



Diocese of Des Moines

*A Journey Together
Celebrating Evangelization:
Past, Present and Future*

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

May 17, 2010

Dear Reverend Fathers, Reverend Deacons, Catechetical Leaders and Youth Ministers,

Lifelong growth in faith is essential for all the faithful in the Church of Des Moines. Of particular concern in our time is the development in belief of our adolescent youth. National studies conducted by the Pew Foundation, National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry and CARA (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate) reach the same conclusion; the faith education of our youth seems to have fallen behind.

After months of study and consultation, including the Diocesan Presbyteral Council, I am forwarding to you a pastoral letter, "A Commitment to Adolescent Catechesis: A Critical Stage in Lifelong Catechesis in the Diocese of Des Moines." The letter addresses the diocesan plan and hope for all of our parishes. It is asked that each parish engage in a process of education and formation for our high school youth that will provide systematic growth in knowledge of faith. This envisions a blending of youth ministry and catechetical instruction. Additionally, the letter offers an overview of the state of adolescent catechesis and youth ministry as they currently exist. It names the process that I encourage you to engage in the coming years.

The Department of Evangelization and Catechesis, which includes the offices of Catechetical Services, Evangelization and Adult Faith Formation and Youth Ministry will be available to assist you in the implementation of comprehensive catechesis and youth ministry for our ninth through twelfth grade students. More information and opportunities for training with regard to the two processes I have approved for use in the Diocese of Des Moines will be coming from these offices in the not too distant future.

I hope that you will share the pastoral letter with your parish community and take time to discuss it with groups of parents, your education and catechesis committees and boards, your parish staff, your pastoral councils and especially with the youth themselves. Each baptized member of the community has a role and responsibility to pass on the faith in living, conscious and active ways. Sharing and discussing the letter with the community allows all to be beneficiaries of the gift of adolescent catechesis. Moreover, the timing of this initiative during the Diocesan centennial celebration highlights the call for Evangelization that is at the center of our remembrance.

Know of my continued prayerful support as we bring to light the vision of this letter and provide for the ongoing discipleship of the young church in Southwest Iowa.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

+ *Richard E. Pates*

Most Reverend Richard E. Pates
Bishop of Des Moines

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*The celebration symbol of
the cross surrounded by
fields and furrowed soil
was created for the
papal visit in 1979.*