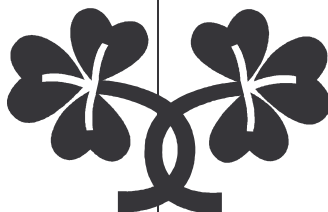
Holy Family Vocation Prayer Cards

The Vocation's Office has released a new prayer card for vocations. It will be used in conjunction with the St. Ann and St. Joachim Society which is a group of home-bound, hospitalized, or elderly persons who wish to pray and offer their troubles and anxieties for the intention of vocations. Two sizes are available – postcard size and trader card size. The smaller size was designed with youth in mind. These prayer cards can

actually serve as an intergenerational link in praying for and “offering up” some of our difficulties for vocations. The image of the Holy Family on the front is quite attractive and was painted by Pompeo Batoni in 1777. It pictures St. Joachim and St. Ann helping the Blessed Mother, Jesus, and St. John the Baptist. If you have not seen one, and would like to have one, please contact Jeovana Michels in the Vocations Office, 507-233-5302 jmichels@dnv.org.



Please keep Betty Strommer (YM/DRE) from Clara City and Mary Beth Botz (Catholic H.S. teacher) from Sleepy Eye in prayer as they undergo treatment for breast cancer.



Remember Upcoming Events

March 21	Adult Gathering	10:00-2:00	St. Anastasia, Hutchinson
April 15	Diocesan Junior High Festival	10:30-4:30 (note time chg)	Marshall Middle School
April 16	Gather for DREs & Youth Ministers Adult Faith Formation - Mary Jo Donahue & Donna Glaser, RCL	10:00-3:00	Center for Youth Ministry
April 28 or June 3	NCYC Information Day	1:00-4:00 pm	Center for Youth Ministry
May 7 - Cancelled	Gather for DREs & Youth Ministers - CANCELLED	10:00-3:00	Center for Youth Ministry
May 19 (was June 3)	Diocesan Youth Council Selection Day	1:00-5:00 pm	Center for Youth Ministry
May 21 (was June 4)	Spring Fling for DREs & Youth Ministers	Noon-4:00 pm	Victorian Inn, Hutchinson
June 3 or April 28	NCYC Information Day	1:00-4:00 pm	Center for Youth Ministry
June 7-8	Young Men's Discipleship Camp	Thurs 9:30 am – Fri 5:00 pm	Center for Youth Ministry
June 14-15	Young Women's Discipleship Camp	Thurs 9:30 am – Fri 5:00 pm	Center for Youth Ministry