



Department of Education

Newsletter

May 2024

A Message from Sr. Ellen Rose...

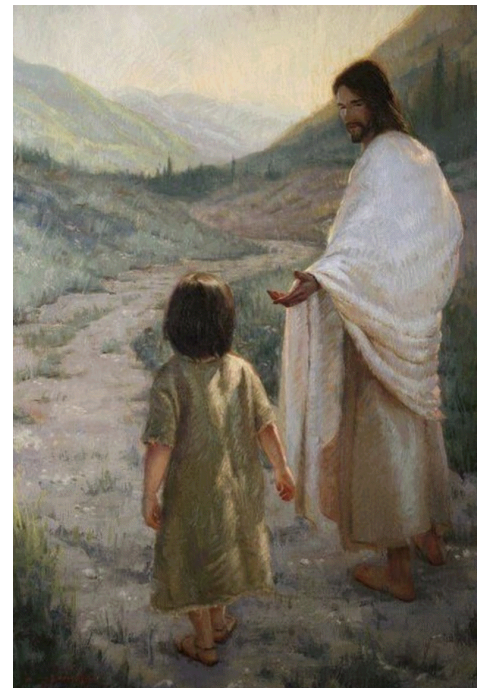
Have you ever experienced a word or phrase that resurfaces often? This has been my experience for the past few weeks.

At daily Masses recently the celebrant prayed one of the *Eucharistic Prayers of Masses for Various Needs*. “You are indeed Holy and to be glorified, O God, who love the human race and who always walk with us on the journey of life.” For me this image and the words are powerful. God loves us and “always walks with us on the journey of life.”

I encountered “walking” in other places. I attended this year’s Youth Rally. “Walking with Christ” was the theme. I noticed a book in our library called *Walking with Jesus* by Pope Francis.

As I reflected on the word walking, it occurred to me that Jesus takes the initiative to walk with us. He meets us on the journey of faith, whether in the sacraments, scripture and/or others who are among His companions. He wants to walk with us. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus Jesus takes the first step in developing a relationship. He reaches out to us. If we are open to Him, He will walk with us as a steady presence of hope and love.

This encounter with Jesus puts our life on a new path. The life of faith is a journey we make with Jesus. He is our companion along the way. With Him, we travel also in the company of others who have accepted His invitation to follow Him. Not only are we companions who walk with Jesus and not only is He our companion who walks with us, but in His company, we become companions to one another.



The Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles describe the earliest disciples as those who walked with Jesus and referred to their life of faith as “the way.” These disciples did not know where they would go as they followed Jesus or what they would find along the way, but they believed in Him and trusted Him. They were committed to “the way.”

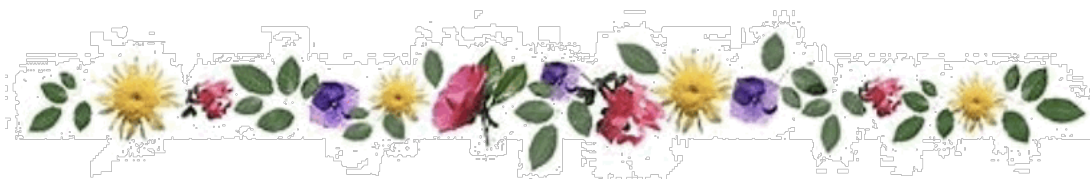
For Pope Francis waking involves an image of the Church that goes outside itself, past its inner and outer walls and reaches out to the people of the Lord and to the world. “Missionary disciples” are always committed to the mission, to spread the joy of the Gospel.

We are called in our time to take up the journey to a renewed personal encounter with Christ. The Lord does not disappoint us when we take the risk to walk with Him. Whenever we take a step in His direction, we find that He is present and waiting for us.

As the two disciples of Emmaus left Jerusalem, they were wanderers bearing their grief and disappointment. On their return to Jerusalem, they were witnesses of hope. They had met the Risen Jesus who walked with them and opened their eyes to the meaning of His life, death, and resurrection.

Sometimes we may get tired of walking, sometimes we stray from the path, sometimes discouragement may tempt us to abandon the walk of faith. If that happens, we need to recall that Jesus is here today. He is among us. He is here in His Word. He is here in the Eucharist. He is here to be our companion.

Quoting Pope Francis, “When His Word warms our hearts, and the Eucharist opens our eyes to faith and nourishes us with hope and charity, we can walk beside our brothers and sisters who are downcast and in despair and warm their heart with the Gospel” (Pope Francis, Homily, 5/4/14).



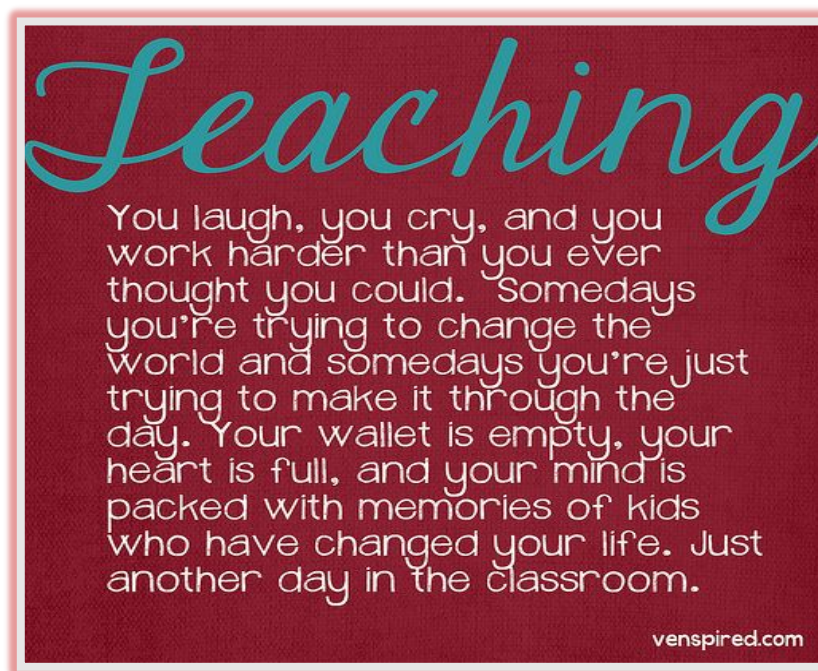
A Message from Karen ...

A Time to Reflect and Renew

The weeks ahead are filled with a sense of accomplishment, excitement, and many farewells as we begin the process of closing out school year 2023-2024. Many of you set high expectations for your students, other staff, and yourselves. Now is the time to gauge the success of our efforts AND ask some particularly important questions: What went well? Why was it such a success? What surprised you? What went poorly? How can circumstances be improved to avoid this happening again? What needs have you identified and now plan to address in the future? What essential resources do you need for the next school year?

Your next step should be to ensure your ideas are shared. Be brave, jump in, and become part of the formal planning process at your school. All sectors of the school community plan for the next year by having targeted conversations focused on the formal goals and objectives set forth by the school's Educational Council. Faculty and staff observations, suggestions, and feedback are critical data required for the success of this process. These comments coupled with student performance data and feedback, parent input, and school capacity to carry out the plan developed, help us achieve our goal to be an outstanding Catholic School.

Reflection and gratitude - As teachers, you encourage and educate our students every day. You have chosen a challenging and rewarding career. Your treasure is ensuring your students are filled with knowledge and inspired by their faith. You help them grow to become the best version of themselves. This is a very tall order, yet you succeed in achieving it, year after year. With gratitude, congratulations on a job well done and completing another successful year.



A Message from Cathy...

It was sometime during the mid 1980's. I was teaching seventh and eighth grade in a Catholic school. I encountered a student who just could not pass a spelling test. I tried everything. I assumed he wasn't trying or studying for the test each Friday. I had him write out the words several times; I had him study with a friend repeatedly. I was determined he would pass a spelling test, any spelling test.



Eventually it dawned on me that this boy, despite his studying and all my efforts, was not going to pass a spelling test because he just couldn't. I also noticed he had a difficult time reading aloud. I think all I succeeded in doing with that boy was making him feel stupid, insecure and worthless. Even today, I still feel guilty about what I did to him and wonder where he is today. Suffice it to say, my experience with this boy has shaped my attitudes about the needs of people with disabilities. It was the beginning of my education about identifying, serving and appreciating people with different needs.

Today is very different from the 1980's. Persons with disabilities are more readily identified and served in schools but I wonder if we can say the same thing about our catechetical programs? I have heard well-meaning catechetical leaders say, "We don't have any students like that in our program." I feel like saying, "How hard have you looked? They are there." I suggest families are reluctant to enroll their disabled children in our programs. Outreach is needed to find these families and invite them, assuring them their children will be cared for in the program. We must build a welcoming place for them.



The United States Catholic Bishops have been firm about the inclusion of persons with disabilities having access to catechesis and the sacraments. You can read one of their documents at the link here:

[Guidelines-for-the-Celebration-of-the-Sacraments-with-Persons-with-Disabilities-Revised-Edition.pdf \(usccb.org\)](#)

There are many resources out there. The National Catholic Partnership on Disability is a great resource. One of their short videos is here:

[How to make your Catechetical Program more Inclusive for Diverse Learners \(youtube.com\)](#)

Loyola Press has an adaptive program available for sacramental preparation. The Catechetical Institute has a workshop devoted to catechesis to those disabled.

Will you commit to seeking out families with special needs children and ensure a welcoming program is available for them? Train your catechists to support these children in a way that does not demean them, make them feel isolated or different. Everyone is a gifted child of God, created in God's image and likeness and you will be rewarded a hundredfold!

A Message from Anita...

Transitions. For some reason, as I thought about this newsletter, the word “transitions” came to mind. Maybe it’s the budding of the trees and green grass that made me think of that, I’m not sure, but that’s what I am focused on – transitions.



As we come to the end of the Easter Season in the Church, we are all aware of the transition Jesus made from death to new life – His glorious resurrection, and then His ascension to heaven. Both of those events, more than any other I can think of perfectly depict (for me) transition, moving from one state of being to another. Pentecost is another “transition” event – the Holy Spirit descending on the apostles “transforming them” and giving them courage and strength to go out and preach the good news.

Spring in the North Country is filled with lots of transitions. Bishop LaValley has been busy travelling many miles to confer the sacrament of Confirmation in parishes all across the Diocese. I was unable to attend my home parish’s Confirmation this year, but I was able to support someone I knew at a neighboring parish. It was a small group, but it struck me there – it only takes one person to make a change in the world in some small way. It doesn’t have to be on the national or world stage. Anyone can make a difference for the better in their home, school, or neighborhood.

I realized THAT is what the Church gives us – the ability to transform our lives for the better. Yes, the transforming power comes from God and his grace, but how do we come to know that power?

Only through the sacraments do we receive the power of the Holy Spirit and the graces that come with that. It’s then up to us to “do the work” to transform our hearts to help us “transition” from sinner to saint. It’s a lifelong process for sure, and just as life ebbs and flows, so do our lifelong “transitions”.



We move from infants to childhood, to pre-teens, to teens, to young adults, to middle age, and on we go. We move from grade school to high school to college to the working world. We are in a constant state of “transition”, and we may not realize it till after it happens. We suddenly look back at where we’ve been and wonder “how did I get here so quick”? The common ground that we all share that helps us with every change we experience is our faith. With a very grateful heart, I know that my faith is what grounds me without a doubt, and I welcome the “transitions” it brings in my life.

Catechetical Institute Workshops

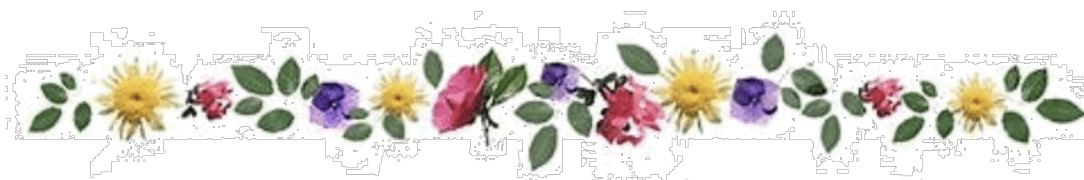
The Faith Formation Department ran 7 Catechetical Institute workshops both in person and virtually throughout the months of April and May. These workshops provide a great opportunity for our Catechists not only to become certified, but more importantly to gain skills and grow in their faith. The common theme in all the workshops regardless of the topic, is directed at each participant individually – where are they at spiritually with the topic? Are they engaged? We can’t give



what we don't have. Instructional knowledge is a good thing, but spiritual connection is much more important. The workshops stress the importance of being a true witness of the faith to all our youth, to reflect the love and care of Jesus to them. Unfortunately, many families are not practicing or imparting knowledge of our faith at home. It does make our jobs harder, but it makes it that much more important.

Conclusion of LEAD Events

Our final Diocesan LEAD event was held on Saturday, April 27th in Massena: *Using the Chosen as a Tool for Catechesis*. Many of the participants had already viewed some or all of the Chosen series, and some parishes have used it as well. The sharing of information and just being with other catechists was enjoyed by all. We look forward to planning similar events for next year.



Youth Ministry ZONE

Youth Rally

The Annual Diocesan Youth Rally was held Saturday April 20th at Trinity Catholic School in Massena with the theme, *Walking in Faith*.



Instead of one keynote speaker, this year, Fr. Leagon Carlin, Sr. Jackie Sellapan and Anita Soltero were the speakers. Ice breakers were used to get the students to talk to each other and meet new people, which they enjoyed. Games were played at the end of the day for prizes – we sure had a competitive bunch!



Returning to the Youth Rally this year, were a few of our Diocesan Offices: Vocations and Respect Life. Sr. Bethany Fitzgerald also brought her Faith and Ecology information.

It's been a few years since we were able to do this, and the students enjoyed it! Everyone visited all the tables during our "table time session" after hearing a few words about their programs from Sr. Eamon, Sr. Bethany and Colleen and John Miner. The students learned that the ministries of the Diocese are staffed by individuals who are Walking in Faith! They too can Walk in Faith every day by treating everyone as they wish to be treated.



Summer Camp Guggenheim

We are well under way with over 100 camper registrations at this point, and have a full staff with many returning counselors from 2023.



Katy Sherman is the Camp Director this year. Katy spent her summers attending camp, family camp and was a counselor for 3 years. Last year, Katy was the Assistant Director and offered to step up as Camp Director this year! We are in good hands! Keep an eye on the NCC for photos and profiles of our 2024 camp staff!

If you would like to spend a day or two as a volunteer at camp to help counselors, please visit the Guggenheim page of the Diocesan website and complete a volunteer application so we can get in touch with you. If you know a volunteer from the past or friend or family member who could be of service, please spread the word!

Camper registrations will be accepted until one week prior to camp starting, so please check the website and get your campers registered!

Parish Youth Ministers

A parish youth ministry retreat day is being planned for **Saturday, June 8th**

Time and location will be announced soon.





Saint Conleth of Kildare



Not much is known about the family life of Saint Conleth, who was born about 450 A.D. He is known to have lived most of his life as a hermit along the River Liffey in what is now Newbridge, County Kildare, Ireland. (In the ancient Church, a hermit was a kind of monk who lived in seclusion by choice, living a life of prayer and work for the glory of God.)

Conleth was a master metal worker who worked with both gold and silver. He came to the attention of Saint Brigid of Kildare, one of Ireland's famous saints, after Patrick. Brigid was the abbess - or head sister - of a local monastery. When she heard of Conleth's talents, she asked him to make the sacred vessels to be used in the sister's chapel. After seeing the beauty of his work, Brigid asked Conleth to create crosses and other beautiful metalwork to decorate the convent. He also crafted croziers for bishops (the shepherd's crook that is a symbol of their position). One, thought to have been made by him for Saint Finbar of Termonbarry, is on display at the Irish Royal Academy Museum - over 1,500 years after it was created!

Conleth became the head of the Kildare School of Metalwork and his reputation for producing great pieces for churches spread. He came know as one of the three chief craftspeople of Ireland of his time.

As Brigid got to know Conleth better, she realized what a profoundly holy man he was and asked him to be the spiritual director of the sisters of whom she was in charge. This meant that they would pray with Conleth and he would give them guidance as to how best live a life closer to God. Eventually, he became to pastor of the people who lived near the monastery.

Saint Conleth was also known for his penmanship and talents at illustration. This was a very important skill in his time because it was before the invention of the printing press. Books could not be mass-produced. They were hand-lettered and decorated by people like Conleth. Under his leadership, a group of monks was started to create and illustrate missals, Books of the Gospel, and hymn books.

According to Church documents*, Conleth became the first bishop of the Diocese of Kildare in 490.

Bridget and Conleth seemingly ruled their monasteries "by means of a mutually happy alliance," according to Brigid's biographer, Cogitosus, who is considered to have written the authoritative biography of the saint. Much of what we know of Saint Conleth comes from this writing.

Many years after becoming a bishop, Conleth decided to make a pilgrimage to Rome. His friend Bridget was very much against the idea to due to what was considered Conleth's "old age" at the time - he was in his late sixties.

It seems that Conleth should have listened to his friend. On May 4, 519, while travelling through the forests of southeastern Ireland on his way to Rome, Conleth was attacked and killed by wolves. Some accounts say that he was buried to the left of the altar in the church he co-governed with Brigid and that just a few years later, she would be buried on the right hand side.

Every year, on May 4, people still honor Saint Conleth by making a two mile pilgrimage from the church in Newbridge to site of his original hermitage.

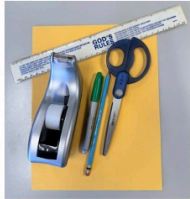
*The Annuario Pontificio



Saint Conleth of Kildare

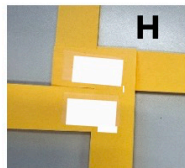
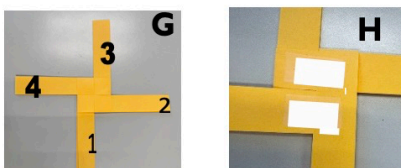
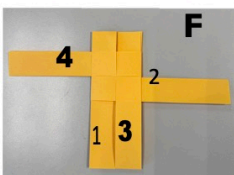
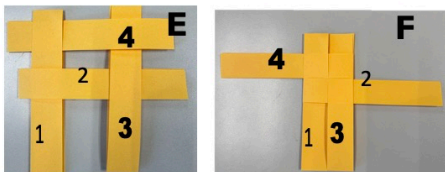
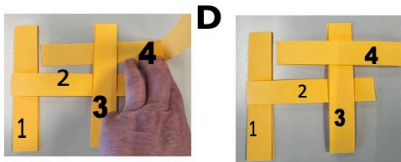
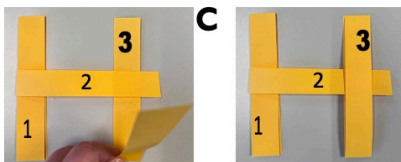
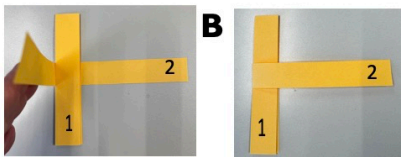
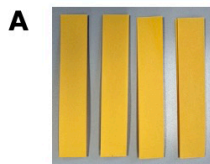


Make a Saint Brigid's Cross



Materials Needed:

- 1 sheet of colored paper (makes 2 crosses),
- 1 pair of scissors, ruler,
- 1 felt tip marker, tape



Directions:

- Fold paper in half lengthwise.
- Fold paper in half lengthwise again. Use your ruler to make a nice, crisp edge on the folds.
- Fold paper in half lengthwise again.
- Unfold paper.
- Cut paper into 4 strips along folds (for 2 crosses).

For Each Cross:

- A. Fold four strips in half top to bottom.
- B. Tuck strip 1 inside strip 2.
- C. Open strip 3. Slide the bottom half between the folds of strip 2, forming an H.
- D. Open strip 4. Slide the bottom through the fold of strip 3.
- E. Tuck both ends of strip 4 between the folds of strip 1.
- F. Pull strips 1 and 4 by the open ends until the folded ends touch strips 2 and 3.
- G. Do the same for strips 2 and 3.
- H. Flip the cross over and apply 2 strips of tape to secure it.
- I. Turn cross again and write prayer intentions on the front and decorate.
- J. Hang crosses on bulletin board or around classroom

Dates to Remember

Catechist Appreciation Dinners



Western Region	St. Mary's Parish Center, Evans Mills	June 12
Eastern Region	Newman Center, St. Peter's	May 31

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