



Department of
Evangelization & Catechesis

Growing Disciples – Wednesday Wrap
Glorifying God – Growing in Faith
Living our Catholic Faith in the World

March 20, 2019 Edition

“Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.” (Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 164)

Prayer & Action Mission this summer – Shenandoah and Atlantic:



Prayer & Action is a Catholic youth ministry program that incorporates mission work within the boundaries of our diocese. It provides the opportunity to evangelize those participating in the mission weeks (youth and adult chaperones) but also the entire communities of Shenandoah and Atlantic

where the teams will work and live. Each week I will share more about the Prayer & Action experience.

We are currently accepting registrations for each of the weeks. This is perfect for two or three young people in your parish along with one adult chaperone who is Virtus trained with a background check. Prayer & Action would be ideal for Boy Scout/Girl Scout troop leaders, Knights of Columbus members bring a few teens or just an awesome parent with one's child and a few friends.

Today's focus is on the 'Collatio.' *Collatio* is Latin for *bring together*. It occurs each evening. One portion of the *Collatio* is a personal witness talk by a member of the Mission Team (the college students running the week.) Topics are:

- Moments of conversion and reversion in one's life with Christ
- Service and solidarity with others
- Leading lives of boldly standing up for Catholic values
- Forgiveness and the love that Christ extends to us
- Eucharist and Jesus washing the disciple's feet – and our responsibility to do the same
- Carrying forward the mission past the mission trip.

The cost for a full week of Prayer & Action is \$80.00. Contact Justin White at

jwhite@dmdioocese.org for information or view our website at

<https://www.dmdioocese.org/ministries-and-faith-formation/youth-and-young-adults/youth-ministry/prayer-action>.

Location 1: Shenandoah, Iowa

Week 1--June 16th-21st

Week 2--June 23rd-28th

Location 2: Atlantic, Iowa

Week 3--July 7th-12th

Week 4--July 14th-19th

Parades, Prayer and Pilgrimage – A Reflection on St. Patrick by Julianne Stanz:

Rugged and imposing, Croagh Patrick (taken from the Irish words “Cruach Phadraig,” Patrick’s Stack) has been a site of pilgrimage for 3,000 years and is considered to be Ireland’s holiest mountain. Nicknamed “The Reek” by locals, the last Sunday in July sees thousands of pilgrims make the climb to the top, many of them barefoot, deep in prayer and often fasting. Over 1 million people climb Croagh Patrick annually and each year the numbers continue to rise.



At first glance, the Lenten customs of fasting, prayer and solitude seem to be in contrast to the over-the-top revelry and gluttony with which, unfortunately, St. Patrick’s Day has become synonymous. And yet, it was the disciplines of prayer, penance and fasting that were at the heart of St. Patrick’s ministry to the people of Ireland.

The small parish of Ballintubber, County Mayo, takes its name from St. Patrick (Baile an Tobair Phadraig, the place of St. Patrick’s well) and traces its origin from when St. Patrick baptized the villagers around the year 440. Fr. Frank Fahey, parish priest of Ballintubber, shared a story with me which has much to teach us about the real St. Patrick and how to celebrate St. Patrick’s Day the Catholic way!

As a boy, Patrick was enslaved on a mountain in Ireland where he was beaten, neglected and starved. Once he had escaped his captors, Patrick made his way home and eventually studied for the seminary in Rome. After being ordained bishop, Patrick asked to be sent to Ireland, where he spent 40 days and 40 nights on Croagh Patrick in order to prepare for his public ministry as bishop to the native Irish, who were renowned for their pagan ways.

Familiar with the Irish, Patrick would have known that Croagh Patrick was sacred to the Irish, particularly to the pagan druids, and set out to claim the mountain for Christ. As he was climbing the mountain, hosts of blackbirds swirled around Patrick. They pecked at him and tormented him with their shrieks and noise.

Patrick, who carried a bell with him to call people to prayer, rang the bell vigorously to scatter the birds and be relieved of their incessant cries. This pattern was repeated several times. Eventually, Patrick managed to banish the blackbirds forever. When he got to the summit of the mountain, he was ready to take on the work of conversion of the Irish, a great serpent came to Patrick.

This serpent identified herself as the mother of the devil, the “caoranach” in the Irish language. Patrick took his walking stick and gave her an almighty whack, as the Irish say! He didn’t kill her, however, but instead she slithered off to a lake and remained there. What, you may ask, is the meaning behind this strange tale? The legend of St. Patrick, Fr. Frank reminded me, is still as powerful and Irish 1,600 years later.

Each time we set out to do the Lord’s work (which feels like climbing a mountain at times), demons will attack us — from within ourselves and from without. The blackbirds that attacked Patrick pecked and tormented him constantly. Only by ringing his prayer bell was he able to banish them.

The demons that come to us when we set out to do the Lord’s work often come in the forms of our own doubts, imperfections and weaknesses. We fear that we cannot do the work of the Lord because we are not holy enough or worthy enough. Those demons can come from within, but they also come from others who feel that we are not qualified enough, special enough or accomplished enough to do the will of the Lord.

It is only through prayer that we keep our attention focused on the Lord and can conquer those demons. And just when we think we are truly ready to set out on our mission, the greatest demon of all comes to tempt us. She came to Patrick in the guise of a serpent and represents the pride and anger that we all harbor within. The mother of the devil is pride. You cannot kill your own pride, but you must work on this relentlessly.

When we set out to do the work of the Lord, the demons of pride and anger will try to convince us that it is our will to be done rather than God’s will. It is only by conversation with God through prayer that we keep our focus on the Lord and defeat those blackbird demons that torment us.

Sixteen hundred years later, the words of Patrick are a powerful reminder to us of the need to be ever faithful to his will: “I pray to God to give me perseverance so that I be a faithful witness to him to the end of my life for my God.”

Julianne Stanz is director of Discipleship Formation in the Diocese of Green Bay.

RCIA Resourcing – Avoid these blunders when celebrating the presentations:

Reflecting back on my first year coordinating the RCIA at St. John’s I realized how many mistakes I made. Thank God that many of those catechumens are not only still practicing their Catholic faith, they are also part of RCIA teams in a few Des Moines area parishes.



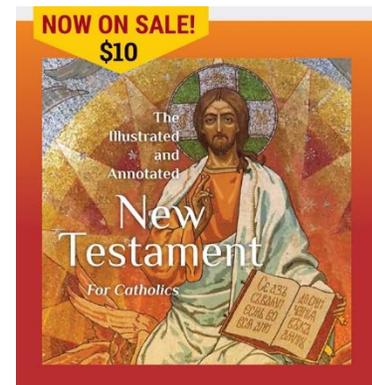
With that said, thanks to the North American Forum and Team RCIA I received excellent formation for this specific ministry that has carried me forward. Although the North American Forum is no longer around, Team RCIA provides excellent insight and formation. As we continue to accompany our catechumens and candidates through the Period of Purification and Enlightenment, here is an excellent article from Team RCIA regarding effective ways to celebrate the presentations.

Team RCIA Link: http://teamrcia.com/2019/03/avoid-these-blunders-when-celebrating-the-presentations/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Avoid+these+blunders+when+celebrating+the+presentations&utm_campaign=2019-03-18+Newsletter

LTP launches a beautiful new Illustrated & Annotated New Testament Bible:

The Illustrated and Annotated New Testament for Catholics is a unique and attractive publication to encourage Bible reading and study among youth and adults alike. It is an effective tool for youth and adult Bible study as well as Confirmation and RCIA programs.

This 608-page book includes hundreds of color illustrations to enhance the reading of the texts, great artworks from the past millennium, as well as photographs of places mentioned in the biblical texts.



Between now and March 25 you can purchase the Illustrated New Testament for \$10.00 using order code IANTC at this link: https://www.ltp.org/products/details/IANTC/illustrated-and-annotated-new-testament-for-catholics?utm_source=IANTC+On+Sale+3%2F19&utm_campaign=FY19+IANTC+sale+3%2F19&utm_medium=email

“Let the Church always be a place of Mercy AND Hope, where everyone is welcomed Loved and Forgiven.” Pope Francis

