

FAITH for today



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Spring 2014

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From the Facilitator

by Jennifer Ludtke

WDREF Facilitator

The life of the Church should always reveal clearly that God takes the initiative, that 'he has loved us first' (1 Jn. 4:19) and that he alone 'gives the growth' (1 Cor. 3:7).

This conviction enables us to maintain a spirit of joy in the midst of a task so demanding and challenging that it engages our entire life. (Evangelii Gaudium, 12)

Each year we realize anew that the mutual support of those engaged in the ministry of catechesis, a task so “demanding and challenging that it engages our entire life,” is without price. I know I often look to those who embody professionalism to encourage and support me in my own growth, so that I can better respond to the ministry tasks before me.

At our May WDREF meeting, we were joined by our diocesan staff, incoming WDREF representatives, and newly elected local organization presidents. Our conversation, focused on the professionalism of parish catechetical leaders, was a tremendous opportunity for us to reaffirm the many ways already in place for parish catechetical leaders to improve as professionals...for us to respond to God's initiative of love and to God's gift of growth. It was a reminder that the goal of professionalism is valued, and is being addressed, on interpersonal, local, diocesan and national levels.

During the summer, as you are looking up at the blue sky, mowing the lawn, or enjoying the sounds of birds and smells of flowers...perhaps you can also begin to dream about how you will continue to respond to God's initiative of love and to God's gift of growth. Who are the professional parish catechetical leaders who inspire you to respond in a spirit of joy?

N.B. It was after writing this short message that we were all stunned to hear of Lee Nagel's death. It seems appropriate to respond to the question above with his name. He truly inspired all of us with his deep spirit of joy. Eternal rest grant unto him...

May the Holy Spirit guide and strengthen us – individually and as Church – throughout the challenges and joys ahead, and may this summer bring you peace and joy.

God bless you all. – Jenny

WDREF Calendar

August 18-19, 2014
WDREF Board Meeting
St. Anthony Spirituality Center

September 21, 2014
Catechetical Sunday

September 24, 2014
Conference Grant Apps Due

November 13-14, 2014
WDREF Conference
Waupaca, WI

2014 WDREF Conference

We Are A People Of Faith

November 13-14, 2014 - Waupaca, WI

Come one, Come all...to this fall's WREF Conference!

Location

On November 13-14, 2014 WDREF will host its Biennial WDREF Conference at the Waupaca Ale House in Waupaca, WI.

Theme

Our theme for the conference is "We Are A People Of Faith." Our conference will focus on building up a strong community of believers based on the lived faith of the saints of the past and the saints of today. As a conference attendee you will be inspired to bring your faith alive with both holiness and humor.



Keynote Speaker

Matt Weber

Our keynote speaker will be Matt Weber, a Harvard graduate. As producer for CatholicTV, he hosts a weekly segment called *A Word with Weber*, which airs internationally to over 10 million viewers. Weber is a frequent contributor to the Huffington Post and has authored the book "Fearing the Stigmata."

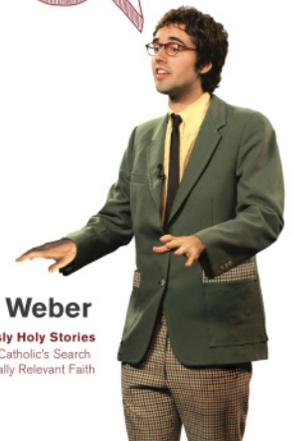
[Check Matt out on YouTube.](#)

Wednesday Night Reception:

Wednesday's Pre-Conference evening is free! ProCLAYM invites all conference attendees to an informal reception at the hotel. Join us for "Wine, Cheese, and Chocolate!"

Registration

The registration fee is \$150 for WDREF members and \$180 for non-members. Registration information is available at www.wdref.org/Events.html or from your local representative.



Matt Weber
Humorously Holy Stories
of a Young Catholic's Search
for a Culturally Relevant Faith

Accommodations

Accommodations for the conference can be made at the Best Western Foxfire in Waupaca. A block of rooms is being held under the name "WDREF" with rates starting at \$85. To reserve your rooms please call: (715) 942-0500.

Grant Availability

Grant monies are available for the conference. Please read on to the next page for due date and more details.

Questions?

For more information or general questions about the conference please contact Pam Fischer at (920) 726-4228.

Conference Grant Applications - Due September 24, 2014

Members of the local organizations of DARE, Mareda, MDREO, ProCLAYM and SUMMIT are encouraged to apply for grant money to attend WDREF's fall conference. The grant application can be found at www.wdref.org and should be submitted to Danelle Kegley of St. Isidore Parish by **September 24**. See application on website for mailing information.

Grant guidelines include:

- 1) A maximum of \$1000 in grant monies is available for the 2014 conference.
- 2) Grants will only be given to WDREF members, i.e. members of DARE, Mareda, MDREO, ProCLAYM or SUMMIT.

- 3) Preference will be given to members who have not previously received a WDREF grant. (Members could receive grant money more than once, depending on number of applicants and funds available.)
- 4) Applications will be confidential.
- 5) Applications will be reviewed and selections made by the Grant Committee with final approval given by the WDREF Board. Recipients will be notified by Oct. 5.

Apply today at www.wdref.org!

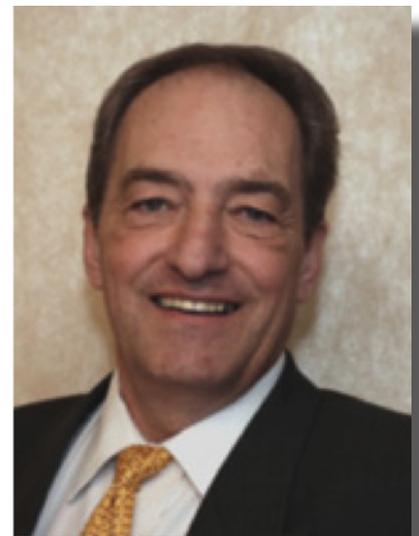
Lee Nagel NCCL Executive Director Dies Suddenly

By Kathy Cornette, St. Louis Parish, Dykville

This addition of the newsletter was meant to highlight an article about Lee's Nagels recent visit to Green Bay in April for a workshop, but instead we are paying tribute to him since his sudden passing May 26. Lee served as diocesan director of Total Catholic Education, in Green Bay, for more than 15 years and was the NCCL Director for the past 9 years. He ministered to all who came in contact with him through his storytelling, his masterful hospitality, and his true servant leadership.

Those who recall his time as Director in Green Bay can't help but think of reams of fabric flowing elegantly in every prayer space, his challenge to us that we all have a story to share and his love of children's books. Though he was extremely sought after and always had more than a full schedule he had the ability to be present to you in the moment. During his visit to Green Bay in April he spent time giving tips to families on creating a faith-nurturing home. He shared hands-on experiences of the best ways to use "prime the pump" activities, and many practical ideas and resources to assist families pass on the faith in easy, little (but concrete) ways every day.

Lee was a friend to many and lived life to the fullest. He had a booming voice and a passion to pass on the faith. He worked tirelessly and his last task before he went to bed the night he died was to send out the CL weekly newsletter that was always jampacked with resources. He was doing the Lord's work right up to the end. Lee will be greatly missed by many but for those of us in the catechetical field it's a loss that is indescribable! Eternal rest grant onto him O Lord!





MAREDA

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee will be holding a Synod, June 7-8. Mareda will have two representative delegates at the Synod, Heather Warner and Danelle Kegley.

The Mareda programs for 2014-2015 will include:

- Sept. 2014: INSPIRIO Youth Ministries ~ Workshop: Retreat Best Practices
- Oct. 2014: Manuel Maldonado ~ Presentation: Multiculturalism & Ministry
- Nov. 2014: WDREF Conference
- Dec. 2014: Advent Morning of Reflection @ Cardinal Stritch University
- Jan. 2015: Mid-Year Mixer featuring Contemporary Praise & Worship 101
- Feb. 2015: Annual Bishop Dialog with Bishop Donald Hying
- March 2015: Jean Marie Weber ~ Presentation: Faith
- April 2015: Catechesis for Special Needs children/Teens Workshop
- May 2015: Biennial Mareda Retreat

The Mareda Board has been discussing concerns including:

- A generational gap is being felt among DREs and DYMs. Additionally, as parishes collaborate more, staffing needs are being condensed. These trends seem to be translating into lagging Mareda membership. They will focus on outreach to pastors as well as new directors, educating them as to the purpose and benefits of Mareda membership. Further attention will be given to programming to ensure value on the part of the general membership.
- Mareda is concerned about the

lack of attention given to catechetical programs and their participants. Brainstorming is being conducted to find ways to positively highlight the contributions of catechetical programs and gain these programs recognition.

MDREO

MDREO ended the year with 43 full members. A tithe of \$330 went to Camp Gray this year.

Monthly Program Days included:

- Sept. 2013: Convocation: “Caritas et Veritate: Clarity in Truth”
- Oct. 2013: WDREF Retreat: MDREO was responsible for prayer
- Nov. 2013: “Catechetical Leadership in the 21st Century” by Dr. Joe Bound
- Dec. 2013: “The Church & New Media” by members
- Jan. 2014: “Wounds of Our Society” by Vicki Thorn: Cancelled due to weather
- Feb. 2014: “Cradle Catholics” by members on Children’s Liturgy of the Word and Vacation Bible School
- March 2014: “Evangelization” by Peter Andrastek
- April 2014: “Full Time Christianity: Creating a Culture of Intentional Discipleship in Your Parish”
- May 2014: Fun Day at Camp Gray

MDREO is looking at their demographics and the age gap in membership. There are very few members in the 30-50 age range, and they are studying how they might evolve to meet the needs of their membership.

Pro-CLAYM

ProCLAYM is presently re-visioning their Mission and Vision statements to tie in with a philosophy in touch with the new evangelization.

Along with this they are restructuring their meeting schedule to include three meetings a year to take place out in the “Fields” (districts).

ProCLAYM hopes to bring in speakers, develop topics and create Catechetical Leadership days to enrich their ministries with the goal of attracting younger ministers to their membership.

A number of ProCLAYM members sat on a committee to preview a High School textbook series in an effort to assist Bishop Ricken in approving four series to be used for HS faith formation.

Many attended a Symposium at Silver Lake College in May on “Pope John XXIII and Jesus as the Evangelist” featuring author, Allan Wright and Bishop Ramirez (NM) speaking on what the new evangelization looks like in our modern world.

Our executive board and Sister Jackie Spaniola FSCC, Director of the Green Bay Diocesan Department of Religious Education, met with Bishop Ricken on May 16 to discuss issues and concerns that we have as a professional organization.

ProCLAYM gathered May 9 for their R and R Day. Carrying out the theme, “Cooking With Jesus,” Chef Pete inspired them with food from Jesus’ time, demonstrating the methods and utensils used in preparing it. This event also honored those in the field who are retiring and those who have obtained certification in ministry degrees and Masters Degrees in Ministry.

B&R Blessings & Recognition

Congratulations to Nora Durst, recipient of the Jack McBride Leadership in Ministry Award!

The Madison Diocese Religious Educator's Organization (MDREO) recognized Nora for her service at their September 2013 Catechetical Convocation at the Bishop O'Connor Center.

Sharing her faith

For over 60 years, Nora has been involved in faith formation, and a beautiful witness to others in sharing her Catholic faith. When asked about her work for the Church, she replied, "I did what I saw needed to be done." And that has included a variety of roles and tasks over the years.

Nora has been working with the people of LaValle for 28 years as a director of religious education (DRE), parish nurse, and pastoral associate.

She currently assists Fr. Loren Bowns, pastor of Holy Family Parish. She said, "After 28 years working with someone, you get to know them," such as what they like and how they want things done.

Nora described herself as one who takes care of the church and keeps the keys. She is also involved in getting Communion to the residents at the local Health Care Center; organizing all of the ministers, servers, ushers, and readers for Masses; and calling to check on people experiencing health issues and other problems.

Previous to this she was the DRE for Sacred Heart Parish in Eau Claire for 15 years. She also served as the priest's house keeper there. She said that back in those days,

"You needed to be a mature woman to be a housekeeper for a priest, but I wasn't 30 years old yet at that time so I had to get the permission of the bishop to do that job."

Because of his health problems and her medical training, the assignment worked out well.

Involving people

Over the years, she said she's learned that parishes should get the families more involved. Holy Family Parish has a Parish Faith Night once a month.

"You have to be where they (the families) are at. You have to be patient with them, and realize all the problems they have in their homes."

"Personally," she said, "I love working with the people and I love the kids. I'm always trying to think ahead about what they need. Father says I'm always thinking."

She still wants to get more people involved. "The more involvement, the more ownership, and the more the whole thing works better."

When asked about the blessings she's seen from her work, she immediately said, "The wonderful people you meet. They are fantastic." She told about how her parish organized a 90th birthday party for her and the cards that she received. She said, "I cried many times. It was all such a surprise to me."

She admitted that she can't do all that she has done in the past, but she quickly added, "God has blessed me with excellent health. Serving God has been a very fulfilling experience."

In the end, she said, "I hope they all get to heaven and that we all enjoy it together. Why else be here if not for that?"

Nora is a member of the MDREO and the Madison Diocese Pastoral Ministers Association (MDPMA). She is also a member and past board member of the Madison Diocese Council of Catholic Women (MDCCW).

- Excerpt taken from article written by Cathy Lins of the Diocese of Madison Catholic Herald



Nora Durst, left, receives the Jack McBride Leadership in Ministry Award from the Madison Diocese Religious Educator's Organization presented by Paula Tacheny Hill, MDREO president, who is the director of religious education at St. Olaf Parish, DeForest. (Photo by Lindsay Becher)

A Match Made In...

It seems that WDREF history was made this past spring with the announcement of the engagement of 2013-14 WDREF Board members Jessica Davis and Dominick Meyer. Our archives reveal no previous incidences of this happening! Jess is youth minister at St. Albert the Great Parish in Sun Prairie, and Dom is coordinator of Middle School/High School/Youth Ministry at St. Thomas Aquinas, Madison. A November wedding is planned. Congrats Jess and Dom!



Best Practices CDs still available!

Take advantage of a great tool! WDREF's Best Practices CD is still available for purchase. We are proud of the collaboration of catechists across the state of Wisconsin who submitted over 80 different catechetical lessons to engage students of all ages in learning about the sacraments of the Church. It is our hope that these ideas will help you in your catechetical ministry. Click the "Best Practices CD" link at www.wdref.org to access the order form.

Here are some of the sample titles included in this version of the CD:

- Collage on the Sacraments Night of Reflection for First Reconciliation
- Baptism Certificate made by Children Anointing Prayer
- Readiness Signs for First Communion Abundance that Makes a Marriage Last
- Confirmation Candidate & Sponsor Meeting Holy Orders Bingo

WDREF Mission Statement

As the statewide organization of professional catechetical leaders, the Wisconsin Directors of Religious Education Federation (WDREF) promotes ministerial and professional development and provides ongoing formation, advocacy, support and recognition to our members through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Find us on the web!
www.wdref.org

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