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Called, Formed, & Sent

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From the
Office of Evangelization and Catechesis

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Blessed and Merry Christmas!

From the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, we wish each of you a Blessed and Merry Christmas! May you have many blessings during this season of love, this season of God's gift to all of us, all humankind!



Anna, Twyla, Bryan, Paul, Joseph

Evangelii Gaudium!

The Joy of the Gospel, Part 2
Pope Francis' New Apostolic Exhortation
by *Bryan Reising*

We will continue to look at this important apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis.

The following are some excerpts, some gems I found in reading this document. Let us see how this apostolic exhortation can help our evangelizing efforts:

On culture, thought, science, and education:

“Proclaiming the Gospel message to different cultures also involves proclaiming it to professional, scientific, and academic circles. This means an encounter between faith, reason, and the sciences with a view to developing new approaches and arguments on the issue of credibility, a creative apologetics which would encourage greater openness to the Gospel on the part of all. When certain categories of reason and the sciences are taken up into the proclamation of the message, these categories then become tools of evangelization; water is changed into wine. Whatever is taken up is not just redeemed, but becomes an instrument of the Spirit for enlightening and renewing the world.” (EG, 132)

On theology: “It is not enough that evangelizers be concerned to reach each person, or that the Gospel be proclaimed to the cultures as a whole. A theology and not simply a pastoral theology – which is in dialogue with other sciences and human experiences is most important for our discernment on how best to bring the Gospel message to different cultural contexts and groups. The Church, in her commitment to evangelization, appreciates and encourages the charism of theologians and their scholarly efforts to advance dialogue with the world of cultures and sciences. I call on theologians to carry out this service as part of the Church's saving mission. In doing so, however, they must always remember that the Church and theology exist to evangelize, and not be content with a desk-bound theology” (EG, 133)

On the homily: “The homily cannot be a form of entertainment like those presented by the media, yet it does need to give life and meaning to the celebration. It is a distinctive genre, since it is preaching situated within the framework of a liturgical celebration; hence it should be brief and avoid taking on the semblance of a speech or a lecture. A preacher may be able to hold the attention of his listeners for a whole hour, but in this case his words become more important than the celebration of faith. If the homily goes on too long, it will affect two characteristic elements of the liturgical celebration: its balance and its rhythm. When preaching takes place within the context of the liturgy, it is part of the

offering made to the Father and a mediation of the grace which Christ pours out during the celebration. This context demands that preaching should guide the assembly, and the preacher, to a life-changing communion with Christ in the Eucharist. This means that the words of the preacher must be measured, so that the Lord, more than his minister, will be the center of attention.” (EG, 138 and Pope Francis continues at length in preparing for homilies, getting to know prayerfully the Word to be preached, getting to know the people who are participating, and delivering homilies. It is in numbers 135-159)

On the kerygma (first proclamation of the Gospel): “...we have rediscovered the fundamental role of the first announcement or kerygma, which needs to be the centre of all evangelizing activity and all efforts at Church renewal. The kerygma is trinitarian. The fire of the Spirit is given in the form of tongues and leads us to believe in Jesus Christ who, by his death and resurrection, reveals and communicates to us the Father’s infinite mercy. On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: ‘Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.’ This first proclamation is called ‘first’ not because it exists at the beginning and can then be forgotten or replaced by other more important things. It is first in a qualitative sense because it is the principal proclamation, the one which we must hear again and again in different ways, the one which we must announce one way or another throughout the process of catechesis, at every level and moment. For this reason too, ‘the priest – like every other member of the Church – ought to grow in awareness that he himself is continually in need of being evangelized’” (EG, 164)

On the kerygma as the foundation to catechesis: “We must not think that in catechesis the kerygma gives way to a supposedly more “solid” formation. Nothing is more solid, profound, secure, meaningful, and wisdom-filled than that initial proclamation. All Christian formation consists of entering more deeply into the kerygma, which is reflected in and constantly illumines, the work of catechesis, thereby enabling us to understand more fully the significance of every subject which the latter treats. It is the message capable of responding to the desire for the infinite which abides in every human heart. The centrality of the kerygma calls for stressing those elements which are most needed today: it has to express God’s saving love which precedes any moral and religious obligation on our

part; it should not impose the truth but appeal to freedom; it should be marked by joy, encouragement, liveliness, and a harmonious balance which will not reduce preaching to a few doctrines which are at times more philosophical than evangelical. All this demands on the part of the evangelizer certain attitudes which foster openness to the message: approachability, readiness for dialogue, patience, a warmth and welcome which is non-judgmental.” (EG, 165)

On catechesis and mystagogic initiation: “Another aspect of catechesis which has developed in recent decades is mystagogic initiation. This basically has to do with two things: a progressive experience of formation involving the entire community and a renewed appreciation of the liturgical signs of Christian initiation.” (EG, 166)

On catechesis and beauty: “Every form of catechesis would do well to attend to the ‘way of beauty’ (via pulchritudinis). Proclaiming Christ means showing that to believe in and to follow him is not only something right and true, but also something beautiful, capable of filling life with new splendor and profound joy, even in the midst of difficulties. Every expression of true beauty can thus be acknowledged as a path leading to an encounter with the Lord Jesus... Each particular Church should encourage the use of the arts in evangelization, building on the treasures of the past but also drawing upon the wide variety of contemporary expressions so as to transmit the faith in a new ‘language of parables.’ We must be bold enough to discover new signs and new symbols, new flesh to embody and communicate the word, and different forms of beauty which are valued in different cultural settings, including those unconventional modes of beauty which may mean little to the evangelizers, yet prove particularly attractive for others.” (EG, 167)

On personal accompaniment in processes of growth: “In a culture paradoxically suffering from anonymity and at the same time obsessed with the details of other people’s lives, shamelessly given over to morbid curiosity, the Church must look more closely and sympathetically at others whenever necessary. In our world, ordained ministers and other pastoral workers can make present the fragrance of Christ’s closeness and his personal gaze. The Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious, and laity – into this ‘art of accompaniment’ which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (cf. Ex 3:5). The pace of this accompaniment must be steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze which also

heals, liberates, and encourages growth in the Christian life.” (EG, 169)

On the word of God: “Not only the homily has to be nourished by the word of God. All evangelization is based on that word, listened to, meditated upon, lived, celebrated, and witnessed to. The sacred Scriptures are the very source of evangelization. Consequently, we need to be constantly trained in hearing the word. The Church does not evangelize unless she constantly lets herself be evangelized. It is indispensable that the word of God ‘be ever more fully at the heart of every ecclesial activity.’ God’s word, listened to and celebrated, above all in the Eucharist, nourishes and inwardly strengthens Christians, enabling them to offer an authentic witness to the Gospel in daily life.” (EG, 174)

“The study of the sacred Scriptures must be a door opened to every believer. It is essential that the revealed word radically enrich our catechesis and all our efforts to pass on the faith. Evangelization demands familiarity with God’s word, which calls for dioceses, parishes, and Catholic associations to provide for a serious, ongoing study of the Bible, while encouraging its prayerful individual and communal reading.” (EG, 175)

In January, I will continue sharing about this apostolic exhortation filled with rich and wonderful insights regarding the new evangelization. To read the entire document, go to:
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium_en.pdf

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

Upcoming PCL Gathering

Thur., Jan. 4, 2018 ~ 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
Beginning at 9:30 for coffee, light breakfast
and gathering at the Assembly Hall,
Diocesan Pastoral Center

This day we will celebrate Christmas and the Epiphany. Please bring a favorite Christmas dish to share and share stories regarding Christmas! Please RSVP to astone@dioceseofbmt.org and also include the dish you will be bringing. Deadline is Wednesday morning, January 3, 2018.



PCL Gatherings

9:00 gather; 9:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

- Sat, Jan 20 2018 Called, Formed, and Sent Day – A Day for Those Who Serve in the Areas of Evangelization and Catechesis **Theme: Living as Missionary Disciples @ Our Mother of Mercy, Beaumont** beginning at 10:00 am and ending with the 4:30 pm Mass (see attached flyer & registration form)
- Thur, Feb 15 PCL Retreat – Langtree Duck Farm
- Thur, March 22 Fundamentals of the RCIA by Luisa Negret and Twyla Satterthwaite; sponsored by Pflaum –
Diocesan Pastoral Center
- Thur, April 19 Curriculum Day—sponsored by the diocese - Diocesan Pastoral Center, Beaumont
- Thur, May 12 sponsored by Loyola Press at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, Beaumont

Parish Visits

Bryan has been on the road since July doing parish visits. He can visit on the day of your Faith Formation. Or he can also do visits with pastors and catechetical leaders. Please arrange a time that you can invite him to your parish by contacting him via email: breising@dioceseofbmt.org or calling his office at 409-924-4323. He will not get to all places during the catechetical year, but he would like to get to all regions of the diocese.

What will happen during these visits? The following are some possibilities: an observation of your faith formation during the time of instruction, perhaps an in-service with your catechists, or even a catechetical presentation – guest catechist for adults, youth, or children.

CEMI Courses and Confirmation Classes

Upcoming courses offerings are found at <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/diocese-of-beaumont-evangelizationcatechesis-7578878365>

RCIA in the Diocese of Beaumont

TeamRCIA rescheduled their Making Disciples Institute for Friday, April 13, 2018 and Saturday, April 14, 2018 at the Church of St. Jude Thaddeus in Beaumont. For further information and to sign up: <https://www.dobgifts.org/events/making-disciples/>

From our Diocesan RCIA Guidelines:

1. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is the normative way for adults to be initiated into the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Beaumont.
2. In the Diocese of Beaumont, the suggested time for completing the process of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is one year or more.
3. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is a process that should be used only for the following:
 - Unbaptized adults (18 years and older)
 - Adults baptized in other Christian Traditions
 - Baptized adult Catholics who have not received Confirmation and Eucharist.
4. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults should ideally be a year-round process, enabling people to begin the process when they first approach the Church.
5. Catechesis in the RCIA process should include both Scripture and Tradition, and provide a conversion experience that is both formational and educational.
6. Members of the parish community should be invited to become involved in the RCIA process through the different roles of the RCIA team, and should be prepared for their ministry, especially

the catechists who should attend the Catechist Formation Process offered by the diocese.

7. All the Stages or Periods and Rites of the RCIA should be experienced by those involved in the process.

University of Dayton's Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF)

Cycle 1: January 14 - February 17, 2018
(Registration: Opens Oct 25, 2017; Closes Jan 10, 2018)

- [A Vision for Catholic Youth Ministry](#)
- [Advanced Catholic Social Teaching](#)
- [Autism in Faith Formation \(SN 4\)](#)
- [Bible Basics](#)
- [Catholic Beliefs](#)
- [Catholic Teaching on Chastity, Family Life, and Human Sexuality Education](#)
- [Christology](#)
- [Church History 1](#)
- [Disabilities in Parish Life: An Overview \(SN 1\)](#)
- [Ecclesiology: Beginnings of the Church](#)
- [Faith and Human Development](#)
- [Images of Jesus](#)
- [Introduction to Catechesis](#)
- [Introduction to Christian Morality](#)
- [Introduction to Liturgy](#)
- [Introduction to Practical Morality](#)
- [Introduction to Prayer](#)
- [Introduction to Scripture](#)
- [Leadership Roles and Skills for Adult Learning and Faith Formation \(AFL 5\)](#)
- [Parish and Social Action](#)
- [The Mass](#)
- [New Testament](#)
- [Old Testament](#)
- [Our Hearts Were Burning](#)
- [RCIA](#)
- [Relational Ministry with Youth](#)
- [Sacrament of Marriage: A Holy Calling](#)

- [Sacraments](#)
- [Study of The Joy of the Gospel \(Evangeli Gaudium\)](#)
- [Survey of Catholic Doctrine](#)
- [Survey of Catholic Social Teaching](#)
- [The Parish Nurse: Facilitating Wholistic Health Through the Lifespan](#)
- [Vocation to Ministry](#)
- [Vocation, Spirituality and Discipleship of Catechists](#)

Adult Faith Formation

Word on Fire: Bishop Robert Barron adult faith formation series - <https://www.wordonfire.org/>
Formed.org is a subscription service by parish that includes adult faith formation offerings, movies, and podcasts, and ebooks:
<https://formed.org/>

Catechetical Planning

For those who are catechetical leaders, Bryan Reising can provide a closed course on "Designing a Parish Catechetical Plan." Other catechetical leaders who have taken this three-week seminar found it very helpful in looking at all aspects of planning for catechesis for their AFC or parish. Please contact Bryan at breising@dioceseofbmt.org if you are interested. The course is scheduled for Cycle 2: March 4 - March 24, 2018 (seminars only) (Registration: Opens Jan 17, 2018; Closes Feb 28, 2018)

ACTS

To find out about upcoming ACTS Retreat and Activities: <https://beaumontacts.org/>

Religious Education Safe Environment Compliance Reminders

The deadline to return the reporting forms to the diocese, along with the form noting children's attendance and absence is December 15, 2017.

An opt out form called *Keeping Kids Safe* is available in both English and Spanish. This is provided to the parent/guardian who prefers to do their own Safe Environment training of their children. This form must be signed and returned before your training in the fall

In signing the Opt Out form, the parent/guardian is agreeing to train their own child. Use the opt out form provided by the diocese. Do not change the content of the form. Any opt out forms signed by the parent/guardian must be turned in to you before the training in the fall.

Any DRE, youth minister, catechist, adults helping with youth ministry, or anyone who may be in a ministry with minors is required to be in total compliance with safe environment requirements.

To be in compliance, one must have attended in person a Protecting God's Children (PGC) session. After 5 years from the initial training participation, a recertification is required. This can be done either through the diocesan website online module, or by attending another in person PGC session.

If you have any questions regarding Safe Environment Training, you may contact the diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator through the following information:

Paul J Thomas
pjthomas@dioceseofbmt.org
 409-924-4315

Remember to abide by all the deadlines for Safe Environment. Thank you!

PGC Trainings
Protecting God's Children for Adults
 Monday December 11, 2017 6:00pm
 @ Immaculate Conception, Groves
 Facilitator: Mary Simon
 Contact: 409-720-8816

Monday January 15, 2018 6:00pm
@ St Francis, Orange
Facilitators: Jackie Spears & Jonnie Broussard
Contact: 409-883-8232

Thursday January 25, 2018 6:00pm
@ St. Mark Silsbee
Facilitator: Kathy Watson
Contact: 409-781-7356

The first step to protecting children from sexual abuse is educating parents about the nature of the problem.

Awareness about child sexual abuse - what it is and who commits it - opens the door to some simple steps parents can take to protect children. No one has more at stake or a more vested interest in protecting children than the people who gave them life. Awareness, education, and responsible parenting give a child the best tools for her or his defense—and the child may be more likely to tell an adult if something happens.

Interested in a Bachelors or Masters in Theology

St. Thomas University in Houston:
<https://www.stthom.edu/Academics/School-of-Arts-and-Sciences/Undergraduate/Theology/Index.aspx>.

National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL) Membership

Join NCCL and receive *CL (Catechetical Leader) online Magazine*, CL Weekly from Margaret Matijasevic, discounts on resources, and information on the national conference and regional workshops! The cost of an individual membership to NCCL is only \$75.00. This is only \$6.25 a month. For further information about membership, check out the Web site: www.nccl.org. For information on the national conference (Chicago: May 30-June 2, 2018), go to www.nccl.us.

Parish Catechesis Question

After reading Pope Francis' new apostolic exhortation, what does he say regarding evangelization and catechesis?

WHAT DOES "EVANGELISE" MEAN? TO GIVE WITNESS WITH JOY AND SIMPLICITY TO WHAT WE ARE AND WHAT WE BELIEVE IN.
POPE FRANCIS

