

# CALLED, FORMED & SENT

## DECEMBER 2018

FROM THE  
OFFICE OF EVANGELIZATION AND CATECHESIS  
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## A Blessed Advent and Christmas to Each of You!



We will continue our series: *Those We Catechize-* in January 2019's issue of *Called, Formed, & Sent*.

### Merry Christmas from Bryan Reising

We Americans use the phrase "Happy" as a greeting for many celebrations like "Happy Birthday," "Happy New Year," "Happy Easter," and "Happy Mother's Day!" But why is the greeting, "Merry Christmas" the greeting of choice during Christmastime? In 1565, in *The Hereford Municipal Manuscript*, it reads: "And thus I comytt you to god, who send you a mery Christmas." In an informal letter written by an English admiral in 1699, the admiral wrote: "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year." In 1843, the same phrase appeared in the popular secular English carol "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" and the first Christmas card, produced in England.

During that same year, Charles Dickens wrote and published *A Christmas Carol*. In English society, the word "merry" was then beginning to take on a new meaning of "jovial, cheerful, and outgoing" instead of the original meaning of "pleasant or agreeable." "Merry Christmas" as a greeting is found in Dicken's novel, *A*

*Christmas Carol*. The popularity of this book and this greeting has led some historians to credit Dickens with popularizing the greeting, "Merry Christmas."



With the popularity of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* in the United States, that phrase became more common here.

The American poet, Clement Moore, wrote *A Visit from St. Nicholas* (Twas the night before Christmas...) in 1823. At the end of this poem, it read originally, "Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night." With the popularity of "Merry Christmas," later editions changed the last line to, "Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night." This reinforced the popularity of "Merry Christmas" in the United States.

And what about the word Christmas? Its English roots come from the Greek, *Christos* and the Latin, *missa* forming a meaning of Christ's Mass. In 1038, the Old English language recorded the earliest expression of this: *Cristes mæsse*. The Middle English phrase was *Christemasse*. And today we have the current word, Christmas. Christmas refers to both Christmas Day, when we celebrate and commemorate the nativity of

Jesus Christ, and the Christmas season that extends to the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord in January.

Now that we know its development, let us mean what we say! You can say to your parishioners, "Merry Christmas! See you at Christ's Mass on the Solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord!" And "Merry Christmas" from all of us from the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis!

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## Teachable Christmas Moments for Parents by Bryan Reising

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Christmas is a time where we gather as families and friends. We celebrate with meals and parties. What are some teachable moments that parents can do with their children?

### *Advent and Christmas Calendar*

The United States Catholic Bishops have an Advent and Christmas Calendar filled with family activities. It is a great resource for prayer and activities for families. **Advent:** <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/advent/upload/advent-calendar2018-family-interactive.pdf>; **Christmas:** <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/christmas/upload/christmas-calendar.pdf>

### *Christmas Blessings*

Gather your family together around the Christmas tree and then the nativity scene. Have a special blessing and prayer for these. For further information about blessing the Christmas tree, go to <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/sacramentals-blessings/objects/blessing-of-a-christmas-tree.cfm>. For further information about blessing the nativity scene, go to <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/sacramentals-blessings/objects/blessing-of-a-christmas-manger-or-nativity-scene.cfm>

### *Christmas Mass*

Some parishes have a Christmas Eve Mass or a Christmas Day Mass geared toward children and families. Let your families know that it is a holy day of obligation, and we need to participate in Mass at Christmas, as we need to participate every Sunday. We attend the Midnight Mass as a family. Take the time to discuss the Christmas story with your children/youth before or after Mass. A question: Jesus said, "Whatever you do to the least of these, you do for me." What will you do for Jesus this Christmas as a gift to him?

### *Advent and Christmas Meal Prayer*

Liturgy Training Publications offers the following booklet for many prayers including the meal prayers during Advent and Christmas:  
<https://ltp.org/products/details/KAC3/keeping-advent-christmastime>.

### *Acts of Charity*

Our family has traditionally helped deliver meals on Christmas Day or during the Christmas season to those persons in need. This teaches your children the true meaning of Christmas: It is more about giving love to others and bringing the Good News of Christ as well. Find out about opportunities to give of your time in your community.

### *Acts of Justice*

Families at a parish can organize around a cause like raising funds for Catholic Relief Services <https://www.crs.org/resource-center/advent-resources-your-parish>. They can organize events in preparation for the March for Life the following month, January 22, 2019 (<http://www.marchforlife.org/>). They can organize and be a voice for immigration reform: <http://www.usccb.org/about/migration-and-refugee-services/index.cfm>.

### *Celebrating Epiphany*

Traditionally, Epiphany has been a time to bless the home. Have your family bless the home, perhaps have a small exchange of gifts, and have a special meal. To find out more about the blessing of your home, go to: <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/sacramentals-blessings/objects/blessing-of-the-home-and-household-on-epiphany.cfm>.

## UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

### *PCL Gatherings*

**Thursday, January 3** sponsored by Loyola Press at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, Beaumont. Lunch during this gathering will be a potluck dinner. **Please bring your favorite dish to share, for those who can.**

**Other Upcoming PCL Gatherings: 2019: February 21, March 21, April 25, May 16**

### *Vocation Awareness Day*

**Saturday, January 12, 2019**

**Save the Date!**

**St. Jude Thaddeus**

### *Called, Formed, & Sent Day*

**- Save the Date!**

**Invite Your Catechists & Others!**

**Saturday, January 26 (9 am to 5 pm including 4 pm Mass with Most Rev. Curtis Guillory) at St. Mary Church in Fannett; Keynotes include Dr. Vanessa White in English and Gustavo Rodriguez of the Diocese of Austin in Spanish; Theme: Witnesses for Jesus Christ**

## Parish Visits

Bryan has been on the road for some parish visits. He can visit on the day of your Faith Formation. 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](mailto: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. In addition, Twyla (North, West Vicariates), Sr. Misty (East, South, and Central Vicariates), and Paul are available for parish visits as well.

What will happen with 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.

## University of Dayton's (VLCFF)



Cycle 1, 2019: January 20 - February 23, 2019  
(Registration: Opens Oct 24, 2018; Closes Jan 16)

- [A Vision for Catholic Youth Ministry](#)
- [Administration in 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](#)
- [Foundations and Vision for Adult Learning and Faith Formation \(AFL 1\)](#)
- [Foundations for Liturgy](#)
- [Images of Jesus](#)
- [Introduction to Catechesis](#)
- [Introduction to Christian Morality](#)

- [Introduction to Liturgy](#)
- [Introduction to Paul's Life and Letters](#)
- [Introduction to Practical Morality](#)
- [Introduction to Prayer](#)
- [Introduction to Scripture](#)
- [Leadership Roles and Skills for Adult Learning and Faith Formation \(AFL 5\)](#)
- [Marianist Studies: Community](#)
- [Marianist Studies: Mary, Holy Possibility](#)
- [New Testament](#)
- [Old Testament](#)
- [Our Hearts Were Burning](#)
- [Pastoral Letter: Blessed are the Merciful](#)
- [Planning Youth Ministry Events](#)
- [RCIA](#)
- [Sacrament of Marriage: A Holy Calling](#)
- [Sacraments](#)
- [Study of The Joy of the Gospel \(Evangelii Gaudium\)](#)
- [Survey of Catholic Doctrine](#)
- [Survey of Catholic Social Teaching](#)
- [Vocation to Ministry](#)
- [Vocation, Spirituality and Discipleship of Catechists](#)

## Evangelization and Adult Faith Formation

**Word on Fire:** Bishop Robert Barron adult faith formation series - <https://www.wordonfire.org/>  
**And check out this resource from Word on Fire Engage:** <https://engage.wordonfire.org/about>

**Formed.org** is a subscription service by parish that includes adult faith formation offerings, movies, and podcasts, and eBooks: <https://formed.org/>

**JustFaith** is a small group process to learn about Catholic Social Teaching: <https://justfaith.org/>

**RENEW International** has a host of resources for renewal and adult catechetical formation: <http://www.renewintl.org/>

**SINE (Systematic Integral New Evangelization)** is a plan for the new evangelization for parishes that offer renewal experiences, small Christian communities, neighborhood based ministries, and home visitation: <https://sinecentral.org/>

**Paulist Evangelization Ministries** offers many resources for small groups, parish renewal, and outreach: <https://www.pemdc.org/>

**Catholic Returning Home** is a process for returning Catholics:  
<http://www.catholicsreturninghome.org/>



Adoration • Community • Theology • Service

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

### 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.aqf>

### National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL) Membership



All PCLs are now members of NCCL! Check out the Web site: [www.nccl.org](http://www.nccl.org). Contact our office to learn how you can be a member of NCCL compliments of the Diocese of Beaumont if you are not a member yet! For information on the national conference (Orange County, CA: May 19-May 23, 2019), go to [www.nccl.org](http://www.nccl.org)

### 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 14, 2018**. If you have any concerns about the deadline please contact Sr. Esther.

[edunegan@dioceseofbmt.org](mailto:edunegan@dioceseofbmt.org)

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 should be turned in to you before the training in the fall.

Any PCL, 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 rectification 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](mailto:pjthomas@dioceseofbmt.org)

409-924-4315

## Upcoming Protecting God's Children sessions

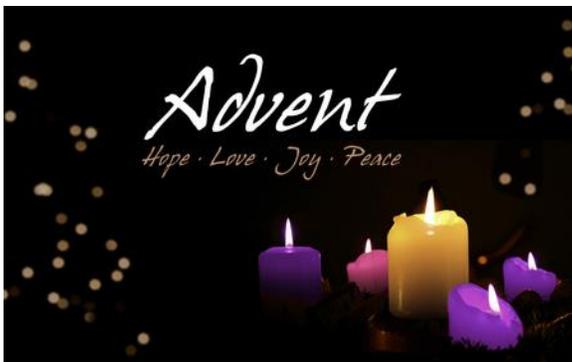
Date	Time	Location	Facilitator	Contact
Tue. December 18, 2018	6:00 pm	St. Jude, Family Life Center Room M2, Beaumont	Ailene Luistro	Michelle: 409-866-5088 x223
Mon. January 7, 2019	6:00 pm	Lamar University, Catholic Student Center, Beaumont	Kelly de la Rosa	Kelly: 409-924-4360
Mon. January 14, 2019	6:00 pm	St. Francis, Orange	Jonnie Broussard	Jackie: 409-882-4453

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

### An Advent Examen

*By Sr. Misty Garriga*

As we begin this holy season of Advent, let us take a moment to step back, be still, and remember what we are preparing for this month. Our lives can become so hectic with the busyness of the year: parties, family gatherings, cooking, baking, shopping, school plays. Let us be intentional and take some time to focus on the meaning of this season.



The following is an Advent Examen adapted from the Ignatian tradition. Take 10 minutes a day to pray with this and see how the graces of the season unfold for you and your family.

Begin by taking in a deep breath, taking in God's love, the light of Christ, the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Exhale all your worries, your challenges, and your fears. During this time of Advent let us reflect on what we can do to prepare for the Lord.

1. Invite the Holy Spirit to help you see the day as the newborn baby Jesus sees it. What joy have you found today? Where have you felt God's love? What have you done today to prepare the way for Jesus being born into this world for you?
2. Now think about your day as if looking at it through the eyes of a child; what do you see? Did something surprise you? What did you recognize as gifts (thinking about the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh brought to Jesus)? Thank God for the gifts you have been given today.
3. Take a moment to reflect on the times today when God was especially present to you. Recognize your feelings in those moments. How did you prepare your heart for God's presence in the coming of Jesus? Where did you feel God's loving arms wrapped around you the way Jesus felt Mary's arms?
4. Now take a moment to think about the times when God seemed to be hidden. Where did you struggle to see the Messiah in your life—the way some failed to recognize the birth of the Messiah when Jesus was

born? When may you have seen the need for love and didn't respond (maybe like the innkeeper), or the opportunity for forgiveness and you walked away? How was your heart prepared? Ask God to forgive you for anything that moved your heart away from God's love and recognizing the birth of Jesus in you. And ask God to help you to open your heart and become the person that God created you to be.

5. Finally, prepare for the hope of Jesus Christ in your life. Think about what you are hopeful for, what you are looking forward to during Advent and the Christmas season. Is your hope like that of a child on Christmas morning? What gifts will you share to be hope for someone else? Ask God to bless all in your life as you prepare the way of the Lord, and ask God to be with you today and every day. Adapted from <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com>

This sacredness of the ordinary calls me to live my life in a purposeful way. I look for the sacred all around me. I often hear Mary asking me, "Do you see what I see?"

## Heart of Our Faith

*By Paul Thomas*

Our office has recently retooled what was formerly known as CEMI (Catholic Education Ministry Institute). Based on input from people in our diocese, it seems that making a commitment to several weeks attendance can be very difficult. People have indicated that they are interested in one-session formation experiences.

We have been working hard to hone many of the former CEMI courses into a single session. We hope that by offering this, it will make attendance convenient and accessible to those who wish to learn more about their Catholic faith. Along with this makeover, we also decided to rename it The Heart of Our Faith. These single session experiences are designed to touch on the core content of the presented topic.

The goal is to offer multiple topics of interest, each in a single session formatted to give participants a taste of what they are interested in learning more about. The first of these sessions, *A Faith for All Seasons*, was recently held at St. Joseph the Worker parish in Dayton. This topic looked at the core Catholic principles we use to make decisions from a well-formed conscience. There were approximately 14 people who attended and

the input and discussions were stimulating and insightful.

We hope The Heart of Our Faith sessions will light a little fire that will lead folks to want more through the University of Dayton online courses (VLCFF), of which we are a partner diocese. In addition, a new initiative introduced by Evangelization and Catechesis Director Bryan Reising called Lay Missionary Discipleship is available as a methodical 2-year journey in faith formation.

Please contact the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis if you would like a Heart of Faith session at your parish. Presentations include **Our Faith Expressed...Sign...Symbol...Word...and Action** (Sacramental Life), **Beyond Our Parish Walls** (Introduction to Home Visitation), **The Two Feet of Love** (Catholic Social Teaching), **Our Foundations** (Core Beliefs of the Church), **A Faith for All Seasons** (Forming a Moral Conscience), and **How to Interpret the Bible** (Sacred Scripture).



## Art and Spirituality

*By Twyla Satterthwaite*

This Advent, Loyola Press has a feature that highlights works of art and how they speak to our spirituality. You can have the reflections emailed to yourself or to your catechists. The link is:

[https://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/liturgical-year/advent/arts-and-faith-advent#.W-m2\\_RixgVM.email](https://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/liturgical-year/advent/arts-and-faith-advent#.W-m2_RixgVM.email)

I listened to the first presentation and I was encouraged to think about using some of my own favorite works of art to explore my spirituality. This is one of my favorite pictures of Mary and Child. I use it as a screen saver every Advent and Christmas. It is by [Liz Lemon Swindle](#) and is titled *Be It Unto Me*.



I love the simplicity of this painting of Mary and her child. Jesus is not portrayed as a baby crowned as the King of Kings. You cannot see a halo around his head. He is just Mary's son and actually looks a lot like my own son did as a baby. The baby is safe and cuddled, he looks out to see the world he has come in to. I can almost hear his little baby sounds and feel his stretching and pulling to experience more of this world. I like the dark eye brows and penetrating look that Mary has. It seems that she has great peace and joy. She invites me

to look at her son, Jesus. It is as though she asks me, "Do you see what I see?"

The blues, grays, creams, and other neutral colors add to the intimacy of the painting. You can only see what the light allows you to see. The rest is private, just for the family. The ordinary household things you can see – a blanket, the hay under the blanket, some red clothing in the corner– seem very intimate. It is as if I have just dropped in to see the new baby. All these things speak to me of a very ordinary life.

I often reflect on the ordinary life the Holy Family lived. It helps me to realize that God is always present in my own life. God comes to me in very ordinary ways. He speaks through other people, the ups and downs of my life, flowers, my pets, and my daily chores. God is always there reaching out to me. He wants to be part of my life. He became one of us. We love a God who loves us in the most intimate and personal ways.

## 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!



*Paul, Bryan, Sr. Misty, Twyla, Joseph & Anna*