



2021 August

Annunciation



VOL. 1 Issue 9



A CATECHETICAL NEWSLETTER OF
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PORTLAND

Sitting at the Feet of Jesus

by Rolando Moreno

The disciples spent three critical years with Jesus in personal formation. Arguably some of the most important years of their lives. It was their time to be formed, to grow in certainty of Christ and his salvific mission. In many ways Pentecost was the culmination of these three years and the necessary event to usher forward their mission as disciples. Even St. Paul would undergo a time of formation before venturing forth as the apostle to the gentiles (Cf. Acts 9:23-31). This is true for us as well. To be his disciples, we must spend some significant time at the feet of the Master, listening, being molded, and allowing our hearts to be seized by Christ. Formation is critical, it's how we begin to fall in love with Christ. *"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me"* (Mt. 11:29). Our time in formation is equally the most critical stage for us too. Time with the Lord is never a waste. It's a time of true conversion, a time to begin to conform our whole life to Christ. Quoting once again this paragraph from the Catechism, *"Whoever is called 'to teach Christ' must first seek 'the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus'; he must suffer 'the loss of all things' in order to gain Christ and be found in him"* CCC 428).

Christ as our all in all is so beautifully captured in The Suscipe prayer of St. Ignatius Loyola,

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, my entire will – all that I have and call my own. You have given it all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours: do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace. That is enough for me.

- WHAT'S INSIDE
- What's coming up
- Institute News
- Articles on Continuing Education
- Speaker Spotlight
- Prayers for you

What's Coming Up

August 18: As we continue our series in honor of St. Joseph, Sr. Veronica Schuler, our beloved Chancellor, will delight us on [Facebook Live](#) at 7pm. Stay tuned to our archdiocese website for more details.

August 28: Orientation/Registration Deadline for Foundational Certificate Program. See below for links/info.

September September 7: How to effectively reach parents to truly enable them, not just exhort them. A webinar offered for free from the Franciscan Catechetical Institute



The Continuing Educational Aim Of The Archdiocese:

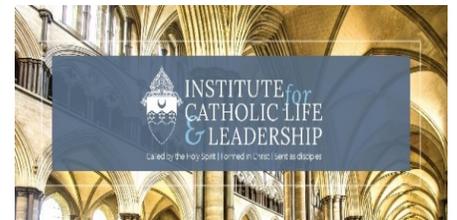
Each month, if you have followed this newsletter, we have tried to put together a workshop or two, or an article or two, in both languages, with which to support those in ministry. From Priests to DRE's to the volunteer catechist, every effort made has been to inform everyone during this time of the resources that are available to them. In the next few months, you are going to be hearing a lot from these two educational platforms as the Archdiocese tries to effect a basic standard of excellent catechesis. It is the desire of the Archbishop to make sure every person who entrusted with handing on the faith, does so in an informed way. To that end, both of these platforms are offered to all in our archdiocese. And now, The Catechetical Institute of Franciscan University is be made available to the whole of the Archdiocese for free. Read more below.

IN PERSON:

The Institute for Catholic Life and Leadership

We are happy to announce that the Institute will offer a new cohort of students for our Foundational Certificate in Theology and Pastoral Ministry!! The new cohort will take place at St. Joseph parish in Salem! Registration is now open! If you are interested in learning your faith more in-depth or have catechists who would like formation, please refer them to the Institute. Due date to register is eminent: **August 28!!**

To register and more information about scholarships, go to our [website](#)



ONLINE: Catechetical Institute

If you have always wanted to have a more complete understanding of your faith, now is the time!! The Archdiocese has embarked on a new partnership with the Catechetical Institute of Franciscan University. Their workshops and ministry tracks are available free to all of our parishes, schools, and selected apostolates. Available in English and Spanish, and with multiple tracts of study that are particular to your role in your parish. To set up your free subscription click [HERE](#)



Articles on Continuing Education

As we enter this last month before the year kicks off, we especially want to inspire both our staff and our volunteers with messages that they will take with them throughout the year. These articles in both English and Spanish discuss how a community's understanding of evangelization significantly influences how catechesis is conceived. The article [Catechesis as Encounter](#), in Spanish, [Catequesis como Encuentro](#) also explores the pedagogical and curricular commitments associated with it. By Dr. Hosffman Ospino, who also co-authored [Reflexiones: Hispanic Ministry](#) which pondering the impact of Hispanic communities on the Church in the United States.



Speaker Spotlight

Fr. Tim Furlow



Fr. Tim Furlow is just one of the instructors at the Institute for Catholic Life & Leadership here in our Archdiocese. As we are looking to begin a new second cohort this fall, we wanted to catch up with Fr. Tim and explore his thoughts on catechesis and his motivation in teaching at the Institute. Father was selected by Church leadership to pursue his seminary training in Rome earning a B.S.T. at the Pontifical Gregorian University and then, was selected again, for a second period of study, his Licentiate, at the University of St. Thomas, also in Rome, in the specific area of expertise of moral theology with a subspecialty of bioethics.

A priest's life is very busy so it was kind of a surprise to everyone that you would have time to teach a class for our Institute. What was your impetus? Why did you want to sacrifice that amount of time?

Well, I signed up when I was a parochial vicar at the Cathedral, and I had more time. But honestly, the deeper underlying reality was that, especially in the last 50, and perhaps, even 100 years, the Church's people and her catechist's have not been catechized very well. They simply have not taught what the Church teaches. The importance then, is to make sure they derive their teaching from the "depositum fidei" - the deposit of faith. In the past, we have experienced catechist's communicating a lackluster faith that is inherently inaccurate. My desire to teach comes from a desire to pass off what the church herself teaches for the good and salvation of the children.

What would you say is the difference between theology and catechesis?

In my mind the distinction is simple: catechetics is the interpersonal execution of theology. You can sit in a room and memorize the catechism or a plethora of quotes from a theology book and have absolutely no idea how to talk to somebody about the Lordship of Jesus. Catechetics is being able to, from your own intimacy with our Lord, share the truth of the Gospel with someone.

From your perspective, how did the students at the Institute change over their time of instruction?

I have one concrete example, and this is my hope for all the classes, when you study theology, if it's not changing you, if it's not drawing you closer to God, then, it's not doing what it's supposed to do. It's not supposed to be a subject like organic chemistry, it's the "queen of the sciences" as Saint Thomas Aquinas called it and it is meant to be a communication of the grace of the Holy Spirit. When the students are engaging with the material, their hearts are converted. I have seen students have major conversion experiences in their spiritual life and in their moral lives just by learning the Truth of the faith. That's what I have observed and that's my hope for all the students.

Would you say that that it's a good investment for a parish to spend the time and money? Are the students able to take that level of knowledge and communicate it to others? Have you observed that?

I think when they complete the program, they have an inherently more acute proficiency in communicated the faith than when they started. Obviously, I have seen a direct correlation to the extent that they engaged the program, but I think, in general, it is higher across the board. If someone were to complete the program, I think they would immediately be able to be utilized by their pastor as lay catechists.

Are you planning to continue teaching with this second cohort?

Yes, if they asked me to continue, yes.

I know that you have a small parish, but you have a unique experience with the Institute in that the only other staff person you have was in the second cohort.

Yes, there is only the two of us and a small team of volunteer catechists. So, I have become the de facto head of catechesis, which honestly, I truly love, and I wish that I had an infinite amount of time to engage them.

What do you think is the largest hole in the functioning of the programing of catechesis? Currently, I am staring at all the workbooks that I have for each grade level even though I'm not a fan of workbooks. As a leader who speaks to catechists, where should we be concentrating our efforts.

Firstly, I think that the biggest hole is probably been our modus operandi in parishes up to this point, which, colloquially, is "let's run people through the course and give them the sacrament they are requesting." The problem with that is that you can end up with people who are catechized but not evangelized. They may know information, but they don't know Jesus. So, my hope is every time we communicate a piece of information that is true about the faith, that we realize it is part of the bigger truth, Jesus himself. Then our minds and our hearts are set on knowing Him, loving Him, and serving Him.

These days, catechetical leaders are reticent to continue the same “drop-off method” of program. They are searching for a more meaningful way to communicate the faith.

Teaching the faith within the family is infinitely more important than what goes on at the parish. The most critical time to communicate the truth to someone is when they are in their primary stages of development. If there's no one in the family that is very intentionally guiding them into a relationship with Jesus and into a solid understanding of what God has revealed to us to be true, then they are probably not going to get it. That level of catechesis is what leads children to be able to derive the benefit that they can from a catechesis that's outside of the house.

What would you say to church ecclesial leadership to help them to see the value of their catechists moving through this program?

I would say to my brother priests: go to the heart of why we are priests. The reason they became priests, very simply, was for the salvations of souls. That's all God cares about; that people are with him forever. If our catechists are not giving our new people the True Faith, if they are giving an alternative version or their own version, those people are not having the actual opportunity to convert. Ultimately, we will answer for the quality of catechesis that we offer in our parishes.

What is your parish working on right now?

I am reading [Bob Schuchts' "Be Healed"](#) which I think is a fantastic book. In the parish we are working on deeper level of organization among staff and volunteers so that we can specifically help our people engage the inner healing that Jesus wants to give them and deliverance from anything that is evil. Because when you are healed, and you are delivered then the Holy Spirit can really do with you what the Father has willed from all eternity to do with you.

A Prayer for Catechists

**Loving God, Creator of all things,
you call us to be in relationship
with you and others.**

**Thank you for calling me to be a catechist,
for the opportunity to share with others
what you have given to me.**

**May all those with whom I share the gift of faith
discover how you are present in all things.**

**May they come to know you, the one true God,
and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.
May the grace of the Holy Spirit guide my heart and lips,
so that I may remain constant in loving and praising
you.**

**May I be a witness to the Gospel and
a minister of your truth.
May all my words and actions reflect your love.
Amen.**

