



— LENT 2026 —

Catechetical Newsletter

A few things you will find in this edition

- Updates on the diocesan priorities
- On-going formation with Dr. White
- Resources for Lent
- NCCL Kids & Families Prayer Initiative
- Safe Environment Requirements
- Diocesan Catechetical Handbook
- Pilgrimage

Lenten Journey: Walking with Jesus Toward Renewal

As we begin this sacred time of Lent, we are invited to walk with Jesus on a journey of conversion, hope, and renewal. Lent is not simply a season on the Church calendar; it is a grace-filled opportunity to slow down, reflect, and open our hearts more deeply to an encounter with Christ. I know how busy life can be, family responsibilities, work, school, and many commitments, but Lent gently calls us to pause and make space for God.

On Ash Wednesday, Jesus offers us three essential keys to guide our Lenten journey: prayer, fasting, and giving. Through prayer, we deepen our relationship with God and learn to listen more attentively to His voice. Through fasting, we practice self-discipline and remind ourselves that God alone is enough. Through giving, especially to those in need, we allow our faith to be expressed through love and compassion. The ashes we receive on our foreheads are more than a symbol; they are a public and personal sign that we desire conversion. They remind us of our need to change, to turn away from sin, and to return to God with sincere hearts. Wearing ashes means we are taking seriously Jesus' invitation: "Repent and believe in the Gospel."

May this Lent be a time of true transformation for our parish community, helping us rediscover these sacred practices and walk together toward Easter with renewed faith and joy.

Director Catechetical Office
catechesis@patersondiocese.org

Associate Director Catechetical Office
jschmidt@patersondiocese.org



Update on Diocesan Priorities

1 Family Catechesis

1. Father Yojaneider and Joana have been invited to speak with several pastors and catechetical leaders to discuss implementing family catechesis in their parishes. The meetings focus on choosing a model based on parish need and family wants, how to begin, and what resources are available. There is a family catechesis option that can work for every parish. We can help assess the best options, taking into account program size, space, cost, and catechist availability.

2 Inclusion & persons with disabilities

1. Resurrection Parish in Randolph is serving as an example parish for inclusion ministry. They have commissioned a team of parishioners, parents, and professionals to serve as an advisory committee. Resurrection has begun holding inclusive Masses and recently opened a new sensory room. Many other parishes around the diocese are moving in this direction, creating welcoming environments where everyone belongs.



3 Leader training & development of catechetical handbook

1. Bishop Sweeney released the diocesan catechetical handbook and the compendium on All Saints Day 2025. It is currently a working draft. We ask for your feedback on its content and design.
2. The first cohort of parish catechetical leaders has graduated from the NCCL certificate program. We are so proud of their hard work and dedication to this ministry. NCCL has used their experience and feedback to fine-tune the program for future participants nationwide as well as to create a whole new program for aspiring leaders with limited experience.

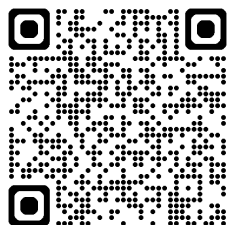
Intro to Catechesis: Online Option for Catechist Certification

Intro to Catechesis is a 3-part series required for all catechists in the diocese. The program can be completed **at your own pace and at no cost** by taking advantage of our partnership with Franciscan at Home.

This program will provide catechists with the background necessary to be an effective and authentic witness to the faith.

Individual catechists may complete the program on their own or catechetical leaders can use the platform to facilitate groups in their parish.

Workshops are available in **English & Spanish**. Click the link or scan the QR code to begin. **Use St. Paul Inside the Walls as your location.**



Virtual On-going Formation

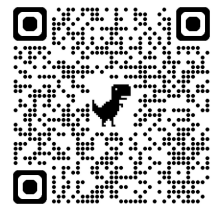
WEBINAR
SERIES

2026



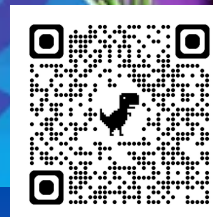
Dozens of free webinars from the Franciscan University Catechetical Institute.

Check out the monthly schedule for February through December.
English and Spanish



Sadlier Religion

CATECHIST
STREAM
SWIM UPSTREAM



Catechist Stream is a new series devoted to catechists that addresses current catechetical issues, events, and strategies.

Being a Catholic catechist is about being faithful disciples who often “swim upstream” in their efforts to share the countercultural message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Catechist Stream helps you to become more informed and prepared to swim upstream!

**Spring
Methodology
Formation**



ACTIVE LEARNING APPROACHES TO EARLY CHILDHOOD CATECHESIS

**Early childhood
through
middle school**

It's a perfect combination: young children learn best by doing
AND our faith is a living, active faith!

Come explore ways to involve the whole child in multisensory
catechesis -- through child-directed activities, sensory-rich
storytelling, music, movement and more!

March 21, 2026
10:00am-2:30pm
St. Paul Inside the Walls

\$10/person
Lunch will be
provided



Presented by Dr. Joseph White
Dr. White is a Child and Family
Psychologist and Associate
Publisher for Catechetical
Resources at OSV Publishing.



Please share a wonderful opportunity that could benefit your parish, school, or catechetical community:

With support from Lilly Endowment, Inc., the National Community of Catechetical Leaders (NCCL) is launching:



These initiatives aim to deepen children's experience of prayer and liturgy, promoting genuine participation and lifelong faith. Best of all, materials, resources, and consultation are completely free.

Attached, you'll find a full project overview

The application form <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NCCLKids>

Please consider applying, or feel free to pass it along to other parishes or schools that may benefit.

Click the graphic above or this box to access the program overview

RESOURCES FOR LENT AND HOLY WEEK



touching hearts. enlivening minds.



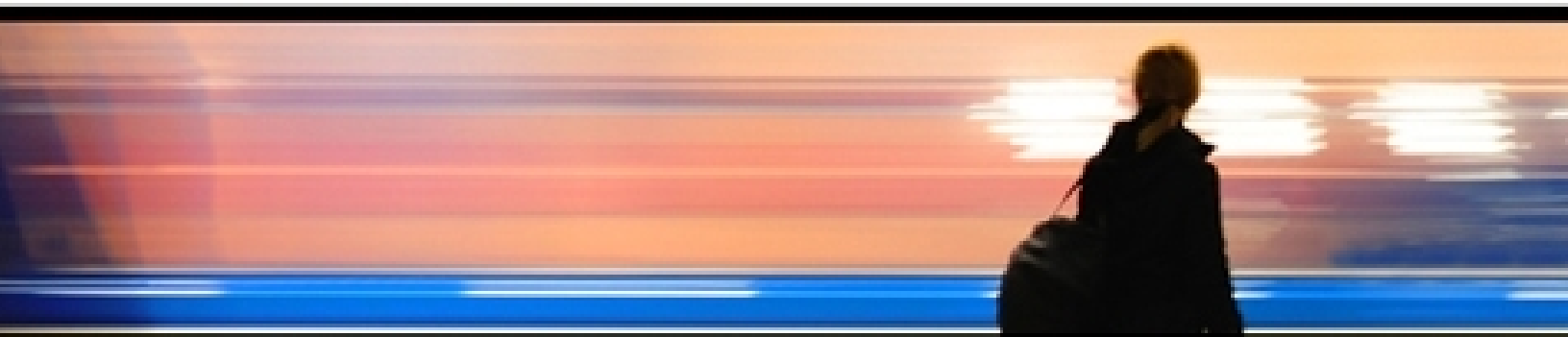
CATHOLIC KIDS MEDIA

The child is the beauty of God present in the world, that greatest gift to a family. **MOTHER TERESA**



LOYOLA PRESS.
A JESUIT MINISTRY





AN IGNATIAN PRAYER ADVENTURE

Loyola Press invites you to join an online Lenten retreat called An Ignatian Prayer Adventure.

This is an adapted version of the Spiritual Exercises based on the longer retreat in *The Ignatian Adventure* by Kevin O'Brien, SJ.

The retreat begins the week of Ash Wednesday and continues through Holy Week and the first week of Easter.

We hope that this retreat will provide you with an opportunity for spiritual renewal as you participate in the reflections and exercises.



Diocese of Paterson

Diocesan Catechetical Handbook



Policies and guidelines for parish religious education programs

The new Handbook & Compendium are available in digital format

Check them out and
give us your feedback.
We do not recommend
printing in case updates
are made.

Safe Environment requirements for parish catechetical leaders



- Ensure **all volunteers** over the age of 18 have completed background checks, fingerprinting, a code of conduct, and *Virtus* Safe Environment training.
- Present “Empowering God’s Children” to religious education students in grades 1 and 4 every year
- Submit the annual audit to your parish Safe Environment Coordinator or Diocesan Office of Child & Youth Protection

Note, this is not a comprehensive list of Safe Environment requirements. Please see the full policy at <https://www.chancery.rcdop.org/child-protection>

Eric Wilsusen

Director, Child & Youth Protection
ewilsusen@patersondiocese.org

Nicole Pizza-George

Admin, Child & Youth Protection
ngeorge@patersondiocese.org

Belonging & Meaningful Participation

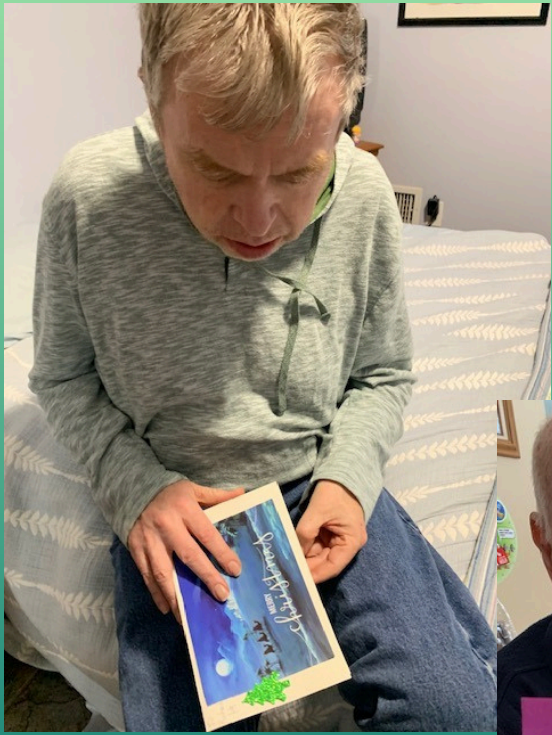
New sensory room and monthly sensory friendly Mass at Resurrection Parish



Let us know if your parish offers adaptive liturgies and space

Belonging & Meaningful Participation

Classes at St. Margaret's in Morristown made cards for residents of Columbus House, a Diocesan group home for the Department of Persons with Disabilities



Feel free to send us your stories and pics. Paterson catechists are doing great things!! All photos are shared with permission



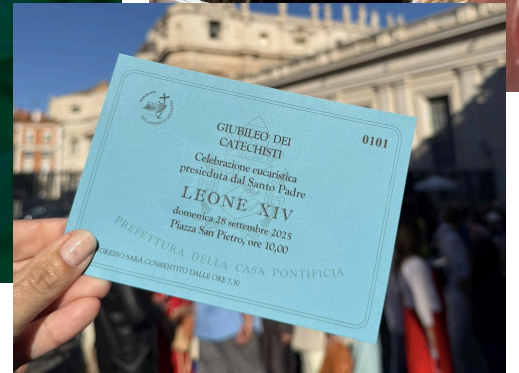
Jubilee of Catechists 2025



Rome

Assisi

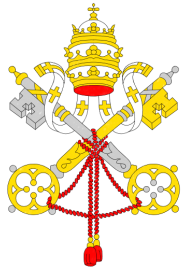
Loreto



GIUBILEO DEI
CATECHISTI 0101
Celebrazione eucaristica
presieduta dal Santo Padre
LEONE XIV
domenica 28 settembre, 2025
Piazza San Pietro, ore 10,00
PREFETTURA DELLA CASA PONTIFICIA
PRELIEVO SARA CONSENTITO DALLE ORE 7,30



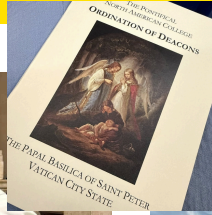
Jubilee of Catechists 2025



Rome

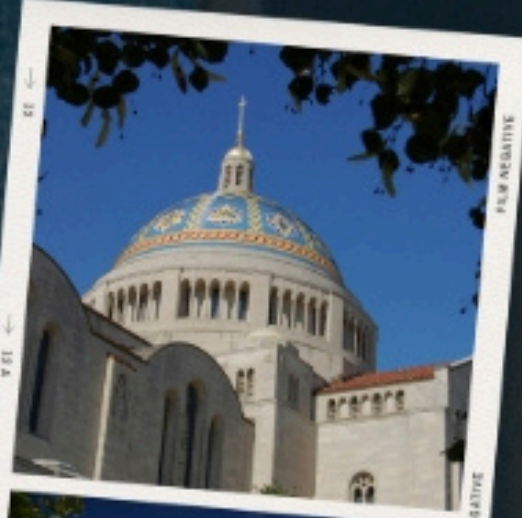
Assisi

Loreto

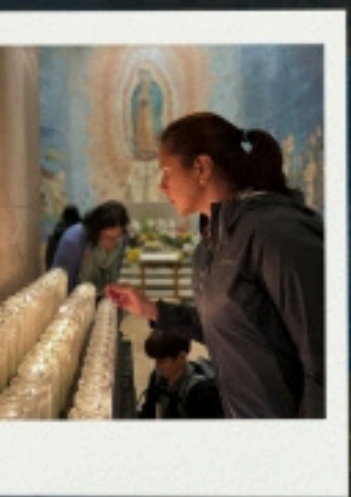




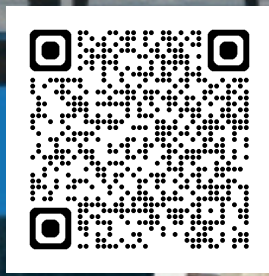
Marian
PILGRIMAGE



BASILICA of the
NATIONAL SHRINE of the
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
in Washington, D.C.



SAVE THE DATE



Join Bishop Kevin J. Sweeney on
Oct. 17, 2026

Buses to depart from various
locations in the Diocese.



LEARN MORE

rcdop.org/marianpilgrimage