



OLFF Newsletter--September 2022

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Catechetical Sunday Message

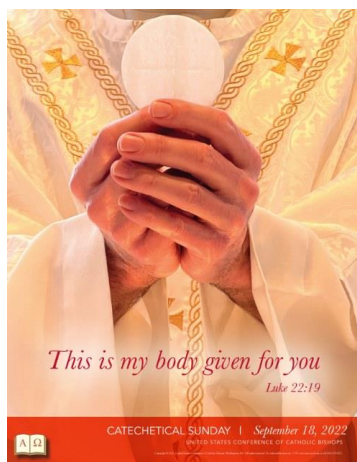
September 18, 2022 the Catholic Church in the United States celebrates Catechetical Sunday. The 2022 theme is "This is My Body Given For You (Luke 22:19)/ Esto es cuerpo que se entrega por ustedes (Lucas 22:19)" evokes in me deep appreciation for every person in Maine who gives of themselves to teach in the name of the Church. Each catechist and catechetical leader becomes a visible expression of Jesus Christ among us. As we celebrate Catechetical Sunday, pause to give thanks for the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist--his body and blood, soul and divinity present in the Blessed Sacrament. When you have 5 minutes [click](#) to watch this video from the USCCB Catechetical Sunday resources to help you recognize how you show reverence to the Real Presence and point others from this gift freely given for the life of the world.

St. Robert Bellarmine, patron saint of catechists, and St. Catherine of Alexandria, patron saint of learners, pray for us.

Your Companion in Christ,

Lori Dahlhoff

1 - From the USCCB website



USCCB Prayer for Catechists

Loving Father, we pray today for our catechist. We thank you for their gift of ministry in your Church. Grant them your wisdom that they may grow in the understanding and teaching of your Word. Grant them also your love that they may be fruitful heralds of your Word and lead others to love you. Pour forth your Holy Spirit upon them to grant them wisdom about what is important; knowledge of the truths of the faith; understanding of their meaning; right judgement about how to apply them in life; courage to persevere even in the face of adversity; reverence before all that is sacred and holy; and that loving zeal which leads others to a transforming encounter with your Son. We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Lifelong & Faith Strong: Supporting a Culture of Family Formation

It is heart-warming and hopeful to engage in conversation with clergy, parish leaders, and volunteers about an intentional shift to begin or expand on family formation in our diocese. Innovating and strengthening practices of family formation means broader and richer faith cultures, in both parishes and households. Grounded in continued prayer, we understand these primary principles:

1. We take the long view with patience as we gradually shift or expand upon what we have already built
2. God is always present among us and because of this, we trust in the Holy Spirit's movements and guidance
3. Together, we acknowledge and name our assumptions, the impact, discomfort, loss, and uncertainty, that intentional and creative change brings; we also accept the excitement, interdependence and we celebrate the yielded fruits
4. We acknowledge that we first need to walk with, support, and form household adults – from which family faith flows and grows

OLFF, along with a focus team of diocesan leaders, are working toward a framework to guide parishes in the implementation of family and intergenerational formation. One major source of support has been the Peyton Family Institute (Holy Cross Ministries – President Emeritus Fr. Willy Raymond, CSC, originally from Old Town, Maine!!), with Dr. Greg and Lisa Popcak. You will be hearing much more about the Peyton Family Institute. Here are some excerpts from a recent publication:

WHAT MAKES A FAMILY HOLY?

Excerpts

from: *Come and Be Formed! The 3R's in the Liturgy of Domestic Church Life*, Gregory K. Popcak, Lisa A. Popcak (Pastoral Solutions Institute) & Peyton Family Institute

In our experience, many people think that families are only holy to the degree that they spend time on their knees, while others believe that families are only holy to the degree that they are spending time in service to others.

It's true that both family prayer and charitable service are important components of a healthy family spirituality, but to limit it to these practices arguably ignores at least 98% of the activities that make up family life. Is it really possible that only 2% of family life leads to holiness?

WHAT IS A DOMESTIC CHURCH?

The term "domestic church," resurrected by Vatican II, isn't meant to be a pet-name by which the "real church," (i.e., the institutional church) refers to its inferior. As Evdokimov explains, when we speak of the domestic church, "*It isn't merely a question of resembling the Church....it is the Church*" (1962, p. 357).

St. Pope John Paul II explained that the family celebrates the Gospel of life through daily, individual and family prayer... "in order to glorify and give thanks to God for the gift of life and to implore his light and strength in order to face times of difficulty and suffering without losing hope. But the celebration which gives meaning to every other form of prayer and worship is found in the family's actual daily life together, if it is a life of love and self-giving." (no. 93)

In *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis wrote, "*...the Church is a family of families, constantly enriched by the lives of all those domestic Churches*" (2015).

But if the domestic church *is* church, that suggests that relationships within the family must somehow also be **liturgical**, because Church life is inherently *liturgical* in nature. As Philip Mamalakis explains, “Families are not church only when they read scriptures, pray, study the faith, or help the needy. They are church in their (turning toward) love, and it is Christ’s love that constitutes the church of the home” (Mamalakis, 2013).

Resources

- [The Peyton Institute for Domestic Church Life | Renewing Catholic Family Life \(peytonfamilyinstitute.org\)](https://www.peytonfamilyinstitute.org/) (Founded by Holy Cross Ministries)
- [Projects & Research | The Peyton Institute for Domestic Church Life \(peytonfamilyinstitute.org\)](https://www.peytonfamilyinstitute.org/projects-research/) (Includes Special Reports on Catholic Families)
- [CatholicHOM - Catholic Households on Mission](https://www.catholicdom.com/) (CatholicHOM app = Households on Mission)



Monthly Leader Learning Sessions

The Office of Lifelong Faith Formation (OLFF) is offering monthly leader learning sessions (see schedule below) which aim to help catechetical and youth ministry leaders develop the skills of being, knowing, and artistry through three simple movements modeled in the Road to Emmaus scripture story.

- *Listen*: What are you discussing as you walk along? (Prayer, Introductions & Prompt Question about Local Experiences)
- *Learn*: Jesus interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures (Delving into Scripture, Tradition, Teaching & Best Practices)
- *Lead*: they recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them (Conversation, Questions & Application)

To accommodate a range of different schedules OLFF will host an **afternoon session from 1-2pm** and an **evening session from 6:30-7:30pm** on the fourth Monday of each month. The evening sessions in October and December will have an emphasis on youth ministry though all leaders are welcome to attend.

[Click](#) to see a full listing of dates and topics for 2022-2023

ABIDE Middle School Youth Ministry Retreat

ABIDE 2022 is taking place **October 1st in Houlton and October 2nd in Scarborough**. Both days will be **10am - 3pm**.

Through prayer, presentations, and activities we will take time to explore what it means to ABIDE in Christ. What does it mean to have a relationship with Christ? How do we do that?

Please note: As of right now, ABIDE in *Houlton* does **not** include Mass to meet the Sunday obligation. In Scarborough we will attend the 10:30am Sunday Mass.

To register please fill out the digital form for each participant: <https://bit.ly/3AxrQfJ>. You can access the permission form, image release form and flyer here: <https://bit.ly/3Ciuk2Q> or by going to files at the top of this page. **Registration deadline is 4pm, September 26.**

Respect Life Month Begins in October

A note from Suzanne Lafreniere, Director of Public Affairs.

Respect Life Month (October) is fast approaching. This year's theme is "Respect Life – Called to Serve Moms in Need." The Respect Life Program begins anew each year on Respect Life Sunday, the first Sunday in October. The USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities provides new materials each year to call attention to numerous human life issues. These materials can be helpful for priests, parish groups, schools, and other organizations. Parish kits for the Respect Life Program were sent directly from the USCCB. If you did not receive them or need more, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Homily notes, reflections, bulletin inserts, and flyers are available at www.respectlife.org/called-to-serve.

To learn more about programs and initiatives in the Diocese of Portland and across the country that care for and promote healing for women and families in need, visit www.portlanddiocese.org/DobbsDecision.



Circle of Grace (Annual Safe Environment Training for Young People)



Out of concern for all God's people and in response to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, The Archdiocese of Omaha developed a safe environment education program for children and young people in 2005. This program is called **Circle of Grace** and it is updated every 5 years. Since 2017, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland has been licensed to use the **Circle of Grace** education program in Maine. All parishes and Catholic schools are mandated to lead annual lessons for children, teens, and families who are enrolled in faith formation.

During the week of September 26, all parish leaders and Catholic school administrators will receive a clear and comprehensive diocesan communication, along with the necessary components to help in the implementation of **Circle of Grace**.

We recommend that parishes roll the Circle of Grace lessons into the annual calendar as a way of communicating that **Circle of Grace** is an essential part of the parish curriculum; it is also recommended that **Circle of Grace** lessons be completed after leaders and catechists have had a few months to get to know group participants and their families (Nov-Dec). Parishes and Catholic schools must submit an annual digital parish report to Bob McDermott at the diocesan *Protecting God's Children Office* no later than **Feb 1st, 2023**.

The annual digital parish form is found on the PGC page of the diocesan website:

[Circle of Grace Annual Parish Form | Diocese of Portland \(portlanddiocese.org\)](https://portlanddiocese.org/circle-of-grace-annual-parish-form)

To learn more about Circle of Grace (Archdiocese of Omaha NE): [Circle of Grace - Archdiocese of Omaha \(archomaha.org\)](https://archomaha.org/circle-of-grace)

For further assistance, please reach out to Georgette Dionne as your primary diocesan support for implementing this vital aspect of being safe and sacred communities for one another.

Tel: (207) 321- 7886

Georgette.dionne@portlanddiocese.org

Quick Reference: Mandated Reporting

The Office of Lifelong Faith Formation (OLFF) and the Office of Professional Responsibility created this guide (see below) to help each of us act in accordance with mandatory reporting protocols in the state of Maine and the principles of Circle of Grace. This document helps:

1. To clarify confusion about mandatory procedure in the face of suspected abuse or neglect of a minor

2. To prepare for such an eventuality, ahead of a crisis
3. To ensure that as representatives of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Portland, and as citizens of the state of Maine, each of us will respond with care and responsibility when or if we are called to

Please keep this document in a safe and accessible place which will allow you to refer to it immediately, if needed. Please note, per the attached document, that each of us have the support of Mike Magalski, Director of the Office of Professional Responsibility, in any matter of reporting.

For added information regarding mandated reporting for the state of Maine DHHS [Mandated Reporter Information | Department of Health and Human Services \(maine.gov\)](https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/provider-resources/reporting-suspected-child-abuse-and-neglect/mandated-reporter-information)

QUICK REFERENCE: Mandated Reporting of Suspected Abuse or Neglect Page 13
Do's & Don'ts: How to Make a Report in Diocese of Portland; Observable Signs of Possible Abuse or Neglect



If a minor child* discloses information about or you notice signs of possible abuse or neglect...

Some DOs:

- Pay attention to physical setting
- Listen to what the child has to say
- Ask for clarification of what you don't understand instead of assuming information
- Assure the child it is okay that he/she told you about the situation
- Report any concerns regarding child abuse/neglect to the **Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of Child and Family Services within 24 hours**
 - Call 1-800-452-1999 hotline or Deaf/Hard of Hearing Call Maine Relay 711
 - Maine mandatory reporting law specifies, you are mandated to report when you learn of the situation through acting in a professional capacity or serving in a position of responsibility within a parish ministry, this includes volunteers given charge of minors in a church-organized activity, for example, catechists and chaperones
 - The "Knows or Has Reasonable Cause To Suspect" requirement in the law rests upon a person's professional training about signs a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected and experience of acting in the best interests of the child

Some DON'Ts:

- Do NOT express disapproval of the parents/ child/ situation
- Do NOT mention consequences for the alleged offender
- Do NOT promise to keep the disclosure a secret
- Do NOT tell the alleged offender a child made a disclosure if it may increase the risk to the child



***Suspected Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation of Vulnerable Adults**
 Adapt the same dos and don'ts related to children. If you have reasonable cause to suspect abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult in your care or supervision make the report to **Maine DHHS Adult Protective Services** at 1-800-624-8404 or Deaf/Hard of Hearing Call Maine Relay 711

Office of Lifelong Faith Formation September 2022

QUICK REFERENCE: Mandated Reporting of Suspected Abuse or Neglect Page 12
Do's & Don'ts: How to Make a Report in Diocese of Portland; Observable Signs of Possible Abuse or Neglect

How to Make a Report Concerning a Minor Child

If you have reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect of a child, you must pass along what you know to the appropriate authorities within 24 hours of becoming aware of the situation.

Call 911 if you see someone abusing a child or have reasonable cause to suspect a child is in immediate grave danger if returns home!



Get Support

1. **Notify your immediate supervisor** of what the child disclosed to you or physical signs you observed. Ideally, this person is an employee of the parish.
 - a. Gather available information needed for the report. Info you will be asked to provide (if known):
 - i. Name, address & phone number of child's custodial parent and directions to the home.
 - ii. Names & relationships of other adults in the home
 - iii. Child's name, age and date of birth.
 - iv. Information on any out of home parents
 - v. Detail the alleged abuse or neglect as specifically as possible
 - vi. Any actions you have or intend to take
 - vii. Any additional information like Native American/tribal connections
 - b. **NOTE:** A reporter only needs to have a reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected. That reporter is **not required to provide "proof" of abuse/neglect**, simply to report the reasonable suspicion. Maine DHHS is trained to decide what to do with the info reported.
2. **Call Michael Magalski**, director of the Diocese of Portland's Office of Professional Responsibility, at (207) 321-7836. Mike will help you be prepared and confident in making a report and advise on what other steps would be prudent.
3. If unable to reach Mike or your supervisor in a timely fashion, make the report to DHHS.

Make a Report

4. **Call the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)** hotline at 1-800-452-1999 to file a report. **NOTE:** If the child is in grave danger of abuse, call the local police **before** calling the DHHS.

Follow Up

5. **Document the incident** including info communicated to DHHS along with date, time, and name of person spoke to at the DHHS.
6. **Provide immediate supervisor with this written record** and ensure pastor is also aware a report was made.
7. **Email or call Mike Magalski**, michael.magalski@portlanddiocese.org or (207) 321-7836, to let him know how the reporting process went so he is prepared if DHHS or law enforcement reach out to him about the case.
8. **Pray** for all those involved while maintaining appropriate confidentiality.

Office of Lifelong Faith Formation September 2022

QUICK REFERENCE: Mandated Reporting of Suspected Abuse or Neglect Page 13
Do's & Don'ts: How to Make a Report in Diocese of Portland; Observable Signs of Possible Abuse or Neglect

Observable Signs of Possible Abuse or Neglect in a Child or Adult

(adapted from NHTUS Protecting God's Children for Adults Training Bulletin Vol. 23 No. 9 "Protecting Vulnerable Adults")

- Indicators that a minor child or vulnerable adult could be experiencing neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, or financial exploitation include but are not limited to:
- Injuries such as cuts, bruises, and other wounds that appear to be uncares for or never seem to heal
 - Poor skin color, sunken eyes, dehydration, or apparent malnutrition
 - Frequent trips to the hospital (for reasons unassociated with a chronic medical condition)
 - Soiled clothing, apparent pain from touching
 - Lack of social contact
 - Fear, anxiety, anger, depression, and confusion
 - Apparent disorientation or confusion and far-fetched stories to explain their situation and/or circumstances
 - Living conditions that are inadequate or consistently unclean is cause for concern
 - Room temperatures that are too extreme in both winter and summer, and foul odors in home
 - Possible financial abuse, which could include the purchase of expensive care provider gifts, the disappearance of personal items and financial issues such as credit card problems, missing bank account funds or bounced checks



To Report Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Minor Child

Call 1-800-452-1999 or Deaf/Hard of Hearing Call Maine Relay 711
Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
Office of Child and Family Services
 hotline staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year

For more information, including a free online training for mandated reporters, go to <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/provider-resources/reporting-suspected-child-abuse-and-neglect/mandated-reporter-information>



To Report Suspected Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation of a Vulnerable Adult

Call 1-800-624-8404 or Deaf/Hard of Hearing Call Maine Relay 711
Maine DHHS Adult Protective Services

For more information go to <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/get-support/aps>

Office of Lifelong Faith Formation September 2022

Regional Parish Leader Days on the Real Presence


Four regional formation days for parish leaders are being planned as part of the Diocesan phase of the National Eucharistic Revival. The focus will be on the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Pastor/administrators are encouraged to invite staff and local leaders to participate in one of the days:

- Friday, October 14 at St Joseph Church, Brewer
- Saturday, October 15 at Holy Rosary Church, Caribou
- Friday, November 4 at St Martha church, Kennebunk
- Saturday, November 5 at St Athanasius Church, Rumford


Each day will cover the same content and take place from 10am – 1:30pm including lunch.


Up to 8 leaders from each parish can attend for free. At the discretion of the local pastor/administrator additional leaders from a parish may participate if space is available and at a cost of \$25/person. Talk with your pastor about extending invitations to appropriate people in your parish.

[Click](#) to register for one of the four parish leader days.



Regional Parish Leader Days





Real Presence

What it is & Why it Matters

Friday, October 14, 2022	Saturday, October 15, 2022	Friday, November 4, 2022	Saturday, November 5, 2022
10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. beginning in the church hall (includes lunch)			
St Joseph Church, Brewer	Holy Rosary Church, Caribou	St Martha Church, Kennebunk	St Athanasius Church, Rumford

Purpose: through prayer, learning, and practice, leaders will:

- grow in their personal understanding of and appreciation for the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament,
- be introduced to skills and resources for engaging parishioners during the parish revival year.

Who: Pastor/Administrator plus parish leaders and staff who will assist in discerning and implementing the parish year of the National Eucharistic Revival

Cost: *Free for up to 8 people per parish**
Includes lunch, + a copy of the book *Real Presence: What it is and why it matters*
 *\$25/additional person as space allows. Contact Lori Dahihoff for availability

Register >> **Online pre-registration required.**

Organized by the Office of Lifelong Faith Formation as part of the Diocesan Revival year. Made possible through donations to the Catholic Appeal and a grant from the Lay Education and Formation Endowment

Un-delete-able: Understanding How Online Activity Impacts Safety On and Off Screen

The **Friday, October 21 morning presentation** is for teens and staff of Catholic and public schools. The in-person presentation will take place at St. Dominic Academy in Auburn and be livestreamed to participating schools around Maine. The presentation will be recorded and distributed to parishes in the diocese for later use with young people.

The **Saturday, October 22 presentation** is for parents of teens. The in-person presentation will take place at St. Dominic Academy in Auburn. The presentation will **not** be livestreamed, but will be recorded and distributed to parishes in the diocese for later use with local families and adults supporting teens.

Registration details will be shared soon. For more information go to: [Keep Maine Kids Safe Conference | stoptraffickingus](https://www.keepmainekids.org/stoptraffickingus)

Save the Date!

Keep Maine Kids Safe Conference
StopTraffickingUs

UN-DELETE-ABLE
Understanding How Online Activity
Impacts Safety On And Off Screen

October 21-22, 2022
St. Dominic Academy, Auburn Campus

Friday for Teens
Saturday for Adults who care about Teens

Additional Psychological First Aid Training Scheduled

In order to allow more people to participate in the psychological first aid trainings OLFF worked with Sweetser to offer a weekend training. This training will take place virtually on **Saturday, October 29th from 9am-3:30pm**. As with the other trainings, breaks and a half hour lunch break will be interspersed throughout the day. To register for this date or the 2 other option in October, click [here](#).

Just as first aid is given after a physical injury has occurred psychological first aid is the care that is given immediately after a trauma has occurred. Psychological first aid is practical, reliable, and evidence based. It is important to note that while this is not a Catholic program, it is an opportunity that the diocese, through the Office of Lifelong Faith Formation, sees the core principles and methods as crucial to more effectively walk with and help those who are suffering through trauma.

Psychological first aid is ideal for those whose jobs are relational such as: first responders, teachers, parish life coordinators, parish catechetical leaders, lay volunteers and more.

As a Catholic herself, and as a former catechist, our training facilitator, Maggie Norbert will skillfully weave together threads of Catholic teaching along with threads of psychology to give you a better picture of how to respond to someone in the moments after crisis.

A grant awarded to Sweetser and a grant from the Lay Continuing Education Foundation awarded to the Office of Lifelong Faith Formation have allowed us to offer this training at no cost to participants.

Prayer Service for those Grieving the Loss of a Child

October 15th is Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day. Our diocesan Project Rachel Ministry acknowledges the many men and women who grieve the loss of their child due to stillbirth, miscarriage, SIDS, abortion or other reasons. Realizing that many grieving find healing through honoring the child(ren) they have lost the Project Rachel Team in collaboration with St. Paul the Apostle Parish will host a prayer service for the loss of a child at 7pm on October 15th. The Project Rachel Team encourages local parishes to hold their own local prayer service in October to honor the children who have died and accompany those who mourn them. For more information contact Hannah Gonneville at Hannah.gonneville@portlanddiocese.org to request a sample prayer service leader guide and worship aid. If you plan to host a local prayer service, please contact Dave Guthro, and let him know when you plan to host the service. A listing of services will be put together and posted on the Diocesan website.

Schedule a Free Language of Compassion Presentation

“Neither do I condemn you.” These were the words Jesus spoke to the women caught in adultery, words full of compassion, love, and forgiveness. Many men and women who have experienced or have been involved in an abortion carry guilt, shame, sorrow, anger, and a variety of other emotions. They long to hear words of compassion, love, and forgiveness from those whom they choose to share their story. The diocesan Project Rachel Ministry offers a 2-hour workshop entitled “Language of Compassion” to help people understand the perspective of those who are post-abortive and to learn how to become effective agents of healing and hope. To learn more or schedule an in person (and at no cost to you) presentation at your local parish, please contact Hannah Gonneville at Hannah.gonneville@portlanddiocese.org.

LFFA Meeting Highlights: Synod on Synodality

[Click](#) to learn more about LFFA and how to join this peer-ministry organization

What is a synod/synodality?

On September 8th the Lifelong Faith Formation Association (LFFA) gathered together to listen to David Bearse, a canonist from the Tribunal, speak about the results of the Synod on Synodality and the next steps in the process. "Synodality comes from a Greek word meaning to walk together," stated David. To extend the definition synods are a way in which the Church comes together to address pressing challenges.

What is the aim of the Synod on Synodality?

The Synod on Synodality gives us a time to pause, listen, and discern where the Holy Spirit is moving the Church both locally and nationally. For this Synod on Synodality we are asked to reflect on the following questions "How are we journeying together? How will we continue to journey together? What's next-- where is the Spirit moving us? " Another way of looking at the Synod on Synodality is the Church is taking it's pulse to identify and evaluate the needs of the Church within Maine, so that faith communities in Maine can be strong for years to come. As Bishop Deeley wrote about the Synod on Synodality "the Synod on Synodality is about conversion and seeking ways in which the mission of the Church might become more focused, fruitful, and generous."

Have there been Synods prior to the Synod on Synodality?

There have been several synods such as the following:

- Synod on Evangelization
- Synod on the Word of God
- Synod on the Family (Amoris Laetitia)
- Synod on Youth and Young People
- Amazon Synod

Our last local synod was held in 1905, so we were due for a new synod.

What kinds of structures are included in a Synod on Synodality?

Synodality can be practiced in all kinds of ways. David outlined a few ways it has been practiced in our own Diocese.

Level 1: Through the Mass--Every time we attend the Mass we have the pleasure of opening God's word and coming to understand parts of it through the homily. Through our participation and faithful reflection on the Scripture readings we are able to get a sense of how the Spirit is moving us and what we are being called to do.

Level 2: Ecclesial Structures--These ecclesial structures can be your parish council, your finance council, your pastoral council, your presbyteral council etc. They are a very concentrated group of people gathered for a specific purpose which benefits the parish and/or Diocese. These ecclesial structures try and listen to the Spirit's promptings and make decisions based on a consensus from the group.

Level 3: Synodal Processes Convoked by Diocesan Authority--You may recall seeing in the weekly mailing a survey that was specifically for the Synodality. Additionally, Bishop Deeley did several consultations with different audiences such as; college students, LFFA members, middle and high school aged youth and more. Parishioners also submitted letters to the Bishop with their thoughtful and prayerful reflections on faith in the state of Maine. All this information was very helpful and we would like to thank those who participated either through consultations or through submitting a letter.

What does the process of a Synod on Synodality look like?

There are several steps in the process of a Synod such as:

1. **Collecting the data in the Diocese of Portland**--Surveys, consultations, letters & communications from priests, lay-leaders and parishioners – January-March 2022.
2. **Reviewing/analyzing the data**-- All archdioceses/dioceses in the United States submitted their reports/syntheses to the USCCB in June 2022.

3. **Synthesizing of the data by Region** -- Once the data has been reviewed and analyzed for commonalities and points of divergence the Dioceses in New England draft a document with the major findings. In July 2022, Archbishop Blair of Hartford organized the writing of a synthesis for Region I (New England).
4. **Submitting the regional reports**--The regional reports are then submitted to the U.S. Bishops Synod Team - July 2022.
5. **Reviewing the regional reports**-- The reports are reviewed by the U.S. Bishops Synod Team.
6. **Creating a new national report**-- A new report is formed which outlines the findings for the country – August 2022 and is submitted to the Synod of Bishops in Rome.
7. **Creation of a Working Document for the Continental phase** – A working document (*instrumentorum laboris*) is created by the Synod of Bishops taking into account all national synod reports/syntheses. This working document is scheduled to be released in December 2022.
8. **Continental Discernment Period**—Different national groups separated by continents will get together to pray, discuss, and reflect on the working document from January through March 2023. The United States and Canada will be working together during this phase of the synodal process. The bishops of the US and Canada will create a report/synthesis that will be sent to the Synod of Bishops in Rome.
9. **Creation of a new working document** – Taking into account the reports/syntheses of the continental phase, a new working document will be created and released – Summer 2023-Fall 2023.
10. **Celebration of the Synod** – The main part of the synod, will be celebrated in Rome in October 2023. The working document created at the conclusion of the continental phase will be the starting place for conversations/discernment at the synod.
11. **Concluding the synodal process**— A final report will be released sometime after the conclusion of the synod in October 2023.
12. **Apostolic Exhortation** – The Pope will likely release an apostolic exhortation or letter offering his reflections on the themes discussed during the synodal process. This might be released sometime in 2024.

Next LFFA Meeting: October 13

The next meeting will be focused on Social Justice & Catholic Teaching. We are very lucky to have a wonderful panel of speakers; Deacon Frank Daggett from Catholic Charities, Bill Wood from Catholic Charities, and Suzanne Lafreniere from the Office of Public Policy within the Diocese of Portland Maine. We look forward to what they have to share and learning from their years of experience and wisdom.



Fruits from the Vineyard



Classroom from the Sipayik Reservation. Submitted by Sheila Foley

As faith formation classes begin again Sheila Foley has been making sure to create an environment conducive to learning and prayer. "My students come in tired and hungry from a long day at school so it is important to have an interesting classroom," states Sheila. Among the many interesting things in her classroom Sheila says her favorite piece is the "I am a child of God" stencil on the wall. "I get these stencils from ETSY," said Sheila " and what's wonderful about them is that I can switch them out depending on the theme of the lesson or the liturgical season we are in.

"My students have a wonderful sense of God as Creator and respect for life and creation. This year I hope to incorporate the story of salvation in my lessons. We will also focus on what the Native American saints and martyrs can teach us and help us in our faith journey. We have been learning about the life of the saint which our parish is named after; St. Kateri Tekakwitha," remarked Sheila. One memorable activity was when the class built a fort and staged St. Kateri's life with paper dolls. Looking forward Sheila is also looking to share the stories of the Martyrs of Florida who had a great reverence for the Eucharist and ended up laying down their lives for their faith. "I want my students to understand that they have an important place in the Church, and the martyrs (many of them who were young people) show us that." Sheila says she also supplements some material with material found in the Word of Life curriculum.

As Catechetical Sunday draws near we invite catechists and faith formation leaders to ponder the following questions:

1. What does the atmosphere of my classroom communicate? Is it warm and inviting? Is it conducive to learning and prayer? How do the decorations speak of the faith that we profess?
2. What are the strengths of the students you will be teaching? Where are the gaps in their knowledge? How can you affirm the strengths and begin to bridge the gaps?
3. Where is your learner developmentally? What types of activities will capture their attention?

Want to help St. Kateri of Tekakwitha parish? Do you have new or used children's books and puzzles that you are willing to part with? The parish is asking for donations of new or gently used children's books and puzzles to add to their collection. They ask that the books and puzzles have a religious theme (stories of the Saints, Bible stories etc.). Books have been a wonderful resource to the community and a wonderful avenue for evangelization. For more information or to donate books, contact Sheila Foley at sheilafoley@icloud.com.

A big thank you to Sheila Foley, Marc Podschlne, Jr. and Fr. Brad Morin of St. Kateri Tekakwitha parish for sharing this project with us.

VBS Materials Available for Free

Parish of the Ascension of the Lord is looking to pass on their Rocky Railway VBS materials to another parish who could use them. Included in the materials are cardboard animal cutouts, a train cutout and more. If you interested in these materials for next summer's VBS please contact Veronica Richards at veronica.richards@portlanddiocese.org.

Inspiration from Hannah

On social media I keep seeing videos of teachers placing a box in the middle of their classroom and having their students approach the box. Inside the box is a mirror. The premise is that inside the box is the teacher's favorite student. When they peer into the box the student finds his or her own image reflected back. Let me just state now that I did this before it was cool. As a young child I wanted to make my memere (French word for grandmother) feel special so I took a box and wrapped the box and the lid of the box as best as I could. Inside the box I glued a little mirror. Then I wrote a note along the lines of " the best gift God gave me is in this box." When she opened the box she obviously saw her own reflection. She was delighted with this simple gift.

More and more I am inspired by that box I gave my grandmother as a little girl and the social media trend. What I like about this activity is that it points to our human dignity. It communicates to us that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. It says that we are unrepeatable. It tells us we are loved by God and points to our identity as His children. It serves as a reminder that God put great care into creating each one of us, instead of haphazardly forming us. We are God's masterpieces meant to reflect His image and His love to the world. What better gift could there be?

Prayer

Lord,
You make all things new
Make us new and strengthen our fidelity to You
Teach us who You are so that we may know who we are in turn.
Renew our belief and Eucharistic amazement that You are present with us
in Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.
When doubt creeps up help us to remember that we are participating in a great Mystery.
When apathy tries to control us, fill us with wonder at the fullness of our faith.
When despair sinks in, help us to turn to You in the Blessed Sacrament for consolation and hope.
Give us a fervor for the Eucharist like that of Saint Paschal Baylon and Blessed Carlos Acutis.
Give us courage to protect and defend the Eucharist like St. Tarcisius and the martyrs.
Help us having been nourished by You to go out and humbly serve others like St. Teresa of Calcutta,
St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and St. Martin de Porres.
May we be made new so that we may become more of who you have called us to be as Church;
as Your Body.
Having been made new may we behold you with a new appreciation and awe and
seek to share the gift we have received with others.
We ask this in your Most Holy Name
And we invoke these holy men and women and ask for their prayers as we say....

St. Paschal Baylon.....pray for us
Blessed Carlos Acutis.....pray for us
St. Tarcisius.....pray for us
All martyrs in Heaven.....pray for us
St. Teresa of Calcutta.....pray for us
St. Elizabeth of Hungary..pray for us
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton...pray for us
St. Martin de Porres.....pray for us
Amen!