
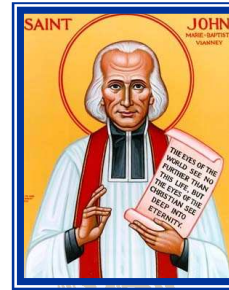


ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER  
Office of Evangelization & Catechesis  
1300 S. Steele Street  
Denver, Colorado 80210  
Tel. 303.715.3260

OUR MISSION

The Office of Evangelization & Catechesis provides support, training and resources to catechists, evangelists, pastors and directors of religious education in order to help them fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and to teach the Catholic faith confidently in accord with the *Magisterium* under the direction of the Archbishop.

 <p><b>Living the Catholic Faith Conference 2010</b> <b>I HAVE CHOSEN YOU</b> "It is not you who have chosen me, but I who have chosen you" John 15:16 Feb. 26-27, 2010 Colorado Convention Center, Downtown Denver</p> <p><i>Featuring Keynotes by:</i> Tim Gray, "The vocation of a teacher: on the re-enchantment of education" Vallimar Jansen, "Living, breathing, moving in the Word of God" Janet Smith, "The family as a path to holiness" With special screening of film "The Human Experience" and Q&amp;A with the filmmakers.</p>	<p><b>St. Vincent de Paul Parish</b> <b>Office of Religious Education</b></p> <p><b>Introduction to</b> <b>Evangelization for Catholics</b> <b>A Day Seminar for Catholics with a</b> <b>Heart for Sharing the Faith</b></p> <p><b>Sat. Sept. 26, 2009</b> <b>8:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.</b> <b>St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, off University &amp;</b> <b>Arizona, just north of I-25</b></p> <p><b>Presenter: Aimee M. Cooper, M.A. Th.</b> We know that we are supposed to evangelize, share our Faith with others, but how? Catholicism is so big; where do we begin? Come attend a day-long introductory seminar on Catholic evangelization by evangelization program developer Aimee M. Cooper to find out!</p> <p><b>Call (303) 744-6119 ext. 17</b> <b>to register</b></p>
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YEAR FOR PRIESTS

ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER OFFICE OF EVANGELIZATION & CATECHESIS

# Finest Wheat

*A newsletter for the New Evangelization*

**Witnessing to the Gospel in today's world:  
Confirmation in the 'Year for Priests.'**  
*-James Cavanagh, Metro Area Director*

August 2009



*(hat tip: Roberta Marsh, Director of Adult Education and Confirmation, St. Thomas More)*

In his letter proclaiming a "Year for Priests" Pope Benedict said, it is "meant to deepen the commitment of all priests to interior renewal for the sake of a stronger and more incisive witness to the Gospel in today's world." It's a beautiful thought; who doesn't want their priests to deepen their commitment to interior renewal? But, one may ask, what does this 'Year' have to do with me? After all, I'm not a priest. But there is a connection I think, and a rather strong one. The connection can be found in the sacrament of confirmation, for both sacraments confer a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit that gives the individual the strength to spread and defend the faith, though each in its own distinctive way. The connection is grounded, first of all, in the fact that the laity and the ministerial priesthood make up "the one priestly people of God." This teaching isn't new, of course; it can be traced directly to the Second Vatican Council. Actually, it goes back a little further than that. St. Peter described the entire people of God as a "royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9). They were called this for a reason: so that they may "declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Peter didn't invent the idea of a priestly people; he was echoing the call in Exodus where God says, "You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Ex. 19:6) Set apart from all the nations in the world the children of Israel were called to bear witness to the one, true God by their manner of life and worship. Assembled at the foot of Mt. Sinai they were told to consecrate themselves and "wash their garments" in preparation for their encounter with God. After hearing the covenant read the people responded: "All that the Lord has spoke we will do!" At that, Moses sprinkled (anointed?) the people with the blood of the sacrificial offerings thus ratifying the covenant between them and God (Ex. 24:7-8).

We can see in this seminal event liturgical actions suggestive of baptism (the washing of garments) and confirmation (sprinkling of blood). The latter 'rite' completes the former with the result that those who were once slaves were consecrated as a "kingdom of priests". Unfortunately it didn't last long. After the incident involving the golden calf, the covenant was broken. Although the covenant was renewed several times, a new and unbreakable covenant, one not carved on tablets of stone but engraved on the human heart, had yet to be established (Jer. 31:31-33). That new covenant, established by Christ, now continues in the Church through the sacra-

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**Papal Intentions for August**



**General:** That public opinion may be more aware of the problem of millions of displaced persons and refugees and that concrete solutions may be found for their often tragic situation

**Mission:** That those Christians who are discriminated against and persecuted in many countries because of the name of Christ may have their human rights, equality and religious freedom recognized, in order to be able to live and profess their own faith freely.

*Pope Benedict has signaled that his primary focus for 2009 will be the drive to proclaim the Gospel, energetically and unapologetically, always relying confidently on the power of the Holy Spirit to guide the Church*

Continued from page 1

ments. As the new Israel, the Church is consecrated by the blood of the Lamb, permanently restoring the sacred order shattered at Mt. Sinai.

Setting aside for the moment the question of baptism, there are important similarities between confirmation and priesthood:

- Both sacraments are administered by the Bishop (the bishop can delegate confirmation, of course).
- Both involve the laying on of hands and anointing with the same sacred chrism.
- Both sacraments strengthen one's bond to Christ and the Church.
- Both confer an 'indelible spiritual character' on the soul.
- Both cannot be repeated.

Both sacraments are essentially for others, for both bestow "a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ" (Recall Pope Benedict's remarks about the priest renewing his commitment "for the sake of a stronger and more incisive witness to the Gospel").

Obviously the sacraments are not identical. The graces are different as are the fruits. The grace proper to the priesthood is *configuration* to Christ. The grace proper to confirmation is the ability to *witness* to Christ.

One of the many excellent outcomes of Vatican II is the positive appraisal of the lay state in the life of the Church. In earlier days, not so long ago, the laity were expected to "pray, pay and obey" – nothing more; nothing less. Still less was it thought that ordinary lay people were called to holiness of life. That aspiration, they thought, belonged solely to priests and religious. But with Vatican II came the awareness that all Christians, by virtue of their baptism and confirmation, are called to holiness of life. Furthermore, Vatican II emphasized the indispensable role that lay people have in carrying out the mission of the Church; a role that only they can fulfill. The resemblance between confirmation and the priesthood can be seen in the Council's teachings on the apostolate of the laity:

The Christian vocation by its very nature is a vocation to the apostolate. Christ conferred on the Apostles and their successor the duty of teaching, sanctifying and ruling in His name and power. But **the laity likewise share in the priestly, prophetic and royal office of Christ and therefore have their own share in the mission of the whole people of God in the Church and in the**

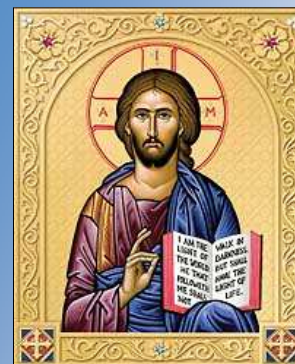
**world.** They exercise the apostolate in fact by their activity directed to the evangelization and sanctification of men and to the penetrating and perfecting of the temporal order through the spirit of the Gospel (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 2).

The apostolate of the laity is directed *outward* to the "the evangelization and sanctification of men and the penetrating and perfecting of the temporal order through the spirit of the Gospel." Although it's worded differently, this is the purpose of confirmation, according to the Catechism: "By the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed." [LG 11; *Catechism* 1285]

The grace proper to priesthood is *configuration* to Christ.  
The grace proper to confirmation is the ability to *witness* to Christ.

If the priest is "configured to Christ by a special grace of the Holy Spirit" then the laity are configured to the Blessed Virgin Mary who exemplifies the spiritual and apostolic virtue proper to the lay state. "Let it be done unto me according to thy word" should be our constant prayer. Both priest and laity are ordered to the mission of the Church as witnesses of Christ. When people look at the priest they should think, "Christ." When they look at us they should think, "Christian."

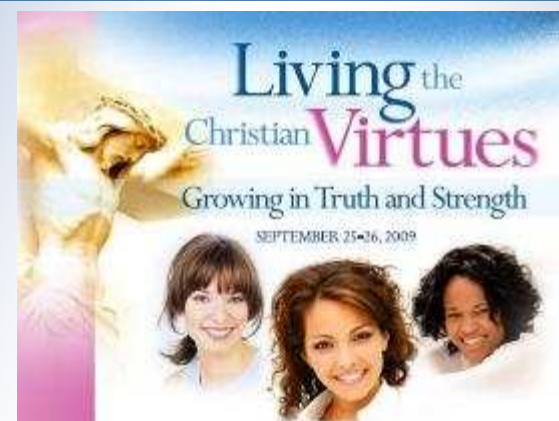
There is a close connection between the priesthood and confirmation. While the 'Year for Priests' is, after all, *for priests*, it's also an invitation to the rest of us to reflect more deeply on the sacrament of confirmation and our own calling to be a "priestly people" consecrated and set apart to bear witness to the one, true God by our worship and manner of life. One final point: priests don't just slide down from heaven on a rainbow: they are shaped and formed by the communities in which they live and pray. Developing a greater understanding and appreciation for the sacrament of confirmation should, one would hope, foster vocations as young people contemplate their special calling at God's 'priestly people' and the unique grace conferred on them in confirmation.



### CATECHIST TRAINING DAY August 29 8:30 am - 12pm JP II Center

- 8:30 am Morning Prayer and Introduction
- 9:00 am Keynote: "The Call to Catechesis"
- 10:00 am Workshops:
  - "Classroom & Lesson Planning Basics"
  - "Sacramental prep-1st Reconciliation"
  - "Faith Development of Children"
  - "Parents' role in catechesis/how to involve them"
- 11:00 am Workshops II (repeated 10am workshops)
- 12:00 pm Lunch (provided at no extra charge)

Call (303) 715-3260 to register. This workshop is provided for **FREE!**



ENDOW Women's Conference  
Sep 25-26, 2009  
St. Thomas More Parish

Visit [www.EndowOnline.com](http://www.EndowOnline.com) for more information and to register.

## ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER OFFICE OF EVANGELIZATION & CATECHESIS FALL CLASSES

### UNDERSTANDING THE CATHOLIC GOSPEL

Starting Wednesday, September 16  
(Eight sessions)  
**7:00—9:00 p.m.**  
John Paul II center

Instructor: Aimee Milburn Cooper

**\$40**  
Or try the **ONLINE COURSE**, email  
**Tess for details!**

To register call 303-715-3260  
Or email [tess.stone@archden.org](mailto:tess.stone@archden.org)

### EVANGELIZATION WORKSHOP SAT. OCTOBER 3, 2009 8:30 AM—3:00 PM IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, NORTHGLENN

Featuring  
Fr. Andreas Hock,  
Aimee Milburn Cooper,  
Chris Stefanick,  
Judd Baretta and Sylvia Gutierrez

Learn the basics of evangelization and how to implement an evangelization program at your parish!

Cost is \$30 which includes lunch and all materials.

To register, please call 303.715.3260

To listen to a preview of this evangelization workshop, please visit our website  
<http://www.archden.org/index.cfm/id/48>  
And click on "Resources"