Dear Catechetical leaders:

As I sit at my desk at the Pastoral Center and glance up from my work, I’m suddenly made aware of darkening grey clouds and thunderheads in the western sky. Ominous skies are usually a metaphor for gloomy things ahead—but in central Texas in a mid-July heat wave, they can be a most welcome sight. It all depends on one’s perspective.

Occasionally we’re faced with problems and challenges in our work, our health, and our relationships. The prospects can start looking really scary, the signs are ominous and we can feel overwhelmed. I certainly have those experiences, and so have the Saints. That’s why I like these perspective-correcting words of advice from St. Catherine of Siena, patroness of our 2017 Diocesan Women’s Conference:

“Start being brave about everything. Drive out darkness and spread light. Don’t look at your weaknesses. Realize instead that in Christ crucified you can do everything.”

What’s your perspective on the challenges ahead of you? Is your “inner chicken” controlling the thoughts in your head—or can you find in Christ crucified, the grace of confident humility and a source of strength?

Sharon K. Perkins, Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Family Life

Summer 2017 Recap and News Briefs

Gustavo Rodriguez, Associate Director for Catechesis

We are in full swing of summer and have been blessed with so many activities going on at the pastoral center and around the diocese. This year we have been focusing on methodology and pedagogy so most of our formation class offerings have followed a common format and goal. We had the opportunity to work with our different publishers—OSV, Sadlier, Loyola Press, RCL Benziger—who presented on best practices for maximum utilization of the catechetical resources for instruction they provide.

In April, we offered a training on serving persons with special needs presented by Charleen Katra, Associate Director of Galveston Houston Office of Evangelization and Catechesis. As a follow-up, Charleen will join us once again on October 9 to present practical strategies on accompanying children with special needs in sacramental formation. On August 12, this training will be offered in Spanish at the Pastoral Center. During this same time, Dr. Joseph White will offer two workshops —Involving Parents, Engaging Families on October 23 and Engaging Children & Teens in their Faith in a Culture of Distractions on November 6. We are blessed to have both presenters share their expertise with us.

Once again our summer certification program has been a huge success! We have had a great number of DREs, catechists and Catholic school teachers attending. In order to encourage continual progress—and allow DREs the opportunity to participate from their home, work or office settings—we will offer a few online DRE certification classes (formally on Google Hangout) which will be now known as the “Zoom Journey to DRE.” These four classes will be offered in the fall beginning in September.
Now for something new! Lately we’ve become aware of quite a few parish personnel changes, so we decided to host an online “Meet and Greet” session on August 16 to allow our new catechetical leaders the opportunity to connect with their peers early in the catechetical year. Also in the works, is our first “New (or relatively new) DRE Boot Camp” at the Pastoral Center on September 14! (We’ll still have our annual wintertime DRE orientation gathering).

As you plan your calendar, keep in mind that the Second Annual Diocesan Women’s Conference is on September 23 in Buda; we invite all of you to bring your teams to the conference for a faith-filled day with incredible keynote presenters and participants from around the diocese (retreat credit applies toward certification). September 17 is Catechetical Sunday and resources are available on the USCCB website—and this year’s theme parallels the theme of the V Encuentro to “Live as Missionary Disciples.”

At the start of a new catechetical year, as we anticipate opportunities for continuous formation focused on methodology, we pray that the Holy Spirit continues to fill us with energy and love so that our joy in spreading the Gospel can be contagious and transmitted to the lives of the people we serve.
August 3, 2017: Forgiveness: Healing Path to New Life

Forgiveness is a commitment to a process of change. It can be difficult and it can take time. Everyone moves toward forgiveness a little differently. The desire to forgive is more about how it can change your life by bringing you more peace; emotional and spiritual healing. Forgiveness is not about excusing or condoning the pain inflicted on you. It is about letting go of that pain so that you can heal. This day is designed to bring you to a deeper understanding of forgiveness and to experience God’s healing power. Presenter is Beverly Collin, assistant director at Cedarbrake along with The Mercy of God Prayer Team will present. [Click here to register.]

August 5, 2017: ¿CONFORME CON TU VIDA ESPIRITUAL?

El retiro ¿Conforme Con Tu Vida Espiritual? se llevará a cabo el día 5 de agosto de 9:30 AM a 2:30 PM en el Centro Católico de Retiros Cedarbrake. Será un día con dos charlas: ¡Espíritu Santo! ¿Te conocemos? y ¿Conversión radical? ¿Desde el corazón? La conferencista será Lizbeth H. de Ayala, Directora de Rescatando a la Familia. [Click here to register.]

September 18, 2017: Hearing the Voice of God

Hearing the Voice of God Retreat will be at St. Mary’s in Waco, TX on September 18, from 9 AM to 2:30 PM. Grow in a deeper relationship with God by learning how the Lord speaks to us in our everyday life. Franciscan Father Albert Haase, OFM, will present this day based on his bestselling book entitled, SAYING YES: Discovering and Responding to God’s Will in Your Life. [Click here to register.]

September 29, 2017: The Shepherd Who Didn’t Run

The Shepherd Who Didn’t Run Retreat will be held at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton Sept. 29-Oct. 1. Father Stanley Rother died a martyr’s death on July 28, 1981, in a Guatemalan village where he ministered to the poor. His life remains a testament to the difference one person makes. María Ruiz Scaperlanda, author of the award-winning official biography of this American martyr, will present this weekend. She will highlight five personal qualities Father Stanley proclaimed with his life. At this time, only shared rooms are being offered. If you wish to be placed on a waiting list for a private room (should any become available), please contact us. [Click here to register.]
This year, the Church will celebrate **Catechetical Sunday on September 17, 2017.** The 2017 theme will be "**Living as Missionary Disciples.**" Those whom the Community has designated to serve as catechists will be called forth to be commissioned for their ministry. Catechetical Sunday is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the role that each person plays, by virtue of Baptism, in handing on the faith and being a witness to the Gospel. Catechetical Sunday is also an opportunity for all to rededicate themselves to this mission as a community of faith.


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**Thinking ahead…**

**Catechetical Leaders’ Virtual “Meet & Greet”**

Are you a brand new (or almost new) DRE getting started? Do you have questions and not sure who to call? Have you spoken with the diocesan staff of Evangelization, Catechesis & Family Life? Are you feeling overwhelmed and don’t know where to start? **“YES”?**

Join us for an online Meet & Greet!

**August 16 from 1-2:30 p.m.**

♦ Introductions & Welcome  ♦ Who are we and how can we help?
♦ Staff contact information  ♦ Opportunities for questions
♦ How can we support you?  ♦ General overview
♦ Roles of each ECFL staff member

**Who should participate?**

Newly hired DREs and Coordinators—we’ll help get you set up for the online meeting

How can all DREs help? If you know of a new DRE in your deanery, encourage them to participate and forward their contact information to Carolyn Martinez at (512) 949-2461 or carolyn-martinez@austindiocese.org so that we can reach out to them and make sure they are on our list serve.

Questions? Contact Carolyn, (512) 949-2461  RSVP to carolyn-martinez@austindiocese.org
To RSVP for the August 12 workshop, please email by Thursday, August 10, to reserve your spot.

To RSVP for the October 9 workshop, please email by Thursday, October 5, to reserve your spot.

Email Yolanda Sanchez at yolanda-sanchez@austindiocese.org
Training on a new and revised program by Ascension Press, YOU: Life, Love, and the Theology of the Body, took place on Friday, June 9, 2017, with great success. In attendance were more than sixty leaders including youth ministers, DRE’s, catechists, school teachers, parents, and one principal, who represent different parishes, schools, and ministries throughout the Diocese. These leaders were trained to use this particular program, and only this one, to facilitate group studies or discussions for their teens and also for parents.

Tom McCabe, our presenter, is an educator, writer, consultant, and frequent conference speaker with more than twenty years of experience serving diocesan and parish organizations. He started the training with a brief overview of what Theology of the Body is, helping the participants understand the current youth culture. The training got more involved and hands-on with his careful guidance through the Facilitator’s Guide, not only teaching the audience how to use the program but also how to implement it effectively using their own personal stories, while coaching them how to become more influential facilitators. The training ultimately touched on some current “difficult” topics and questions (i.e. gay marriage, same sex attraction, and artificial contraception) for which the trainer suggested some valuable principles and tips on handling them well without causing confusion or scandal—using different resourceful media like textbooks, videos, drama, etc. His demonstration of “techniques of a great facilitator” was incredible. This training is part of the Family Life Office’s Leadership Training Series, which is intended in our Diocese to prepare and equip leaders to provide ministries at their local parishes and schools, as well as with their own families, in the areas of marriage and family life. Providing trainings and resources is our direction and our focus.

Missed the training? Have questions? Please feel free to call (512) 949-2470 for Dr. Phi Le, Associate Director for Family Life

Click here for office website. Email phi-le@austindiocese.org
2017 Catechetical Calendar Dates
English & Spanish

SUMMER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM COMING TO AN END!

Visit our 2017 webpages to register and view the full class listing for the following programs:

♦ 2017 Summer Certification Program
  Wednesday, July 26: Theological Reflection (retreat credit)
  Thursday, July 27: Christian Leadership (DRE class or continued education)
  Friday, August 4: Building Community—A History of Black Catholics
    (DRE class or continued education)

NEWLY SCHEDULED CLASSES:

♦ National Directory for Catechesis
  September 16: Reicher Catholic High School in Waco, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (ENGLISH)
  November 18: St. Anthony Parish in Bryan, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (ENGLISH)
  September 16: Santa Teresa Parish in Bryan, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (SPANISH)
  October 28: Sacred Heart Parish in Austin, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (SPANISH)

♦ New Evangelization & Catechesis
  October 21: Reicher Catholic High School in Waco, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (ENGLISH)
  December 16: St. Anthony Parish in Bryan, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (ENGLISH)
  September 30: Santa Teresa Parish in Bryan, 9 a.m.—1 p.m. (SPANISH)
  November 11: Sacred Heart Parish in Austin, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (SPANISH)

♦ 2017 Basic Teachings and CAF (English)—visit website for details
♦ 2017 Basic Teachings and CAF (Spanish)—visit website for details

“Zoom Journey to DRE”
(offered online; formerly known as “Google Hangout”)

Working with Volunteers—Part 1: September 5 / Part 2: September 19
Maintaining Professional Balance—Part 1: October 3 / Part 2: October 17
Forming Ministerial Relationships—Part 1: November 14 / Part 2: November 28
Parish Programming & Budgets—Part 1: December 5 / Part 2: December 12

Time for all online Zoom classes is 1-3 p.m. More information to follow, but mark your calendar now!
Note: Registration for these will open in August! Instructions for online access will be provided.
DRE Bootcamp
September 14
Diocesan Pastoral Center

Attention all new or nearly new DREs! This year we are trying something new just for you. Don’t let the image scare you away—DRE Bootcamp is an opportunity to equip yourself with the knowledge, courage and wisdom you will need to tackle all the responsibilities thrown your way (reassuring hugs are provided at no extra charge!). DRE Bootcamp will be held on Thursday, September 14, at the Diocesan Pastoral Center from 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

You are welcome to RSVP to carolyn-martinez@austindiocese.org and we encourage all DREs to share this date with any new DRE in your deanery. If you have any questions, please let us know! More details to follow!

Fall workshops with Dr. Joseph White

Dr. White is a Clinical Psychologist, former Diocesan Director of Family Life, and a National Catechetical Consultant for Our Sunday Visitor.

Involving Parents, Engaging Families
October 23, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Diocesan Pastoral Center
Parents are the first and most important teachers of the faith, but it's often a challenge to get parents and families involved in parish and school faith formation. This session, presented by a child and family psychologist and former diocesan family life director, will discuss tested and effective ways to partner with parents and families and evangelize the domestic church.

Attention, Please!: Engaging Children and Teens in their Faith in a Culture of Distractions
November 6, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Diocesan Pastoral Center
A particular challenge catechists face today is how to engage and maintain the attention of children during learning sessions. In an age of fast-moving electronic media, multi-tasking, and shorter attention spans, how can we help kids be tuned-in and involved with the Gospel? This session, presented by a veteran catechist and child psychologist, will discuss proven strategies for getting -- and keeping -- the attention of children in a group setting.

Certification credit will be given to attendees. These workshops can substitute for the Learning Theories / Learning Styles class or may count towards continued education credit hours.

Registration is open—$15 per workshop.
To register, visit: http://www.austindiocese.org/aff2017
Save the Date!

August 16, 2017  Catechetical Leaders’ Virtual “Meet & Greet” for New DREs
September 14, 2017  DRE Boot Camp!
September 23, 2017  Diocesan Women’s Conference at Santa Cruz, Buda
October 9, 2017  “Made in the Image of God”—Sacramental Formation for Persons with Special Needs, at Diocesan Pastoral Center
October 23, 2017  Catechists Workshop with Dr. Joseph White at the Pastoral Center—Invoking Parents, Engaging Families
November 6, 2017  Catechists Workshop with Dr. Joseph White at the Pastoral Center—Keeping Kids’ Attention

Deanery Meetings

**Austin North/Georgetown/RR:**
Thursday, September 21, 10 a.m.
Santa Rosa de Lima, Andice
Thursday, November 9, 10 a.m.
St. Vincent de Paul, Austin
Thursday, March 8, 10 a.m.
St. William, Round Rock
Thursday, May 10, 10 a.m.
St. Patrick, Hutto

**Austin South & Central:**
Monday, August 21, 10 a.m.
St. John Neumann, Austin

**Waco Deanery:**
Thursday, August 10, 6:30 p.m.
St. Francis, Waco

**Temple/Killeen:**
Thursday, August 17, 4:30 p.m.
St. Mary, Temple

**Bastrop/Lockhart Deanery:**
Pending

**Brenham/La Grange Deanery & Bryan/College Station:**
Monday, August 7, 10 a.m.
St. Anthony, Bryan

**San Marcos Deanery:**
Thursday, August 17, 10 a.m.
St. Mary, Wimberley

**Marble Falls/Lampasas:**
Friday, September 15, 10 a.m.
St. Paul, Horseshoe Bay
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Tuesday, November 7, 2017
8:30am - 2:30pm
Diocese of Austin Pastoral Center
6225 East Highway, Austin, TX 78723

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LIVING AS MISSIONARY DISCIPLES
A Day of Retreat for Catechists

† Keynote by Fr. Patricio Rodriguez
† Breakout Sessions
  † Lunch
  † Adoration
  † Reconciliation
† Diocesan Catechetical Credit Offered

Saturday, August 26, 2017
9am-3pm
$12 per person
St John Neumann Catholic Church
5455 Bee Cave Road
Austin, TX 78746

Hosted by the South & Central Deaneries of the Diocese of Austin

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Christie McGee
512.328.3220, ext. 126
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Sabado, 26 de Agosto de 2017
9am-3pm
$12 por persona

St John Neumann Catholic Church
5455 Bee Cave Road
Austin, TX 78746

Para mas información:
Christie McGee
512.328.3220, ext. 126

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Diocesan Prayer Books & Resources

We are pleased to announce that our Catholic Prayer booklets are being edited and will include new prayers! Both the English and the Spanish books, will soon include the Divine Mercy Chaplet, A Daily Prayer for Vocations, and A Prayer to Know My Vocation.

These newly revised booklets will become available this fall at a very affordable price so we ask for your patience in the meantime. We do have a few of the current Spanish books in stock and also some in English. If you have any questions regarding the prayer books, please let us know.

Other resources available from our office are the religious education class rosters and the student permanent record form. If you are in need of product, please let us know and items may be picked up or mailed.

Click here for the order form for prayer books, rosters, and permanent records.