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The Rensselaer Newman Foundation
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
The Student Union, Room 3514
110 Eighth Street
Troy, NY 12180-3590

Phone: (518) 276-6518 Chaplains Office
Phone: (518) 274-7793 Chapel + Cultural Center
Fax: (518) 274-5945
E-mail: rnf@rpi.edu

www.chapelandculturalcenter.org
www.christsunofjustice.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 2 December 7:00PM – Bertrand Fay's Greek Theater
4 December 7:30PM – Capital Pride Singers – "Joyous Holiday Caberet" followed by a dessert social
9 December 7:00PM – Rensselaer Choir Concert – Annual Winter Concert
11 December 7:30PM - The McKrell's Christmas Show
16 February 10:00PM – Mardi Gras, followed by a 12:00 Midnight Mass with Blessing and distribution of ashes
17 February 12:00 Midnight, 12:10PM, 5:15PM, 7:30PM – Ash Wednesday
20 February 9:30AM and 1:00PM – Pysanky Workshop
24 February Lenten Wednesday Speaker Series – Kathy Coffey, "Spirituality, What's Your Style?"
26 February 7:00PM – Verba Sancta – Roman Voices From The Gentile Church, A Psalm and Four Responsories by Bertrand Fay
28 February 6:45PM – Garrett Smelcer Concert
3 March Lenten Wednesday Speaker Series, Brother Mickey McGrath, OSFS, "Spirituality and Creativity"
10 March Lenten Wednesday Speaker Series, Brother James Zullo, FSC, "Spirituality and Sexuality"
17 March Lenten Wednesday Speaker Series, Noah Sheetz, "Spirituality and Health"
21 March 7:00PM – Stations of the Cross, The Rensselaer Music Ministry
24 March Lenten Wednesday Speaker Series, Fr. Michael Guinan, OFM, "Spirituality and Prayer"
27 March 11:00AM – Lenten Penance Service
27 March 5:15PM – Palm Sunday
28 March 9:00AM, 10:30AM 5:00PM – Palm Sunday
1 April 6:30PM – Holy Thursday Agape and Mass
2 April 7:30PM Good Friday, Dramatic Reading Of The Passion Of Jesus and Communion Service
3 April 8:00PM – Holy Saturday, The Great Easter Vigil
4 April 9:00AM, 10:30AM (focus on the children), 5:00PM – Easter Sunday

HOW TO SUPPORT OUR WORK

If you work for a matching gift company: Please make your check payable to "Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute" and write "C+CC" on the memo line. Also make out your matching gift form to RPI, which will send us a gift equaling your contribution, plus the matching gift value.

If you do not work for a matching gift company: Please make your check payable to "Rensselaer Newman Foundation".

Pledges: Gifts made over a number of months or years may allow you to increase your overall contribution.

Gifts of Securities: Gifts of appreciated securities are tax-deductible. Please call 276-6518 for transfer instructions.

Bequests: By leaving the Chapel + Cultural Center in your will you can insure the continuation of quality events and programs as well as receive a savings on your estate taxes.

Online Donations: Please visit our website at www.chapelandculturalcenter.org and click the DONATE NOW button.

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THE RENSSELAER
NEWMAN FOUNDATION
November 2009

Dear Alums, Friends and Family,

We are entering the time of year when communities of faith celebrate great festivals (Thanksgiving, Christmas and Chanukah). The Winter Solstice is approaching and will present some of the most brilliant night skies that one could imagine. There is a reflective aura within our hearts and souls during these days. The colors of the dawn, the pitch black of night broken with radiant specks of light, the white fresh snow, the green conifer trees and the magical qualities of paper wrappings with spectacular ribbons and bows all illumine aspects of the head, heart and mind. To be sure, the mystical of the ordinary is very present.

With the season of great festivals approaching, including the new year of the Church beginning with the First Sunday of Advent, I encourage you to make a conscious choice (which is not always an easy one) to take the time to appreciate this time of year and be present with each other as we enter into these coming days. The gift of presence is the greatest gift we have to offer, as it lends to a greater appreciation for life and a greater level of happiness.

Your monetary gift allows our existence and our vital presence to the students here at the Chapel + Cultural Center and the community of Rensselaer. You are the light in the pitch of the night in a person's life and this is evident every time a student asks "Do you have a minute?" and an hour can be given. Through the careful use of our financial resources we are able to minister and serve the students in ways I find to be the mystery of God, present and real.

We know all too well the current economic reality is overwhelming; nevertheless, we continue to place our trust in you and your belief in us. Please, I ask for your assistance on behalf of a community in progress, our students. To be able to be engaged at the point of necessity is the grace of God's presence, for me, and for all in need. Please assist in making that happen.

May the joys of these upcoming festivals (Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas, the New Year, the Epiphany and the light of the days eventually becoming longer) fill your hearts and minds with the faith of a living and loving God.

A Blessed Christmas and Healthy, Happy 2010 from everyone here.....

Sincerely,

Fr Ed Kacerguis

REFLECTIONS ON FAITH FORMATION

Excerpts of Remarks by Sr. Clarisse Correia
Rensselaer Newman Foundation Committee of One Hundred Dinner
October 16, 2009



Sr. Clarisse Correia with Ed and Kathy Spain

Did you ever wonder why Europe has so many great cathedrals – Notre Dame and Chartres in France, the Cologne Cathedral in Germany, the León Cathedral in Spain, and so many others? These cathedrals were built as giant records of the faith. In the elegant windows and impressive sculptures bible stories and the beliefs of the Church are told in simple, yet intimate, detail, so that all people – whether nobles or paupers, learned scribes or illiterate peasants – could learn about Jesus and come to believe in him. For almost a thousand years, the Church used these images to retell the story of Jesus and the Church to the next generation of believers.

Today the Church continues to proclaim the Good News of Christ Jesus using multi media instead of just glass and stone. Yet the Church's goals and message are still the same:

- To introduce people to the person and story of Jesus
- To lead them to believe in him and to follow his way,

As baptized members of the Body of Christ – the Church - each of us is called to grow as disciples of Jesus and to share our faith. We grow in faith by keeping up with current Church teachings, participating in the life of the Church, by becoming closer to God through prayer and reflection.

Historically the Church has given great credence to the belief that parents are the ones responsible for passing on their own faith to that of their children. While this continues to be true there has been a gradual shift taking place.

For many of us born before the 1950s, our faith formation was centered about going to Mass each Sunday, participating in cathetical instruction within Catholic schools or “release time” from public schools to attend religious education programs in our own local, often ethnic parishes with the goal of preparing for First Communion and Confirmation. Once “graduated” our formal Catholic education ended ... we had basic knowledge from memorizing the tenants of our faith as described in the Baltimore Catechism, could name the Sacraments and Precepts of the Church, were expected to go to Confession on a regular basis in order to receive Communion and conform to the overriding value on being raised as an obedient Catholic.

Today we are living in a very different world. We are influenced by the secular society in which we are deeply, inescapably marked by our culture. There is a growing distrust of authority and institutional integrity; job security occurs because of movement from job to job / profession to profession often requiring mobility. Our lives are affected by informational overload and demands placed on us. Remember when Sunday was a day for prayer and rest now replaced by sports, to do lists and other choices.

CHURCH RECOGNITION ...

Catholics have a proportionately stronger presence in children's education programs and a much weaker presence in adult faith formation as compared to Protestants. There is a recognition that the emphasis needs to return to adult formation first.

We Catholics are being challenged to witness to our faith and give our children reason to choose likewise. Since the 1960s children are taught to think for themselves, to be creative, not to rely on others. Being creative and thinking for oneself is essential for success in our culture and our economy. Our society is marked by individualism and choice.

TRANSITION TO GENERATION IN FAITH

The Second Vatican Council really brought a shift in the Church's approach to how we pass on the faith. It was in 1971, that the Holy See published the first **General Catechetical Directory**, laying out guidelines for how to pass on faith. Over the next 30 years there have been significant strides in better understanding “catechetical” faith formation – The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (1972), The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992).

The goal is to make Christ and his life come alive in the minds and hearts of seekers today. The Directives begins with a reflection on the **parable of the Sower and the Seed**. Faith is planted and grown in the many different cultures in which people live and work. Just as the seed in the parable falls on all types of ground it is also planted in all types of situations and surroundings.

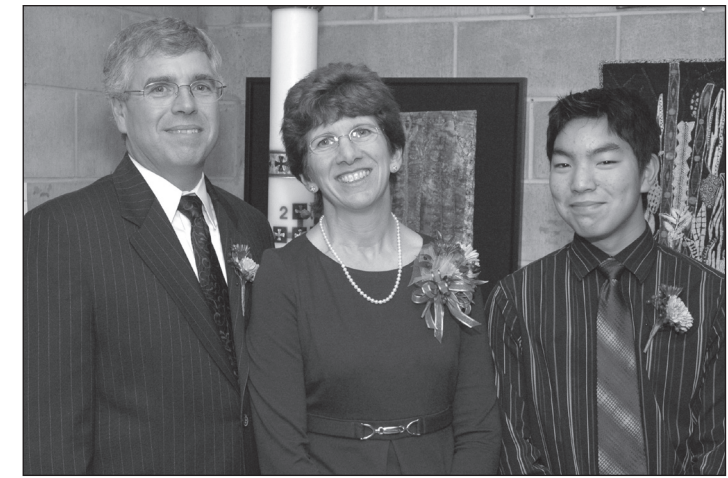
The message to us is simple: Celebrate the diversity of God's gifts. Be open to learn about those you catechize and to learn from them. Preach the word of God in a way that it can be heard and understood while protecting the integrity of the message. Take from the riches of cultures that which is compatible with the faith, and challenge those parts of the culture which are not.

The Generations in Faith Together (GIFT) movement started in the 1970's as a process of life long learning using the guidelines from the General Directory. Today it can be found in over 2000 parishes in the United States and Canada in 70 dioceses. The Diocese of Albany introduced the process in 2002 and it is being used in 40 parishes / 20% of the parishes in the Diocese. This is the fourth year of GIFT in this parish.

Briefly described GIFT is a multi-year process of faith formation for all persons in a parish community with a core curriculum which is rooted in the life of the Church.

The comprehensive vision includes six essential and interrelated tasks:

- Promoting knowledge of the faith through study of Tradition and Scripture
- Liturgical education ~ so that the faithful can enter fully into the liturgy and sacraments with conscious and active participation
- Moral formation ~ which fosters conversion of life by transmitting the spirit of the beatitudes and values of the Commandments ~ witnessing to the social consequences of the demands of the Gospel – often in contradiction to the society in which we find ourselves
- Teaching to pray ~ adoration, praise, thanksgiving, supplication, the Our Father which is a summary of the entire Gospel
- Education for the community life ~ ongoing education, keeping up with the teachings of the Church as presented in pastoral letters, encyclicals, etc.
- Missionary initiation ~ equipping the faithful to be present as Christians in society through their professional, cultural and social lives



Jim, Teresa and Christopher Brennan

Faith formation in GIFT prepares people of all ages and all generations for meaningful participation in Church events through intergenerational learning, engages all ages and generation in Church events and guides them in reflecting on and applying the significance and meaning of the events to their lives as Catholics.

CONCLUSION

I would like to conclude with four key passages for the Directory for Catechesis:

- “Faith is a personal encounter with Jesus Christ ... This demands a permanent commitment to think like him, to judge like him and to live as he lived.” (#53)
- “The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ.” (#80)
- “The witness of Christian life given by parents in the family comes to children with tenderness and parental respect. Children thus perceive and joyously live the closeness of God and of Jesus made manifest by their parents in such a way that this first Christian experience frequently leaves decisive trace throughout life. This childhood religious awakening is irreplaceable ... Indeed family catechesis proceeded... accompanies and enriches all forms of catechesis.” (#226)
- “The parish is, without doubt, the most important focus in which the Christian community is formed and expressed. This is called to be a fraternal and welcoming family where Christians become aware of being a people of God. In the parish, all human differences melt away and are absorbed into the universality of the Church.” (#257)

I believe that faith formation here in the Church of Christ Sun of Justice is on the right path thanks to the commitment of the Rensselaer Newman Foundation and because of Father Ed's leadership and the lived commitment of people such as the Jim, Teresa and Christopher Brennan, recipients of the *Sun and Balance* award this year.