

THE TRANSMISSION OF FAITH IN  
A Pastoral Letter  
by  
The Most Reverend Lawrence E.  
Bishop of Greensburg



THE PRESENT CULTURE

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

For nearly four years *The Transmission of Faith in the Present Culture* has been the encompassing theme of the Strategic Planning process by which the Diocese of Greensburg has prepared itself to move steadily and with courage into the 21st century. I have chosen that same theme as the title of this Pastoral Letter to you, the faithful of the Diocese of Greensburg, since it is one of my roles as Bishop, to strive to convey effectively and completely the teachings of Jesus Christ and other elements of the Catholic faith to those entrusted to my pastoral care. My hope is that those who embrace the message and teachings of this Pastoral Letter will be better equipped to pass the treasures of our faith on to a new generation of believers with confidence and joy.

It is my responsibility as Bishop to consider the pastoral realities and the catechetical needs of our contemporary culture as I contemplate the development and implementation of Lifelong Catholic Faith Formation in this Diocese. Keeping this in mind, I invite all who read this letter to do so with trust in the Holy Spirit's care and guidance through the Church, especially during times of uncertainty and change.

Two goals linked to the promulgation of this Pastoral Letter are to announce formally the *Catechetical Master Plan* for the Diocese of Greensburg and to assure the faithful that changes we may face as a result of the *Catechetical Master Plan* are not to be perceived as mere reactions to societal situations that have emerged in our rapidly changing times. They should be viewed rather as thoughtfully developed responses to comprehensive and strategic planning efforts that have been supplemented by thorough research and, of course, much prayer.

I announce the implementation of our *Catechetical Master Plan* after deliberate and at times painstaking reflection on responses to numerous consultations that have transpired in conjunction with the Strategic Planning process in the Diocese of Greensburg since 2005. These include the organization and analysis of volumes of responses to questions posed to approximately 9,000 participants of our Lenten Listening Sessions in 2006, consultations with Regional and Parish Pastoral Council members across the Diocese, conversations and meetings with our Deans and Regional Moderators, insights from Diocesan staff members and other professionals in related fields, and results submitted by Confirmation Focus Groups that were facilitated, at my direction, by the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation in the summer of 2008.

While core teachings and elements of the Catholic faith have and always will remain constant, methods by which we hand down our faith must be adapted to current environmental and situational conditions of the society in which we live. The promulgation of this Pastoral Letter on Pentecost Sunday is then quite appropriate since on this feast we joyfully celebrate the fulfillment of the Lord's promise of the coming of the Advocate – the Holy Spirit who continues to guide the Church and her leaders in *The Transmission of Faith in the Present Culture*.

#### **CENTRALITY OF THE SUNDAY EUCHARIST**

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, "The Eucharist makes the Church" (CCC 1396). No other activity in which we participate as Catholics surpasses the salvific value of the Sunday Eucharist. All parish programs, activities and events should flow from this weekly gathering of the People of God. We must recognize that there is no more important commitment than this. No secular activity, including sporting or recreational events, should take priority over the weekly obligation to participate in the Sunday Eucharist. When we share in the Sunday Eucharist, we are nourished and strengthened by the Word of God and the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This

nourishment assists us both as individuals and as a people sent forth by God to build up his Kingdom in the world in which we live.

In light of the centrality of the Sunday Eucharist in the life of the Church, it is incumbent upon every parish to insure that Sunday Eucharist reflects the highest standards of good liturgy. This would entail an examination and possible adaptation of elements of liturgy that include: presiding, preaching, functions of liturgical ministers, music, and environment and art. Since formation in our faith revolves around the Sunday Eucharist, it is essential that we model in our Sunday Eucharistic celebrations, the same level of excellence that we desire in our Faith Formation programs. Indeed, the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is the ultimate experience of faith formation.

### **IMPORTANCE OF LIFELONG FAITH FORMATION**

In the Gospel pericope from Saint John proclaimed at Masses on Pentecost this year, Jesus says "But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth." (John 16:13) We are assured by the words of Jesus that it is indeed the Holy Spirit who guides the Church. We are reminded that it is through the instruction and care of those who lead us in faith, above all the Bishops as successors of the Apostles, that we hear the declaration of the Spirit and are encouraged to be strong witnesses who transmit the faith to those around us. From its beginning in 1951, the Diocese of Greensburg has been blessed with bishops, priests, religious men and women, and countless lay teachers and catechists who have engaged in the task of passing on the Faith with dedication and zeal.

By actively participating in Lifelong Faith Formation, seeds of faith sown by the Holy Spirit through the Sacraments and other aspects of ecclesial life are nurtured in many ways, including the proclamation of the Good News. Lifelong Faith Formation augments the gifts of faith bestowed at Baptism and expands the meaning of the Sacraments in one's life. Through embracing the Word of God, the Sacraments and the Tradition of the Catholic Church, Lifelong Faith Formation assists in contemplating the loving nature of God, encourages a more intense participation in the Church, and enables a more complete Christian way of living.

The *National Directory for Catechesis* states that faith formation is "central to the Church's mission" and that without it the "... initial faith aroused by the original proclamation of the Gospel would not mature; education in the faith through a deeper knowledge of the person and message of Jesus Christ would not transpire; and discipleship in Christ through genuine apostolic witness would not be fostered." The faithful, therefore, are called to continuous formation throughout their lives. The Holy Spirit calls Church leaders to provide a seamless garment of faith formation for her members in order to enfold and support them, just as a mantle protects and keeps safe from the elements of nature the one who wears it.

Faith that is introduced through the instruction of parents and family, formal childhood catechesis or shared in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), must be fostered, owned and nurtured throughout our lives. This mantle must be worn with pride, yet generously shared with those in need of hearing the words of Jesus and those open to receive the faith formation which the Church provides.

### **THE PRESENT CULTURE**

Under the guise of tolerance and diversity a relentless secularism seeks to eliminate religion from any role in the public life of society (e.g. the war on Christmas). In so doing, it endangers religious freedom and conveys the message to young people that religious faith is retrograde.

When moral imperatives which come from religious faith are deconstructed, then the relativism of individual opinion challenges the teachings of the Church as just one opinion among many. When this happens, the void which is thereby created is filled with the values promoted by the media and the entertainment industry. An example of this is the unapologetic role-modeling of sexual promiscuity on certain television programs. Our present culture is pervasively influenced by both these industries which also attempt to drive social change in the direction of the values they promote.

Is it any wonder that a Catholic who is poorly formed in the faith becomes confused and often unaware of being formed by values contrary to the Gospel and the teachings of the Church? More than ever before, it is necessary that we meet this challenge by studying our faith in a process of continuing lifelong education. This can insure that we live as successful and happy human beings and create such a world around us.

In a lecture given at Saint Basil's Collegiate Church on the campus of the University of Toronto, Canada, on February 23, 2009, Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of the Archdiocese of Denver said, "The Church in the United States has done a poor job of forming the faith and conscience of Catholics for more than 40 years —

and now we're harvesting the results — in the public square, in our families and in the confusion of our personal lives."

This *Catechetical Master Plan* is intended to deal with this situation. The challenge we face today is difficult, but not insurmountable. We must form the members of our faith with courage, determination, and perseverance, mindful that today, as never before, we have to pay the price of witness.

Our present culture teaches youth that freedom without responsibility is an acceptable norm to follow. A lack of faith formation can, and eventually will, lead youth and young adults to make poor decisions without the consideration of future consequences. This will undoubtedly change their lives for the worse, and the lives of those around them.

In his 1995 encyclical *The Gospel of Life*, Pope John Paul II identified the presence of a "Culture of Death." This culture continues to be prevalent in our society today. It presents to our youth and young adults seemingly easy solutions to complex moral and ethical dilemmas. These "easy answers" include the acceptance of abortion, pre-marital sex, cohabitation, the abuse of drugs and alcohol, and the misuse of technology as normative. All of these are symptomatic of the reality of the difficult challenges facing young people today which can be put into a correct perspective only with the truth of the Gospel.

In an address to the Bishops of the United States during his Apostolic Visit in 2008, Pope Benedict XVI described the present culture and its relationship to God when he said, "People today need to be reminded of the ultimate purpose of their lives. They need to recognize that implanted within them is a deep thirst for God. They need to be given opportunities to drink from the wells of his infinite love. It is easy to be entranced by the almost unlimited possibilities that science and technology place before us; it is easy to make the mistake of thinking we can obtain by our own efforts the fulfillment of our deepest needs. This is an illusion. Without God, who alone bestows upon us what we by ourselves cannot attain, our lives are ultimately empty."

As a Diocese, we must have a catechetical plan which seeks to address the needs and the challenges to the faith that we all, in particular our youth, face today. Consequently, a goal of our current pastoral and catechetical work, to pass on the faith of two millennia and to "go and make disciples" in this present day and age, is crucial.

### **CATECHETICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BISHOP**

The Church, through the power of the Holy Spirit, calls all to salvation. During the Vigil with the young people at World Youth Day, 2008 (Sydney, Australia), His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI stated, "The Spirit sustains the Church in union with the Lord and in fidelity to the Apostolic Tradition. He inspired the Sacred Scriptures and he guides God's People into the fullness of truth. In all these ways the Spirit is the 'giver of life', leading us into the very heart of God."

The proclamation and transmission of the Gospel is central to the Bishop's ministry. The Second Vatican Council teaches that by virtue of his Episcopal Ordination, three *munera* or offices are conferred upon a Bishop. These offices of sanctifying, teaching, and governing are essential to the way a Bishop carries out his responsibilities. *Lumen Gentium* teaches, "... by means of the imposition of hands and the words of consecration, the grace of the Holy Spirit is so conferred, and the sacred character so impressed, that bishops in an eminent and visible way sustain the roles of Christ Himself as Teacher, Shepherd and High Priest, and that they act in His person."

Consequently, the Bishop holds the primary responsibility for catechesis in his diocese and accepts the role of chief catechist there while being responsible for the nature of its catechetical mission.

In the Gospel of Saint John we are told that after washing his disciples' feet, Jesus describes to them their role as true and authentic teachers, "Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me." (John 13:20) The Bishop, with the collaboration and support of priests, deacons and properly formed lay leaders, is commissioned to teach, preach and fill the role as a true and authentic teacher by articulating the faith to the local Church entrusted to his care in the name of Christ.

In his role as pastor of a community and under the authority of the Bishop, the priest likewise holds the primary responsibility in the parish to proclaim the Gospel through homilies and catechetical instruction. As stated in Canon 528 §1, the pastor is "... to have particular care for the Catholic education of children and youth. He is to make every effort, even with the collaboration of the Christian faithful, so that the message of the gospel comes also to those who have ceased the practice of their religion or do not profess the true faith."

In light of this important role held by the pastor, I direct that all pastors evaluate the current parish faith formation programs. This evaluation should include the assessment of both content and methodology. Lay and religious faith formation staff should be included in this process. When the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation publishes the revised diocesan norms, each pastor and his catechetical staff will be expected to bring their current faith formation programs and catechetical methodologies into compliance with diocesan norms. The Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation will assist pastors and their staffs in establishing an ongoing evaluation or outcomes assessment process to guarantee consistency across the Diocese in the transmission of the faith and to evaluate its results.

### **CATECHETICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS**

Like the bishop and priests, parents share responsibility for the formation of their children in the Catholic faith. During the Sacrament of Baptism, the celebrant states to the parents and godparents: "On your part you must make it your constant care to bring your child up in the practice of the faith. See that the divine life which God gives your child is kept safe from the poison of sin, to grow always stronger in your child's heart." This exhortation emphasizes the primary and unique role of the parents in the faith formation of their children. Even the best parish catechetical programs will not be sufficient if they are not mirrored by parents and families of our children and youth in the home on a daily basis. Active participation in the faith by all Catholics should include at the least: weekly attendance at Sunday Eucharist, regular participation in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, daily prayer, ongoing formation in faith, and the use of sacramentals and the prominent display of articles of devotion in the home. Parents must insist that their children accompany them to Mass on Sunday (The Lord's Day or its Vigil). Parents must likewise see that their children participate in religious education programs. There is no substitute for these supportive measures.

In order to assist pastors and parents in their catechetical responsibilities, I encourage all catechists to embrace the challenge of helping appropriately to transmit the faith with a joyful spirit. The participation and collaboration of catechists is crucial to the success of this important endeavor both now and in the future.

### **OFFICE FOR EVANGELIZATION AND FAITH FORMATION**

The directive to establish a catechetical office in every diocese was instituted by the decree *Provido Sane* in 1935. In 1971, the *General Catechetical Directory* stated, "The Catechetical Office, therefore, which is part of the diocesan curia, is the means by which the bishop as head of the community and authentic teacher of doctrine utilizes to direct and moderate all the catechetical activities of the diocese."

Built upon the principles of *Provido Sane*, the section of our current Diocesan Strategic Plan that concerns evangelization and faith formation recommends to "Change the present Office for Faith Formation to the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation and develop a clear, integrated and balanced theology and pastoral practice that will reflect this title."

In the *National Directory for Catechesis*, published by the Bishops of the United States in 2005, an outline for a number of functions for diocesan catechetical offices is presented. In the Diocese of Greensburg, these functions, now under the purview of the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation, are currently part of the formal responsibilities of that office and its staff.

These functions include the development of a diocesan catechetical curriculum based on the *General Directory for Catechesis*, the *National Directory for Catechesis*, and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; the provision of guidelines for the organization of Lifelong Faith Formation, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and other programs of sacramental preparation; the provision of access to catechetical resources, including textbooks and instructional aides that have been found to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) *Ad Hoc* Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism; the consultation with parishes and schools on matters related to faith formation, especially by site visits; the establishment of norms for the training and certification of all involved in faith formation in parishes and schools of the diocese; the holding of an annual survey to determine the number of adults, youth, children, preschoolers, persons with disabilities, and others who are receiving formal catechetical instruction; the availability of training and continuing education of personnel; the manner in which the faith is transmitted and its effectiveness and the number of hours of formation being given; the encouragement and motivation of all involved in faith formation through commissioning rites and ongoing affirmation and the updating of catechetical personnel on important Church documents and issues on a regular basis.

These, along with other duties that may emerge, are each unique and have their own struggles and opportunities to embrace, in order to help pass on the faith in the Diocese of Greensburg.

## **CATECHETICAL MASTER PLAN**

In September, 2006, after considering the extensive consultations and findings of the Lenten Listening Sessions, the membership of the Diocesan Strategic Planning Committee formulated a recommendation that one of the first major projects of the newly established Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation should be the development of a *Catechetical Master Plan*. The recommendation stated that "The Director of Evangelization and Faith Formation should lead in the development and implementation of a Diocesan Plan for Evangelization and Faith Formation. This plan should take into account the investigation of evangelization programs best suited for the Diocese of Greensburg, as well as updating of the *Taste and See* curriculum guidelines with follow-up training sessions." (NB: *Taste and See* was published by the Diocese of Greensburg in 1999. It is the document that established guidelines and policies for the Diocese and was designed to assist in catechesis.) The recommendation from the Diocesan Strategic Planning Committee continued, "...included in this plan should be the endorsement of policies for higher competencies for catechetical leadership, initiation of an accreditation or certification process and the ongoing oversight of parish catechists and their programs."

After careful review of that recommendation and further consultations made by the staff of the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation over the past eighteen months, I am pleased to announce the three major parts of our *Catechetical Master Plan* that have been formulated to help me, and those who work in my name across the Diocese, to form in faith and evangelize the People of God in our four counties.

### **Training and Catechetical Certification Process**

The first initiative of our *Catechetical Master Plan* calls for the establishment of a Training and Catechetical Certification Process for those who hold catechetical roles in our parishes, Catholic schools and other settings where catechesis takes place. Those who would be a part of this certification process include parish Catechetical Leaders, in particular those who have no formal training to date in Catechesis or any formal accreditation, catechists, youth ministry leaders and volunteers, RCIA leaders and team members, and Catholic School teachers. Details of the certification process will be provided before the start of the 2009-2010 catechetical year by the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation.

The diocesan-wide certification process will include orientation sessions for those new to catechetical ministries and the establishment of Basic and Permanent Certification Levels. The Basic and Permanent Certification Levels will require participants to attend and complete workshops on the four pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: creed, Sacraments, morality, and prayer.

Other key doctrinal and catechetical elements that include the study of Scripture, Christology, Ecclesiology, Catholic social teaching, Church history and the history of the Church in the United States will be part of the certification process as well.

Additionally, there are plans to assist unique faith formation programs at parish or regional levels with practical formation opportunities to assist those engaged in specific areas of catechetics such as campus ministry, catechesis for the physically impaired, and catechesis for those with developmental disabilities.

All catechetical leaders are called to develop and grow in their knowledge of the faith and be prepared to pass it on effectively with hope to a new generation. We must not grow lax in our commitment to be vigilant in changing times and be sure to continue with perseverance the commission given to the apostles and to each of us by Christ.

While *Taste and See* continues to be a source of information and guidance with regard to catechesis, there are sections of this document that need to be updated. This proposed action, like others mentioned in this Pastoral Letter, was outlined in the recommendations of the Diocesan Strategic Planning Committee. The updating of *Taste and See* will require the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation to develop two new documents. The creation of these documents comprises the second component of the *Catechetical Master Plan*.  
Updating of Catechetical Guidelines and Curriculum

The documents to be developed by the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation include *A Catechetical Curriculum for Faith Formation and Elementary School Religion Classes for Grades Pre-K through Grade 8* which addresses the content, expected outcomes, prayers to be learned, annual classroom hours, and assessment methods of catechetical programs. The second document to be generated will be a *Catechetical Development Program for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* that is based on the Lectionary and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The United States Bishops have developed already a curriculum framework for catechetical education in the high school years.

### **Normative Age for the Reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation**

As a result of the development of a new and comprehensive Catechetical Curriculum for Grades Pre-K through 8, it has become obvious that the current practice for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Diocese of Greensburg would be enhanced by a catechetical and pastoral model that will continue to advance and deepen the understanding of this life-giving Sacrament for children, youth, young adults, and adults. As previously noted, our society presents to all, especially youth and young adults, many challenges. The Church must have a catechetical and pastoral model of faith formation that addresses the needs and challenges confronting our youth. Despite their age, psychological and emotional maturity levels, and physical development, our children and teenagers often face very difficult challenges. Our young people, their parents, and other support systems of friends, family and peers, must become aware that the Church is a healthy and reliable source of strength, encouragement and information to help them face these struggles.

As part of this enhancement of the catechetical and pastoral model of religious education, the subsequent and third initiative of the *Catechetical Master Plan* calls for the normative age for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Diocese of Greensburg to be about the age of 13 (Grade 8) by the 2017 - 2018 catechetical year. The transition to this norm will be a gradual one and will allow for the education of the faithful concerning this contemporary catechetical and pastoral model to occur while giving those in catechetical roles the time that is necessary to modify and adapt programming and develop new and revitalized formation processes. This gradual process of implementation will initially involve those who will be in Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 in the 2009-2010 academic year. Separate liturgies for the reception of First Eucharist and the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation, as supported by the recommendations of the Diocesan Strategic Planning Committee, will begin in the 2009-2010 catechetical year. The parish priest will administer First Holy Communion and the Bishop will administer the sacrament of Confirmation.

When considering the theology surrounding the Sacrament of Confirmation, we understand this Sacrament to be a means by which the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are enhanced and sealed. Given at Baptism, these gifts, if we permit them to flourish, can be driving influences in how we continue to deepen and strengthen our faith in God and our commitment to serve those around us. Confirmation seals the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and calls us, challenges us, and enables us to give stronger witness to our faith. For this and other reasons, it is imperative that we have a catechetical curriculum that corresponds to the needs of our children and youth in the present culture while addressing concerns and issues that have not been posed to us in the past.

Without question, a solidly developed and executed faith formation curriculum in our Diocese will enable all the faithful, in particular our children, to see Catholic faith formation as a lifelong process and a seamless garment to be embraced throughout the entirety of their lives.

It is important for me to clarify that there is no "right" or "wrong" time, *per se*, for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is a gift from God that is to be cherished for the wonder, mystery and grace it offers. The *de facto* administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation has historically depended upon the needs of the environment in which the Church has found herself. Raising the normative age for the reception of this sacramental grace serves as a way to enhance the faith introduced in childhood and owned progressively by means of catechetical formation throughout youth and adulthood. Through the graces received by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, our young people, at this new normative age of reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation, will have a better opportunity to grasp the pastoral reason for a later age for the reception of Confirmation. This will be especially so as they face the challenges that are posed to them in everyday life and seek to respond to them from a more mature faith.

An additional benefit of raising the normative age of the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation in this Diocese is that it brings us into greater conformity with other dioceses in the Ecclesiastical Province of Pennsylvania and with the majority of dioceses in the United States. There is a stability and cohesion that results from this type of uniformity, that with creative development, can be used to our benefit.

### **EVANGELIZATION PLAN**

Evangelization, like catechesis, is foundational to a person's faith journey. Without evangelization, catechetical instruction becomes detached from lived faith. Evangelization therefore, could be described as simply passing on the faith to others for the good of all. The rapidly growing number of fallen away Catholics and the increasing population of the unchurched in our midst reveals that we are not evangelizing as well as we should.

In the Lenten Listening Sessions of 2006, a repeated concern that surfaced was "Our parishes need to feed our people." Additionally, we heard frequently that parishes and their staff members are looking for resources and support from the Diocese in their efforts at evangelization outreach and faith formation. Keeping this in mind, the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation will, in addition to its other endeavors, develop a Diocesan Plan for Evangelization based on the USCCB document *Go and Make Disciples*.

This plan will reflect elements congruent with successful diocesan evangelization plans in other dioceses. A primary step that will help assure success in this effort will be to train diocesan staff and parish leadership teams to be evangelizers. Parish leadership teams will in turn lead their parish community members to be evangelizers as well.

The Diocese of Greensburg will use and benefit from modern media and technology (television, radio, and the Internet) to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. One of the goals of the Evangelization Plan is for the diocese to assist parishes in promoting news of local events, Web sites, and community outreach opportunities into a process and tool for evangelization. A final, yet major piece of the Evangelization Plan, will be the proactive evangelization of the community through time-honored techniques that involve personal contact, relationship building and home visitation.

### **YOUTH MINISTRY**

Throughout this Pastoral Letter, I have made reference to some of the challenges that young people face with regard to their faith. During the Lenten Listening Sessions of 2006, in conjunction with the Diocesan Strategic Plan, it was expressed that structured youth ministry programming is an overwhelmingly urgent need in the Diocese of Greensburg. In response to this concern, the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation will form a Catechetical Development Process for Parish Youth Ministry programs based on two USCCB documents.

The first document to be used as a guide is *Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age*. The framework is designed to guide catechetical instruction for those of high school age wherever and however it takes place. This approach has already been implemented in our Catholic high schools during the 2008-2009 academic year. The introduction of the framework states that the curriculum for young people of high school age should be focused on the person of Jesus Christ. It is that focus which is the core of instruction for our youth and which will lead to growth in their relationship with the Lord and in turn, with those around them.

The second USCCB document that the Catechetical Development Process for Parish Youth Ministry will use as a guide is *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*. This document outlines the eight components through which our young people can grow in their relationship with the Lord. These components are evangelization, community life, catechesis, prayer and worship, pastoral care, advocacy, leadership development, and justice and service.

### **CATHOLIC SCOUTING**

Catholic Scouting has been considered a model of youth ministry in the Church. It is a ministry that is accomplished by youth, with youth, and for youth. One of the values promoted in Scouting is that of a healthy spirituality. Through this practice, Scouts are encouraged to express their faith and be active members of their local faith communities.

Catechetical ideals clearly present in diocesan Emblem and Retreatoree programs sponsored by the Catholic Committee on Scouting are under the auspices of the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation. Just as the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation advances a Catechetical Development Process for Parish Youth Ministry programs, the diocesan Emblems and Retreatoree programs of Catholic Scouting will be adapted in terms of content and requirements.

### **YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY**

Young adult ministry is essential to the life and growth of the Church. The Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation will oversee as part of the *Catechetical Master Plan*, the development of a set of guidelines and resources for young adult ministry based on *Sons and Daughters of the Light*, the USCCB's pastoral plan for young adult ministry. Additionally, the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation will explore the possibility of sponsoring diocesan young adult programs such as Theology on Tap, coffee houses, diocesan gatherings of young adults, and providing parishes and regions with resources on young adulthood and ministry to young adults.

### **THE CATHOLIC IDENTITY OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

For generations, Catholic schools have been an invaluable part of the history and fabric of Catholic faith formation in the Diocese of Greensburg. Our Catholic schools have helped shape the faith, lives and minds of innumerable students who have become outstanding leaders within our civic and ecclesial communities. Catholic schools are community assets to be treasured. These faith-based educational environments prepare students by challenging them to develop their spirituality based on Gospel values, while ensuring academic excellence and a spirit of justice and community service with a global perspective. This assists in giving their lives passion and purpose. Formation in the faith and teaching a way of living based on the example of Christ are primary reasons why our Catholic schools exist. These priorities permeate every facet of our educational settings. Faith formation designed by the Church in light of its teaching and based on the Gospel is what is meant by Catholic identity. Catholic schools must be committed to this.

In every dimension of the life of Catholic schools, teachers have a highly significant impact in creating and sustaining this environment of Catholic identity. It is essential that every person charged with this responsibility have both an understanding of Catholic faith formation and an appreciation for the attitudes and behaviors called for by these teachings. For teachers who instruct children and youth, specifically in Catholic doctrine and practice, this responsibility is especially serious.

In light of the critical role that all Catholic school staff members have in facilitating the Catholic identity within the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Greensburg, the following provisions must be made:

- ✚ Paramount within the roles of the Superintendent of Catholic Schools and the Managing Director of the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation is the realization of excellence in the content and delivery of the faith formation curriculum. In addition to the Catechetical Training and Certification Process outlined in the *Catechetical Master Plan*, the Superintendent of Catholic Schools and the Managing Director of the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation will work with Catholic school leaders to determine the criteria for hiring and for the ongoing formation for all staff relative to Catholic identity.
- ✚ Each principal has the responsibility to be the leader of the school's faith community. Therefore, each principal must meet criteria congruent with her or his role as the leader in developing and fostering the school's Catholic identity. Every staff member in the Catholic school must support the creation and continuation of a strong Catholic environment in which the total formation of the student takes place. Therefore, every staff member is required to meet the training and certification criteria set by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools and the Managing Director of the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation.

These provisions will ensure that the Catholic identity within the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Greensburg reaches and maintains the highest level of priority in the schools and is embraced by the present generation and those in the future.

## CONCLUSION

In issuing this Pastoral Letter to the faithful of the Diocese of Greensburg, I have promulgated the *Catechetical Master Plan*, addressed the issue of the normative age for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation, stressed the need for youth ministry, and have emphasized the need to strengthen Catholic identity within our Catholic schools. These are actions that will help us remain faithful also to the implementation of our Diocesan Strategic Plan.

In and through Lifelong Faith Formation, we are reminded of the centrality of the Sunday Eucharist in our lives. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, "All other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself." In the Eucharist, we find strength to evangelize and deepen the faith that has been entrusted to our care.

Just as on that first Pentecost day, may the Holy Spirit strengthen us to share by courage, hope and enthusiasm the Gospel message with this generation and those who follow.

Given at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral of the Diocese of Greensburg on Pentecost Sunday, the 31st day of May in the year of Our Lord 2009.

+ Lawrence E. Brandt  
The Most Reverend Lawrence E. Brandt, JCD, PhD  
Bishop of Greensburg