



Effective Parish Practices for the Jubilee of Mercy:

Now that the Extraordinary Jubilee is underway, parishes and dioceses are letting us know ideas that they are undertaking regarding parish initiatives. Below are a few from this week:

- St. Theresa in Des Moines – have developed a post card invite to Christmas Mass. The process is that parishioners mail or give to someone who they know who hasn't been at Mass for a while and invite them back. This pre *Catholics Come Home* idea lines up with one of our four major initiatives in the diocese. For those of us who specialize in lifelong faith formation, we can adjust this practice by inviting families, teens or other adults in our programs to invite someone back who they haven't seen in some time. For more information contact Barb Woods at bwoods@sainttheresaiowa.org or Jane Ann Becicka at jbecicka@sainttheresaiowa.org for more information.
- Mercy Cards Idea from the Diocese of Joliet – you will find an attachment with Mercy Cards that are being developed for children and teens in formation. It is a two-sided PDF that will have 8 cards per sheet. Throughout each week of the Jubilee, children and teens will receive a Mercy Card with one suggestion that will help them and their family learn about and live mercy that week.

Young Adult Silent Retreat on Mercy at St. Thomas More Center – December 11 & 12:

A wonderful opportunity this Advent and Jubilee to retreat from the busyness of the lead-up to Christmas and discover the reason for the season: Jesus. Pray and reflect with other young adults from around the diocese.

The retreat begins at 7:00 pm on December 11 and ends at 5:00 pm on December 12. This silent retreat is for young professionals and those enrolled at the University/College.

The cost is \$30.00 per person and includes lodging and meals. For more information contact Alex Kautzky at retreats.stmc@gmail.com.

Catechetical Leader Spotlight for December – Irma Jaime Cruz from Our Lady of the Americas parish in Des Moines:

Irma has been a catechist for more than 44 years. She heard God's call at an early age. As the director of religious education at Our Lady of the Americas Parish in Des Moines, she oversees the largest Hispanic religious education program in the city. More than 600 students and their families are involved each year, which has led many to a deeper awareness and practice of their faith. The program has a 100 percent bilingual staff, which is essential for evangelization, as the Hispanic population can come to Christ in their native language. Irma walks with the people on

their journey of faith, and her dedication to Christ and her deep desire to evangelize shines through everything she does and reflects in everyone she meets.

Pflaum Weeklies Evangelizes Catholic Social Teaching with a Pope Francis Comic Book:

This is a wonderful way to prepare children for the Jubilee by sharing with them this short, but powerful, comic book about Catholic Social Teaching on the fundamental option for the poor.

This comic book can be viewed digitally or printed. To find this resource please follow this link: <http://www.pflaumgospelweeklies.com/popesvisit/Comic-Book/#p=1>

Thank you to Julie Pschesang from Pflaum on bringing this to my attention. To reach her about Pflaum Gospel Weeklies, her e-mail is jpschesang@pflaum.com.

Winter Catechist In-Service at St. Francis parish in West Des Moines – January 6 from 7:00 to 9:00 pm:

Attached to this e-newsletter e-mail is the winter catechist in-service flyer from Christen at St. Francis of Assisi. If you desire your parish catechists to participate, please contact Christen at ccota@saintfrancischurch.org.

CLADD Retreat 2016 in Council Bluffs:

The 2016 Catechetical Leader retreat will be held on February 11-12 in Council Bluffs at the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites at Ameristar <http://www.ihg.com/holidayinn/hotels/us/en/council-bluffs/cbfrb/hoteldetail>. The retreat team is currently working out a few details. Here is what we know:

- Cindy Shaw, co-director for the Emmaus House Retreat Center in Des Moines, is our retreat facilitator.
- This year's theme is will be a continuation from last year as we dig deeper into God's mercy.
- It appears that the retreat fee will be similar to last year and includes materials along with wonderful meals (dinner and lunch along with afternoon and morning snacks)
- For those staying at the Holiday Inn and Suites, the room charge is \$104.95 (plus taxes) for an executive king room or a double queen room. Breakfast is included for those staying at the hotel.

The flyer with more information will be sent soon. Thank you to Patsy Carlson and Jenifer Parsons who is working with Cindy on developing a prayerful and powerful retreat experience for you.

Jubilee of Mercy Prayer (Vatican):

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father, and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him. Show us your face and we will be saved. Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money; the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things; made Peter weep after his betrayal, and assured

Paradise to the repentant thief. Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman: "If you knew the gift of God!"

You are the visible face of the invisible Father, of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy: let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and gloried. You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error: let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God.

Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind.

We ask this of you, Lord Jesus, through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy; you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.

Amen