

April 2009

Highlights of this Issue

Focus on Evangelization



"Perhaps one of the finest gifts we could offer to Jesus Christ would be that the Good News will at least be made known to every person in the world—first of all through the living witness of Christian example..." (Pope John Paul II)

The April issue of NACYML News focuses on the topic of evangelization, and how it should be an integral part of our ministry with young people.

How do we, as ministers, evangelize and how do we encourage our young people to do the same? Continue reading for answers to these and other questions.

Also, be sure to check out the highlights from the NACYML members' website outlined below.

Evangelization: An Important Aspect of Youth Ministry

The work of youth ministry is challenging. We all know that. In order for a youth ministry program to be successful, it should contain certain elements. These include catechesis, prayer, service, and social activities. But we can not forget about evangelization.

[Read more of Sean's article...](#)

Holiness and Evangelization: What Can I Do?

In his great document *The Mission of the Redeemer*, the Holy Father says that there is an intimate connection between our call to holiness and our call to evangelize. When we bring our light into the mission field, we have to make sure it's shining with the holiness of Jesus. What does that mean? It means that if you skip the mission to evangelize, you're no saint, and it means that if you're no saint, you won't do a great job at the mission. You have to do both.

[Continue reading Fr. Tom's article](#)

From the Chair

I admit to shamelessly eavesdropping on my flight the morning following the election. The two men in front of me were engaged in animated (and loud) conversation about the results from the previous evening.

[Read more of Mary's article...](#)

Using Noise to Evangelize

In today's fast-paced, electronic world, the Good News can get lost among the noise of daily life: movies, cell phones, games, IMs, and the Internet among the noise makers. But that does not have to be the case. Check out these resources to help you evangelize by blending the Good News with our media world.

[Continue reading Jenn's article...](#)

And a Youth Shall Lead Them: How Young People Evangelize

A wise mentor once told me the root of evangelization is letting your

[here...](#)

Christ In Our Midst

I use the phrase, "Christ in our midst" to greet our community at the start of liturgy every Sunday. They respond, "He is and always shall be."

Independently, and together these two statements are filled with good news. The sharing of this good news in essence is evangelization—the focus of this quarter's newsletter.

[Read the rest of Dean's article here...](#)

Hospitality and Welcome

We are called to extend hospitality to teens who live in a world where they are often viewed as too noisy, too messy, and just too unpredictable. We are called to help create a community that listens to the voices of our young people and helps them to discover and use their gifts in the parish community and the world.

[Read more of Beth's article...](#)

faith shine through as friendship and hospitality. As I work with young people in my parish and throughout the diocese, I find this to be true.

[Continue reading Faye's article here...](#)

Founders of Faith

Our diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting developed an award program that leads young people through the history of the Church in America. It recounts the great story of evangelization in our country.

[Read more of Deacon Bob's article...](#)

Recharging Yourself for Ministry

As a diocesan director for youth ministry, one of my most important roles is to help those who work and minister in parishes connect with the resources that will help them succeed in their ministry efforts. I find the metaphor of the sycamore tree in the Scripture passage above most appropriate for some of the things I do to support others.

[Read more of Kyle's article here...](#)

Highlights of Important and Useful Information on the NACYML Members' Website

- NACYML and the NFCYM are supporting the Climate Change Initiative and the St. Francis Pledge
- Join the NACYML group on the LinkedIn website
- OnCourse Online Formation Program - 50% Registration Discount and Diocesan/Parish Group Discount for the Final Session
- Institute for New Youth Ministers Sponsored by Cultivation Ministries and NACYML
- Additional Articles on Social Justice and Peace by Catholic News Service (CNS) columnist Tony Magliano

A Picture Is Worth...

Articles in this newsletter correspond to the Core Competencies detailed in the National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers.


Look for the symbol in the article that indicates which core competency the article addresses.

To learn more about the standards, see the [resource page](#) which is always accessible from the newsletter navigation bar. It provides a summary of the core competencies and the specialized competencies for youth ministry leaders.



Print the Newsletter!

Two print options offer streamlined process for printing *NACYML News*.

- Use your browser's print function or click on the  "Print this page" link at the bottom of the right-hand navigation column to print an individual page.
- Print the entire issue by using the link below. This will open a single PDF document made up of "printed pages" of each article in order. Or, download this PDF to your computer by right-clicking the link and selecting "Save Target As..." With the PDF file open, click the printer command in the Adobe Reader interface and the entire issue will be printed.



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April 2009

From the Chair

Mary Mueller

Pastoral Associate and NACYML Chair

Good Shepherd Church, Shawnee, Kansas



I admit to shamelessly eavesdropping on my flight the morning following the election. The two men in front of me were engaged in animated (and loud) conversation about the results from the previous evening. The conversation went like this:

“The whole of America did not elect a president. Did you see the results? The crowd in Chicago?”

“Oh sure, the young people got out to vote. And the African American community, and the Latino community, and it seems that women supported him, oh, and seniors were a mixed result.”

And then the first man repeated, “But the whole of America did not make

him our president-elect.”

I could not help but wonder who in America was left.

During the months prior to the election, we were inundated with demographics, statistics, studies, exit polls, and projections from every aspect of media and political life. In these fractured numbers it became easy to lose sight of who really makes up ‘the whole of America.’

This is not unlike the many times I become caught up in my own roles, ministries, and agendas and lost sight of what my call really is—to share the Good News, to invite young people to respond to the call of baptism, discipleship, and to God’s loving invitation to live life in covenant with others.

Of course, we need our specific groups and ministries, faith communities, campus ministries, parish youth ministries, religious formation programs, and others that make up the reality and work of our Church. We also need to recognize we share in this call, and we are all about the same task. We are all called to this work, we are all expected to respond to our baptismal promise, and it is not an easy task.

To use campaign language, “It is time to mobilize our bases, to come together, to communicate, to share the message, and do the work.” To use the language of faith, “It is time to evangelize, to spread the Good News, and to invite young people to community and discipleship.”

On election night, in his acceptance speech, Barack Obama called us together. He reminded us we will be kept in the loop, but the work needs to be shared.

Today, in our own faith-filled and ongoing work and ministries, we may have much to learn from the moment.

Many thanks for sharing in the ongoing work of evangelizing young people. Many thanks for sharing in the work and building of NACYML.

“The person who has been evangelized goes on to evangelize others. It is unthinkable that a person should accept the Word and give themselves to the kingdom without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in turn.”

(Pope Paul VI, On Evangelization in the Modern World)

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April 2009

Evangelization: An Important Aspect of Youth Ministry

*Sean McDonald
Coordinator of Youth Ministry
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The dictionary gives us several definitions of the word evangelist. An evangelist is *a preacher of the Gospel, a preacher who first brought the Gospel to a city or region, or a person marked by evangelical enthusiasm for or support of any cause.*

Pope Benedict XVI declared this to be the year of Saint Paul—one of the Church’s most effective and important evangelists. During his visit to the United States last year, the Holy Father addressed a group of youth at Saint Joseph Seminary in New York. He started his remarks with a quote from Saint Peter’s first epistle, “Proclaim the Lord Christ and always have your answer ready for people who ask the reason for the hope that lies within you.”

The work of youth ministry is challenging. We all know that. In order for a youth ministry program to be successful, it should contain certain elements. These include catechesis, prayer, service, and social activities. But we can not forget about evangelization. We must endeavor to impress upon the youth we serve how important it is they learn how to share what they are learning, feeling, and experiencing with others. This is so vital in the world our youth have inherited. While we are overjoyed young people come to our youth ministry meetings and activities, we also realize there are many more that do not. That is where your youth ministry leaders come in! We must find ways to get the youth who do attend youth ministry activities excited enough about their faith so they are prepared to share Christ with others if and when given the opportunity.



This can be challenging. With the enormous peer pressure that exists, even the teenagers who do come to youth ministry meetings are somewhat apprehensive about talking about Jesus, faith, or religion with their friends and peers. It is not the cool thing to do. So what can we do to change that? We can encourage the youth to read about the lives of the saints—especially, in this year of celebration in honor of Saint Paul. Paul was thrown out of more places than he was accepted. He was persecuted, ridiculed, and eventually executed for trying to spread the Gospel. Despite the hardships he faced and the way he was treated, he carried on. He persevered. He kept going. He did not give up or give in. He loved Jesus too much to simply quit. Jesus told his followers their work would not be easy. He warned them they would be persecuted for his sake, but he also promised them they would be blessed as a result of the persecution they encountered.

So the answers are there. They are contained in the lives of the saints and they are contained in Christ’s own words as recorded by the Gospel writers.

Pope Benedict started his address to the youth with words from Holy Scripture. He ended his address with these words, “You are Christ’s disciples today. Shine his light upon this great city and beyond. Show the world the reason for the hope that resonates within you. Tell others about the truth that sets you free.”



Friends, that is what evangelization is all about!

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April 2009

Recharging Yourself for Ministry

Kyle Holtgrave

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In Luke 19:1-10 we read the story of Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector from Jericho. Zacchaeus, being short in stature, climbs a sycamore tree so he can get a glimpse of Jesus coming down the road. Jesus sees this man in the tree and ends up being a guest at Zacchaeus' house. When reading this story, we often relate to the various characters mentioned. However, one character in the story that may not get much attention is the sycamore tree.



As a diocesan director for youth ministry, one of my most important roles is to help those who work and minister in parishes connect with the resources that will help them succeed in their ministry efforts. I find the metaphor of the sycamore tree in the Scripture passage above most appropriate for some of the things I do to support others. This simple tree became an important tool for

Zacchaeus to see Jesus.

One of the ways I am the sycamore tree for youth ministers is by hosting networking meetings. My goal is to give youth ministers a forum for talking among themselves about the joys and frustrations they are feeling in their ministry settings. I do not bring an agenda, just an open mind so I can listen to others.

These networking meetings are only one of many ways a diocese can help youth ministers recharge and receive nourishment to press on as workers in the Lord's vineyard. Consider some of these sycamore trees (okay, enough with the tree metaphor, right?) that are available nationally:

- OnCourse from [Ministry Training Source](#)
- Workshops and certificate programs from the [Center for Ministry Development](#)
- The [National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry](#) has links to printed materials, colleges that offer education programs, and other organizations that offer enrichment programs for youth ministers
- [Notre Dame's Vision CYM program](#) offers adult tracks that help us reenergize and renew ourselves during their summer program

Check your local monastery or retreat center to see what options might be available in your area.

I hope some of these resources can help you find ways to step back from the busy day to day noise of your life to find the time and space you need to recharge yourself spiritually and physically.

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April 2009

Hospitality and Welcome: Entertaining Angels

Beth Simmonds

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St. Christopher Parish, Columbus Ohio

“Be generous in your hospitality,” St. Paul writes to the Romans in chapter 12, verse 3. From Abraham entertaining angels unaware, to Matthew, chapter 25, where Jesus calls us to see himself in all those we encounter, hospitality is central to living our faith.

We are called to extend hospitality to teens who live in a world where they are often viewed as too noisy, too messy, and just too unpredictable. We are called to help create a community that listens to the voices of our young people and helps them to discover and use their gifts in the parish community and the world. We are called to help them meet themselves and God in the center of their being, and then to learn to seek God through loving and serving others.



In youth ministry programs we spend a great deal of time focusing on the hospitality which happens at our youth gatherings. Yet we must also work to create a parish community which welcomes and celebrates our teens and their gifts.

If our parish has the gift of hospitality, our ministry can flow from, and build on, that gift. Alternately, the hospitality we offer to those in our ministry can animate and inspire a deeper sense of hospitality in the larger parish community. At its core, this sense of hospitality flows from our belief that each person is created in the image and likeness of God.

We can consider:

- Are teens invited to serve in various liturgical ministries?
- Are young people invited to have more than a superficial role on parish council or on other planning committees?
- Could the teens help plan a parish-wide reconciliation service?
- Could the young people work with the men's or women's group to organize and facilitate a service project in the parish or in the community?
- Are teens involved in facilitating vacation bible school or Children's Liturgy of the Word programs?

In addition to involving teens in the larger parish community, we need to consider whether we are making a hospitable space for young people to wrestle with their faith and their lives. Jesus provides an excellent model for us. He told stories and asked questions which often left people wrestling with their faith and their lives.

We can consider:

- Do we ask open-ended questions? Do we make time to listen?
- Do we invite the sharing of stories which can help capture the complexity of teens lives and challenges?
- Do we invite them to make real world connections between scripture and church teaching and their lives?
- Do we help them understand that doubt is often part of the faith journey?
- Can we help them identify and learn faith practices, resources, and ideas which help them put the pieces back together when they are struggling?



We are called to create an environment where teens voices are heard, their gifts are nurtured, and they feel comfortable raising questions about their faith and their lives. We can share the Christian story and invite them to recognize their part in it. As Ronald Rolheiser writes in *The Holy Longing*, “together we search for the face of God.”

Who practices hospitality entertains God himself.

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April 2009

Founders of Faith

*Deacon Bob Killoren, Scout Chaplain
Diocese of Columbus, Ohio*



Our diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting developed an award program that leads young people through the history of the Church in America. It recounts the great story of evangelization in our country. Isaac Joques and Jacques Marquette who preached among the Indians east of the Mississippi, Juniper Serra who preached among them in California, John Carroll—the first Bishop of the United States and brother to one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, Elizabeth Anne Seaton, Prince Demetrius Gallitzin, and Edward Fenwick, all played a key role in the evangelization of the United States.

The Founders in Faith program was developed by youth, for youth—young men and women in our diocese’s Venture Crew developed the program—and it is open to Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, as well as youth leaders and parents. The idea started while Ohio celebrated its bicentennial and has been offered every year since 2003. We held the 2008 program in Somerset, Ohio, where the first mass in Ohio was celebrated 200 years ago on the Joseph Dittoe farm.

These men and women brought passion and dedication to their work of bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to North America—to both the American Indians and to the early settlers. Some died a martyr’s death and others died from the hardships of pioneer living, but all their stories, and those of hundreds of others, chronicle the history of the Church in America.

I encourage you to have your youth explore the history of their own Catholic communities. How was the faith brought to their state, region, diocese, or town and what are the names of those who spread it? By knowing more about the history of their local Church, young people can perhaps better understand their own mission to evangelize.

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April 2009

Holiness and Evangelization: What Can I Do?

Rev. Tom Forrest, CSsR

International Director, EVANGELIZATION 2000

Washington, District of Columbia

In his great document *The Mission of the Redeemer*, the Holy Father says that there is an intimate connection between our call to holiness and our call to evangelize. When we bring our light into the mission field, we have to make sure it's shining with the holiness of Jesus. What does that mean? It means that if you skip the mission to evangelize, you're no saint, and it means that if you're no saint, you won't do a great job at the mission. You have to do both.

Five Ways to Share the Gospel:

- Pray - Devote a part of your regular prayer time to interceding for one or two people whom you think God wants to touch. Be persistent, and trust that the Lord hears you. Also, develop the habit of listening to the Spirit and getting used to his promptings.
- Forgive - Nothing robs us of our joy and dims the light of Christ in us as much as resentments and lack of forgiveness. It may take time, and we may need to keep going to Jesus for healing and guidance, but it is worth it. Perhaps you can begin by just telling him that you're ready to be made willing to forgive and bless.
- Help - Wherever possible, be willing to go out of your way to help people in need. From the local homeless shelter to the neighbor who is sick and would like a kindly visit, there are so many opportunities to share the light and love of Christ without saying a single word. Over time, your witness of loving service will open doors.
- Smile - Check yourself in the course of the day: "Am I at peace right now? Do I know that the Father has my life in his hands? Can I give over to the Lord any anxiety or frustration?" The more you demonstrate the freedom and peace of Christ, the more your witness will touch others.
- Share - Don't be afraid to talk about your faith when the opportunity arises. Talk from your personal experience of how God has touched you, protected you or your family, or given you grace in a time of difficulty. Talk about how your experience of salvation in Christ has freed you from sin and given you confidence in the love God has for you.



We must understand that before everything else, our own lamps must be lit with the unmistakable glow of the holiness of Jesus Christ. That's the light that leads the way. When people meet us, they have to be meeting Christ in all of his love, in all of his goodness, in all of his holiness. They must be seeing the Holy One of God in us. That's what we call witnessing. It's the highest form of witnessing, to glow in this world with the goodness and holiness of Christ. We cannot waste time hiding the light under a table, putting it under a bushel basket with what is an absolutely false humility. We must let that light shine, and we must cry out with Mary, "God has done great things in me, and holy is his name" (Luke 1:49).



God no longer simply stands before us as the One who is totally Other. He is within us, and we are in him. His dynamic enters into us and then seeks to spread outward to others until it fills the world, so that his love can truly become the dominant measure of the world.

- Pope Benedict XVI

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April 2009

And a Youth Shall Lead Them: How Young People Evangelize

Faye E. Abbondanza

*Associate Director, Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry
Diocese of Youngstown, Ohio*

A wise mentor once told me the root of evangelization is letting your faith shine through as friendship and hospitality. As I work with young people in my parish and throughout the diocese, I find this to be true.

We as youth ministry professionals speak about youth-friendly and intergenerational friendly parishes, but too often we think the effort needs to come from the adults. I have found, though that young people have a tremendous ability to lead their friends, their families, and other adults into discipleship.



We just had our annual diocesan youth convention. Many of the teens I spoke with were there because a friend or sibling had gone to a previous convention and talked about how much fun it was. They were excited because someone else was excited. Some were there because they were looking for new friends or to find someone who believes the same things they believe. There is great merit to large gatherings like conferences, rallies, and retreats for helping young people to show each other that they are not alone in the Church.

My confirmation class at the parish is looking forward to getting involved in parish ministries. They see other teenagers serving as lectors, musicians, greeters, and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, and they want to do the same. I believe some of the best and most dedicated liturgical ministers in our parish are young people.



Young people are models for the entire community. When they come to mass prepared, confident, and eager to serve, the entire community is evangelized by their efforts. Many of them bring their parents back to the church and get them involved as well.

Each year as I prepare for our diocesan awards liturgy and banquet for outstanding high school juniors and seniors, I am humbled by the stories of the young people we honor. Quite often, there are so many stories of how young people influence their siblings or classmates to become more involved in their faith. Some are charismatic leaders, who draw others to follow their example. Many, though, show their discipleship in small ways through service, prayer, and personal integrity.

As adult leaders, our job is to recognize the many gifts for evangelization that exist in our young people. We should highlight, encourage, and work with them to be the young leaders that they are called to be.

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April 2009

Using Noise to Evangelize

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In today's fast-paced, electronic world, the Good News can get lost among the noise of daily life: movies, cell phones, games, IMs, and the Internet among the noise makers. But that does not have to be the case. Check out these resources to help you evangelize by blending the Good News with our media world.

Ministryandmedia.com is a subscription site providing lessons linking God's word with videos, movies, music, television, and games.

Cornerstone Media offers a variety of products blending contemporary music taken from Top 40 hits with God's word.

- LifeTeen.com has Catholic movie reviews, blogs, podcasts, and games.
- USCCB Office for Film and Television provides a broad look at television and movies, with reviews, top movie lists and sneak peaks at what television shows and movies are coming soon.
- Plugged In is a site where you can get a Christian perspective on the media, including movies, music, and video games. There is also a weekly eNewsletter that includes topical information such as Internet access on airline flights.
- Teach with Movies is a site where you pay for access to their lessons. There are free sample lessons you can check out before purchasing. It is more of a teacher site than a youth ministry site, but may give you some good ideas on things to look for in movies, including background information.
- Movie Theme Index provides a quick resource listing of religious themes and the movies that would tie into those themes.
- Group Publishing offers a variety of books using movies, music, and media to spread God's message. Examples include Dinner and a Movie books, cds with multisensory media for the youth to experience prayer, and PowerPlay cds with customizable games.
- Blockbuster Movie Illustrations from St. Mary Press is a resource linking movie clips with lessons.



Some other quick ideas for using media to evangelize:

Email or text Scripture verses on a regular basis.

Include Saint of the Day and/or Readings of the Day in email, on your website, in a newsletter, on Facebook and/or MySpace, on birthday cards, etc. You can find those and more at American Catholic.

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April 2009

Christ In Our Midst

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NACYML Leadership Team and Publications Committee Chair

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I use the phrase, “Christ in our midst” to greet our community at the start of liturgy every Sunday. They respond, “He is and always shall be.” Independently, and together these two statements are filled with good news. The sharing of this good news in essence is evangelization—the focus of this quarter’s newsletter.



Having celebrated the gift of Christ to the world at Christmas on a few months ago, we also acknowledged the true manifestation of the ‘word made flesh’ at the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25.

And so, as early as the infant narratives, those who receive the Good News also become the first proclaimers of it:

- The Magi, who “after having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, departed for their country by another way.” There is no scriptural account of the Magi after this, but we can only assume that, once home, they shared their experience with everyone they came in contact with including everyone along the way. (Matthew 2:12)
- The Shepherds, who “from the very moment of hearing angles proclaim the presence of a savior, go in haste to Mary and Joseph and share what was told to them. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds.” (Luke 2:17-18)

These first recorded encounters with Christ transform those with whom the message is shared into witnesses themselves. Throughout the Gospels, not only do we see lives transformed by Christ, but those who experience the personal encounter are called to a response of action:



- Zacchaeus—“gives half his possessions to the poor.” (Luke 19:8)
- Samaritan Woman—left her water jar and went into the town and said to the people, “Come and see. Could he possibly be the Messiah.” In the very next verse we learn the town’s people “went out of town and came to him.” (John 4: 1-30)
- Two blind men—after being instructed not to tell, go out and spread word of him through all the land. (Matthew 9:31)

A discussion of evangelization certainly cannot overlook Saint Paul, the “Apostle to the Gentiles,” whose experience and writings are the source of faith for the entire non-Jewish world.

As we move through the remainder of this calendar year, in the midst of this holy year of St. Paul, let us be refreshed, renewed, and reminded of our role in ministry—to proclaim the Gospel at all times. May the hope and anticipation that comes with Christmas continue to give us confidence that those to whom we share the message of the love of God will then be transformed, called to action, and sent out to share that message with their friends and families. The honor of being a part of the process that brings others to Christ, and making disciples who in turn evangelize others, truly is Good News.



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"Best of all, Christmas means a spirit of love, a time when the love of God and the love of our fellow men should prevail over all hatred and bitterness, a time when our thoughts and deeds and the spirit of our lives manifest the presence of God."