



2021 February

Annunciation



VOL. 1 Issue 3



A CATECHETICAL UPDATE OF
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PORTLAND

Family Catechesis in Parish Life

by Rolando Moreno

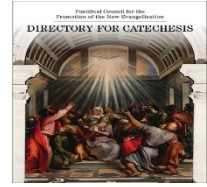
The Catechism states that *“The Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (CCC #2205).* As an icon of the Trinity, the Christian family stands as a visible sign of the presence of God in the world. The renewal of Catholic life will come through the intentional ministry toward the family and by the family. This year has brought many things to the light, most notably the importance of family life and the home. As it relates to catechesis, the family remains the preeminent context for the transmission of the faith. In other words, nothing replaces the role of parents as Christian disciples and primary catechists. Now more than ever is the opportunity to reevaluate how we do ministry. As we have had to do more from the home, perhaps more than ever before, it is time to take advantage of the moment and develop family catechesis as a mode of transmitting the faith in parish life. Much will need to take place to accomplish this, not the least of which is a shift in thinking and praxis on the part of parish leaders. Their openness of heart and mind is crucial. What is being proposed here is the need to take a serious look at developing family catechesis as a viable form of teaching the faith.

Dr. Ryan Mainard, our featured speaker in this edition, will be offering a presentation on how to develop a family catechesis model in your parish. If you are interested in learning what he has done at his parish (St. John the Apostle, Oregon City) please consider attending [this workshop](#). As lay ministers in the Church, may we always be receptive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Lastly, in the words of St. John Paul II, *“the absolute need for family catechesis emerges with particular force in certain situations that the Church unfortunately experiences in some places, places where widespread unbelief or invasive secularism makes real religious growth practically impossible, the Church of the home remains the one place where children and young people can receive an authentic catechesis”* (Familiaris Consortio # 52).

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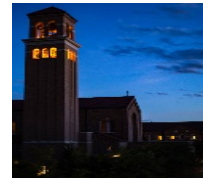
What's Coming Up

On March 4, 2021: Rolando will be leading a virtual bi-monthly study series on the New Catechetical Directory. This will be an opportunity to study it together and learn how to apply it to our ministries. This workshop will take place both virtually and in-person at Queen of Peace parish in Salem. To register either for in-person or virtual click [here](#). To participate you will need a copy of the directory. To order a copy go to [HERE](#).



On Wednesday March 31 at 6:00pm: Dr. Ryan Mainard in collaboration with the Archdiocese, will be giving in-person workshop on family catechesis at St. John the Apostle parish. This workshop will highlight the importance of family catechesis, how to develop a program at your parish and Dr. Mainard's own experience of implementing this at his parish over the last couple of years. All parish staff leaders and pastors are highly encouraged to attend. To register go to [this Eventbrite registration page](#).

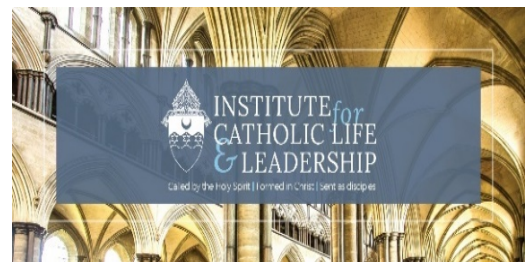
Registration is Now Open! We are planning to offer the **Annual Faith Formation Leaders Retreat on April 5-7** at Mt. Angel Abbey Retreat House. The Easter Season will be a nice time for rest, prayer, and fellowship. Mount Angel has been open to a limited number of retreatants throughout the pandemic and has been following strict COVID-19 precautions. For more information and to register click [here](#)



The Institute for Catholic Life and Leadership

Fr. Tim Furlow and Sr. Guadalupe Medina will continue their class on moral theology on February 27th at Shepherd of the Valley in Central Point. Their bios are [here](#).

Look for an update very soon on courses in the fall of 2021. For more information regarding the Institute click [HERE](#).



Domestic Church Resources:

Catechetical Institute

If you are interested in learning more about the domestic church and wanting to a deep dive the [Catechetical Institute](#), can help you in the comfort of your own home. There is a workshop called [The Family as the Context of Catechesis](#). This workshop examines the primacy of the family in religious education and the importance of assisting families in their formation.

For future Franciscan University offers every year an amazing opportunity for growth at the [St. John Bosco Conference](#) which is happening July 12 -15. There are well over 50 different speakers and many different tracks to individualize your learning. Watch last year's speech from Archbishop Sample [here](#). For more information and ways to enroll with the support of your archdiocese contact rmoreno@archdpx.org

Bilingual Domestic Church Articles

The [Catechetical Review](#) is a great resource for all who teach the faith in parish catechetical ministry. Here is a great article on the scriptural and historical reference concerning the domestic church. You can find it [here](#) in English and its translation into Spanish [here](#). To subscribe to the *Catechetical Review*, click [HERE](#)

Also, at your fingertips:

[The Domestic Church Project](#) is a 6-week program to help young families have real conversations about their faith and answer kids' questions as together they build their domestic church. This might provide a jump start for parents to be able to ask better questions. When parents want to know what their kids are really thinking about their faith and they don't know where to start. A great Lenten project for the whole family!!

[So, Your Domestic Church is a Fixer Upper](#) is a great article for mom's just starting out with young families



Speaker Spotlight: Ryan Mainard & Empowering Your Families



[Dr. Ryan Mainard](#) is the pastoral associate at St. John the Apostle in Oregon City. Recently we discussed the challenges and realities of creating a faith formation community. Ryan earned his doctorate in Theology at Mount Angel Seminary with an emphasis on the Domestic Church. Ryan is available to speak at your parish.

As many parishes are faced with yet another challenge of how to implement a catechetical program, why do you think focusing on creating the domestic church will help?

John Paul II is often quoted as saying “The future of humanity passes by way of the family” ([Familiaris Consortio](#)). When I consider that document and compare it to what usually happens at an average parish, the drop off/pick up model, which is what we have been doing for 40 years, I see a stark contrast. That current catechetical method is not working. We can see evidence in the number of people leaving the church in high school and college, we are hemorrhaging young Catholics. I believe our youth are moving away from their faith, not because of a theological issue, rather, it is an absence of community. Fostering intentional relationships within a parish, outside of the mass, is the response that is needed. The answer is family faith formation.

What is the biggest challenge to getting this accomplished?

There is so much working against parents prioritizing our faith. Much of the culture is working against the development of faith in the family and parents are pressured into prioritizing sports, school, video games, the next bigger car or house above matters of the faith. Many societal expectations require parents to perform in such a way that is fundamentally at odds with Kingdom values. Sometimes we want to see the Kingdom of God in the world but the reality that the world has a different ruler. There was a study done about 15 years ago which reported that the de facto faith of teens was belief in a nice God that does not put any moral restrictions on anyone, a “moralistic therapeutic deism “. Well, now, those kids have children, and these beliefs are now deeply embedded in the next generation.

So, how do we change that, where do we start?

You start small, you think big, move slowly, and you grow the core, much like Jesus’ ministry with the disciples and then the apostles. You start with a small core group of families that believe in Kingdom values and committed to sharing and raising their kids in the faith. From there you grow the core group and invite more families with the eventual aim of implementing family faith formation for the whole parish. You must take the long view and try to change the culture within your parish.

Did you, as the leader, encounter difficulties, spiritual warfare? Because the ruler of this world will not want you to succeed.

Of course, you must lead with your eyes open, none of us are saints and we each have our own spiritual challenges. But in my experience, the core families persisted, not in finding or creating a new program but in affecting a shift in culture not relying on other catechists to teach the faith but relying on the parent-catechists as the primary teachers.

What does that look like practically?

We started the year with a retreat, which was primarily for fellowship with some catechesis, we also have two meetings once a month: one for the parents, and one for the whole family. The latter meeting is not for catechesis but to build community. The primary goal is forming disciples. Every parent is asked to lead an activity during a community meeting at least once during the year. The result is that kids do not see their own parents as weird for practicing the Catholic faith. They see other parents practicing the same Catholic faith and see them as inspirational. We also have mutual disciple families, where we pair up families for the year, to be able to regularly check in with each other. It has been essential, and a great blessing to have the full support of the pastor. It can be easy for parents to be discouraged, which is why a lot of my job is to be a cheerleader for family faith formation and keep encouraging the good work of the parents.

Has COVID-19 changed things?

It really hasn’t changed much, except now we wear masks and we socially distance. Everything we do is live and in person. We had smaller numbers for our sacrament programs, but that is not always a bad thing. Each parent and child during sacramental preparation goes through a lesson together and meals are taken as a family at their own table.



Prayer for the creation of the Domestic Church
Give this to your families!
Act of family consecration:

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary, we consecrate ourselves and our entire family to you. We consecrate to you: our very being and all our life. All that we are. All that we have. And all that we love. To you we give our bodies, our hearts, and our souls. To you we dedicate our home and our country. Mindful of this consecration, we promise you to live the Christian way by the practice of Christian virtues, with great regard for respect for one another. O Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary, accept our humble confidence and this act of consecration by which we entrust ourselves and all our family to you. Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us. Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.