



OLFF Newsletter-January 2023

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Relaunching Annual Faith Formation Report



One goal of the diocesan catechetical plan is to develop a common framework for what constitutes effective and doable faith formation across the state. Part of working toward that aim is getting more consistent snapshots of what evangelizing and catechetical activities are taking place in parishes. We will gather this information by **reinstating an annual parish faith formation report**. The reporting process uses our common tools of Excel and SharePoint to minimize the amount of work needed to enter, access, and update information now and into the future.

This yearly snapshot of activity benefits the parish by having all faith formation information in one place for planning, ministry-sharing and local accountability. It will also assist the diocesan Office of Lifelong Faith Formation (OLFF) in responding to common questions asked by parish leaders and inform discernment of where to focus diocesan resources for supporting parish ministries aimed at forming missionary disciples of Christ in the changing situations the Church faces.

Thank you in advance for working together to celebrate the ways in which the local parish is echoing God's Word and to create the mosaic of how the Holy Spirit is at work across Maine as we seek to make disciples who know, love, and serve Christ.

What this means for parishes:

1. On January 25, the pastor/administrator and the primary catechetical contact at each parish received a link to a customized Excel document pre-filled with information OLFF already has for the parish. [Click](#) to preview a generic report. Instructions on how to enter the requested information are provided on each of the sheets in the workbook. The deadline for entering current data is February 28th.
2. OLFF will provide two virtual "Intro and Q&A" sessions via Teams on Tuesday, January 31 from 1-2pm and Wednesday, February 1 from 10:30-11:30am. Use this info to connect to either meeting.

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 270 687 850 880

Passcode: JeXMqY

Or call in (audio only)

[207-352-4189](tel:207-352-4189)

Phone Conference ID: 544 429 737#

A recording of a session will also be posted on the diocesan Vimeo page.

Lay Continuing Education & Formation Grant



The Lay Continuing Education & Formation Endowment Fund, administered by the Catholic Foundation of Maine, was established through the *Strengthening the Heartbeat of the Church Campaign* in 2008. The purpose of the endowment was to build resources to support the present and future lay ecclesial ministry of the Catholic Church in Maine. [Click](#) to see the grant program overview that is also provided below.

The purpose of this fund is to provide grants to current employees and volunteers of parishes, Maine Catholic schools, and diocesan offices (such as pastoral life coordinators and associates, business coordinators, music ministers, catechetical leaders, teachers and youth ministers, etc.) to further their education and training related to professional service within the Church. This fund also provides parishes, Maine Catholic schools, diocesan offices, and affiliated organizations of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland with grants to support education, training, and the start-up of new initiatives related to adult faith formation and professional service to the Church. The fund is not intended for the annual budgets of ongoing or recurring programs.

Click [here](#) to view eligibility criteria, the application process and more. Applications will be made available within the next week or so.

Rite of Election 2023



Click [here](#) to register for the Rite of Election

Each year as Lent begins, the bishop, with and on behalf of the Christian community, "elects" those catechumens who are deemed ready to continue preparing for full initiation at the Easter Vigil. These catechumens become members of the "Elect," the chosen. Similarly, candidates for reception into full communion with the Catholic Church come forward to make a public commitment by answering the call to continuing conversion, thus readying themselves with the community for full reception into the Church.

The Most Reverend Robert P. Deeley, Bishop of Portland, anticipates celebrating the Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion for catechumens, candidates, sponsors/godparents, family members, or friends at the following three* churches across the diocese:

- **Saturday, February 25 at 4:00pm--Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, Presque Isle**
- **Sunday, February 26 at 10:30am--St. John the Baptist Church, Winslow**
- **Sunday, February 26 at 5:00pm--Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Portland**

***There must be at least one adult catechumen registered to be presented at a site for the scheduled *Rite* to take place there.**

The celebration will also be shared via live stream from Portland. If Bishop Deeley is unable to celebrate the Mass in Presque Isle or Winslow due to inclement weather, parish contacts will be notified. All catechumens and candidates from cancelled liturgies will be presented via live stream at the 5:00pm Cathedral Mass on February 26.

Protecting God's Children--Circle of Grace Annual Parish Report



Parishes must submit an annual digital parish report to Bob McDermott at the diocesan Protecting God's Children Office **no later than February 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)

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

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.

Telephone #: (207)-321-7886

Georgette.dionne@portlanddiocese.org

Register for the Maine Catholic Men's and Women's Conferences today!



Deacon



MAINE CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE

March 18, 2023 from 9am-5pm
 St. John's Community Center,
 Brunswick
 \$65/person (including lunch)

The day will be a time to gather as catholic men to pray, to listen to keynotes and witness, and to be nourished by the sacraments to go out and love and serve God and his children

Matt Halbach

Click [here](#) to register for the **Maine Catholic Men's Conference**

Give the Date

Maine Catholic Women's Conference
 Holiday Inn by the Bay-Portland
May 6, 2023
 9AM-5PM

Theme:
Holy Friendship

Keynote Speaker:
Vallimar Jansen





Scan the QR code to learn more about Vallimar, our inspirational, internationally acclaimed presenter

Click [here](#) to register for the **Maine Catholic Women's Conference**

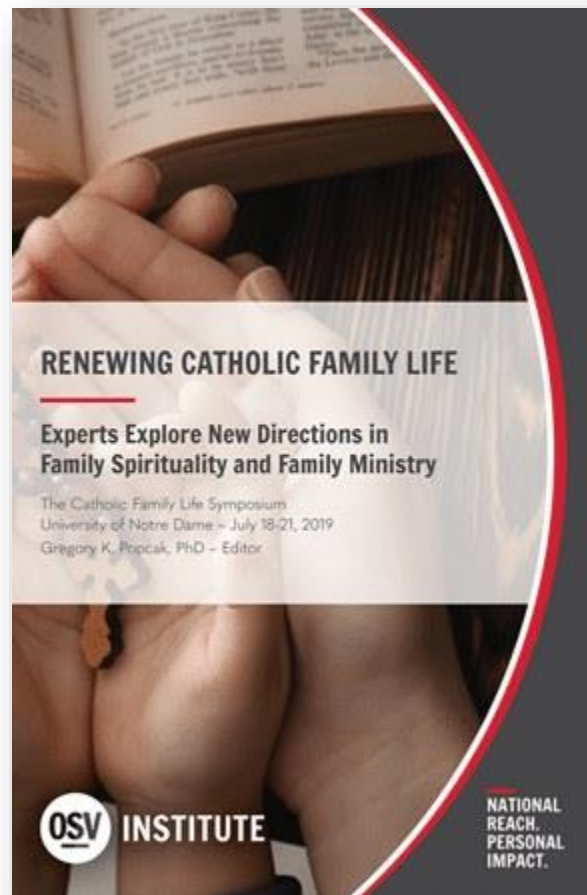
Fr. Charles Irvin Memorial Writing Scholarship for High School Seniors



FAITH Catholic has announced a writing scholarship contest for high school seniors in the dioceses of its publishing partners, including the Diocese of Portland. The 2023 Father Charles Irvin Memorial Writing Scholarship is open to high school seniors and is given directly to the winner in the form of a \$1,500 check. This year's essay theme is "Tell Us About the Person in Whom You Most See the Face of Christ."

To view the scholarship rules and guidelines, visit www.faithsyndicated.org/father-charles-irvin-writing-scholarship-2023.

Highlights from LFFA Book Read



Five Quick Takes

- *In addition to Penance and Anointing of the Sick, Baptism, Marriage, and the Eucharist have healing dimensions that are important for family life.*
- *The grace communicated in the sacrament of Marriage is not a one-time infusion, but an ongoing source of strength and power for couples in living out their vocation as spouses and parents.*
- *The healing effects of Baptism and Marriage are fruitfully received and extended through the life of a family by regular practices of love, prayer, reconciliation, acknowledgement, and service.*

- *The Eucharist is the "source and summit" of the life of the domestic church and its healing effects are extended in the life of a family by spent time together--especially at the family dinner table.*
- *The healing effects of these sacraments empower and equip Christian families to answer the call to be active agents of the New Evangelization in ministering to others.*

"Confession is just such a gift, the grace and healing we gain from it is just amazing," remarked a parish leader at the January 12th LFFA meeting.

"There are just so many practices that the human family can do to bring about healing." A common practice amongst the group was family dinner. "Family dinner is where we come together to share a meal and talk about our day, share prayer requests and learn to listen and genuinely care for each other. It is an important practice in our household," affirmed a parish leader.

As parents it is a great witness to our children when we apologize when we have done wrong to them. It shows great humility, especially when we could choose to ignore the hurt that we have caused. It shows them that we are not perfect, and yet we are trying our best. It shows them that we make mistakes, but we can choose to start over (through reconciliation) when we make a mistake.

"Going to Mass together and taking some time afterwards to discuss what we heard in the Homily or what we gleaned from the readings has been a way that we as parents can help our children understand our Catholic faith so that they may go out and evangelize others. Faith begins when it is modeled in the home through the family,"

The group who took part in the conversation read Chapter 4 of the Renewing Catholic Family Life book and prayerfully pondered the major themes of the chapter. Each of us gleaned a different insight as we read the chapter. We invite you to read the chapter and prayerfully ponder the questions on page 93 and discuss your thoughts or insights with a colleague or friend.

Discussion Questions:

- *What are the four effects of the grace of the Sacrament of Marriage according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1641-1642)*
- *Can you identify a time when you experienced healing through your reception of a sacrament? What was the sacrament and what was the fruit of the healing?*

- *Identify three regular practices in your household that help its members draw on the healing effects of the sacraments. What are two additional practices you believe you should add to these?*
- *In **Evangelii Gaudium**, Pope Francis teaches that "Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization (120)." How are you responding to this challenge in the daily life of your household?*

NCCL Happenings



Webinars

NCCL is hosting multiple webinars focused on important ministry-related topics. Please see the offerings below. You will need to register for the webinar in order to receive the Zoom link.

What's Working in Family Faith Formation Online Conference

February 15th

3 presentations

- 12pm--*Family Faith Formation in the Parish*--Dr. Kathie Amidei & Patrice Spirou
- 2pm--*Family Faith Formation at Home*--Catherine LeVecchia
- 4pm--*Parent Faith Formation*--Denise Utter

What's Working in Adult Faith Formation Online Conference

February 16th

3 presentations

- 12pm--*Faith Formation with Young Adults*--Dr. Tracey Lamont & Cassie Schutzer
- 2pm--*Faith Formation with Adults (40-80's)*--Sr. Ruth Bolarte & Sr. Janet Schaeffler
- 4pm--*Adult Faith Formation Programming*--John Roberto

Click [here](#) to register through NCCL.

Becoming a Trauma Informed Parish Webinar

March 1st

Mike Carotta & Scott Herd

Click here to register through NCCL

Projects

Shaping the Future of Catechesis with All Ages and Generations has become the focus of NCCL. This effort involves engaging the catechetical community in envisioning new directions and initiatives for proclaiming and teaching the Catholic faith in our world today.

This project is broken into three separate phases:

Phase 1: Interpreting

Exploring the trends and issues having the biggest impact on catechesis now and into the future through a series of articles and videos in Winter-Spring 2023.

Phase 2: Envisioning

Creating new models of catechetical ministry with all ages and generations that creatively address the challenges through seven regional convocations in Fall 2023 (*see listing below*).

- September 18-19: San Francisco--Mercy Center
- September 26-27: Baltimore-Bon Secours Center, Marriottsville
- October 3-4: Dallas-Hilton Garden Inn DFW Airport South
- October 10-11: Connecticut-Holy Family Retreat Center, Farmington
- October 17-18: Chicago-Hilton Garden Inn O'Hare Airport
- October 24-25: Tampa-Franciscan Center
- November 29-30: San Diego-Hilton Garden Inn Mission Valley

Registration prices and housing information is now available on the NCCL Catholic website. Registration will open by March 1, 2023.

Phase 3: Designing

Implementing new initiatives to bring to life the future of catechesis in parishes and dioceses throughout 2024.

For more information and pricing click [here](#).

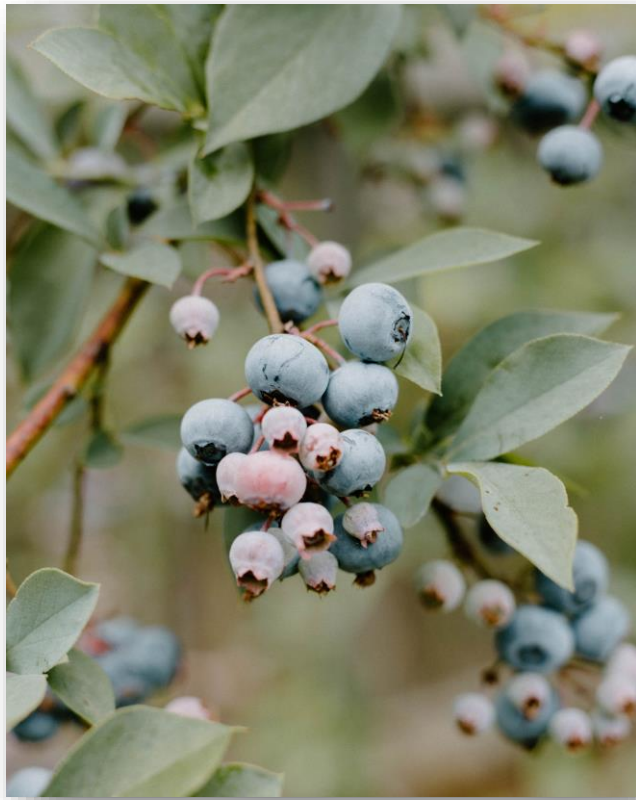
Free Continuing Education Opportunity on Synodality



Boston College will hold its second free Intercontinental Massive Online Course (MOOC) focused on the theme: "History, Theology and Ministerial Practice of Synodality" as part of lead up to the October Synod of Bishops on synodality. **Pre-registration is required to access the course set for February 6 to March 26, 2023.** Content is available in multiple languages including Spanish, English and French.

Click [here](#) to learn more.

Fruits from the Vineyard



Check out the diocesan Vimeo account where the Office of Lifelong Faith Formation posts recordings of gatherings and events such as the monthly leader learning sessions, advancing the mission meetings, videos from CYLT and more. The account name is OLFF Maine. We will continue to post recordings to this page as the year continues.

Click [here](#) to access these valuable resources.

Inspiration



In a recent virtual writing workshop participants were asked to write a letter to 2022. After concluding our letters several people read theirs out loud. One of the sentences that has stuck with me (Hannah) since goes something along the lines of "maybe life isn't so much about seeing the glass as half empty or half full. Maybe instead life is about realizing that the glass can be refilled." I've thought about and reflected on that quote a lot since then. When I am running on empty, when I am tired, or when things aren't going according to my plan do my thoughts become pessimistic or do they remain hopeful? Do I turn to the One who can fill me, the One who is Living Water? Do I ask Him to fill me with the joy, the hope, the peace, the rest, the love that I am needing? Scripture proclaims:

You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows (Psalm 23:5)

Come you who weary and burdened, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28)

Until now you have not asked anything in my name. Ask and you will receive and that your joy may be complete (John 16:24)

Sometimes we are empty wells. Jesus is the Living Water that comes to restore and refresh us. All we need to do is ask.

Prayer



Loving Father, we pray today for our catechists. 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 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.

(Taken from the [USCCB Catechetical Sunday 2020 Campaign](#))