

Lay Formation Alumni Newsletter

Winter 2018

ALUMNI GATHER FOR INSPIRATION AND EVANGELIZATION

A group of some 50 Lay Formation alumni joined Most Reverend Bishop Mark Hagemoen on October 27, 2018 for a day filled with inspiration and evangelization!

The morning began with celebration of the Eucharist in the Chapel at Queen's House of Retreat. By live-streaming on our Lay Formation Facebook Page we were able to reach out and share this morning service online (reaching over 450 views to date).

Bishop Mark started by sharing a story of a 24-foot cross that stands atop barren rock at Trapper's Lake Retreat Centre, in his former diocese. He shared a lovely bright photo of the cross, taken at 1 am, at the end of summer. He contrasted the summer challenge there of constant light and birds singing to our winter of constant dark. "You'd think the darkness of winter is the problem. Also, the brightness of summer is another problem. What a spiritual journey, when you think about it."

"What I'd like to talk about is evangelization, evangelization, new evangelization."

The first example was Pope Paul VI's apostolic exhortation that was very influential on him in his seminary days. "As an evangelizer, Christ first of all proclaims a kingdom, the kingdom of God; and this is so important that, by comparison, everything else becomes "the rest", which is "given in addition"." [Evangelii Nuntiandi #8]. "...the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church" [Evangelii Nuntiandi #14].
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Then Bishop Mark shared a few findings from pollster and sociologist Angus Reid at the recent Diocesan Study Day. Reid had summarized that two words Canadians don't like are 'religion' and 'evangelization', mostly as a result of media feed over the last 20 years.

GRATITUDE

A special thank you to Bishop Hagemoen for his enthusiastic presentation on "Evangelization and Inclusivity". His vision of ministry within the Church was very timely and encouraging.



Most profound are the two most liked words, 'mercy' and 'forgiveness'. So, if speaking to a broader audience, Bishop Mark indicated he may adjust his phrasing to not encourage negativity; but for people of the faith, the new evangelization is a powerful, important phrase! Bishop Mark passionately shared many examples to emphasize the new evangelization.

Bishop Mark challenged us with this scenario "If you said to people, good faithful Catholics, 'What's the most important thing we do?', I think you'd get: 'go to mass on Sunday' - that'd probably be number one, 'imitate Christ', or 'pray every day'." He explained that "this document basically says – not that it excludes any of those – that the most important thing that the Church does is evangelize – this constitutes the mission of the Church. That's an amazing statement." He stressed that it is not just a part of the Church's task – it is the entire Church's task and the task of all the people of God to evangelize, to bring Jesus to the world.

All of the people of God share in the work of the apostles. Bishop Mark used examples from Jesuit theologian, Hans Urs Von Balthasar to explain "apostolicity as the fullness of Ministerial Priesthood and Common Priesthood to accomplish the Mission of Christ in the World". These excerpts from *The Fullness of Faith: On the Centrality of the Distinctively Catholic* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1988) by Hans Urs Von Balthasar are too profound to paraphrase:

* "While the Church is apostolic insofar as much of ecclesial governance is entrusted to and exercised by the twelve apostles, this guarantees an official structure and mission that endures through the ages and can be verified. Such structure provides the framework for the charismatic dimension of the People of God" (98)

* "The Body of Christ fully formed...generates a plurality of missions, charism, theological and spiritual movements in the Church...and although there is so many, the net does not break." (99)

* "...it is the charismatic dimension in all the members that shows and guarantees the fullness of apostolicity; it would be meaningless, therefore, to reduce this to a nuda successio (bare succession). All the same it remains a skeleton without which the Lord's 'Body' cannot stand upright." (99)

Bishop Mark went on to teach about a variety of Church models, and Diocesan and Parish organization diagrams. He emphasized prayer and allowing the Spirit to lead us. He shared a quote from St. John Paul II to Austrian Bishops: "Your greatest pastoral task (as bishops) is not administration or planning, but is intimacy with the Tri-une God. From this will come your 'plan'." Another quote of great magnitude that he shared was from then-Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio conclave address four days before his election as Pope: "The ministers of the Gospel must be people who can warm the hearts of the people, who walk through the dark night with them, who know how to dialogue and to descend themselves into their people's night, into the darkness, but without getting lost. The people of God want pastors, not clergy acting like bureaucrats or government officials. The bishops, particularly, must be able to support the movements of God among their people with patience, so that no one is left behind. But they must also be able to accompany the flock that has a flair for finding new paths."

Bishop Mark applied the New Evangelization to responsible service, governance, and administration. Authority is always linked to service and "the mission orients everything". (Continued on next page)

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ALUMNI GATHER FOR INSPIRATION AND EVANGELIZATION

"If you said to people, good faithful Catholics, 'What's the most important thing we do?'"



*Artwork by Anne Donald
Class of 2016*

“Governance and administration is the litmus test to how mission focused a church organization is,”

Bishop Mark explained. Code of canon law says there must be a finance committee and a pastoral committee. A healthy finance council wants to know the pastoral priorities so they can guide stewardship: you don't start with the money, you start with pastoral priorities. Quoting Archbishop Emeritus Adam Exner, OMI (Vancouver): “Authority in the Church must always be linked to the Responsibility to Serve (the Body of Christ) vs. Power. Anytime in human history the shortcut is made to power, we have always seen throughout human history – including in the Church – great problems and transgressions.” And another inspiration from Pope Francis: “I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the center and then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures.” (Evangelii Gaudium, 49)

He further spoke about stewardship; recognizing and discerning gifts, resources, and charisms in your parish. He also reinforced that sacraments give you the grace for your charisms! Our Bishop then shared a story of his Parish in BC, a lovely story of his spiritual journey through a stained-glass windows project with Luminous Mysteries on the church and how the Luminous Mysteries are the New Evangelization as seen by St. John Paul II. Ask him about this spiritual journey experience!

Later in the afternoon, Harvey Chatlain shared a Lay Formation alumni story. He reminded us how every Vatican II document mentioned Laity, and then, after Vatican II, there were lectors. He shared the beginnings of Lay Formation in 1987, starting with the need for Lay led services, but there was no tradition. Bishop Mahoney, Sr. Cecile Fall, Bishop Gerry Wiesner, Fr. Ron Rolheiser and Gisele Bauche answered the call. He shared stories of past evangelizing teams and faith formation. He pointed out the frequent disconnect between faith and how we lead our lives and reminded us that it is not “just one hour on Sunday”. He shared a saying of Bishop Wiesner's: “The biggest gap is between what we know we're supposed to be doing and what we are doing.” Harvey reminded us that our life stories are sacred and shared how God touched his life. There are over 800 graduates of Lay Formation, and he lovingly reminded us that we are all witnesses. We all have a part in the New Evangelization.

Queen's House of Retreats, Saskatoon

Prayerfully submitted by Teresa Bodnar- Hiebert

2013 Lay Formation Alumnus



A Journey of Faith

As we enter this Advent season we embark on a waiting period for Christ to come into our lives. I often reflect on the waiting, as we tend to always wait for numerous things in our lives. We wait to be finished high school. We wait to finish college. We wait to meet someone and get married. We wait for a rewarding career. We wait for children. We wait for retirement and ultimately we wait for death.

And during this waiting period, we experience the ups and the downs of everyday life. We struggle to fit in, be accepted and we struggle to be something or someone different than what God has intended for us. All along, we wait for Christ to come into our lives, not realizing that he has and always will be with us. Through the good times and bad, he holds us with an overwhelming love that in our everyday life is difficult to accept because we don't feel we deserve it.

Well, we do. Our Creators love is unconditional. Simply put all we have to do is accept it.

On behalf of Jennifer, myself and all the current and past Lay Formation participants, we wish all of you a very blessed Christmas and Happy New Year. As 2019 approaches, we are committing to accept Christ into our lives, every day we invite you to do the same

Jennifer and Blair Carruthers

Lay Formation Program Coordinators

We all have a part to play in the New Evangelization

ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL...

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle; Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into Hell Satan and all the other evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls.

AMEN

HISTORY: After celebrating Holy Mass, Pope Leo XIII (PAPACY 1878-1903) heard a conversation between Our Lord and Satan during which Satan threatened to harm the Church during a certain period of time. The Pope then realized that after this time, St. Michael would engage in mortal conflict with the devil in defense of the Church. The Pope then composed this prayer; for many years it was recited after Holy Mass in churches throughout the world.



NOTES ON THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, OCTOBER 27, 2018

The Lay Formation Alumni executive wish you all a peaceful and hope-filled Advent and a blessed Christmas celebration.

The organizing committee would sincerely like to thank all those who participated in making the Holy Mass such a joyful celebration with Bishop Mark. Even though we had hoped to have more Lay Formation Alumni attend, Teresa Bodnar-Hiebert informed us that we had 450 views of our Mass as it was live-streamed on our Lay Formation Facebook Page.

Thank You Harvey Chatlain for his very informative impromptu talk on the history of Lay Formation. We certainly picked up on the passionate commitment of those who initiated the vision of Lay Formation years ago.

Our next fall gathering will be held at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in order to accommodate a larger group. **We are so pleased that Father Ron Rolheiser O.M.I. has agreed to be our Facilitator in October 12th, 2019.**

Submitted by Marjorie Stevens

A MESSAGE ON COURAGE

In J.M. Barrie's famous essay on "Courage", he states: "Pray for courage with your daily bread, for courage will keep you light-hearted." In our world today many things seem to be out of control. But, as graduated Lay Formation people fighting gallantly against discouragement, hardship and fear, we know that only God can bring order out of the emotional and spiritual chaos of these times.

PSALM 33 10-15 The Lord brings to nought the plans of nations; he foils the designs of peoples. But the plan of the Lord stands forever; the design of his heart, through all generations. Happy the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he has chosen for his own inheritance. From heaven the Lord looks down; he sees all mankind. From his fixed throne he beholds all who dwell on the earth, He who fashioned the heart of each, he who knows all their works. We can rest assured that God can move the hearts of today's political and spiritual leaders. We read in Proverbs 21:1 that "the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord." and Romans 13:1 says that "there is no authority except from God."

Dear Lay Formation friends, let's ask Him to work. "Father, the world seems out of control. We know You are sovereign over everything. We pray that Your will be done in the hearts of all world leaders.

*Lay Formation Alumni
Newsletter Editor:
Katelyn Peterson*