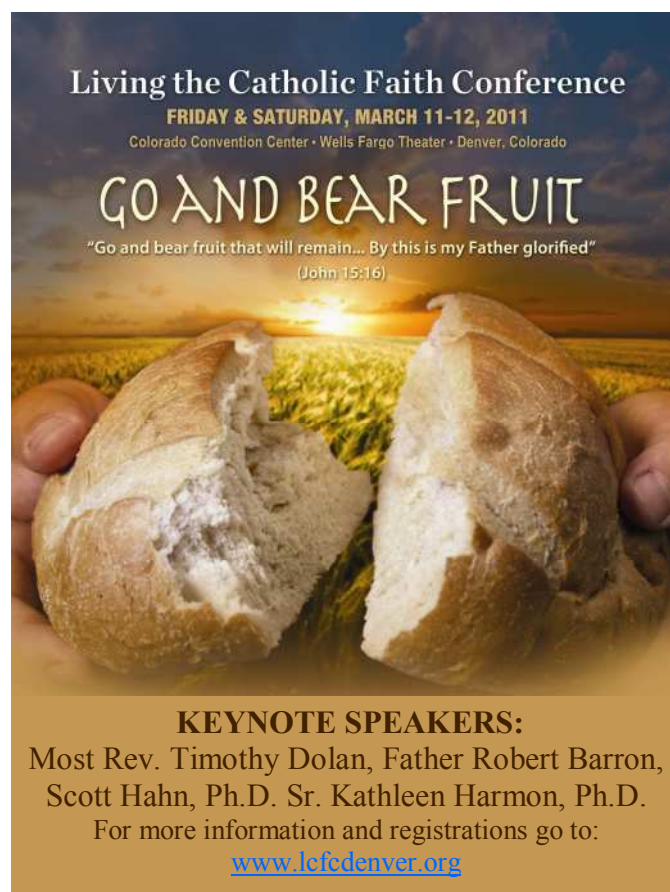


ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER
Office of Evangelization & Catechesis
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Denver, Colorado 80210
Tel. 303.715.3260

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 teach the Catholic faith in complete fidelity with the *Magisterium* under the direction of the Archbishop.



Living the Catholic Faith Conference
FRIDAY & SATURDAY, MARCH 11-12, 2011
Colorado Convention Center • Wells Fargo Theater • Denver, Colorado

GO AND BEAR FRUIT

"Go and bear fruit that will remain... By this is my Father glorified"
(John 15:16)

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:
Most Rev. Timothy Dolan, Father Robert Barron,
Scott Hahn, Ph.D. Sr. Kathleen Harmon, Ph.D.
For more information and registrations go to:
www.lcfdenver.org

Dates to remember

- Mar. 9 Ash Wednesday
- Mar. 11-12 Living the Catholic Faith Conference
- Mar. 13 Rite of Election, 1
- Mar. 20 Rite of Election, 2
- April 30 Matthew in a Day
- August 4-6 Beginnings - RCIA Training
- August 27 Catechetical Congress

CATHOLIC PSYCHOTHERAPY CONFERENCE

Do you work in mental healthcare? Consider attending!
On **March 25-26**. Themed: "Implementing the Catholic Faith into Your Practice: Psychotherapy in the Service of the Church." Talks, workshops and networking opportunities, including presentations by three of Colorado's four bishops: Denver's Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., and Auxiliary Bishop James D. Conley, and Colorado Springs' Bishop Michael J. Sheridan. Get more info or register go to:
www.catholicpsychotherapy.org/conference

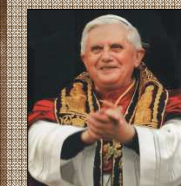
Finest Wheat

A newsletter for the New Evangelization
March 2011

Inside:

- Liturgy as public prayer
- Why do people clap at the end of Mass?
- Formation opportunities during summer

Pope Benedict's prayer intentions for March 2011



General intention: "That the nations of Latin America may walk in fidelity to the Gospel and be bountiful in social justice and peace."

Missionary intention: "That the Holy Spirit may give light and strength to the Christian communities and the faithful who are persecuted or discriminated against because of the Gospel."

*We encourage you to include these intentions
in the prayers of the faithful.*

Liturgy as public prayer

~James Cavanagh, Metro Area Director



Not long ago I gave a talk about the Mass to a group of parishioners in preparation for the new missal translation. Afterward someone came up to me and said, "You kept using the word 'liturgy,' but you didn't explain what that word means." The question surprised me because I assumed everyone knew what 'liturgy' meant. It was a good question though because it made me realize just how much of a need there is for liturgical catechesis.

What is liturgy? The Catechism gives us a beautiful explanation in paragraphs 1067-1070, a portion of which reads,

"For it is in the liturgy, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, that the work of our redemption is accomplished; and it is through the liturgy especially that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church." [1068]

Originally 'liturgy' meant 'public work' - a work of the people. And many people in the Church still think of it that way. But in Christian usage it has a deeper meaning. It is really Opus Dei - the work of God. As the Catechism says, "In the liturgy of the Church, it is principally his own Paschal mystery that Christ signifies and makes present. Christ always associates the Church with himself in this great work in which God is perfectly glorified and men are sanctified." [1085; 1089]. The liturgy is not ours to "make" - it is Christ's. We receive it as a gift.

The simplest definition of liturgy is "public prayer." I don't use the term "worship" because in all the arguments about liturgy over the past forty years, it is precisely the question of worship that's been at stake. It is true that liturgy is public worship, but what is worship? But that only leads back to the original question: "what is liturgy?"

Pope Benedict XVI, when he was still Cardinal Ratzinger, observed that many people think of the liturgy as something that individual congregations arrange, with groups making up their own liturgies from week to week. Since many came to regard liturgy as the product of individual congregations, the sense of the Mass as coming to us "from above" or "from outside" was lost or at least severely obscured. Congrega-

tional activity thus became the chief measure by which liturgy was evaluated. But with the increase of external activity came a decrease in the interior participation of the people. "Where the inner dimension was neglected," Cardinal Ratzinger said, "the liturgy seemed boring and unintelligible. The quiet following of the Mass, as we knew it former times, was far more realistic and dramatic: it was a sharing in the action at a deep level and in it the community of faith was silently and powerfully mobilized." (Feast of Faith, p. 101) He doesn't discount the value of "active participation" commonly understood, but when active participation is equated with external activity and 'busyness' something essential is lost.

Liturgy should be, above all, prayerful so that it fosters prayer in the faithful. Prayer needs silence and time for reflection. That means that the congregation should be given opportunities for quiet reflection without being distracted by external activity. Two places in the Mass require immediate attention, in my opinion. One is at the offertory and the other is during communion. The congregation should not be expected to sing at these times, yet almost everywhere the cantor urges the congregation to sing along. Instead of being given the chance to prayerfully recollect themselves in order to prepare for the miracle about to take place on the altar, the people must fumble with the songbook, reach for their wallet, pass the collection plate and join in the singing.

All that activity detracts from prayer and makes it more difficult to fully participate in the mystery about to unfold. In the second instance during communion, people should be given the opportunity to quietly reflect on what they have just received. It is a time of profound spiritual intimacy. Music at these times should facilitate prayer, not ask that everyone sing. This kind of 'active participation' at such a sublime moment detracts from "unity-creating power of shared listening, shared wonder and the shared experience of being moved at a level deeper than words." (Feast of Faith, p. 101) There is a kind of participation that's much deeper than merely singing together. This is where the choir can play such a vital role in the liturgy. By quietly singing a communion antiphon or some other anthem, without asking the congregation to join in singing, the choir can actually help the people pray more deeply and thus enable them to participate more fully in the Mass.

Continues on page 3

Almost everyone understands what is meant by prayer, even if they don't do it very well or as often as they should. If we think of liturgy as prayer then it's not hard to see why worship sometimes isn't all that it could be. We don't know how to pray as we ought and so we turn to Christ saying, "Lord, teach us to pray!" Liturgy, like prayer, comes from the Lord because liturgy is prayer - public prayer. It is the prime place where we learn how to pray. It's the place where our feeble attempts at prayer are supported and elevated by the prayer of the Universal Church, the communion of saints and the entire heavenly host. If the liturgy is simply the product of our own making demanding maximum activity by everyone in the same way and to the same degree, then prayerful participation in the mystery of our salvation, which transcends time and space, will be wanting.

Why Do We Do That? Catechesis on the Liturgy

Why do people clap at the end of Mass?

When a recital or any kind of performance takes place it is customary to clap at the end, even if the performance is rather mediocre. It's only natural and polite to show our appreciation by clapping. People who clap at Mass mean well, but be careful. Applause reveals a fundamental misunderstanding about what the Mass is. The Mass is not a performance. What we celebrate in the Mass is the Paschal mystery by which Christ accomplished the work of our salvation. It is a participation in his passion, death, resurrection and ascension whereby we are taken up with him into the divine life of the Most Holy Trinity. Applause suggests that the liturgy is not a sacred mystery in which we participate, but a performance that we watch, like a play or a concert. Applause suggests that we are not active participants in the liturgy, but an audience. "Where applause breaks out in the liturgy because of some human achievement," Pope Benedict said in his book Spirit of the Liturgy, "it is a sure sign that the essence of liturgy has totally disappeared and been replaced by a kind of religious entertainment." If you feel compelled to applaud at the end of Mass, put your hands together in prayer and thank the Lord for what he has just done for you.

SAVE THE DATE!

Ascension Press & the Office of Evangelization
Presents

MATTHEW IN A DAY

With Thomas Smith

April 30

Sacred Heart of Mary
South Boulder Rd., Boulder

\$45 (by Apr. 15)
\$55 (after Apr. 15)

SAVE THE DATE!

BEGINNINGS

RCIA Training

With the
North American Forum on the Catechumenate.

August 4-6

St. Thomas More
8035 S. Quebec St., Centennial

Details regarding cost will be available soon.

For more information about
North American Forum go to www.naforum.org

SAVE THE DATE!

2011 CATECHETICAL CONGRESS
"DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME."

August 27

Renaissance hotel
3801 Quebec St., Denver

The focus for 2011 is on the Mass and the implementation of the revised Roman Missal. The 2011 Catechetical Sunday theme: "Do This In Memory of Me".