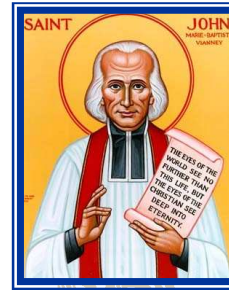


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ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER OFFICE OF EVANGELIZATION & CATECHESIS

Finest Wheat
 A newsletter for the New Evangelization

Catechesis in the Year of the Priest
 -James Cavanagh, Metro Area Director

JUNE 2009

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.

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 management/Lesson Planning Basics"
 - "Sacramental economy—Reconciliation"
 - "Faith Development of Children"
 - "Parents' Role in Catechesis and how to involve them"
- 11:00 am Workshops II (repeated 10am workshops)
- 12:00 pm Optional Lunch

Call (303) 715-3260 to pre-register

AROUND THE METRO AREA THIS SUMMER

- LOGOS – Eucharistic Summer Series**
 Each evening will consist of praise and worship, a Eucharistic teaching and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.
June 9th, 7:00-8:30pm @ Church of the Risen Christ. Steve Nepil will speak on "Eucharistic Theology."
July 14th, 7:00-8:30pm @ St. Frances Cabrini. Jim Beckman will speak on "The Eucharist & Silence."
Aug. 11th, 7:00-8:30pm @ St. Thomas More. Bishop James Conley will speak on "Our Response to the Eucharist."
- St. Mary, Littleton**
 "Men are from Clay. Women are from Ribs". Fri. June 6, 6:00 a.m. Mary Beth Bonacci. Sponsored by "That Man is You."
- Christ the King (Denver)**
 Closing of the Year of St. Paul - Movie and Discussion on June 29th
- Immaculate Heart of Mary**
 Journey Days – Family Festival: June 26th and 27th; includes Golf tournament, Silent auction, and Mass of Unity
- St. Catherine of Siena**
 Festival – June 5th, 6th, and 7th; includes food, music, raffles, and games for all ages!
- St. Michael the Archangel**
 Book Club "Living Your Strengths" begins on June 27th
- Spirit of Christ**
 Fr. Justin Grose: "The History of the Church: Resurrection to Present" – July 7, 8, 9 and 14, 15, 16
- Shrine of St. Anne**
 Annual Parish Bazaar – July 24, 25, and 26



June 19 marks the beginning of the "Year of the Priest." But I worry that many Catholics will not give the Year the attention it deserves. Many parishioners will probably think that a "Year of the *Priest*" is irrelevant to them because they're *not priests*. Others, including some priests, might not give the Year the attention it deserves because of a concern that focusing on the priesthood might invite an unhealthy form of clericalism where everything revolves around the priest; where the laity are patronized and deterred from meaningful involvement in the Church.

Over the last 45 years, the laity have assumed a much larger role in the life of the Church, rightly fulfilling their baptismal vocation. This has been a tremendous blessing for the Church. Since Vatican II the Church has stressed the importance of how the faithful are called to 'full, active and conscious participation' in the liturgy and the life of the Church in keeping with their baptismal dignity. With an increased emphasis on the priestly nature of the people of God, however, one may wonder if an unintended consequence has been a diminishment of the ministerial priesthood. Could this have something to do with a shortage of vocations? Perhaps. But there are other reasons for the shortage, one being that we haven't encouraged vocations as much as we should have.

A recent issue of The National Catholic Register reported on a survey commissioned by the USCCB, which found that a *lack of encouragement* has more to do with the shortage of new vocations than most other factors. "No less than 45% of priests planning to be ordained this year" it said, "reported they were discouraged from considering the priesthood. One can only assume that the figure is just as high, or even higher, for those who seriously considered a priestly vocation but didn't pursue it."

Obviously, the Year of the Priest will highlight the importance of the ministerial priesthood, but that shouldn't detract from the laity's role in the life and mission of the Church. On the contrary, the Year of the

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Papal Intentions for June



General: That the international attention towards the poorer countries may give rise to more concrete help, in particular to relieve them of the crushing burden of foreign debt.

Mission: That the particular Churches operating in regions marked by violence may be sustained by the love and concrete closeness of all the Catholics in the world.

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

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You are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises" of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ~ 1 Peter 2:9

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Priest presents us with an ideal catechetical opportunity: it is an invitation to reflect on and teach about what it means to be the priestly people of God.

"In the Church there is a diversity of ministry but a oneness of mission," the Second Vatican Council taught. "Christ conferred on the Apostles and their successors 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*" (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, 2, *emphasis added*).

"Incorporated into Christ's Mystical Body through Baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through Confirmation" (AA 3) the laity are endowed with a dignity befitting sons and daughters of God. Do we believe it? Consider one example. When we attend Mass we expect the priest to be attired appropriately for the celebration of the sacred mysteries: alb, stole and chasuble. If the ordained priest is expected to vest in accordance with the dignity of his vocation and the solemnity of the occasion, does it not follow that the priestly people of God should also dress in a way that dignifies the 'marriage supper of the Lamb?' Flip flops, cut-offs and t-shirts do not exactly reflect the dignity of the Mass. More importantly, such attire does not reflect the dignity of person who belongs to the priestly people of God. How one dresses at Mass may not be the most important thing, but it's not irrelevant. For how one dresses not only expresses one's respect of others and the holy sacrifice of the Mass, it also expresses one's own self esteem – or lack thereof. When it comes to the liturgy, everything is significant.

The Year of the Priest was chosen by Pope Benedict XVI to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the death of St. John Vianney, the Cure 'd Ars. He chose the theme, he said, to "encourage 'spiritual perfection' in priests." The focus on

priestly perfection should encourage all of us to reflect on our own pursuit of perfection according to our state in life. Christ's directive - "Be perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect" - was addressed to the *multitudes*, not just to the twelve apostles.

One of the most recognizable expressions of Vatican II is the "universal call to holiness." "Everyone," the Council Fathers said, "whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness" (LG 39). The Year of the Priest is for everyone, not just those who are ordained. Good and holy priests inspire us to be good and holy people. But the converse is also true. Good and holy priests are cultivated in the fertile soil of good and holy families and parishes. The priestly people of God and the ministerial priesthood are inseparable. A holy people will produce holy priests. If priests are called to spiritual perfection, so are we. "Everyone, whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness." And what does "holiness" mean? Nothing less than the perfection of charity. Everyone, lay and ordained, is called to follow in Christ's footsteps and "conform themselves to His image seeking the will of the Father in all things. They must devote themselves with all their being to the glory of God and the service of their neighbor" (LG 40).

One final remark. In keeping with the Year of the Priest I urge every parish to include prayers for Pope Benedict, Archbishop Chaput, Bishop Conley, and your own pastor (and assistant priests) in the Prayers of the Faithful *every Sunday*. I also urge you to include a prayer for an increase of vocations to the priesthood and religious life. In this way, we honor our priests, encourage vocations and strengthen our solidarity with the universal Church. ❖



Praying the Psalms for Life

Retreat with Thomas Smith



June 29-July 1
St. Malo Retreat Center
To Register call 303.715.3260
(space is limited)

- Rediscover and Reignite your love for the Psalms
- Learn the ancient Hebrew images that will unlock these powerhouses of prayer
- Discover the meaning of meditation and the centrality of Christ in the Psalms
- Connect the Psalter with the ancient forms of prayer and renew your praying of the Office
- Master the methods for teaching the Psalms to your parish, community, or class

IF YOU REGISTER BEFORE JUNE 15, YOU'LL SAVE MONEY! (\$95 FOR DOUBLE OCCUPANCY; \$125 FOR SINGLE)



National Catholic Bible Conference 2009

The National Catholic Bible Conference has been designed to equip all Catholics with the skills needed to read, understand, and proclaim Sacred Scripture. This annual event allows you to spend time with, and learn from, some of the most effective biblical scholars today as they share the keys to unlocking the riches of the Bible.

June 26 - 27, 2009

St. Thomas More Parish, Centennial
Please visit
<http://catholicbibleconference.com>
for more information and to register.

UPCOMING EVENTS



DRE Meeting June 11: 9am-11am JP II Center

Presentation by Andrew Watson, DRE at St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Denver

The Great Adventure has grown into a remarkable system designed to give the average Catholic a solid foundation for a lifetime of Bible reading. Parishes around the world are finding renewed faith and increased involvement among parishioners whose lives have been changed by this exciting study series.

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