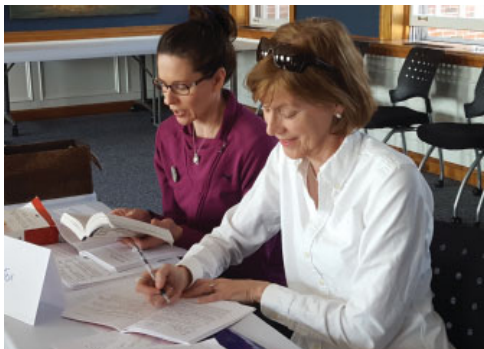


Transformation: Living Christ's Mission Today

What is Catechesis?

After reflecting on the spiritual growth opportunities for our community, the Transformation team decided that we could best serve our parish by focusing on two broad initiatives: *Communio* (how we live as a Christian community) and *Catechesis* (knowing Christ's teachings). In many ways, it is difficult to have a robust, responsive Christian community if you do not know the actual teachings of Christ!

Catechesis is an ancient word that simply means a systematic process for providing religious instruction. The idea harks back to the earliest days of the church when oral instruction was provided to the catechumens (the early church converts) before they were baptized. While we still give religious instruction to our youth and to converts to our faith, we want to examine catechesis in the context of a more personal renewal. For many of us, our Scripture Study program has offered an opportunity to delve into the Bible and deeply examine what these living words mean for our lives today. Transformation also asks us to balance what we have learned in the past with our life experiences and to re-examine knowledge and experience in light of the world in which we now live. How does Christ's teaching apply to us in this digital age?



In the Transformation workbook that guided our workshop, it states: "Catechesis helps us to know the person, the message, and the mission of Christ so that our entire lives are Christ-centered." As Mark Vogel, a Transformation team member, stated, "I thought I had it all worked out. I went to church every Sunday with a few friends. I had my favorite pew and donated to the church regularly. I thought I had

been doing everything right! Then I reflected on what was written in our workbook and realized that Christ is really asking much more of us. The true meaning of Christ's mission is much more challenging."

The purpose of Catechesis is to put us in communion with Jesus Christ so He can lead us to the love of the Father and the Holy Spirit. We might ask why it is of such importance to emphasize Catechesis at this time? Through the study of Christ's foundational tenets, we can realize the profound power of Christ to change every aspect of our lives, no matter where we are on our spiritual journey. We are all Catechists when we aspire to model Christ in our words and in our deeds. Christ's words can live in our actions, and they can resonate as vibrantly today as when Jesus spoke to his followers 2000 years ago. In this way, Catechesis is both personal and communal, something we receive and something we give away.

Transformation has already initiated programs that can help us rediscover the true significance of our Faith and to learn more about what it means to live Christ's mission. Fr. Nick plans to give quarterly talks, the first was on the meaning of Advent, the next will be a Lenten talk scheduled for April 1. "OLPH 101" is a fun course to learn about our Parish, and "Hearts Afire," is an in-house retreat that leads to Marian Consecration; both are being offered on designated Saturday mornings. Fr. Hickey will once again host his popular "Prayer Tastings," on March 15, 22, and 29. Other programs are now in the planning stages.

Because we exist in a much different age than the one in which Christ lived, we must consider new ways to bring Christ's message into our lives. We can still utilize and cherish the more traditional methods of communication that require talking with one another, drawing closer, and sharing stories of our faith journeys. But, it is also interesting to consider ways in which we can utilize digital media, social media, podcasts, and video to build even greater communities outside the walls of the traditional church. The reach could be revolutionary! The potential to revitalize the Church is why Fr. Lewinski, the Archdiocesan author of this program calls Transformation "a new Pentecost." It has the capacity to rekindle the spiritual fire in all of our lives.



Join Us in Prayer...

For our brothers and sisters in Christ who are leading and participating in the Hearts Afire Marian Consecration program, may their hearts be set on fire with love for our Lord Jesus Christ and may this love spread to others who desire to become closer to Jesus. Sixty-five OLPH parishioners have begun a 33-day preparation for consecration to Jesus through Mary, which will take place at 8:30 Mass on Saturday, March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation of the Lord. Thank you for keeping them in your prayers!