



Diocese of Greensburg Office of Faith, Family, and Discipleship

Becoming Eucharistic People: Forming Missionary Disciples in the Truth

The Eucharistic Revival and the "Christ is the Truth" Survey

This initial plan for the Office of Faith, Family, and Discipleship occurs during the time of Eucharistic Revival in the United States and is rooted in the "Christ is the Truth" survey conducted by the Diocese of Greensburg. These two events provide the fertile soil for the organizational development of this initial pastoral plan.

In June 2022, the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) launched a three-year period of Eucharistic Revival in which dioceses, parishes, and individuals are invited to a renewed encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist that leads to a "path of a pastoral and missionary conversion which cannot leave things as they presently are" (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 25). The desire of this revival is not just to bring about greater intellectual understanding of the Eucharist, but to form missionary disciples who live their lives *Eucharistically*. Therefore, the goal of this revival is to invite Catholics to a new way of life in which they recognize and experience Jesus' true presence in the Eucharist who calls them in turn to offer their lives back to God and the Body of Christ, the Church, in thanksgiving for all God's blessings.

Coinciding with the Eucharistic Revival, the Diocese of Greensburg conducted a strategic planning study entitled, "Christ is the Truth," published in 2022. The purpose of this study was to "develop enhanced holistic formation programs in Armstrong, Fayette, Indiana, and Westmoreland Counties for every child and every adult who wants to learn and live the Catholic faith." Listening sessions were held throughout the diocese and a survey of general information was conducted with the parishes.

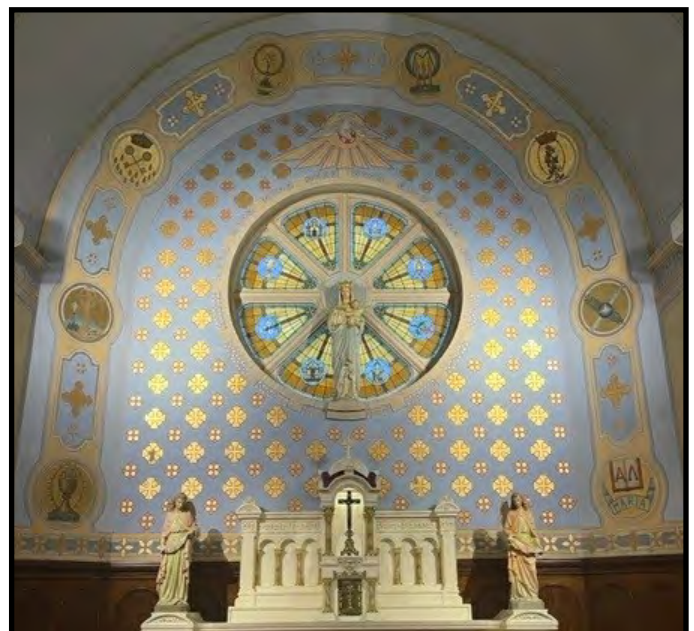
Responses to the study identified four key areas of necessary growth and will serve as the basis for this pastoral planning process. First and foremost, connecting with the goal of the Eucharistic Revival, parish and diocesan leaders must create and cultivate opportunities for an encounter with Christ for every person in the Diocese of Greensburg.

Pope Francis refers to this encounter as the "first announcement" of the Gospel and its necessity for growth in the Church. In *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis states,

"In catechesis too, we have rediscovered the fundamental role of the first announcement or *kerygma*, which needs to be the center of all evangelizing activity and all efforts at Church renewal" (*EG*, 164). However, by calling this encounter the "first announcement," we are not implying that it only occurs as an introduction to faith, but rather personal encounter with Jesus is primary and at the center of all of our efforts of faith formation of all ages and levels of religious and spiritual development. The goal of creating varied encounters with Jesus as experienced in the Church will serve as the underlying method of formation developed in this pastoral plan.

Four Key Areas for Growth

1. Encounters with Christ
2. Creative Catechesis
3. Building Relationships
4. Collaboration of Parishes



Sanctuary with Eucharistic Imagery,
Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Mount Pleasant

The most raised concern was the need for creative catechetical programming that reaches parents as well as the youth. In the last decade, particularly during the most difficult times of the pandemic, the way that children learn has dramatically changed and parishes throughout the country have struggled to adapt. Currently, in the Diocese of Greensburg, there are three types of instruction, including the traditional classroom model, the intergenerational model (where youth and adults come together for a shared learning experience), and the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd model. These models continue to serve the Church well, but also need to be updated and enhanced to meet the current needs of our families. This pastoral plan will not eliminate any of these types of instruction, but will seek intentional opportunities for an encounter with Jesus in these existing models. In addition, this plan will propose new and creative models of faith formation for adults and youth that make the encounter with Jesus the central aspect of the experience.

To create exciting and appealing models of faith formation, all Catholics must build relationships both within the individual parishes and across the Diocese. In today's world, there is an increased desire for community and relationships after the social isolation that occurred during the pandemic. Our parishes are ideal locations to build welcoming Christian communities that nourish the spiritual and social needs of God's people. The most recent *Directory for Catechesis* recognizes this essential need, "Catechesis... has the task of developing the sense of belonging to the Church; teaching the sense of ecclesial communion... forming believers in the sense of ecclesial *co-responsibility*, contributing as active participants to building up the community and as missionary disciples to its growth" (*DC*, 89). This sense of *co-responsibility* can only be established through the building of relationships within the parish between the pastor and his people, the catechists and their students, the catechists and parents, and parents and students amongst themselves. The ability to proclaim the Gospel is rooted in the "art of accompaniment," which is "an openness of heart which makes possible that closeness without which genuine spiritual encounter cannot occur" (*EG*, 171). This pastoral plan will encourage relationship building within parishes, inviting those on the peripheries of the community to feel welcome and valued. Additionally, this plan



The Supper at Emmaus,
Blessed Sacrament Cathedral in Greensburg

will invite parishes into forming processes of accompaniment for members to journey deeper into the life of faith, particularly in the areas of family life and missionary discipleship.

Finally, this building of relationships within the parish must also continue to grow with communication and collaboration between and among parishes of the Diocese. With the hiring of a permanent Managing Director for Faith, Family, and Discipleship, this Office can communicate the resources available to parishes, events taking place in the Diocese and nationwide, and facilitate the collaboration of parishes to share knowledge and resources.

This effort will begin with an additional survey of parishes building from the data collected from the "Christ is the Truth" study that will identify the current catechetical personnel and the needs of those already engaged in catechetical ministry. This survey will include parish visits to all pastors and Catechetical Leaders as well as an online questionnaire that will be conducted annually.

Once a database of catechetical leaders is established, a regularly scheduled electronic newsletter promoting the formation opportunities available will be created. Additionally, committees will be formed through the Office of Faith, Family, and Discipleship to design the various aspects of this pastoral plan whose goal is to help the Diocese of Greensburg become Eucharistic people who seek to form missionary disciples in truth.

Becoming Eucharistic People

In the strategic plan of the Diocese of Greensburg published in 2022, the Mission of the Diocese is “to create a more Eucharistic Community devoted to loving and serving one another, and forming Disciples of Christ.” The way of creating a Eucharistic Community is to help each member become a Eucharistic person.

Becoming a Eucharistic person is more than just attending Mass on Sundays. A Eucharistic person has a relationship with Jesus and sees Jesus in all places and people. A Eucharistic person feels a sense of gratitude for the blessings that God has bestowed on him or her and feels a need to share those gifts with others. A Eucharistic person cannot help but introduce others to Jesus Christ with whom they have formed a relationship. In short, Eucharistic people are missionary disciples.

The *Directory for Catechesis* states that the Catechetical Office of a Diocese is to evaluate the state of catechesis through “an evangelical

discernment [using] the approach of a missionary disciple” (*DC*, 420). Therefore, committees of Eucharistic people—clergy, religious, and laity—will be formed to discern what the strengths and needs of the Diocese are in eight areas that are essential to guiding the mission of the Office of Faith, Family, and Discipleship proceeding forward:

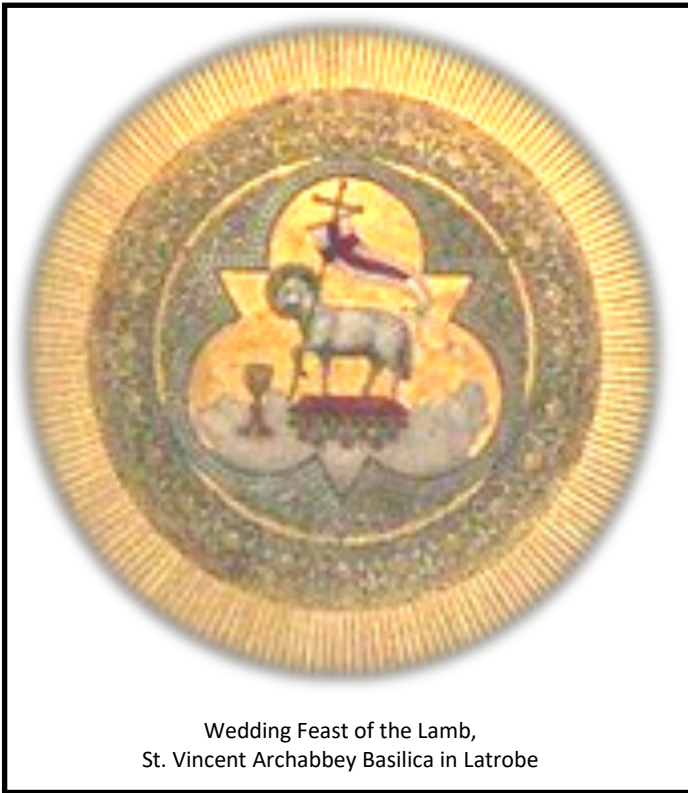
1. Catechist Certification
2. Curriculum
3. Religious Education Best Practices
4. Sacramental Preparation
5. Youth & Young Adult Ministry
6. Christian Initiation
7. Marriage Catechumenate
8. Adult Discipleship and Formation

Forming Missionary Disciples in the Truth

The goal of each committee is to assess the current strengths and needs within the whole diocese to help develop policies, standards, and best practices in their particular area of the catechetical plan that will be recommended to the Diocesan Bishop for his approval. Each area of the plan has the overarching goal of forming missionary disciples in the Truth of the Gospel. Personal relationship experienced through a process of encounter and accompaniment is key in forming people to become missionary disciples and will be fundamental to the plan.

Together these eight committees under the active leadership and guidance of the Managing Director of Faith, Family, and Discipleship will form a comprehensive plan to fulfill the expectations of the *Directory for Catechesis*, “The diocesan catechetical program is the global catechetical project of a particular Church, which integrates, in a structured way, the diverse catechetical programs” (*DC*, 422). Each aspect of the plan will promote, in a complementary way, the *kerygmatic* and missionary accentuation of catechesis in order to foster pastoral conversion and the missionary transformation of the Church (cf. *DC*, 420). By focusing on what is most important to the Christian life, which is the proclamation of God’s love poured out in the Eucharist, this process of catechetical formation has the power to stir up a response in each of us to lead





Wedding Feast of the Lamb,
St. Vincent Archabbey Basilica in Latrobe

us to conversion and the strength to live a new way of life in the risen and living Christ.

Each committee will evaluate and develop their policies, standards, and best practices organized by the five tasks for catechesis as summarized in the following statements:

- Eucharistic People and Missionary Disciples *know* Jesus and their faith.
- Eucharistic People and Missionary Disciples *celebrate* Jesus and their faith.
- Eucharistic People and Missionary Disciples *live for and in* Jesus and their faith.
- Eucharistic People and Missionary Disciples *pray to and with* Jesus in faith.
- Eucharistic People and Missionary Disciples *experience* Jesus in the community of faith.
(cf. Directory for Catechesis, 79)

By having a common vision between the various committees based on our encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist, together we can form people to actually know Jesus and become his disciples. Despite the cultural situations facing the Church today, we will persevere based on the Lord's promise and through our unified efforts. May our shared efforts and the grace given to us by the Eucharistic Lord give us the strength and desire to respond to this invitation of forming missionary disciples with joy. May God be praised in our shared work!

Committees

1. **Catechist Certification** (forming April 2023 with new opportunities for certification in September 2023). This committee will revise certification requirements and coursework for all catechists and lay ecclesial ministers.
2. **Curriculum** (forming May 2023). In collaboration with the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, this committee will review curriculum requirements for Pre-Kindergarten through 12th Grade.
3. **Faith Formation Best Practices** (forming July 2023). This committee will develop best practices and guidelines for Faith Formation in parishes and parish partners, including catechetical leadership, staff, and program structures.
4. **Sacramental Preparation** (forming June 2023). This committee will revise sacramental preparation policies and guidelines for infant Baptism and youth Confirmation, Reconciliation, and Eucharist.
5. **Youth & Young Adult Ministry** (forming April 2023). This committee will develop policies and best practices for youth and young adult ministry, including Junior High, High School, College, and Young Adults.
6. **Christian Initiation** (forming when the new Order is published). This committee will revise policies, curriculum, and guidelines for the Christian Initiation of Adults based on the new ritual book and best practices.
7. **Marriage Catechumenate** (forming May 2023). This committee will develop new policies and guidelines for marriage preparation and marriage enrichment, including ministry to young families, in response to the Vatican's Dicastery of Laity, Family, and Life's recent document, *Catechumenal Itineraries for Married Life*.
8. **Adult Discipleship and Formation** (forming June 2023). This committee will develop best practices and guidelines for discipleship retreats and Small Christian Communities to be established in parishes throughout the Diocese.