

## To Hold in Trust... The Forum Family Gathering

By Miriam Malone, Member, Board of Directors



Miriam Malone

Last November I had the joy of hosting my family for the Thanksgiving holidays at our community's retreat villa. My siblings, their spouses, children and grandchildren, and my father came together for a weekend of family traditions and feasting. It was a graced time during which we told and re-told old family stories, reveled in memories, particularly of my mother, and gathered in thanksgiving around an abundance of gifts at the table. We played and prayed together, and took immense delight in the presence of the newest generation of family members. We left each other renewed and energized by the opportunity to be together, enjoy each other's company, and nurture our relationships with one another.

Three weeks prior to our family gathering, I had a similar experience as I participated in Forum's Fifth International Convocation in Cleveland, Ohio, where members of the North American Forum on the Catechumenate, new and long-timers, joined together. The Convocation was very much like a family gathering with all the embraces, shared memories, storytelling, new learning and insights, and wonderful feasting. The sense of shared mission was palpable and the energy in the room high as more seasoned members "remembered when" and newer members

*continued on page 7*

*"The Convocation was very much like a family gathering with all the embraces, shared memories, storytelling, new learning and insights, and wonderful feasting. The sense of shared mission was palpable and the energy in the room high as more seasoned members "remembered when" and newer members shared their enthusiasm about Forum's contributions to the full implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in dioceses and parishes throughout the United States and Canada."*

*The Mission of The North American Forum on the Catechumenate is the full implementation in all parishes of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and its implications for reconciliation.*

### Table of Contents

**Lean Times Need Large Hearts—Your Part in Forum's Spring Appeal 2009** .....2

**Combined Federal Campaign** .....2

**Forum's 25th Anniversary Campaign—Acknowledgment of Our Large Donors**.....4

**The Sponsors and Exhibitors Who Helped Make Forum's Fifth International Convocation Possible** .....5

**Is it Really Lent Without the Scrutinies**.....8

**A Reflection on the Experience of Forum's Fifth Convocation**.....10

**Catholics Commit to Care for God's Creation—The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change**.....11

**The Catholic Climate Covenant: The St. Francis Pledge to Protect Creation and the Poor** .....12

**Increase Your Awareness, Speak Out for Just Relations Between the U.S. and Africa** .14

**Resource Reviews** .....15

Essentials for Christian Living: Prayers and Truths of the Catholic Church with Space for Personal Reflection Reviewed by Steve Lanza

**2009 Calendar** .....17

## Lean Times Need Large Hearts— Your Part in Forum's Spring Appeal 2009

This Easter Season we learn again the central place the mystery of the Lord's death and resurrection has in the Christian way of life. This Paschal Mystery infuses all life with a meaning and purpose we share with our inquirers, catechumens, and neophytes in a special way during the great Fifty Days of Easter. The message is to "rejoice, know the greatness of the gift you have been given in Christ, live that gift to the full, share it without counting the cost, live large and generously on others' behalf."

Such a way of living is needed in these hard times more than ever. All around us there is want: homelessness, job loss, families at the breaking point, communities at risk in rural areas, cities, and suburbs. Worry and fear stalk us all. These times require generous hearts and hands and wallets as much as any most of us have seen. Basic human needs must be met and those between homes and jobs looked after.

Alongside support for these basic needs, the needs of organizations devoted to the deepest human desires for community and communion, for faith, for the Lord also need your support. So many good groups that promote the common good and Christian faith and discipleship are at risk as giving either goes elsewhere or dries up. Remember them this Easter Season as we reflect mystagogically on all we have been given in the Lord.

Remember to give to Forum, a unique community of those like you who passionately serve the growth of faith

and the way of life in Christ that gives that faith flesh. Just look at your own parish community. How many of those who lead and serve came to conversion and living discipleship through the adult initiation process that Forum fosters in every aspect of its mission?

Each year we must raise 10% of Forum's operating costs through annual giving opportunities like this Spring Appeal. Our May 2009 Institute in Anchorage, Alaska, could not happen without support from the appeal. No gift is too small. Those who can contribute \$200 or more will be honored in the Fall issue of the Forum Newsletter.

Please make your donation online at [www.naforum.org](http://www.naforum.org) or mail it to:

The North American Forum on the Catechumenate  
P. O. Box 79459, Baltimore, MD 21279-0459 USA

In Christ, risen and so very much alive among us in these holy 50 Days!

Jim Schellman

The North American Forum on the Catechumenate is a not-for-profit organization in the U.S. with a 501 (c) 3 IRS ruling. Contributions to Forum are 100% tax deductible under current U.S. law.

### NOTICE TO FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Please remember  
**FORUM** at our  
new number:  
**CFC #10095**

#### Regarding the Combined Federal Campaign

Federal employees, we invite you once again to offer your direct support to FORUM through the Combined Federal Campaign. Forum is a proud and continuous member of CFC for many years!.

*Thank you for your support through the years!*

### The North American Forum on the Catechumenate

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**Mission** The North American Forum on the Catechumenate (Forum) is an international network of pastoral ministers, liturgists, catechists, and theologians united to share the vision and practice of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*.

**Mission Statement** The mission of The North American Forum on the Catechumenate is the full implementation in all parishes of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* and its implications for reconciliation.

**Theological Foundation** The Mission of Forum is grounded in a theology based on the experience of

- ◆ God's gracious initiative
- ◆ the paschal mystery of death and resurrection in Jesus Christ
- ◆ the prophetic power of word and sacrament
- ◆ the shared life and wisdom of the people of God, graced and sinful
- ◆ listening to the voice of the poor and oppressed
- ◆ conversion to the freedom of disciples
- ◆ working for justice and peace for the world

**Formational Principles** To remain faithful to the vision of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, Forum adheres to these principles:

- ◆ Initiation begins with evangelization leading to conversion.
- ◆ Catechesis, community, liturgy, and mission are formative.
- ◆ All cultural gifts are honored and celebrated.
- ◆ The methods of theological reflection are pastoral.
- ◆ The processes of adult learning are normative.

**Organizational Traits** Forum's operations, behaviors, attitudes, and actions exhibit these traits:

- ◆ Excellence: The highest level of competence, creativity, and professionalism are strived for at all times.
- ◆ Stewardship: Human, material, environmental, and financial resources are administered with responsibility and accountability.
- ◆ Respect: The precepts that all life is sacred, that each human being is unique, and that all deserve to be treated with dignity are affirmed in speech and action.
- ◆ Collaboration: Cooperation, consultation, communication, and networking are normative for all Forum projects.
- ◆ Inclusivity: Forum relies on the diversity of gifts among its members and proactively seeks a full range of diversity in all areas of its ministry.
- ◆ Integrity: Honesty, justice, and ethical behavior are hallmarks of Forum's work.

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## Forum's 25th Anniversary Campaign— Acknowledgment of Our Large Donors

The year 2008 was Forum's 25th anniversary year. This wonderful milestone in Forum's life and ministry was marked by two special events:

- **Forum's 25th Anniversary Matching Gifts Campaign**
- **Forum's Fifth International Convocation in November in Cleveland, Ohio**

The basis of the Anniversary Campaign was a \$50,000 challenge grant from one of Forum's most generous donors. Members and friends were invited to give to the Campaign with the understanding that each dollar they gave was matched by a dollar of the challenge grant. The Campaign came to a celebrative conclusion during the Fifth Convocation. We take this opportunity to thank once again all who contributed to our reaching the goal set out for us by the giver of the challenge grant. All gifts were essential to the task and were received with gratitude and personal acknowledgment.

At this time, we want to offer particular and public thanks to our large donors, each of whom gave at least \$250 toward the Campaign. A number asked not to be recognized, but most of these were subsequently persuaded of the importance of other members and friends of Forum seeing the importance they give to Forum's mission.

### In grateful acknowledgment of the large donors to Forum's 25th Anniversary Matching Gifts Campaign

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# The Sponsors and Exhibitors Who Helped Make Forum's Fifth International Convocation Possible

By Jim Schellman, Executive Director



Jim Schellman

Many words of appreciation have come to the Forum office since the Fifth Convocation, November 6-8, 2008, in Cleveland, Ohio. The participants' evaluations were, with few exceptions, highly positive. The few that were critical offered good suggestions for how to make the next one even better!

I think that the positive experience of so many was as much a result of who came as it was of the many folk who

planned and led the Convocation. The evidence is that, as a gathering of ministry leaders, participants came hungry for deeper formation in ministry and hungry for assembly and life-giving worship. Together, we fed

those hungers and nourished hundreds of fellow leaders by the very way we took part in the many events of those several days.

Two aspects of the Convocation deserve particular mention. These were the quality of the hospitality offered and the good variety of ministry resources available through publishers and other ministry leaders. In short, the sponsors of the various hospitality events imbued the Convocation with warmth and nourishment that fed both body and soul, and the exhibitors set another kind of table, one full of vision and possibilities that served the real ministry needs of those who came.

It is my privilege to honor by name here those who gave so generously to Forum's Fifth International Convocation, some as sponsors, some as exhibitors, some as both. The experience simply would not have been the same without you. So many thanks!

## With sincere thanks to the Sponsors of Forum's Fifth International Convocation

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shared their enthusiasm about Forum's contributions to the full implementation of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* in dioceses and parishes throughout the United States and Canada over the past twenty-five years.

The generous sponsors and exhibitors who partnered with Forum (tribute is given to them by name on pp. 5-6) transformed the hotel venue into a warm and welcoming place of hospitality. I marveled at the way exhibitors marketing a variety of goods and services were, at heart, all representing a common vision and mission close to Forum's own, that is, the formation of Christian disciples for mission. Sponsors and exhibitors alike contributed to the festive atmosphere by providing music, environment, refreshments, entertainment, and receptions. These gifts were invaluable contributions to the exuberant atmosphere and quality of presence that characterized the event. We are deeply grateful to those who provided them.

There were, for me, two highlights of the Convocation that were made possible only by the generosity of our sponsors. First, prior to the opening event of the Convocation, members of Forum's Board of Directors and Team members enjoyed a luncheon and gathering to be renewed in Forum's mission and vision. The afternoon included a presentation and lively discussion about the use of technology to move Forum's vision forward and to provide more resources for Forum's members. The second highlight was a reception for diocesan leaders hosted by members of Forum's Board. This gathering was a unique opportunity for the Board

to hear concerns, needs, and feedback from our partners throughout our two countries. Without them, Forum would be hard pressed to do the work we do so well in offering a wide variety of institutes for the formation of catechumenal ministers.

At the final liturgy of the Convocation, the Forum family gathered around the great Thanksgiving Feast of Word and Eucharist. We heard our story in light of the great stories of God in Scripture, we feasted on the Bread of Life and shared the Cup of Salvation. We remembered what has been, celebrated what is, and

looked forward to that which is yet to be. Sent forth to love and serve by handing on what we had received from our God, we left one another renewed and strengthened in our relationships and in our common mission.

My experience at Convocation assures me that Forum's mission is alive and well. I saw it in the people, events, and celebrations of the Convocation. I heard it in the stories of people committed to the full implementation of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. I saw it

deepen through keynote addresses, workshops, and enlightened conversations. I experienced it in the liturgies that we celebrated. Forum's mission lives and breathes with God's Spirit in people, parishes, and dioceses throughout North America. The mandate of the Board is to hold that mission in trust, the mission that belongs to all of us. Let us continue to move forward together, a family of disciples, with courage, commitment, and thanksgiving. And let's look forward to our next family reunion!

*"My experience at Convocation assures me that Forum's mission is alive and well. I saw it in the people, events, and celebrations of the Convocation. I heard it in the stories of people committed to the full implementation of the Rite. I saw it deepen through keynote addresses, workshops, and enlightened conversations. I experienced it in the liturgies that we celebrated."*

# Is it Really Lent Without the Scrutinies

By Elio Capra, SDB

*This article is reprinted from the March 2009 Issue of "Network News," published by the Australian Catechumenate Network. Forum acknowledges with gratitude reprint permission from Elio Capra.*

Leave the city of Melbourne behind and drive north in the country. Continue north after the airport and you'll come into Sunbury. You are now out of the concrete jungle and among gently rolling hills. In early December, you can enjoy the changing colour of the environment: the green colour of winter begins to be replaced by the yellow, orange and beige colours of summer. But there are some very strong patches of green scattered on the side of the hills surrounding the town. They are the vineyards sprouting up all over the place. If you inspect them more closely, you can see that the rows of vines are covered with tiny bunches of green grapes. The summer sun will ripen them into a rich and abundant harvest.

In a few months the grapes will be harvested. Then the vinedressers will move along the rows and with precision and purpose they will prune them. It is all part of the cycle of growth. And Jesus said: "I am the vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit he cuts away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes to make it bear even more." (John 15:1-2).

The Christian calendar sets aside the period of Lent for pruning. It is not a time of self-punishment, but a time of preparation. It is a time to refocus on the purpose and the meaning of being Christian. It is a time we place ourselves into the hands of God, the vinedresser, who will prune us so that we will bear abundant fruit.

This process becomes evident and alive through the celebration of the scrutinies. They are rituals celebrated during the third, fourth and fifth week of Lent to pre-

pare those who are going to be initiated (the elect) during the Easter vigil (see RCIA # 146 U.S./133 CAN). What is the purpose of the scrutinies? They "are meant to uncover, then heal all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of the elect; to bring out, then strengthen all that is upright, strong, and good. For the scrutinies are celebrated in order to deliver the elect from the power of sin and Satan, to protect them against temptation, and to give them strength in Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life" (RCIA #141 U.S./128 CAN). This passage is a clear description of the fact that in order to become followers of Christ, the elect will have to undergo a process of pruning which is a very painful experience and it must be carried out properly and correctly.

Because the act of pruning is painful, the Church, gathered in the presence of the Trinity and of the angels and saints, asks the community to surround the elect with their prayers and support. In this company, and only in this company, does the Church invite the elect to face sin and Satan and to uncover what is weak, defective and sinful in them. Therefore the scrutinies are celebrated by the Church in the name of Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Because the correct and proper method of pruning is essential, the Church does not want this to be the work of an individual or individuals who arbitrarily judge whether the elect are ready for initiation. Spiritual pruning can only be done after

consulting the guidelines and criteria given to the Church by the Vinedresser. This is why the scrutinies are always celebrated after the liturgy of the word of God. The three gospels of the third, fourth and fifth Sunday

*"The Christian calendar sets aside the period of Lent for pruning. It is not a time of self-punishment, but a time of preparation. It is a time to refocus on the purpose and the meaning of being Christian. It is a time we place ourselves into the hands of God, the vinedresser, who will prune us so that we will bear abundant fruit."*

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of Lent Year A become the criteria for the scrutinies. Jesus is proclaimed, is present and is encountered as the living water (the story of the woman at the well, John 4:5-42), as the light (the story of the man born blind, John 9:1-41) and as new life (the story of the raising of Lazarus, John 11:1-45).

Through these three gospels the Church is asking the elect: If you want to become a follower of Christ, does your heart really seek Christ

- 1) as the only one who can quench your deepest thirst?
- 2) as the one only who can open your eyes to see God's presence around you and within you?
- 3) as the one only who can bring new meaning, new purpose and complete new direction into your life?

The world asks the question: "What can I get out of life?" The gospel's question is far more challenging and demanding: "What does God want me to do with my life that I may bear abundant fruit in the vineyard of the Lord?"

These three gospels will inspire the elect to be united with Christ but at the same time they will uncover the weaknesses in their hearts. In order to be able to accept Christ as the living water, the light and the new life, the heart must be scrutinised and pruned. The word of God therefore will uncover the poisonous and stagnant water lying in their hearts; the blindness of their anger, jealousy and hard-heartedness, the waste of their selfishness, apathy and self-interest. But Jesus, the living word of God, does not uncover to condemn or to judge, but in order to heal and to forgive. The exorcism celebrated during the scrutinies is a proclamation of the fact that God's love for elect is stronger and more powerful than their own sins and weaknesses. "In the rite of exorcism ... the elect ... are freed from the effects of sin and from the influence of the devil. They receive new strength in the midst of their spiritual journey and they open their hearts to receive the gifts of the Savior" (RCIA # 144 U.S./131 CAN).

During the scrutinies, the first beneficiaries of God's gift are the elect. For them the scrutinies are encounters with Jesus who offers them the gifts of living water, new sight and new life, through three baptismal symbols: water, light and new life. But all the members of the Christian assembly gathered for the Sunday eucharist become the direct beneficiaries. Certainly, their presence proclaims to the elect that their initiation is of importance to this community and to the whole Church. Through the scrutinies *all* the members of the commu-

nity are reminded of the true meaning of Lent: to make Christ the centre of their lives.

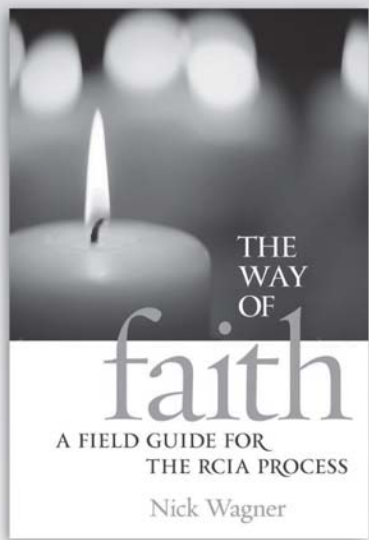
God is not only scrutinising the hearts of the elect, but also the hearts of every individual gathered for these rituals. They too must allow the proclamation of the three lenten gospels to uncover and heal. "The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts like any double-edged sword but more finely; it can slip through the place where the soul is divided from the spirit or joints from the marrow; it can judge the secret emotions and thoughts. no created thing can hide from him; everything is uncovered and open to the eyes of the one to whom we must give an account of ourselves" (Hebrews 4:12-13).

For all the members of the community, the scrutinies are

- 1) a celebration of God's power in their lives,
- 2) a reminder that as Christian we are constantly called to conversion;
- 3) a renewal of their baptismal commitment and responsibilities.

Therefore, what is my short answer to the question: "Is it really Lent without the scrutinies?" I would say: "It is possible, but you will be missing out on an awful lot!!!"

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# A Reflection on the Experience of Forum's Fifth Convocation

By Kay White, SND

I begin this reflection with an overflowing heart of gratitude to each and every person who planned Forum's International Convocation. Thank you for an opportunity to step aside from my everyday immersion in the RCIA process and numerous other pastoral duties to be given the time to listen to others, to reflect upon who and what the *Rite of Christian Initiation Adults* is calling us to be and to do, and to rekindle the fire that burns so deep in my heart.

Hearing over and over "the Church is being reborn daily" gave me great hope for today and for the future of our Church. Birth signals new life, an opportunity to BE rather than to talk about Church. As Thomas Merton reminds us, "the deepest level of communication is not communication, but communion. It is wordless. It is beyond words, it is beyond speech, it is beyond concept." I believe this being reborn has to do with what I already am but imagine that I am not. What I have to recover is my original call in baptism. I am challenged to be what I am, a child of God. This requires conversion and transformation....

Mary Birmingham compared the natural birthing process in a family to the apprenticing community's formation in Christ through Word and Sacrament. Being a midwife in this process is to bring the catechumens to birth through our shared stories and traditions, walking closely with them on this journey and forming them in the pattern of the Gospels. This birthing process of the apprenticing community sometimes comes when least expected. It is messy, it is painful, it is so fully human and yet so divine—the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the paschal mystery lived today....

Bishop Gerald Wiesner reminded us that the world is calling for communion. People are looking for community. I believe that in light of our baptism we are called to live discipleship in communion with others in the new social, economic, intellectual, and cultural situation of today. Communion is a mystery and comes from God. The Church, the Body of Christ, is a growing movement of communion. The apprenticing community can be a distinct sign that Christian faith can create communities, communion, in which peace, justice, love, and true brotherhood/sisterhood are lived reality and not only empty words.

The apprenticing community has a prophetic function—a prophetic community living in a given environment and offering by word, actions, and life an alternative way. Such communities will challenge lifestyles and will often find themselves at times to be outsiders. This way of living will call for daily conversion and transformation as we accept the invitation to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. The theology of the Church contained in Scripture and Tradition will then be lived in service. This will mean living our baptismal call to put on the mind and heart of Jesus Christ, to be risk takers, to live fully the liturgical life of the Church....

Jesus gathered people together in family-like communities as seeds of the emerging kingdom. In doing the same we discover our oneness and solidarity with one another. This is God's work and, like God's wisdom, it is revolutionary. It will turn the world as we know it upside down.

*"Being a midwife in this process is to bring the catechumens to birth through our shared stories and traditions, walking closely with them on this journey and forming them in the pattern of the Gospels. This birthing process of the apprenticing community sometimes comes when least expected. It is messy, it is painful, it is so fully human and yet so divine—the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the paschal mystery lived today...."*

# Catholics Commit to Care for God's Creation— The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change

By Kathy Brown



Kathy Brown

Is the climate changing? This is the question being asked by scientists and politicians. As Catholics we are asking, “What does it mean for the poor?,” for we know that the poor are often the most vulnerable in times of disasters.

Rob Gorman, diocesan director for Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux (Louisiana) gave this report: “The Gulf of Mexico creeps

closer each year because of the erosion and subsidence of the wetlands and barrier islands, sea levels rise, and hurricanes are more intense. The poorest members of our communities live right on the Gulf and their homes have already flooded many times over” (*Charities USA*, Fall 2008).

Crises abound in other parts of the world. Unending droughts are hitting vast areas of Africa, destroying the capacity of communities to grow much-needed food. At the same time other areas in Africa are unusually flooded, destroying crops and livestock. Flooding nearly wiped out huge portions of Bangladesh last year. Islanders in the Pacific are shouting for recognition because their land is disappearing, displacing millions of people. Thankfully organizations like Catholic Charities and Catholic Relief

Services are working with people to develop their capacities to adapt to the changing climates and environments, but we are all invited to do something.

The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change recently stated,

“The U.S. bishops and Pope Benedict XVI, in response to intergovernmental warnings that human activity is resulting in climate change which is seriously impacting those least able to respond, have called us to examine our lifestyle and demonstrate in concrete ways our concern for God’s creation and the poor, so that the poor do not unduly suffer.”

As individuals, parishes, schools, initiating communities, what can we do? How do we form and invite catechumens and candidates to understand the Catholic perspective and to get engaged in this important issue?

Individuals and communities can join the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change initiative, A Catholic Climate Covenant: the St. Francis Pledge to Protect Creation and the Poor. Launched on Earth Day, April 22, 2009, this initiative already has the support of many organizations, parishes, and individuals who have taken the St. Francis Pledge. The Pledge to protect creation and the poor is a solemn commitment to honor God’s creation and serve the poor by

*“As individuals, parishes, schools, initiating communities, what can we do? How do we form and invite catechumens and candidates to understand the Catholic perspective and to get engaged in this important issue? Individuals and communities can join the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change initiative, A Catholic Climate Covenant: the St. Francis Pledge to Protect Creation and the Poor.”*

*continued on page 12*

*continued from page 11*

- Praying, learning about, and educating others on the causes and moral dimensions of climate change;
- assessing how each of us, as individuals and communities, contribute to climate change (i.e., consumption and conservation);
- acting to change our choices and behaviors;
- and advocating Catholic principles and priorities in climate change discussion and decisions, particularly related to upcoming U.S. congressional legislation.

Sponsors include Catholic Charities USA, USCCB, and Catholic Relief Services, plus many others.

Numerous resources are being developed that could be used for prayer, education, and advocacy. To join and sign up to receive updates, please visit [www.Catholicsandclimatechange.org](http://www.Catholicsandclimatechange.org)

*Kathy Brown is senior director for mission, Catholic Charities USA. She has served in various Church ministries for more than 30 years, including Director of the Justice and Peace Office in the Phoenix Diocese and Director of Evangelization, Initiation, and Liturgy for the Diocese of Tucson. A Forum Team member and former director of institutes for Forum, Kathy has worked in initiation ministries at the parish and diocesan level since 1982.*

## The Catholic Climate Covenant: The St. Francis Pledge to Protect Creation and the Poor

### Ways for Individuals and Communities to Join the Covenant by Taking the Pledge

Pray and reflect on the duty to care for God's creation and protect the poor and vulnerable:

- Begin your meals and meetings with prayer, such as the prayers of St. Francis.
- Encourage parish council/staff/members/families to use these prayers daily.

*Prayers of St. Francis (1182-1226)*

#### Mother Earth

Dear mother earth, who day by day unfolds rich blessing on our way,  
O praise God! Alleluia!  
The fruits and flowers that verdant grow, let them his praise abundant show.  
O praise God, O praise God, Alleluia,  
Alleluia, Alleluia.

#### Peace Prayer

Lord make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light;  
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,

Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;  
To be understood as to understand;  
To be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

*continued on page 13*

*continued from page 12*

### **Prayer Resources**

The USCCB's *Faithful Stewards of God's Creation* and other prayer resources can be found on the Catholic Coalition's (CCCC) website:

[www.catholicsandclimatechange.org/resources/prayer.html](http://www.catholicsandclimatechange.org/resources/prayer.html)

### **Learn about and educate others on the moral dimensions of climate change:**

- Establish a group (seminar, brown bag lunch) with council/staff/members to study using any of the following resources (available at the website above).
- The resource manual for the Bishops' Statement (USCCB), *Faithful Stewards of God's Creation*, includes Catholic social teaching on climate change, prayers, and actions.
- Try the *8-week curriculum* "God's Creation Cries for Justice. Climate Change: Impact and Response" from *JustFaith's* "JustMatters" series. This includes prayer ideas, educational resources and ways to act on climate change.

"*This Is Your Home*" is an excellent three-part, downloadable PowerPoint developed by the Immaculate Heart of Mary community in Monroe, MI. It outlines the science and impacts of climate change, our faith response, and offers suggested actions.

### **Assess your participation—as individuals and communities—in contributing to climate change (i.e. consumption and conservation):**

- Conduct an *Energy Audit* of facilities/operations: [www.energystar.gov/](http://www.energystar.gov/) (Buildings & Plants).
- Calculate your *carbon footprint*, e.g. [www.coolcongregations.org](http://www.coolcongregations.org)
- Study and adapt the *Catholic Health Organization's effort to* raise awareness about global climate change throughout their network (CCCC website, Partners page).

### **Act to change your choices and behaviors contributing to climate change:**

- Make an organizational plan to implement the recommendations from your energy audit over time.
- Set goals/guidelines for Energy Conservation throughout your community.
- Green your offices, meetings, and events: go paperless, recycle, eliminate Styrofoam cups, serve *Fair Trade coffee*, use recycled copy paper/stationery, upgrade lighting, install power-strips or timers to turn off unnecessary equipment during nights and weekends.
- Reduce transportation by car among members/workers: bike more, drive less, establish carpools.
- Become an *Energy Star* organization.
- Publish your learnings, assessments, and actions in your newsletter or other outreach.

### **Advocate Catholic principles and priorities in climate change discussions and decisions, especially as they affect the poor and vulnerable:**

- Keep abreast of legislative action on climate change through the USCCB's website ([www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/)). Sign up for the USCCB's Peace, Justice, and Human Development action alerts.
- Sign up on the Catholic Coalition's website ([www.catholicsandclimatechange.org](http://www.catholicsandclimatechange.org)) to receive Action Alerts on climate change legislation.
- Visit Coalition member websites (CCCC website, Partner's page) to learn how they are advocating for poor people at home and abroad.

## Increase Your Awareness, Speak Out for Just Relations Between the U.S. and Africa

If you want solid information and policy analysis on issues such as conflict resolution, health, trade, climate change, and food security on the African continent, you can do no better than get to know the (U.S.) Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN). The mission of AFJN says it all:

Africa Faith and Justice Network, inspired by the Gospel and informed by Catholic Social Teaching, educates and advocates for just U.S. relations with Africa.

AFJN engages in policy analysis and works to increase awareness of these issues among the U.S. public, the media, and lawmakers. The membership's motivation to work for the transformation of U.S. policy towards Africa comes from a deep respect for our brothers and sisters in Africa and the desire to walk with them in their quest for genuine justice and

peace. The Network is currently immersed in four focus campaigns:

- opposing the further militarization of the continent through the U.S. military command for Africa (AFRICOM)
- ending the ongoing crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
- preparing for the upcoming African Synod
- promoting restorative justice as an alternative to criminal justice in post-conflict societies

or further information and to get involved:

**Africa Faith and Justice Network**  
 125 Michigan Ave. NE, Suite 481  
 Washington, DC 20017  
 Phone: 202-884-9780  
 Fax: 202-884-9774

[afjn@afjn.org](mailto:afjn@afjn.org) [www.afjn.org](http://www.afjn.org)



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## RESOURCE REVIEW

### Essentials for Christian Living: Prayers and Truths of the Catholic Church with Space for Personal Reflection

From Libreria Editrice Vaticana,  
Published by the United States Conference of  
Catholic Bishops,  
\$6.95 (U.S.), 127 pages

*Reviewed by Steve Lanza*

There isn't any single prayer book or catechetical text that imparts the essentials of the Christian life and how to live it. The essentials of Christian living are best conveyed through *relationship*, through association with Christians who mentor, who provide good example and guidance, and who walk as spiritual companions with those who wish to become Christian.

Nevertheless, this book is wonderful. I like it a lot. I think initiation ministers will find it extremely useful. It can be a personal help to them as ministers. In addition, every parish should consider giving this book to catechumens, elect, or mystagogues as a treasure trove to excite and inform faith.

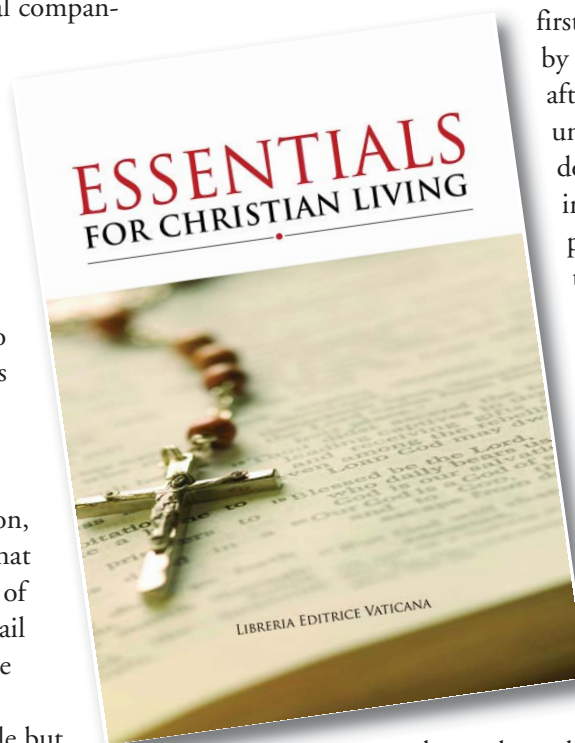
Part One (68 pages) contains 21 prayer texts in the Catholic tradition, ranging, for example, from those that are better known, such as the Sign of the Cross, the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Glory Be, the Rosary, the Acts of Faith, Hope, Love and Contrition, to a collection of simple but perhaps less well known invocations ("Heart of Jesus, I trust in you" and "Lord, increase my faith"). It concludes with "Amen" (the last prayer text

presented in this section). Part One also includes a six-page general description of the Mass as the "supreme act of worship of the Christian people."

Part Two (53 pages) contains formulas of Catholic doctrine organized under three rubrics: what is the faith? (Creed), what does the faith give? (Sacraments) and what does the faith require? (Commandments). I was thrilled to read at the outset of this section the wonderful disclaimer/claim regarding these formulas of faith, these compact doctrinal statements: "They may appear to be dry, but in fact they refer to the one center that is Christ."

There are some features of this book that are especially useful for initiation ministry. First of all, the composition of the book begins with prayer texts and then proceeds to doctrinal texts. This placement of prayers before doctrine subtly reminds us of *lex orandi, lex credendi*. How many of us were first swept up into the love of God by the prayer of the Church and, afterwards, gradually came to understand through teaching and doctrine to whom we were praying and what it was we were praying? Also, for each prayer text or doctrinal statement a pithy explanation is offered that helps the reader to understand the heart of the matter. Here the reader will be exposed to the thoughts of Romano Guardini, Blessed Charles de Foucauld, St. Francis of Assisi, Dante Alighieri, St. Benedict, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. Leo the Great. References throughout the book point

the reader to both the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *Compendium*. Finally, each



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**RESOURCE REVIEW**

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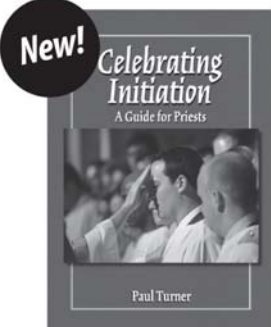
page of the book has some space with lines meant to encourage journaling or notes by the user. The introduction explicitly invites the reader “to pause for a moment of inner silence, to focus one’s attention, to write down a thought, to draw a picture, to formulate a resolution, to recall an example, to highlight a key word, to reflect on the text in the style of *lectio divina*.”

This invitation points to the greatest value of this book. This gem of a book is meant to be interactive. The prayer texts and doctrinal formulas are but a spring-

board for an internal conversation which, in turn, might very well fuel a beautiful external conversation with one’s sponsor, Godparent, catechist, or spiritual director.

*Steve Lanza has served for eleven years as associate pastor in two large suburban parishes. First as an administrator and then as pastor, Steve also served in a newly consolidated parish, Notre Dame de Chicago. He is now pastor at St. Julie Billiart Parish in Tinley Park, IL. Steve has contributed articles to Catechumenate and is also a contributing author to A Catechumen’s Lectionary and to the Foundations in Faith series.*

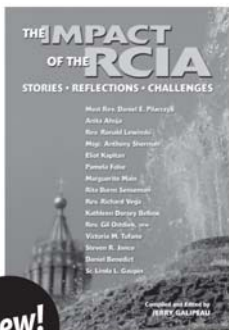
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## 2009 CALENDAR

### THE INITIATION EXPERIENCE INSTITUTES

present the compelling vision and pastoral skills to implement the initiation process and emphasize the relationship of good liturgy to good catechesis.

#### BEGINNINGS & BEYOND INSTITUTE

August 9-14, 2009, *Beginnings & Beyond*, Diocese of Prince Albert (SK) – with a rural focus  
August 16-21, 2009, Diocese of Thunder Bay (ON)

#### BEGINNINGS "PLUS" INSTITUTE

June 29-July 2, 2009, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago (IL) - with focus on adults & children  
July 23-26, 2009, Archdiocese of Atlanta (GA) – Bilingual  
August 5-8, 2009, Diocese of Grand Rapids (MI) – with focus on adults & children  
August 12-15, 2009, Diocese of Cheyenne (WY) – with a rural focus  
August 12-15, 2009, Diocese of Nashville (TN)  
September 23-26, 2009, Dioceses of Belleville and Springfield (IL)—with focus on adults & children

#### BEGINNINGS INSTITUTE

April 24-26, 2009, Diocese of El Paso (TX)  
June 4-6, 2009, Diocese of Salt Lake City (UT)  
June 25-27, 2009, Diocese of Providence (RI)  
July 10-12, 2009, Archdiocese of New York (NY)- English  
July 31-August 2, 2009, Archdiocese of New York (NY)- Spanish  
September 17-19, 2009, Diocese of Wichita (KS)  
October 22-24, 2009, Archdiocese of Mobile (AL)  
October 22-24, 2009, Our Lady of Light Catholic Community, Ft. Myers, FL (Diocese of Venice)

### INITIATION IN RURAL & SMALL PARISHES

(Diocesan Events)  
Spring, 2009, *Period of the Catechumenate*, Diocese of Charlotte (NC)  
Fall, 2009, *Period of Purification & Enlightenment*, Diocese of Charlotte (NC)

### THE FOCUS ON INITIATION INSTITUTES

concentrate on specific aspects of initiation using presentations, celebrations of the rites, and small group discussions. It is preferable that they follow the Initiation Experience Institutes.

#### CATECHUMENATE

June 26-27, 2009, Washington Theological Union (Washington, D.C.)  
July 10-11, 2009, Diocese of Santa Rosa (CA)  
July 17-18, 2009, Archdiocese of Indianapolis (IN)  
August 7-8, 2009, Archdiocese of Santa Fe (NM)  
September 25-26, 2009, Diocese of Ogdensburg (NY)  
October 16-17, 2009, Diocese of Oakland (CA)

#### MYSTAGOGY

June 25-26, 2009, Diocese of Lansing (MI)  
June 26-27, 2009, Archdiocese of Philadelphia (PA)  
July 24-25, 2009, Diocese of Davenport (IA)

#### CHILDREN AND CHRISTIAN INITIATION

June 26-27, 2009, Diocese of Las Vegas (NV)  
July 13-14, 2009, Diocese of Evansville (IN)  
July 31-August 1, 2009, Diocese of Sacramento (CA)

#### CONCERNING THE BAPTIZED

June 19-20, 2009, Diocese of AltoonaJohnstown (PA)  
July 10-11, 2009, Diocese of Richmond (VA)  
July 31-August 1, 2009, Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston (TX)  
August 28-29, 2009, Diocese of Tucson (AZ)

### THE INITIATING COMMUNITY INSTITUTES

explore advanced issues of implementation for experienced ministers as they broaden the initiation experience to include the entire community. Small groups discuss, share, and critique models.

#### DEVELOPING THE MINISTRIES

#### FURTHERING THE INITIATION EXPERIENCE

June 26-27, 2009, Diocese of Baton Rouge (LA)

#### PRAYING THE RITES

### ECHOING GOD'S WORD

July 15-16, 2009, Diocese of Evansville (IN)

### IMAGING THE INITIATION PROCESS IN SMALL CHURCH COMMUNITIES

### AMBASSADORS OF CHRIST: BUILDING RECONCILING COMMUNITIES

explores the ministry of reconciliation

- invites participants to reflect on the vision and process of conversion and reconciliation
- explores an understanding of a reconciling community rooted in initiation
- examines present processes and future possibilities for reconciling ministry in the parish

### THE VISION OF INITIATION MINISTRY CONFERENCES

(Diocesan Events)  
introduce the vision and practice of initiation in a two-day format for individual dioceses, formation institutions, and religious communities. For clergy and other pastoral ministers, together or in separate conferences.

February 2-3, 2009, Clergy, Archdiocese of New York (NY)  
May 8-9, 2009, Pastoral Ministers, Archd. of Anchorage (AK)  
May 13, 2009, Pastoral Ministers, Archdiocese of Hartford (CT)  
May 14, 2009, Clergy, Archdiocese of Hartford (CT)  
August 6-7, 2009, Clergy, Diocese of Prince Albert (SK)  
September 21-23, 2009, Clergy, Diocese of Syracuse (NY)

### THE EVANGELIZING PARISH: VISION, PASSION, PRACTICE

develops the vision and practice of evangelization and how this creates parishes of mission  
October 11-16, 2009, Diocese of Great Falls-Billings (MT) – Diocesan Event (3 times in 3 different locations)

### TO BE DETERMINED



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