

Gatherings

Reflections

December 7, 2006

Dear DREs and Youth Ministers:

From the Religious Education Office:

Bryan Reising

*Director of Religious Education & Adult Faith Formation
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A Blessed Merry Christmas to You, Your Loved Ones, and Your Parishes!

By the Reising Family

Wow! It has been nearly six months since our arrival to New Ulm. We are very grateful to our friends back in Wheeling, West Virginia. Twelve years is a long time, and they have been supportive of us, and they continue their contact with us and we with them! We are thankful for our family. Bryan's mom came up for Thanksgiving to see our new place, and we extended the invitation to all our siblings and many relatives. Bryan has a cousin in Fairmont, MN, and Monica Clare, our daughter, and I visited with them in October. We found out that my cousin has two daughters in New Ulm. Wow! We have relatives in New Ulm! We are looking forward to meeting our cousins in New Ulm. In addition, we give thanks to all of you within the Diocese of New Ulm, who have opened your doors to us and made us feel at home! Thank you from the bottom of our hearts! May you all have a Blessed and Merry Christmas and many blessings in the New Year!

Catechist Formation and Adult Faith Formation

George Barrett of Twenty-Third Publications and a director of life-long catechesis at the Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis gave a presentation on a parish catechist formation process called "Into the Fields" at the last Gathering. His presentation was well received by the DREs and



Youth Ministers who were present. It can be extended for 3-4 years and there are three components: spirituality, content from the Catechism of the Catholic Church using the "Growing Faith Project," and methodology or classroom skills. If you missed this presentation, and you would like further information on this process, just let me know! I can show you some of the resources that might be helpful to your catechists.

Even though we are not partnering yet with any online courses for catechists, adult faith formation and continuing education for catechetical leaders, we encourage you to look into these following online learning opportunities:

- University of Dayton's Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF) – www.udayton.edu/~vlc
- University of Notre Dame's STEP program – <http://step.nd.edu>.

Resources for Christian Living, RCL, and the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership, NCCL, are embarking upon a new resource called "Echoes of Faith Plus." We currently have some of the "Echoes of Faith" series within our Media Center. This new resource "Echoes of Faith Plus," will be an updating of the current Echoes of Faith to include insights from the General Directory for Catechesis (GDC) as well as the National Directory of Catechesis (NDC). It will also be a DVD format. Parishes and area faith communities can use these DVD series for catechist formation and adult faith formation. We will let you know when these resources become available.

Silver Burdett Ginn Religion recently produced a resource called **Adult Faith Formation Strategies** authored by Tom Zanzig and Shirley Kelter. This resource offers over 170

creative activities and engaging exercises for adult faith formation sessions, parent sessions, catechist formation, seasonal programs, and more. The strategies manual provides discussion starters, group exercises, prayer experiences, and presentation outlines. The manual also includes a searchable CD-Rom for customizing presentations for your setting. Cost is \$150. Visit them online at www.sbgreligion.com.

Curriculum Updates

We are updating our curriculum in the Media Resource Center at the Pastoral Center. If you are planning on updating your curriculum, please stop by the Pastoral Center to see what is available. In the coming months, we will be ordering new curriculum that is compliant with the Catechism of the Catholic Church. It will be available for your review.

RCIA Workshops

- Saturday, February 3, from 10:00 a.m.-Noon
Church of St. Anastasia, Hutchinson
- OR
- Thursday, February 15, from 7:00-9:00 p.m.
Church of St. Joseph, Montevideo

Intergenerational Meeting

Our next intergenerational meeting will be Thursday, February 8, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. We will have a potluck lunch (please let Bryan know what you are willing to bring – so we do not get duplicates). Also, if you would like to volunteer your space for the meeting, please let me know. We are looking for a centrally located place for this meeting. (breising@dnu.org; 507-233-5324)

Questions about Parish Catechesis

- Is your curriculum in compliance with the Catechism of the Catholic Church? See if your curriculum is on the compliance list: <http://www.usccb.org/catechism/document/Currenlist.pdf>
- What else do you look for when selecting curriculum for your Parish School of Faith (Religious Education)?
- Regarding Adult Faith Formation, what Bible studies are you using? What other Adult Faith Formation opportunities are you using?

Please send your responses to Cindy Blickem by e-mail: cblickem@dnu.org



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



Advent: Call & Holy Longing

Have you ever wanted anything so badly that would have done *almost* anything to get it? Or do you ever remember waiting so long for a special day to come that it seemed like it would take forever? As a child you may have waited for Christmas or a birthday with that kind of anticipation. Or maybe it was summer vacation or a special trip? Just last month, I saw a group of college kids who wanted the new Play Station 3 so badly that they camped out overnight in front of the Target store in New Ulm. While I had no desire to join them, it reminded me of how much I've anticipated other events! Advent brings to life the *best* versions of hope, expectation, and longing in our souls!

But have we ever considered what God's longing is?

Yesterday afternoon and last evening I helped to organize a Vocation Fair at Holy Family in Silver Lake. It was the first Vocation Fair I remember scheduling during Advent and as I prepared for the event, I couldn't help but notice how appropriate the theme of *vocation* is for the season of Advent. First of all, the season is full of readings from the prophets and of course, each prophet has a special calling from God. Yes, even a vocation! Then, *have you ever noticed* how Advent music has a strange mournful tone of longing? The Advent readings are so many expressions of desire for the promised Messiah. And as I noticed for the first time this year, these very same Scriptures carry the motif of God's longing to be with His people: God's longing to become *enfleshed and enrobed* in our humanity, God's longing to save His people from their sin! *Can you*

even wrap your mind around the thought that God is longing to be with you and spend time with you?

As great as our own longing can be, however deeply we may experience the "God-shaped hole in our heart," God's desire and passion for us is so much greater! God wanted so much to be with us that He would do anything to come down and stay with us. But He knew that humanity would need time and preparation in order for this to be accomplished. God's interactions and relations with humankind are traced and retraced throughout the books of the Old Testament. Humanity's hopes and God's promises fulfilled, His covenants offered and met with our infidelity...the list goes on and on!

But throughout all of this, God remains faithful, steady, purposeful, and intentional in His plan to save us. Finally, the time of fulfillment draws near and God sends the great angel, the Archangel Gabriel down from heaven to ask a young woman if she would be willing to become the Mother of God. This gutsy teenager has the courage and faith to say, "Yes!" to God and the very timeline of humanity is broken in two, transformed and redeemed by the coming of God into our world.

As this holy season of Advent draws to a close, will you join me in praying that you and I (and our young people) would be willing to work with God and open to understand what God's longing is for us?

My best wishes and prayers for a happy and holy Christmas and New Year!



As we celebrate this holiday season, please remember to pray for the people in Granite Falls and Montevideo who have just lost three young people to accidental/tragic deaths over the past month and a half.

Junior High Festival 2007

April 15, 2007

Time Change: 10:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Mass with Bishop Nienstedt at 2:00 p.m.

After checking with Bishop Nienstedt and a discussion with the Youth Ministers and DREs at the November 13 meeting, we decided on a time change for this year's Festival. Please note the change in schedule and make every effort to arrive early! Bishop Nienstedt will be the main celebrant at Sunday Mass at 2:00 p.m. instead of at the usual 4:00 p.m. Also in response to the suggestions of a number of Youth Ministers, we will have a special breakout session for guys and girls at next year's Festival.

Senior High Rally 2007

October 21, 2007

Please mark your calendars with the date for next year's Senior High Rally. It will be Sunday, October 21. We are in the process of looking for a hosting site. Please contact Sr. Margaret if you would be interested in seeing the Rally come to your town, parish, or Area Faith Community.



The next **TEC retreat** is

January 13-15, 2007 at Bird Island.

For more information, check the TEC website at www.riverbendtec.org.

**World Day of Prayer for the
Consecrated Life
Mass for Renewal of Vows
February 4, 2007**



You and your young people will soon be receiving invitations, but in the meantime, please mark your calendars:

WHO: All are invited
WHAT: Renewal of Vows and Celebration of Religious Life
WHERE: Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm
WHEN: 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, February 4, 2007
WHY: Because it's a wonderful occasion to see and understand more about the life of a sister and you're invited!!

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

Please see the attached forms and have them back to Cindy by January 4, 2007.

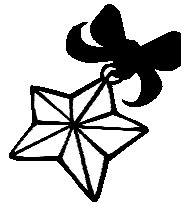
National Vocation Awareness Week

Baptized for Service/ Bautizados para Servirs is the theme for National Vocation Awareness Week, January 8 - 12, 2007. This year, the week providentially begins on the feast day of the Baptism of the Lord. What a great way to talk about a vocation to the priesthood or religious life! You should be receiving promotional materials from the Vocation Office in anticipation of this event. Please call Sr. Margaret if you would like additional help or resources at 507-233-5327.

2006-2007 Vocation Fairs

As mentioned earlier, we just hosted a Vocation Fair in Silver Lake on December 6. Our next two fairs will be held during the months of January and February. St. Michael's School and Religious Ed in Morgan will be hosting a Fair on January 10, 2007. St. John's in Ortonville is scheduled for the evening of February 7, 2007.

We're already looking forward to the 2007-2008 scholastic year. If you would be interested in hosting a Vocation Fair, please contact Sr. Margaret in the Vocation Office.



Remember Upcoming Events

2006

December 10	Advent Day of Reflection (Blessing of Baby Jesus)	3:00 pm (note time chg)	St. Mary Church, Bird Island
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2007

January 10 (FYI)	Vocation Fair	Rel Ed 6:00-8:00, Sch TBA	Morgan
February 7 (FYI)	Vocation Fair	6-8 pm	Ortonville
February 12	Gather for DREs & Youth Ministers	10:00-3:00	Center for Youth Ministry
March 5	Gather for DREs & Youth Ministers	10:00-3:00	Center for Youth Ministry
April 16	Gather for DREs & Youth Ministers	10:00-3:00	Center for Youth Ministry
April 15 (change)	Diocesan Junior High Festival	10:30-4:30 (note time chg)	Marshall

World Youth Day 2008

Anyone interested in finding out more information about World Youth Day and/or may wish to join the diocesan pilgrimage July 10-23, 2008 should plan on attending an informational meeting:

Place: Center for Youth Ministry in Renville

Date: Sunday, January 28, 2007 - 2:00 p.m.

Please call 507-233-5327 by Thursday, January 25, to let us know you're coming!

SONAR Worship Band to offer free concert "Out of the Office"

Tuesday, December 19

St. Michael's Catholic Church in Prior Lake

7:30-9:00 (doors open 6:45)

Please find the attached fliers for your information. This is an awesome worship band!! Go and listen to them free of charge, you may even want to invite them to your own event... For more information, contact Nate Lamusga 952-447-2486 or Nlamusga@stmichael-pl.org

Advent Day of Reflection

with Fr. Joe Vander Ploeg

Thursday, December 14 - 9:15 am-2:00 pm

NET Ministries is hosting their annual Advent Day of Reflection on (lunch included) December 14. The theme is, "Come Holy Spirit."