

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

Mary and Jesus

Q. Jesus seems to demean Mary when he says, "Who are my mother and brothers? ... Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." (Mark 3:31-35). Protestants think that Catholics esteem Mary too much; even more than Jesus did. How do Catholics account for Jesus' dismissive attitude toward Mary, as shown by this passage?

A. One of the major themes of the Gospels is discipleship: how to be a true follower of Jesus. Jesus spells out the requirements of discipleship in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere, saying that a real disciple is one who does the will of God. Jesus may seem to belittle Mary, downplaying her importance by praising the "true disciples" who do God's will. But a deeper perspective shows us that's not the case. St. Augustine, in a sermon on this Gospel says that Jesus is, in fact, actually elevating Mary. He asks, "Did the Virgin Mary, who believed by faith and conceived by faith...did she not do the will of the Father? Indeed the blessed Mary certainly did the Father's will, and so it was for her a greater thing to have been Christ's disciple than to have been his mother, and she was more blessed in her discipleship than in her motherhood" (*Sermon 25, 7-8: PL 46, 937*). *Mary stands first in line of those who do God's will. She is the first and preeminent disciple and a model for all those who follow Jesus. In other words, even if Mary had not become the biological Mother of Jesus, she would still be a prime example of discipleship for Christians because of her obedience and willingness to do the will of the Father.*

Scott Powell - Instructor, Catholic Biblical School

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
For registrations forms please call 303-715-3260

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".

Finest Wheat

A newsletter for the New Evangelization
May 2011

Inside:

- Conversing with God
- JP II is blessed

Pope Benedict's prayer intentions for May 2011



General intention: "That those who work in the media may always respect truth, solidarity and the dignity of each person."

Missionary intention: "That the Lord may grant the Church in China the capacity to persevere in fidelity to the Gospel and to grow in unity."

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



“The first victims of the spiritual and cultural crisis gripping world are the young. It is also true that any commitment to the betterment of society finds its hopes in them. This should stimulate the Church all the more to proclaim the Gospel to the world of youth with courage and creativity.” [General Directory for Catechesis, no. 181]

May is a big month for confirmations. The liturgy office reports that more than 6200 kids were confirmed last year and expects a comparable number this year.

There are two basic periods of preparation and catechesis for confirmation – remote and proximate. Both are necessary. Remote preparation involves ongoing catechesis from preschool through confirmation. Proximate preparation involves liturgical catechesis that prepares for the sacrament itself. In some places remote preparation is practically non-existent. Youngsters receive a little instruction before first reconciliation and communion and then nothing until they prepare for confirmation.

I, like many of you, worry that too many young people are confirmed without being adequately catechized. They receive the information but you wonder how much of it sinks in. One reason they're not well catechized is that they haven't been evangelized. Without a personal relationship with Christ, efforts to pass on the faith to the next generation will be frustrated, and frustrating. Young people need to be taught how to develop their own 'conversation with Christ.'

In his "Letter to Youth" John Paul II reflects on the story of the rich young man who asked Jesus the secret to eternal life – eternal happiness. "What must I do?" is a question that everyone asks, John Paul II notes, but especially so youth. It has a transcendent dimension because it's not just about immediate concerns like a career; it has to do the meaning and purpose of life. It's the same sort of question that John Paul II dealt with in "the Christian meaning of human suffering" (*Salvici Doloris*). "Why suffering? like "What must I do?" is ultimately a question that's put to God.

The young man went away sad. Why? Obviously, one reason is that he followed his baser passions and decided to put his trust in material wealth rather than Christ. But could

it be also that he knew somewhere deep down inside that he was forfeiting a treasure far more valuable than gold and silver? Could it be that he did not recognize the special treasure that was *himself*? "The decision to go away from Christ," John Paul II reflected, "was definitively influenced only by external riches, what the young man possessed. Not by what he was! What he was, as precisely a young man – the interior treasure hidden in youth – had led him to Jesus." Since the question "What must I do with my life?" can only be answered by God, ultimately, we must teach youngsters how to converse with Christ and to comprehend the "special treasure" that is youth which can lead them to Christ.

Young people preparing for confirmation need to be evangelized before they can be catechized. They need to know Christ. That means they need to know the gospel. Any confirmation program that neglects a thorough acquaintance with Christ in the gospel is, in my judgment, inadequate. In the Letter to Young People the Holy Father's entire message is built on an encounter with Christ. Toward the end of that Letter he urged young people to pray: "Open you hearts and your consciences to the one who knows you better than you know yourselves. Talk to him! Deepen your knowledge of the word of the living God by reading and meditating on the Scriptures."

With all the confirmations taking place in May, this might be a good time to reflect on the effectiveness of your programs. How well do those being confirmed know Christ and the teachings which he left to his Church? One of my goals this summer is to devise a set of guidelines and learning goals to help catechists prepare young people for confirmation. Your input would be greatly appreciated.

**DRE meeting -
Confirmation guidelines:
a discussion**
Thursday, May 5th
 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
 John Paul II Center
 (1300 S. Steele St., Denver) - Room 123
 Please RSVP at 303-715-3260 or at
ursula.jimenez@archden.org

'John Paul II is blessed!' – Pope Benedict pays tribute to his predecessor
By David Kerr

Rome, Italy, May 1, 2011 / 04:35 am (CNA/EWTN News).- Pope Benedict XVI has beatified Pope John Paul II. In a ceremony before hundreds of thousands of pilgrims in Rome he explained his great admiration and affection for his predecessor.

"John Paul II is blessed because of his faith, a strong, generous and apostolic faith."

It's estimated that two million pilgrims have descended on Rome for the occasion. The Pope told them that Blessed John Paul II, as he can now be called, had reinvigorated the Catholic Church following his election as pontiff in October 1978.

"By his witness of faith, love and apostolic courage, accompanied by great human charisma, this exemplary son of Poland helped believers throughout the world not to be afraid to be called Christian, to belong to the Church, to speak of the Gospel." "In a word: he helped us not to fear the truth, because truth is the guarantee of liberty. To put it even more succinctly: he gave us the strength to believe in Christ, because Christ is 'Redemptor hominis,' the Redeemer of man."

The presidents of Italy, Poland and Mexico were among some 90 heads of state and other dignitaries attending the beatification. Pope Benedict recalled for them the key role Blessed John Paul II's pontificate played in the peaceful dismantling of communism.

"When Karol Wojtyla ascended to the throne of Peter, he brought with him a deep understanding of the difference between Marxism and Christianity, based on their respective visions of man. This was his message: man is the way of the Church, and Christ is the way of man."

It was Blessed John Paul's first papal visit to communist-controlled Poland in 1979 that many historians pinpoint as the beginning of the end for communism. Today in St. Peter's Square, the Polish flag was being waived everywhere by



thrilled Poles.

"He rightly reclaimed for Christianity that impulse of hope which had in some sense faltered before Marxism and the ideology of progress. He restored to Christianity its true face as a religion of hope, to be lived in history in an 'Advent' spirit, in a personal and communitarian existence directed to Christ, the fullness of humanity and the fulfillment of all our longings for justice and peace."

On very personal note, Pope Benedict also recalled his 23 years in charge of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith when worked closely alongside Blessed John Paul.

"I was at his side and came to revere him all the more. My own service was sustained by his spiritual depth and by the richness of his insights. His example of prayer continually impressed and edified me."

The coffin of Blessed John Paul II will now be on display in St. Peter's Basilica until tomorrow to allow pilgrims to venerate him.

