Witnessing to the Gospel
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It is my pleasure to share the 2017-2018 Annual Report of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis. Each of the articles regarding the excellent programs, events, and initiatives held during this past catechetical year shows how individuals of all ages in Brooklyn and Queens took a risk and responded to the mandate from Christ Jesus to “put out into the deep.” The data included in the report shows that a new springtime of faith came into bloom this year in the Diocese of Brooklyn.

A hopeful sign of a new springtime was the very well received Assembly on Evangelization and Celebration of the V Encuentro, held at St. John’s University on April 27 and 28, 2018. A meaningful experience for more than 4,000 people of Brooklyn and Queens, this two-day gathering, held in the presence of His Excellency, the Most Reverend Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, coupled with the Diocesan Youth Day held the previous Saturday, will not soon be forgotten. Those who attended returned to their parishes, academies, and schools renewed and determined to fulfill their role as faith-filled missionary disciples.

Data reporting and personal testimony tell us that participation in parish small faith sharing groups continues to grow. Families continue to join parish programs of faith formation. Young adults meet in various settings to explore their faith, attend Mass and receive the Sacraments, and enjoy fellowship. Young children gather to pray the Rosary and the Stations of the Cross. Thousands of people across our Diocese participate in some form of adult faith formation. The NEW Holy Spirit Institute for Service and Leadership, educating and forming volunteer and paid professional lay leaders, has over 120 participants in the English and Spanish tracks.

We are truly blessed in this wonderful Diocese in Brooklyn and Queens. I offer a sincere thanks to the staff of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis and all of our collaborators who work so hard to spread the Good News of the Gospel in so many ways. A special word of thanks is extended also to the priests, deacons, women and men in consecrated life, and the faithful of Brooklyn and Queens who actively participate as promoters of the New Evangelization and act as missionary disciples in many and varied ways.

Mary, Queen of the New Evangelization, pray for us.

Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, Ph.D., D.D.
Bishop of Brooklyn
Message of the Secretary

Thank you for taking the time to read the 2017-2018 Annual Report of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis. This report contains articles and photographs that document some of the many positive achievements of this past year: we completed the final year of the Diocesan Evangelization and Renewal Plan titled The Joy of Encountering Christ: The Family’s Hope, we celebrated the tremendous work done by Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio especially in the field of evangelization, we sponsored the Diocesan Assembly on Evangelization and the Celebration of the V Encuentro, we saw a tremendous growth in the number of people participating in faith formation programs of all ages, and approximately 10,000 people participated in some small faith sharing group. This was all made possible by the participation of men and women like yourself who responded to the call of Jesus to “put out into the deep.”

Please share this good news with family members, friends, neighbors, fellow parishioners, and even those who are not at all involved in the life of the Church. As missionary disciples, the Gospel is never beyond our sight. We need to be educated and formed in the Faith, and committed to responding to the universal call to holiness. The resources provided by our many collaborators and the staff of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis are of no value unless they are used and shared.

2017-2018 was a great year, I hope you have been inspired and, filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, desire to continue to grow in the virtues of faith, hope, and love.

Theodore J. Musco
Secretary for Evangelization and Catechesis
Diocese of Brooklyn
The Joy of Encountering Christ:
The Family’s Hope

An Evangelization and Renewal Springboard for Parishes, Families, and Individuals in the Diocese of Brooklyn — Final Report

Since the heart of evangelization is to introduce others to the saving presence and power of the Lord Jesus, any pastoral vision that seeks to explain in greater detail the work of evangelization must begin with an opportunity for personal reflection. If we seek to revitalize our Church, to bring new life to our mission to teach and preach the Gospel, and bring others to greater faith, then we must ask some serious questions of ourselves. What does it really mean to me to seek new life and vigor in Christ? What is really being asked of me? What attitudes must I change in my life before I can become an effective agent of evangelization in my family, parish, and neighborhood?


This past April, more than 4,000 people gathered at the Diocesan Assembly on Evangelization and the Celebration of the V Encuentro at St. John’s University in Flushing, New York, for a Mass intended to thank God for His many blessings related to the successful achievement of the six goals related to the evangelization and renewal plan for the Diocese, parishes, families, and individuals called The Joy of Encountering Christ: The Family’s Hope. That historic day provided an opportunity for all to reflect on the questions asked by Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio in his pastoral letter on evangelization. We have so much to be grateful for here in the Diocese, parishes, and families of Brooklyn and Queens.

Since the introduction of the plan by Bishop DiMarzio on Holy Family Sunday in 2014, The Joy of Encountering Christ: The Family’s Hope we have slowly but surely entered a “new springtime” of faith. The plan included six goals for the staff of the Diocese, parishes, families, and individuals to implement over the four-year period:

1. Provide multiple opportunities for people of all ages to encounter Christ
2. Find ways to increase Mass attendance
3. Increase daily prayer opportunities
4. Attract and support inactive Catholics
5. Enhance participation in parish life/religious education efforts at all levels
6. Invite and welcome seekers
The following bold actions taken during the past four years greatly assisted in the achieving the goals of the evangelization and renewal plan:

- the foundation of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis by Bishop DiMarzio in 2017
- the establishment of the Holy Spirit Institute for Service and Leadership (English, Spanish, and Haitian-Creole tracks)
- the creation of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis Advisory Board
- the addition of a Diocesan department and commission for Special Needs Religious Education
- increased enrollment of more than 48,000 young people in parish programs of religious education and youth faith formation
- the development of a new program for Marriage Preparation
- the enhanced development of the Catholic Youth Ministry Initiative (CYMI)
- the creation of the Small Faith Sharing Group Initiative in collaboration with RENEW International
- an expanded partnership with the Catholic Distance University (CDU)
- the implementation of important data and record keeping processes in collaboration with My Catholic Faith Delivered
- new resources and guidelines relating to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) and the RCIA Adapted for Children
- the approval of various models for parishes and parents to use for the religious education of children and teens, including traditional weekly sessions, monthly sessions, on-line and in-class opportunities, and an summer intensive option
- the ability to accept more than 80 parishes to the Catholic Youth Ministry Initiative, a combined effort of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis and the Catholic Foundation for Brooklyn and Queens
- the opportunities provided for more than 8,000 people to participate in some form of live or online adult faith formation
- the fact that every parish now has an active catechetical leader, some parishes with the help of a Religious Education Grant from the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Trust
- the commitment of 27 men and women who received grants for Masters Degrees in Theology or Religious Education from funds administered by the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis and Catholic Foundation for Brooklyn and Queens
- outreach to parishes, Catholic academies, parish schools, families, and individuals on a daily basis to coordinate the evangelization and catechetical efforts of the Diocese in Brooklyn and Queens

The good news is that:

- 10,000 people participated in some type of small faith sharing group in Brooklyn and Queens.
- Parish religious education program enrollment rose to over 48,000 Diocesan-wide.
- More than 50% of the parishes indicated a rise in the number of religious education students and youth ministry participants.
- Over 8,000 catechists, catechetical leader, teachers, and principals participated in some form of formation and education in the Faith.
- Over 125 people are participating in the first year of the Holy Spirit Institute for Service and Leadership.
- Over 6,000 people, including 2,000 young people, attended the Diocesan Assembly on Evangelization and the Celebration of the V Encuentro held at St. John's University over a three-day period in April of 2018.
• The Magnificat Foundation selected the Diocese of Brooklyn to co-sponsor the 25th Jubilee celebration due to the Diocese’s commitment to evangelization and catechesis.

• Mr. Musco and staff members of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis staff members have been chosen to make presentations at almost every major national conferences held during this past year.

Much is now in place to secure a prosperous *new springtime*. We all are called to holiness by witnessing to the Gospel. The completion of the plan does not mean the completion of our work to bring the Good News to everyone we encounter. Moving to the next stage of renewal calls for a bold response to the call to continuing conversion.

Bishop DiMarzio’s questions still remain relevant:

• What does it really mean to me to seek new life and vigor in Christ?
• What is really being asked of me?
• What attitudes must I change in my life before I can become an effective agent of evangelization in my family, parish, and neighborhood?

*Photos credit  The Tablet*
The Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, Ph.D., D.D., Bishop of Brooklyn, was the first recipient of the Duc In Altum Award presented by the Most Reverend Raymond Chappetto, Vicar General for the Diocese of Brooklyn, at the Diocesan Assembly on Evangelization and the Celebration of the V Encuentro on April 28, 2018, at St. John’s University Carnesecca Arena.
Almost two years in the planning by a committee of eight people, the Diocesan Assembly on Evangelization and the Celebration of the V Encuentro took place on April 27 and 28, 2018, at St. John’s University Carnesecca Arena. An enthusiastic crowd of over 4,000 people witnessed an historic and faith-filled event in the life of the Diocese in Brooklyn and Queens. Some highlights are listed here:

• Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States of America, spent the greater part of two days participating in the gathering. He delivered the same major keynote address once in English and once in Spanish. The English version is included at the end of this Annual Report.

• The following provided keynote addresses or major presentations:
  - Rev. Ricky Manalo, CSP
  - Rev. Juan Sosa
  - Dr. Hosfman Ospino
  - Bro. Ricardo Grzona
  - Sr. Gaudia, OLM
  - Sr. Inga, OLM
  - Sr. Gianna Maria, SV
  - Sr. Maeve, SV
  - Sr. Veronica Mary, SV
  - Mr. John Collins
  - Mrs. Frances DeLuca
  - Mr. Mario Parades

• The following generously exhibited:
  - Catholic Charities
  - Catholic Distance University
  - Daughters of St. Paul
  - Exodus Forty Apparel
  - Librería Católica Shalom
  - Loyola Press
  - Magnificat
  - My Catholic Faith Delivered
  - Our Sunday Visitor
  - Pflaum Publishing Group
  - RENEW International
  - William H. Sadlier

• Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio was honored by four individuals and one family representing the people of the Diocese in Brooklyn and Queens. Three gifts were presented: an icon of Christ the Teacher, the “Duc in Altum” Award, and a book of fifty articles written by Bishop DiMarzio representing decades of work and leadership in the area of evangelization and catechesis.

• Various groups met for fellowship during the course of the day on Saturday.

• Saturday ended with a fiesta led by Bishop Octavio Cisneros. Dancers and musicians provided a festive way to send the participants back to their families and parishes to continue sharing the Good News.

• The theme “Put Out Into the Deep” resonated throughout the two days in: music, prayer, the Masses, the Fiesta procession, the presentations and keynote addresses, the exhibits, the lunchtime dance presentations, the informal sharing during breaks, and the many and varied opportunities for sharing with friends, neighbors, follow parishioners, and other missionary disciples.
In a spirit of joy and thanksgiving, let us work diligently to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. Archbishop Pierre closed his keynote address by urging us to BE BOLD:

At the conclusion of Saint John’s Gospel (John 21:1-14), the Apostles were again fishing and hadn’t caught anything. The Risen Lord told them to cast their nets, and they caught one hundred fifty-three large fish. With the Lord Jesus, all things are possible. The mission is daunting, but it is our mission: to make sure that “the joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and minds of all who encounter Jesus” (EG, 1). That is Pope Francis’ dream for the Church – right here in Brooklyn, and he wants this to be your dream too. So, be bold! Be creative! And put out into the deep!
Children’s Religious Education

Congratulations to all the participants of the Annual Religion Bee!

A total of thirty-seven Academies, Catholic Schools, and Parish Religious Formation Programs from Brooklyn and Queens participated in the 2017-2018 Annual Religion Bee. Participants competed at the local and regional rounds, with the regional winners going on to compete at the Diocesan Religion Bee at ICC, Douglaston. The Religion Bee has proven to be a fun way for children and parents to learn together about our Catholic Faith. Many thanks to the staff of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis; the judges: Fr. Joseph Gibino, Robert Caldera (CYO) and Annmarie Creighton (CYO); Barbara McArdle, former Assistant Superintendent for Catholic Identity; the staff at ICC; and Anna Ferraiuolo from Sadlier, Inc., for sponsoring the Religion Bee. We also would like to recognize and congratulate all the family members, Principals, Directors of Faith Formation, catechists and teachers who assisted in preparing the participants for the various rounds of the Religion Bee. We commend them all for their dedication, enthusiasm, and good sportsmanship!

The final round Diocesan winners of the Religion Bee are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catholic Academies and Parish Schools</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade Level 3-5</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Place Winner: Nickolas Talusan</td>
<td>Immaculate Conception Catholic Academy, Jamaica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Place Winner: Ariana Ayala</td>
<td>St. Ephrem Catholic School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Place Winner: Ryan Marano</td>
<td>Good Shepherd Catholic Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honorable Mention: Raniel Pasaoa</td>
<td>Immaculate Conception Catholic Academy, Jamaica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade Level 6-8</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Place Winner: Ann Torres</td>
<td>Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Place Winner: Daelyn Pena</td>
<td>St. Brigid Catholic Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Place Winner: Scarlett Cordero</td>
<td>St. Brigid Catholic Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honorable Mention: Ana Mauro</td>
<td>St. Luke Catholic School</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish Religious Education Programs</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade Level 3-5</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Place Winner: Mateusz Saczko</td>
<td>St. Adalbert, Elmhurst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Place Winner: Joseph Torre</td>
<td>St. Adalbert, Elmhurst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Place Winner: Christopher Perez</td>
<td>St. Michael, Flushing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honorable Mention: Shane Aird</td>
<td>Christ the King Springfield Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade Level 6-8</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Place Winner: Allen Nieva</td>
<td>St. Adalbert, Elmhurst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Place Winner: Sara Flores</td>
<td>Our Lady of the Angelus, Rego Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Place Winner: Shanyla Desamours</td>
<td>Christ the King, Springfield Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honorable Mention: Christopher Sanon</td>
<td>Christ the King, Springfield Gardens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The 2017-2018 year has proven to be rewarding and fruitful for the member parishes of the Catholic Youth Ministry Initiative (CYMI). Since 2012, seventy-five parishes joined the CYMI. For the upcoming 2018-2019 year, fourteen parishes will benefit from a full or part time youth minister.

The CYMI seeks to provide support to parishes by developing leadership initiatives and providing resources to assist in developing effective outreach, programs, and strategies for comprehensive youth ministry with youth and their families. Youth are evangelized and formed as disciples through vibrant opportunities offered by the Diocese, parish, and family home.

Professional development sessions provided by the Center for Ministry Development (CMD) continued this year. The CMD supports the CYMI by providing training, resources and consultation to assist the Diocesan staff in supporting vibrant youth ministry. This project consists of nine workshops over a three-year period. For the 2017-2018 year, over 180 people attended the professional development sessions. The workshop included elements of team planning. Planning work will also be assigned to teams to complete in between workshops. Resources were provided to the CYMI through Youth Ministry Access, which includes thousands of youth ministry sessions, retreats, service events, community builders, prayer services and strategies for reaching youth and their families. This subscription website is provided for each of the parishes in the project and is available to all team members from any computer.

While professional development for leaders is an integral part of a total youth ministry program, the development of a supportive team and spiritual guidance are also key factors. Full time youth ministers are provided monthly professional sessions addressing a number of critical issues. Youth ministers are provided opportunities for discussion as well as time for spiritual reflection. Youth Ministers are also invited to evenings of prayer during the seasons of Advent and Lent.
The following chart indicates those parishes who were recently accepted into the Catholic Youth Ministry Initiative:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort 6 (entered in 2017)</th>
<th>Cohort 7 (entering Fall of 2018)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most Holy Trinity Parish</td>
<td>Holy Family Parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Precious Blood Parish</td>
<td>St. Pius V Parish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our Lady of Hope Parish</td>
<td>St. Bonaventure-St. Benedict the Moor Parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Lady of the Angelus Parish</td>
<td>Our Lady of Lourdes Parish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our Lady of Presentation Parish</td>
<td>Our Lady of Light Parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Brendan Parish</td>
<td>St. Robert Bellarmine Parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Clare Parish</td>
<td>American Martyrs Parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Spirit Parish</td>
<td>Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Francis de Sales Parish</td>
<td>St. Raphael Parish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holy Child of Jesus Parish</td>
<td>St. Agatha Parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Therese of Lisieux Parish</td>
<td>Ss. Peter and Paul-Epiphany Parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Matthias Parish</td>
<td>St. Pius X Parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Elizabeth Parish</td>
<td>Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary Parish</td>
<td>St. Laurence Parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Frances Cabrini Parish</td>
<td>Our Lady of Mercy Parish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Photo credit: The Tablet*
Parish Youth Ministry

National Catholic Youth Conference

The Diocese of Brooklyn participated in the 2017 National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) held in Indianapolis, Indiana. The conference is organized and sponsored by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry. Throughout the course of the three-day event, over 20,000 young people and adult leaders took part in Masses, mega sessions, small group sharing, and fellowship.

An overview of the NCYC follows:

Young People Are Hungry

If you stepped into a hallway between sessions, one would see youth devouring snacks, hot dogs, and pizza. The real hunger, however, was a hunger rooted in Jesus Christ. Young people may not know they are truly looking for Jesus. NCYC made it clear that Jesus died for them exactly as they are at this very moment.

There is a relief in knowing that God accepts us just as we are, and journeys with us as we grow in our faith. With this, young people begin to allow Christ into their hearts and set parishes on fire.
Prayer Is Not Overrated

Some trends show that Millennials and Generation Z'ers participate less than others in the formal Church; however, prayer is important. At the closing NCYC Mass, Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles told teens that prayer would not only build their friendship with Jesus, but would transform their lives. The good news is that young people are looking for a relationship with Christ and bishops are able to help them. Are those in the pews and in leadership positions in parishes welcoming young people looking for a faith community? How can parishes be more welcoming to young people?

The Church is in Good Hands

The NCYC schedule filled each day completely. Yet somehow, the lines for confession and adoration were constantly long. The programs organized to feed the homeless world-wide were always fully staffed, and the various devotions were always well attended.

Confirmation Retreats

The Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis worked with the Catholic Scholars from St. John's University, parish Coordinators of Youth Ministry, and Retreat Directors to provide parishes with a Confirmation retreat experience for their youth. Over 700 Confirmation candidates participated in these retreat experiences. In large and small groups, they discussed increasing their participation in their parish. The day included an opportunity for confessions and concluded with participation in a Holy Hour.

Junior High Catholic School Rallies

This is the third year of this initiative. Junior high school students from throughout Brooklyn and Queens gathered for a morning of praise and worship, games, catechesis, formation, and Mass. Eight events saw an average of 600 participants per event. This initiative is a collaborative effort of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis, the CYO Office, the Vocation Office, the Saint John’s Catholic Scholars, the Catholic Youth Ministry Initiative, and the Cathedral House of Formation.

Catholic High School Professional Day

As part of an annual initiative, we gather high school religion departments, campus ministries, and chaplains for a professional day to work together to better outreach to our high school students. This year we had thirty attendees. Our keynote presenter was Ela Milewska from the Archdiocese of New York. The day included Mass celebrated by Fr. Sean Suckiel, the Vocation Director for the Diocese of Brooklyn.
January 22-27, 2019

World Youth Day 2019
Panama City, Panama

WYD Panama

The Diocese is preparing to send 170 pilgrims to the 2019 World Youth Day Gathering in Panama City, Panama. This event will consist of catechesis, stations of the cross, a vigil service, and closing Mass with Pope Francis.

Follow this event on www.dioceseofbrooklyn.org
Brooklyn Queens Catholic Youth Day 2018

At Saint John’s University in Jamaica, New York, on April 21, 2018, over 2,200 teens and their group leaders gathered for a day of prayer, Mass, keynote addresses, confession, fellowship, and praise and worship. Mass was celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop James Massa, the keynote address was given by Dr. Ansel Augustine, and praise and worship was led by Alverlis Pena.

The theme for the day was “Put Out Into the Deep”.

Steubenville NY Youth Conference 2018

Sponsored by LifeTeen, and the Youth Ministry Offices in the Archdiocese of New York, the Diocese of Rockville Centre, and the Diocese of Brooklyn, the fourth Steubenville NY Youth Conference was held at St. John’s University. A capacity crowd of over 2,000 young people came to meet the Lord in this weekend experience; 150 students attended from the Diocese in Brooklyn and Queens. The theme this year was “Revealed”.

Each summer, Life Teen hosts twenty Steubenville Youth Conferences throughout the United States with the hopes of strengthening and inspiring teens in their relationships with Christ and His Church. These weekend conferences are both a great “introduction” to the Gospel message for new or younger teens as well as a deep and moving experience of prayer and fellowship for Youth Group regulars.

Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio celebrated the closing Mass on Sunday, June 22, 2018.

Holy Hours and Fellowship

In collaboration with the Vocations Office, two evenings of Holy Hour and Fellowship were held this year, one at Our Lady of Martyrs and one at St. Athanasius. The evenings consisted of adoration with praise and worship music with an opportunity for confession.
The Diocese of Brooklyn's Catholic Youth Organization will join in partnership with the Play Like a Champion Today Character Education Through Sports Program in September of 2018. Rob Caldera, Executive Director of the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO), welcomes the opportunity to work with Play Like a Champion, saying: “Play Like a Champion sees coaching as a form of ministry, and challenges coaches to develop the whole athlete: physically, mentally, socially and spiritually. Our parishes look forward to gaining tools to enhance our total Catholic athletic experience.”

Winning-at-all-costs coaching, sports specialization, and parent “sports rage” are just a few of the problems eroding the culture of sports today. The Play Like a Champion Today program is designed to provide children and adolescents with the highest quality faith-based sports experience possible. The program’s resources are developed in collaboration with faculty at the University of Notre Dame's Shaw Center for Children and Families and with social scientists, philosophers, theologians, sport scientists, and physicians in universities nationally and internationally. Play Like a Champion helps sports organizations by educating coaches and parents to make sports safer, fun, and developmentally enriching.

By partnering with Play Like a Champion, the CYO will bring their “Coaching as Ministry” clinic to the local catholic parishes to participate in the training. Saturday, September 15, 2018 will be the partnership launch date in which the first coach trainings will take place for the Parish Athletic Representatives (PAR’s), who will become trained “Local Certified Trainers” of the curriculum. Once the PAR's are trained, they will in turn train the coaches in their parishes.

The Pontifical Council for the Laity convened a May, 2015 conference for coaches. In his address to the gathering, Pope Francis insisted that coaches receive a solid formal education: “Educators must be educated.” It is up to sports organizations “to pay due attention to and invest the necessary resources in the professional preparation, both human and spiritual, of coaches.” Through the partnership with Play Like a Champion Today, the Brooklyn CYO joins with more than 2,000 schools and sports organizations across more than 50 Dioceses committed to answering Pope Francis’ call to educate their coaches.

Play Like a Champion Today workshops are nationally accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Coaching Education (NCACE.) Play Like a Champion has partners in forty-two states across the United States and Canada, and has educated over 100,000 coaches and parents who in turn have impacted the lives of over a million athletes. We are thrilled to partner with the Diocese of Brooklyn CYO in this effort,” says Mr. Sheehan, Play Like a Champion Program Director.
Young Adults

Theology on Tap
This initiative is geared to catechize and evangelize young adults, ages 21-39, in the Catholic Faith. By the end of the year, over seven hundred young adults participated in this program. These events take place in both Brooklyn (at the San Damiano Mission and The Vanderbilt) and Queens (Donovan’s Pub of Woodside).

Grilling With God
To continue the Theology on Tap idea of gathering young adults to learn about their faith, the month of June was filled with five sessions of Grilling with God. Young adults gathered for a Holy Hour followed by a BBQ and a presentation on the Faith. Over two hundred young adults participated in this initiative this summer.

This year we had presentations from:
- Jerry and Meg Rodriguez
- Fr. James Kuroly
- Lauren Gentry
- Fr. Christopher Bethge

Diocesan Convocations
Twice a year, the department gathers those men and women who serve as coordinators of youth and young adults for an evening of prayer, fellowship, and updating. This year, 200 collaborators representing over 70 parishes participated. Our keynote address presenter for the Fall Convocation was Christina Lamas, Executive Director of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry. The Winter Convocation’s keynote address was presented by Dr. Ansel Augustine, Campus Minister at St. John’s University.

Annual Thanksgiving Eve Event
This event is now in its seventh year and is celebrated annually at Transfiguration Roman Catholic Church in Brooklyn. Each year, on the evening before Thanksgiving, young adults are invited to participate in an evening of praise and worship provided by the Jornada Movement and others. Following the Holy Hour, the group gathers for fellowship.

Spiritual Direction for Coordinators of Youth and Young Adult Faith Formation
Fr. Kuroly, Chaplain for Youth and Young Adult Programs, has seen to it that every Coordinators of Youth Ministry and Young Adult Ministry has some sort of spiritual direction provided for them. To date, about twenty leaders have come forward looking for this support, and we believe this number will continue to grow.
Retreat

In collaboration with The Frassati Fellowship of NYC and the Queens1 Deanery, a young adult retreat was held on April 17, 2018 at Most Precious Blood Church in Long Island City. Over 80 young adults participated in this event.

Midnight Run

Midnight Run is a service project geared specifically for young adults. Young adults gather to prepare bagged meals for the homeless. Once the food is all prepared, groups drive with food, clothing, toiletries and other items to bring to the homeless. The participants are invited to share their faith with the homeless and pray with them. During Christmas, each homeless person receives a wrapped gift to open. Currently, this program has its home at Saint Dominic’s in Brooklyn.

Email Blast

To promote young adult events happening in and around the Diocese of Brooklyn events are shared by using an email blast. Parishes email events to the coordinator who composes a bi-monthly mailing to young adults and young adult leaders.

College Campus Ministers

In addition to participating in occasional gatherings of the College Campus Ministers, the department organized the installation of the Newman Club and Campus Ministry Officers (student leaders) as well as visits to college campus ministry programs.

San Damiano Mission

Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio established the San Damiano Mission to reach out to the young adults in the Williamsburg area. The Mission is staffed by the Franciscan Friars Conventual (OFM Conv.). Together we have coordinated outreach events and liturgies for young adults.
Second Annual Catechetical Summit with Bishop DiMarzio

Over 300 pastors, administrators, and catechetical leaders from parishes, Catholic academies, and parish schools gathered at the Immaculate Conception Center in Douglaston for the Second Annual Catechetical Summit with Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio on September 14, 2017. The evening’s theme was Celebrating the Fifth Anniversary of “The Catechetical Leader in the Third Millennium”. This important catechetical document was written by the Diocesan Directors of New York State in collaboration with the bishops of New York State as a guide to catechetical leadership. Every agenda item that evening addressed some aspect of this document. The five general areas included:

1. Evangelization
2. The Changing Parish Landscape
3. The Family
4. Cultural Realities
5. The Rapid Development of Technology

The evening included a Summit Address by Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, a Secretary’s Report by Mr. Theodore Musco, a question and answer period and a panel discussion including members of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis staff led by Fr. Joseph Gibino.

Bishop James Massa concluded the evening with a wonderful summary of the evening’s presentations and a final prayer.

New Web Pages

In collaboration with the staff of DeSales Media, the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis was able to create two new web pages this year. Information regarding Special Needs Religious Education can be found at www.dioceseofbrooklyn.org/get-involved/special-needs-religious-education/ and information regarding the Diocesan Assembly on Evangelization and the Celebration of the V Encuentro held in April of 2018 at St. John’s University in Jamaica, New York, can be found at www.dioceseofbrooklyn.org/get-involved/assembly-on-evangelization-fifth-encuentro/

Please take time to visit our web sites at www.dioceseofbrooklyn.org/get-involved/secretariat-for-evangelization-and-catechesis/ , www.bqonlineformation.org, and www.meetmein.church

Religious Education Program Statistics 2017-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total student enrollment in programs of Religious Education and Youth Ministry</td>
<td>49,122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of catechists for parish programs of Religious Education and Catholic academies/parish schools</td>
<td>6,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of catechetical leaders for all catechetical programs (directors, coordinators, and principals)</td>
<td>1,225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NALM Annual Conference on May 30- June 2, 2018

The National Association for Lay Ministry (NALM) is a collaborative organization of lay, religious and ordained ministers that empowers, advocates for, and develops lay pastoral leadership and promotes the growth of lay pastoral ministry in the Catholic Church. This year for its annual conference NALM partnered with the National Congress for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL). The conference was held in Chicago, Illinois and the theme was “Walk with Christ: Inspiring Encounter. Authentic Accompaniment. Modern Proclamation”. The conference included Mass, workshops, various keynote speakers, as well as opportunities to “encounter” persons in the peripheries through on and off site experiences. The Catholic Apostolate Center and its Director, Fr. Frank Donio, S.A.C., were honored with the “Gaudium et Spes Award”. The award recognizes an outstanding individual or organization for promoting understanding of the Church in the world according to the vision of Vatican II. The Diocese of Brooklyn is represented on the NALM Board of Directors by Nelsa I. Elías, Facilitator for Catechetical Outreach, Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis.

National Catholic Education Association (NCEA)

Secretary Theodore Musco was honored to be a guest speaker at the 2018 National Catholic Educational Association's Annual Convention and Expo in Cincinnati, Ohio. He served on a panel that discussed best methods used to provide adult faith formation, especially to catechists and Catholic schools teachers. Several thousand people attended the convention, held annually the week following Easter Sunday. NCEA President/CEO Dr. Thomas Burnford stated, “The Convention is great – I get to welcome thousands of wonderful Catholic school educators from all over the country and the world. We have three days packed with professional development for teachers, principals, pastors and superintendents who educate and form nearly two million Catholic school students in the United States.”

Franciscan University of Steubenville Bosco Conference

The Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis held two information sessions during this past Spring for those catechetical leaders interested in learning about the Franciscan University of Steubenville's Catechetical Institute. A great deal of interest was demonstrated during these meetings, and more information will be provided as the new year begins.

A group of five people attended the Franciscan University of Steubenville’s St. John Bosco Conference for Evangelization and Catechesis held this year in July. Rather unique to this conference is the option to follow one of several tracks related to evangelization and catechesis or choose from among many workshops offered by outstanding presenters. This conference also provided an opportunity for sharing of best practices on many levels: parish, family, Diocesan, and international.

Annual New York State Diocesan Directors and Staffs Meeting

On June 11 and 12, 2018, the Annual Meeting of the New York State Diocesan Directors of Religious Education and Staffs took place in Lake Placid, New York. Dr. Joseph White, presenter for the two-day gathering, works as a National Catechetical Consultant for Our Sunday Visitor and is in part-time practice as a clinical child psychologist. During the two days, the Diocesan staffs had an opportunity to explore the many aspects of the catechetical vision of Pope Francis, both in large group and small group settings. Breakfast and dinner provided an opportunity for the participants from the various (Arch)Dioceses to “meet and greet.”
Adult Faith Formation

Online Adult Faith Formation Collaborators

The Secretariat of Evangelization and Catechesis partnered with My Catholic Faith Delivered (MCFD), the Catholic Distance University (CDU), the STEP Program of the University of Notre Dame, the Catechetical Institute at Franciscan University of Steubenville, and others to provide online courses available for adult faith formation.

ARISE: Together in Christ    LEVÁNTATE: Unámonos en Cristo

ARISE Together in Christ and LEVÁNTATE Unámonos en Cristo are programs that respond to the need for a greater understanding of what it means to be evangelized and to more fully live the life of a committed disciple. Participants commonly felt more confident to witness to their faith and became evangelizers. In addition, the programs lead to putting the Gospel faith into action in daily life. This was accomplished through evangelization, invitation strategies, and the training of lay leaders. All of these efforts promoted the good news of the Holy Spirit’s presence in the people of God and revitalized parish life throughout our Diocese.

Through the vehicle of small faith sharing groups, the four seasons of ARISE gave participants an opportunity to deepen their personal relationship with Jesus, an appreciation of conversion as a lifelong process, become more knowledgeable about Catholic Social Teaching, enter into the necessity of reconciliation for their communities and become more confident evangelizers. As a result, participants, individually and communally, more readily connected faith with action in their daily lives, as members of the Body of Christ. As we look back on the last four seasons of ARISE, we see how each of the objectives was achieved through the grace of God, the power of the Spirit, and the openness and generosity of the participants.

There are parishes now in three stages of the ARISE process. Some parishes are preparing to begin ARISE in Fall 2018 and other parishes recently finished Season 2. The largest group of parishes will finish with Season 5 of ARISE in Fall 2018.

Small Faith Sharing Groups By the Numbers...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish Participation (includes parishes in all three stages of the process)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>78 parishes participated in English, Spanish, Chinese and Haitian Creole during the past year</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Workshops Conducted in the Fall and Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Small Faith Sharing Group Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4,523 in English groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,526 in Spanish groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>348 in Haitian Creole groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125 in Chinese groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reaching Out Around the Globe...

On November 6, 2017, in partnership with Stop Hunger Now, Catholic Relief Services, and RENEW International, members of the small faith sharing groups joined youth, young adults, and adults from several parishes, Catholic academies, and parish schools in Brooklyn and Queens to pack 20,000 meals to be sent to Burkina Faso. The event began with prayer, followed by careful instructions given by the coordinator of Stop Hunger Now. People then began to work in small groups accomplishing various tasks related to the packing process. The group worked to achieve certain milestones during the time provided. By the end of the two-hour session, most requested that we plan another similar event soon. It will become a regular event here in Brooklyn and Queens.

A message from those who received these meals:

“Burkina Faso is a poor country, and most people in the United States can’t even find it on a map. But even though you don’t know the face of the children you are sending this food to, you are helping. I can tell you how we feel. We feel thankful, so thankful for what you are doing.”

—Cardinal Philippe Ouedraogo

Theodore Musco, Secretary for Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of Brooklyn, greets the Holy Father, Pope Francis, at a gathering of diocesan catechetical leaders at the Vatican in 2018

Photo credit L’Osservatore Romano Photographic Service
Putting Faith into Action

While the Diocese in Brooklyn and Queens sponsored the packing of meals in November, individual parishes also did their own service and mission outreach projects. Outreach to the homebound and ministry to the homeless are just two of the many ways that parishes lived the Gospel values in their neighborhoods.
Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) gave vitality to many parishes again this year. It was rewarding to see an ever-increasing number of our Chinese and Korean brothers and sisters participate in the Rite of Election this year. At this year’s Rite of Election, 105 parishes participated, among which 526 catechumens sought Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist and 555 candidates completed their initiation through the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.

Some adults received the Easter sacraments at the Easter Vigil in parishes in Brooklyn and Queens but were not present for the Rite of Election celebrated by Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio on Sunday, February 14, 2018, in Queens, New York. Over 1,100 people were welcomed by Bishop DiMarzio at the Rite of Election.

The celebration of each rite was an integral part of the catechumenal process. The rites not only marked the transition of one period of the RCIA process to another, but also expressed the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those participating in the process, thus leading them to conversion as faithful followers of the Lord. These rites well celebrated served as a tremendous witness to the entire parish community and served as the “vehicle” calling others to begin the catechumenal process.

The Rite of Election Adapted for Children

The RCIA text addresses the initiation process involved for children of a catechetical age who have not been baptized. Our Diocesan RCIA Guidelines state that once a child is in third grade/eight years old, this child must enter into the catechumenal process adapted to their age for a minimum of three years culminating with the celebration of all three of the initiation sacraments, Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, at the Easter Vigil or during one of the seven Sundays of Easter. The celebration of these sacraments must not be separated.

104 children participated in this year’s Diocesan celebration of the Rite of Election Adapted for Children held at the Cathedral-Basilica of St. James on Saturday, February 1, 2018. Bishop Octavio Cisneros celebrated the Rite in all its splendor. Parents and other family members joined in the celebration by offering prayers for those planning to enter the Church at the Easter Vigil in March.

Diocesan Mass for Neophytes and Candidates

The Annual Diocesan Mass for Neophytes and Candidates was celebrated on Saturday, May 5, 2018 at Our Lady of Grace Parish, Howard Beach, New York. Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio was the principle celebrant and homilist. The day included the celebration of Mass, a presentation by William Keimig, a nationally known expert in the RCIA process, followed by lunch.
Holy Spirit Institute for Service and Leadership

“The New Evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are “disciples” and “missionaries”, but rather that we are always “missionary disciples”. — Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, #120

In response to Pope Francis’ invitation at the start of his Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel), the Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, Ph.D., D.D., established the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis (SEC) on June 23, 2017. Coinciding with the establishment of the SEC was the development of a new structure for lay leadership formation. Building on the successes of the last fifty years of lay leadership formation in the Diocese in Brooklyn and Queens, the Holy Spirit Institute for Service and Leadership (HSI) was tasked with providing excellent formation and education to men and women called to serve as missionary disciples.

During 2017-2018, 60 students took courses in English or in Spanish for credit or non-credit in the professional and volunteer tracks of the HSI. Participants worked toward formal certification which aided their ability to eventually serve in the Diocese and in their parish as a missionary disciple. The approach of the HSI and Catholic Distance University (CDU) is one of holistic formation in the faith. These students participated in theological studies, pastoral formation, spiritual formation, and human development. Over 40 of them assisted in serving at the Diocesan Assembly on Evangelization and the Celebration of the V Encuentro in April of 2018 at St. John’s University. This event afforded our students the “hands-on” experience of assisting members of the Diocesan Church that they so desired.

Pastors and administrators nominated active parishioners for consideration in one of two tracks of the HSI. Both address the four pillars of formation: Academic, Spiritual, Pastoral, and Human Development.

Master of Arts Degree Scholarship Program

The Master of Arts Scholarship Program is co-sponsored by the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis and the Catholic Foundation for Brooklyn and Queens. This program is intended for a person already employed as a catechetical leader in the Diocese of Brooklyn. The following schools partner with us: Catholic Distance University, Fordham University, St. John’s University, and St. Joseph’s Seminary.

This year, a total of $40,000 was awarded in scholarships to three individuals who serve as parish catechetical leaders.

Catholic Distance University Collaboration Expands

The Diocese of Brooklyn serves 1.5 million Catholics in the New York City boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens. Founded in 1853 to meet the needs of millions of recent Irish immigrants, today the Diocese is home to a burgeoning, multicultural immigrant community that is largely Hispanic. To hand on the Faith, seven-thousand catechists serve young people in the Diocese’s 186 parishes and 84 Catholic academies/parish schools each week.
“Many of the catechists here in Brooklyn and Queens desire an opportunity to be further formed in the Faith,” says Theodore Musco, Secretary of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese. Yet, the Diocese faces a number of challenges in preparing adults to teach the Faith: time and energy, multiple commitments, lack of knowledge about programs offered to assist in passing on the Faith, lack of knowledge about financial assistance available, and language issues.

In June 2017, the Diocese established the Holy Spirit Institute for Service and Leadership to provide formation and education to those called to serve as missionary disciples. Catholic Distance University is one of the six institutes and universities approved as an educational provider. The Diocese has partnered with CDU since 2010 to provide Continuing Education to its catechists, catechetical leaders, and parish volunteers, so extending the relationship seemed to be a natural fit. “The great successes of the past gave me the confidence to move forward as we created the new Holy Spirit Institute for Service and Leadership,” Theodore says.

“CDU is authentically Catholic and has a mission of Catechetics and Evangelization. It also clearly understands the challenges of a large, urban, multicultural Diocese,” Theodore says. “We are making headway in all these areas, thanks to collaborators like CDU,” he adds.

Through the Holy Spirit Institute, CDU offers a non-credit Diocesan Lay Leadership Certificate as well as an undergraduate-level Catechetical Coordinator’s Certificate to prepare lay leaders to serve the Diocese. “The [undergraduate] certificate serves those who are already in catechetical leader positions but may not have the proper academic credentials,” Theodore explains. “Our goal is that all 200+ catechetical leaders be properly trained.” CDU also works with the Diocesan permanent deacons. Bishop DiMarzio is encouraging deacons to pursue degrees in theology at CDU.

To better serve the Diocese’s large Spanish-speaking population, its staff is working to convert six foundational courses into Spanish for the non-credit certificate. “We hope to have this finished by the end of 2018,” Ted says. “They can then be used by anyone at any time.”

Sister Mary Margaret Ann Schlather, CDU’s dean of Continuing Education, was instrumental in arranging the partnership in 2010. “Ted Musco brought such energy to our first meeting, that a partnership with Brooklyn was going to be a win-win situation for Brooklyn’s catechists and CDU’s Continuing Education Program. Starting with a dynamic three-week seminar, our partnership has developed into offering academic level-certificate and degree opportunities for those who want to ‘put out into the deep’ of the Catholic Faith to better serve others,” she says.

The Diocese of Brooklyn is shepherded by Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, a champion of immigrants’ rights. Masses are regularly held in 33 different languages across the Diocese, which has 26 ethnic ministries that promote cultural events and provide an opportunity for immigrants to belong to the larger community while preserving and sharing their uniqueness and traditions.

Bishop DiMarzio often uses the phrase “Put out into the deep.” “This is not merely a byword or an interesting phrase. Rather, this truly reminds us that if we are to make Christ for the world in this new millennium, we must truly go out of our way. We must try harder. We must experience our own conversion, so that we can be faithful to the Lord’s demand to put out into the deep,” he recently said at the Diocese’s Evangelization Congress in late April. CDU President Dr. Marianne Evans Mount and Sr. Schlather attended the event, which drew thousands. Its theme was “The Joy of Encountering Christ – The Family’s Hope.”

“We’ve come a long way in the last few years thanks to CDU,” Theodore reflects.

Re-printed with permission—Catholic Distance University, Charles Town, West Virginia.
www.cdu.edu
My Catholic Faith Delivered

Tremendous Growth–Great News!

As demonstrated by the figures below, the Diocese of Brooklyn, in collaboration with My Catholic Faith Delivered, has provided thousands of opportunities for faith formation and assessment. We are grateful to all who have participated in any way, and look forward to continued growth and prosperity to come. We in Brooklyn and Queens are truly blessed!
Marriage Ministry

The Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis sponsored the Annual Diocesan Wedding Anniversary Mass. The Mass was celebrated by Most Reverend James Massa, PhD, DD, Bishop of Brooklyn, at Immaculate Conception Center on Saturday, June 9, 2018. 105 couples participated in the Mass and reception that followed. The couple married longest celebrated 65 years of marriage.

SEC also sponsored the annual World Marriage Day celebration held on the second weekend in February. All parishes received from our office a planning kit and resources in English and Spanish. Numerous parishes and deaneries in Brooklyn and Queens hosted local celebrations.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) dedicated the week of July 22- July 28, 2018 as National Natural Family Planning Awareness Week. This year’s theme was “Generations of Love: *Humanae Vitae* (1968-2018).” The dates of Natural Family Planning Awareness Week highlight the anniversary of the papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (July 25) which articulates Catholic beliefs about human sexuality, conjugal love and responsible parenthood. The dates also mark the feast of Saints Joachim and Anne (July 26), the parents of the Blessed Mother. SEC collected several resources that pastors, administrators, priests, deacons, and catechetical leaders could use to provide Natural Family Planning (NFP) sessions within their respective parishes. Homily notes and special petitions were distributed for use during NFP week. Participants were also provided links to both English and Spanish posters we provided.

### Marriage Ministry Statistics

#### Leaders in Marriage Ministry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>priests presiding at Pre-Cana services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>deacons presiding at Pre-Cana prayer services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>couples presenting Pre-Cana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 16 couples in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 5 couples in Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2 couples in Creole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1 couple in Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>couples presenting Catholic Engaged Encounter Weekend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>couples presenting Marriage Encounter weekends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 10 in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 6 in Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>couples presenting Retrouvaille weekends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>couple teaching the Billings Ovulation Method of Natural Family Planning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Pre-Cana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>98</th>
<th>Diocesan Pre-Cana sessions held:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 29 sessions at 310 Prospect Park West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 30 sessions at the Immaculate Conception Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 41 sessions at parishes across the Diocese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The breakdown per type of session:

- 77 classes in English
  - 60 Catholic
  - 13 Interfaith
  - 4 Re-Marriage
- 13 in Spanish
- 6 in Polish
- 4 Creole

A total of 1464 couples participated in the Diocesan Pre-Cana program from September 1, 2016 through August 14, 2017.

Co-sponsored 2 Engaged Encounter weekends with 20 couples attending.

## Marriage Enrichment

Co-sponsored:

- 11 Marriage Encounter Weekends
  - 7 in English
  - 4 in Spanish
- 4 Retrouvaille Weekends (for couples in crisis)
- 2 Beginning Experience weekends (for the widowed/divorced)

## Natural Family Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8</th>
<th>training sessions in the Billings Ovulation Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>training session in Creighton Ovulation Method</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of 40 couples registered for these sessions.

1464 engaged couples received the NFP introductory session during their Diocesan Pre-Cana class.

## FOCCUS Pre-Marriage Assessment

| 5 | training sessions in the FOCCUS Pre-Marriage Assessment |

A total of 35 new facilitators registered for these sessions

125 couples participated in the FOCCUS Pre-Marriage Assessment during their marriage preparation.
Family Formation

Forty-nine pilgrims traveled to Ireland for the World Meeting of Families. The information shared by the many excellent presenters during these days of catechesis and evangelization will serve as a basis for the ongoing family outreach here in Brooklyn and Queens and certainly beyond.

The Holy Father, Pope Francis, when speaking to the 80,000 people gathered at the Festival of Families on Saturday, August 25, 2018, at the Croke Park Stadium in Dublin, addressed the theme of the meeting by saying:

You, dear families, are the vast majority of the People of God. What would the Church look like without you? A Church of statues, a Church of lone individuals... It was to help us recognize the beauty and importance of the family, with its lights and shadows, that the Exhortation Amoris Laetitia (On the Joy of Love) was written, and that I wanted the theme of this World Meeting of Families to be “The Gospel of the Family, Joy for the World”. God wants every family to be a beacon of the joy of his love in our world. What does this mean? It means that we, who have encountered God’s saving love, try, with or without words, to express it in little acts of kindness in our daily routine and in the most hidden moments of our day. And what is this called? It is called holiness.

Strong Catholic Families National Initiative

The Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis announced this May that parishes will be invited to participate in the Strong Catholic Families National Initiative of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). This Initiative is planned as a follow-up to the World Meeting of Families held in Ireland during August of 2018.

This is what their website has to say:

Strong Catholic Families National Initiative is a collaborative effort by four national Catholic organizations to help church leaders envision how the Catholic Church can more effectively partner with parents to help bring home the faith. Developed by NFCYM in 2005, the Strong Catholic Families National Initiative is presented in partnership with the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL), the National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers (NACFLM) and the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) who together offer a series of Diocesan and parish level trainings, presentations, online and print resources and Catholic Parent Revivals.
Respect Life Education

Respect Life Ministry upholds the sanctity and dignity of all human life from conception to natural death. To fulfill this vision, we rely on information and direction from the Bishops’ Pro-Life Office and the USCCB’s annual Respect Life Program.

Respect Life Ministry is organized across several areas:

- **Education:** An educational/public information effort to inform, clarify and deepen understanding of the basic issues concerning pro-life activities.

- **Pastoral:** A pastoral effort addressed to the specific needs of women with problems related to pregnancy and to those who have had, or have taken part in, an abortion.

- **Public Policy:** This area is under the direction of Msgr. Kieran Harrington, Vicar for Communications, through the Office of Government Affairs/DeSales Media in the Diocese of Brooklyn. A public policy effort directed toward the legislative, judicial, and administrative efforts to insure effective legal protection for the right to life.

Every parish received an annual Respect Life Program packet that the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities publishes each year to call attention to numerous human life issues. The Respect Life program is highlighted in liturgies and marked by special events; these materials are especially helpful for priests, parish groups, and other organizations.

In addition, the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis sponsored:

- **Ten buses from different parishes, schools, and deaneries to participate in the Annual March for Life on January 19, 2018 in Washington, DC. Through the new Respect Life grant, parishes, schools, and deaneries who can apply for a subsidy to help offset the cost of chartering a bus to bring parishioners or students to attend the March for Life. Over 800 individuals from Brooklyn and Queens participated in this March for Life.**

- **One post-abortion healing program was held in Queens. Over 20 women participated in the bible study.**

- **Several educational programs in Brooklyn and Queens concerning the Sanctity of All Human Life, Theology of the Body, Chastity, and National Family Planning were held during the year.**
Boards and Commission

Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis Advisory Board

The following served as members of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis Advisory Board for the 2017-2018 catechetical year:

- Bishop James Massa*
- Theresa Andersen
- Fr. Jeremy Canna
- Dcn. John Cantirino
- Carmina DelaRosa
- Fr. Vincentius Do
- Krzysztof Gospodarcz
- Joanne Heppt
- Sandra Jean
- Edwin Perez
- Juan Perez
- Fr. Marc Swartvagher
- Paul Morisi*
- Theodore Musco*
- Christian Rada*
- Joann Roa*

*Ex-officio member

Special Needs Religious Education Commission

The following served as members of the Special Needs Religious Education Commission for the 2017-2018 catechetical year:

- Bishop James Massa*
- Roseanne Bourke
- John Bourke
- Marylyn Crum
- Joan DiMarco
- Fr. Joseph Gibino*
- Nelly Gutierrez
- Georgette Lyons
- Helen McCleary
- Sr. Alice Michael
- Alison Morisi
- Theodore Musco*
- Donna Spoto
- Helen Teifer
- Cecilia Uriguen

*Ex-officio member

Catholic Youth Organization Board

The following served as directors of the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) Board for the 2017-2018 catechetical year:

- Brendan Grady
- Eileen Long
- Michael McGovern
- John O’Brien
- Michael Healy
- Carl Quigley
- Brian Cosgrove
- Paul Morisi*
- Marie Raico
- Theodore Musco*

*Ex-officio member

Catholic Youth Ministry Initiative Advisory Board

The following served as members of the Catholic Youth Ministry Initiative (CYMI) Advisory Board for the 2017-2018 catechetical year:

- Ana Puente
- Ellen Rhatigan
- Joan McMaster
- Lucia Morales*
- Michelle Fox
- Paul Morisi*
- Rev. James Kuroly
- Robert Caldera
- John Notaro*
- Rhonda Willis

*Ex-officio member
Keynote Address of Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States of America

“The Dream of Pope Francis: A Missionary Church”
Assembly on Evangelization and V Encuentro, Diocese of Brooklyn
St. John’s University, Queens, New York
April 28, 2018

As the Apostolic Nuncio, the representative of the Holy Father to the United States of America, I want to express the warm greetings, spiritual closeness and paternal affection of Pope Francis to all gathered here today as you examine the theme “Put Out Into the Deep”, concluding the Diocesan Evangelization and Renewal Plan and celebrating the Diocesan Encuentro; these are important milestones in the life of this local Church of Brooklyn. I am grateful to Bishop DiMarzio, Bishop Massa, and Mr. Theodore Musco, the Secretary for Evangelization and Catechesis, for their kind invitation. It is an honor to be here with you: to encounter the Lord and to encounter our brothers and sisters in Christ.

In preparation for the Fifth Encuentro, Pope Francis said to the American bishops:

Our great challenge is to create a culture of encounter, which encourages individuals and groups to share the richness of our traditions and experiences, to break down walls and to build bridges. The Church in America, as elsewhere, is called to ‘go out’ from its comfort zone and to be a leaven of communion. Communion among ourselves, with our fellow Christians, and with all who seek a future of hope. We need to become ever more fully a community of missionary disciples, filled with love of the Lord Jesus and enthusiasm for the spread of the Gospel.” (VIDEO MESSAGE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE USCCB, 14-17 NOVEMBER 2016)

Today, I want to speak to you about the dream Pope Francis has for the Church, a dream which we are invited to share. In the Bible, God often manifests Himself or His will in dreams as he did for Joseph in the Old Testament (Gen 37:1-11) and for Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus, in the New Testament, when he asked him to take Mary as his wife and to name the child Jesus. God too manifested His will in a dream to Peter in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 10:10-16), inviting Peter to baptize the whole household of Cornelius, opening the gate of salvation to the Gentiles. Paul also had a dream, articulated in Ephesians (2:11-22), in which Jews and Gentiles would be reconciled and be truly one Body in Christ. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, dreamed of having one flock, ruled by one shepherd (John 10: 11-18).

Pope Francis too has a dream for Christ’s Church – that it would be a missionary Church. He writes:

I dream of a “missionary option”, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation. (POPE FRANCIS, APOTOLIC EXHORTATION EVANGELII GAUDIUM, 24 NOVEMBER 2013, 27)

Pope Francis dreams of a poor Church for the poor, a Church close to the abandoned and forgotten, a Church which conveys the tenderness of God. He wants an evangelical Church, called to measure itself constantly against the breadth and richness of the Gospel. He wants a Church willing to go forth from its comfort zone (cf. EG, 20) – a Church willing to put out into the deep for a great catch!
The Primacy of God among the People of God

Pope Francis dreams of a Church that lives as the People of God – the holy, faithful People of God. This notion of the Church as the People of God was an important idea from the Second Vatican Council. In its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium, the Council Fathers noted that the universal salvific plan of the Father is shown in the sending of His Son and finds its completion in the gift of the Holy Spirit. They stated that the Church is “a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” (LG, 4)

To evangelize, the Church must refer herself back to God, who has manifested Himself in Christ and who through the Holy Spirit continues to dwell in and animate the Church. An evangelizing Church must act in accordance with God’s will and make His presence known. Therefore, the Pope does not want a self-referential Church, but a Church which goes forth bringing the “joy of the Gospel” to the whole world. Pope Francis explains his preference:

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 which then ends up by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life. (Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, 24 November 2013, 49)

This friendship with Christ is the fruit of an encounter with Him. It is the Church’s mission to facilitate this encounter, which can be life-changing just as it was for Saint Paul. While new programs might be helpful for evangelization, the encounter is essential. Pope Benedict XVI expressed it this way:

Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction. (Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter Deus Caritas Est, 25 December 2005, 1)

This event or Person is Jesus Himself. The proclamation of the Lord’s Resurrection cannot be understood as a mere recollection of a past event; rather, He continues to live. The Church exists to help others encounter the Risen One who offers salvation. To encounter the Risen One means to be gathered under the loving gaze that introduces us into the love of God, in a living and lasting relationship with Him. The Holy Father reminds us that the primary reason for evangelizing is “the love of Jesus which we have received, the experience of salvation which urges us to ever greater love of Him.” (cf. EG, 264) The best incentive to share the faith and to evangelize comes from contemplating His love. It is the Beauty of the Lord that amazes and excites us and that attracts new believers.

The Gospel of Mercy

If there is a new emphasis on the primacy of God in the life of the Church by Pope Francis, it comes from his proclamation of the “Gospel of Mercy.” Mercy is not an aspect of the Gospel or a parenthesis in the life of the Church. In his letter concluding the Jubilee Year of Mercy, the Holy Father wrote:

Mercy cannot become a mere parenthesis in the life of the Church; it constitutes her very existence, through which the profound truths of the Gospel are made manifest and tangible. Everything is revealed in mercy; everything is resolved in the merciful love of the Father. (Pope Francis, Apostolic Letter Misericordia et Misera, 21 November 2016, 1)

Mercy is fundamental to the face of God revealed in Christ Jesus. Therefore, the Church must begin from the person of Jesus, from his attitude and praxis – his words and deeds – especially toward sinners; for these reveal the mercy of God and become the source of joy for humanity. To enter into contact with Christ means having a relationship with the Father of Mercies, who has a heart for the lost, the forgotten, the abandoned, and the miserable, especially for sinners. God has a heart for suffering humanity and desires to mercifully embrace us, as the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) marvelously captures. Mercy is at the heart of the Gospel. If I can say it directly: this is Pope Francis’ contribution. The Gospel is more than just doctrine; it cannot be reduced to an idea. The concrete expression of the truths of the Gospel must reflect the newness of the Gospel itself. (cf. EG, 41)
The Gospel builds the Church, and the churches proclaim the Gospel to the people in their different cultures and situations – in concrete and sometimes difficult situations. The Gospel message of mercy should not be understood as an equivocation or an indifference to the demands of conversion or worse still, a toleration of sin, thereby leading to laxity or a lack of moral responsibility. Rather, one might think of faith and conversion as a pilgrimage in which the People of God “journeys tirelessly toward the fullness of his kingdom of justice, love, forgiveness and mercy.” (MV, 14)

The Holy Father distinguishes between the sinner (who needs mercy) and the corrupt (who attempts to justify himself and who sees no need for mercy), a distinction seen in the story of the publican and the Pharisee. Mercy is a gift, which we are invited to share. We receive it by allowing ourselves to be touched by Christ and converted.

The Church of Mercy

The Church must witness to this mercy. Only a truly evangelical Church would continue on this path of mercy. Ecclesial mediation is indispensable because the God of Mercy appeared in Christ and reaches others through His Mystical Body, the Church. This Church reflects the light of Christ to the nations and reflects it, even if the “mirror” that is the Church is, at times, dirty due to human weakness.

An evangelical and merciful Church must herself be a subject of the Gospel of Mercy, open to conversion. She is an ecclesia semper reformanda, being shaped, formed, and conformed to her Spouse by the Holy Spirit at work in her. What is demanded is not simply external, formal, structural change but a true interior conversion of heart to be a Church of the Poor for the Poor. In Evangelli Gaudium, Pope Francis points out that the preferential option for the poor is principally a theological category, as God shows the poor his mercy first, and that “This divine preference has consequences for the faith life of all Christians since we are called to have ‘this mind ... which was in Jesus Christ.’” (EG, 198).

Indeed, Christ became poor to make us rich. He was born in poverty, exercised His ministry among the poor, and died in poverty. A Church of the Poor is a merciful Church, which looks upon the woundedness of the poor – whether materially or spiritually poor – with compassion and is willing to take concrete steps to heal the wounds, to offer forgiveness and the possibility of a new life – to offer hope. We live in what the Pope calls ”the time of mercy.”

In our day, there is an urgent need not only for the Church to show forth the Merciful Face of the Father, but also for the Church to rediscover her identity as Mother. She is a mother who gives new life in baptism; who bandages up the wounds of her children in Reconciliation; and, who feeds her children with the Holy Eucharist. The Church is not a business or an NGO; rather, she is a Mother, who announces that God has a heart for sinful and suffering humanity. The Church is not the “tribunal” for punishment, but the place, “the womb”, to encounter this mercy.

The Church: the Holy, Faithful People of God

Earlier I said that Pope Francis has a dream for the Church. When he speaks of the Church, he describes her as “the holy, faithful People of God.” Following the Second Vatican Council, which emphasized the People of God, there was shift in emphasis to the Church as a communion: a communion with God; a communion of the members with each other; and a communion between the laity and the hierarchy. Pope Francis now wants to re-emphasize the Church as the People of God for the task of evangelization. It is the whole People of God that proclaims the Gospel.

God has called, chosen, and saved us, not just as individuals but as a people. (cf. EG, 113) We belong to a People. We are His people. This idea of belonging to a community is challenging in an American context with its strong emphasis on individual liberty. Nevertheless, this idea of being a people can be prophetic in a world, marked by individualism. In Laudato Si, the Holy Father laments that rather than having care for a common home, many tend to view things as completely subject to individual use and progressively distance themselves from nature and from one another (POPE FRANCIS, ENCYCLICAL LETTER Laudato Si, 24 May 2015, 115-121). The Holy Father wants us to understand the Church as the People of God, not the individuals of God.

This emphasis on the People of God helps the missionary Church focus on its destiny and the destiny of humanity. The Church is to be the universal sacrament of salvation. This is the Church that Pope Francis dreams about:
Being Church means being God’s people in accordance with the great plan of his fatherly love. This means that we are to be God’s leaven in the midst of humanity. It means proclaiming and bringing God’s salvation into our world, which often goes astray and needs to be encouraged. (EG, 114)

The Church as the “holy, faithful, People of God” is made up of many members with equal dignity and who share a co-responsibility for evangelization. The members have different roles, but no one is exempted or excluded. We do not need a clericalized Church, nor do we want to clericalize the laity; rather, clergy ought to place themselves wholeheartedly at the service of the Gospel and the lay faithful, so that the laity can live their vocations and evangelize. Each vocation – that of the clergy and that of the laity – began with baptism, through which we were made children of God, incorporated into the Church, and anointed with the power of the Spirit. The clergy have been called to a special pastoral service of the People of God. A pastor is a pastor of a people. The concept of the People of God includes both the pastor and the flock, who journey together.

The whole People of God has a collective responsibility to evangelize. Here we must recall the Second Vatican Council’s teaching on the universal call to holiness – to daily holiness, which is associated with patience, not only in our duties or our existential situations but also in moving forward each day. This call to holiness is not only for the well-educated or “qualified” but for the whole people.

As such, we can speak of a “popular Church” in which each member contributes something to the holiness and mission of the Church. Thus, the vision of the People of God strengthens the idea of fraternity in the Spirit, which demands openness to the Spirit and to the other – the otherness of God and the otherness of our brothers and sisters made in His image. There is a true mystical fraternity (cf. EG, 92) in the People of God. Christ Himself summarized the Law and the Prophets in the two great commandments: love of God and love of neighbor. Without keeping these two commandments, holiness is impossible. The communion of the People of God – fraternity – is a sign of the vocation to communion with God, the source of holiness. The People of God is called to be holy.

The Church: Unity in Diversity

I began by speaking of “dreams” and referred to the patriarch, Joseph, who wore a multi-colored garment. The Fathers of the Church saw in this a symbol of the Church, resplendent in its variety of peoples and cultures. While we speak of the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation, the presence of the Church among the diverse nations and cultures of the world speaks to its mark of catholicity. The People of God is incarnated in the different peoples and cultures of the earth. Thus, the one People of God as a Church is rich in diversity.

It is precisely within the context of these peoples and cultures that evangelization happens. Here in Brooklyn, where so many peoples and cultures come together, including within the presbyterate, it is important to maintain unity as a local church, especially with your bishop. However, unity does not mean uniformity or suppression of one’s culture and heritage; rather, it suggests making an extra effort to appreciate and appropriate the best cultural traditions in the service of the local church and the mission of evangelization.

Presently, we are experiencing a rapid secularization and de-Christianization of society. What should we do? Should the Church flee from the culture? On the contrary, the Church must bring the Gospel to the cultures she encounters, taking what is best of the culture, but ennobling it with the truth and joy of the Gospel. It is within the culture(s) that the Gospel is proclaimed and received, offering its challenges, its call to conversion, and its promise of new life. This is the mission of the Church: to inculturate the Gospel. At the same time, the different groups and cultures here in Brooklyn can help the Church see things in new perspectives and so adapt and enhance techniques for evangelization, catechesis, and pastoral ministry.

The holy, faithful People of God, incarnated in different peoples and cultures, shares the gift of faith. Pope Francis has promoted a “theology of the people”, characterized by the unity of the people in their diversity. Unlike some forms of liberation theology, which started from a Marxist ideology or from the idea of an oppressed class, the theology of the people sees social injustice as being “anti-people”, that is, as that which threatens the people in their history and common culture through which they developed a “common lifestyle” as a people. Culture indicates the way a people are a people in their natural relationships and in their relationships with God.
Pope Francis speaks of “A People of many Faces” (cf. EG, 115-118), providing a vision of the People of God that is incarnated among diverse peoples and cultures. While St. Thomas Aquinas says that grace builds upon nature and perfects it, Pope Francis elaborates, saying that “grace supposes culture, and God’s gift becomes flesh in the culture of those who receive it.” (EG, 115)

Men and women do not exist alone or as individuals, adrift from relationships; rather, they are incorporated into a determined people and share a common lifestyle. The baptized are inserted into and transfigure their cultures, forming the one People of God and revealing the many faces of God. The evangelizing Church is the evangelized Church, which the Holy Spirit beautifies by showing forth new dimensions of revelation – a new face. Perhaps, that is what is happening here in Brooklyn.

No one culture can capture the diversity of the Church. The Holy Father states:

When properly understood, cultural diversity is not a threat to unity. The Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son, transforms our hearts and enables us to enter into the perfect communion of the blessed Trinity where all things find their unity ... Evangelization joyfully acknowledges these varied treasures which the Holy Spirit pours out upon the Church.” (EG, 117)

This openness to cultures favors a “de-centralization” and adaption of some dimensions of pastoral activity and governance for the sake of more effective evangelization. The Gospel itself transcends every culture and must be able to express itself and be heard at all times and by all cultures. The Gospel does not exist in the abstract. It must be inserted within and evangelize cultures.

The Church: the Sensus Fidei and Popular Piety

This same holy, faithful People of God has been given the Holy Spirit who guides the Church and gives her an evangelizing Spirit. Pope Francis notes that “As part of his mysterious love for humanity, God furnishes the totality of the faithful with an instinct of faith – sensus fidei – which helps them to discern what is truly of God” (EG, 119), thereby giving the faithful a genuine wisdom which helps them grasp divine realities, even when the specific expression escapes them.

The content of the faith is preserved in the people by the Holy Spirit, who helps them discern God’s will and presence and to act in accord with the Divine Wisdom, under the guidance of their shepherds. This “anointing of the people by the Spirit” allows them to journey toward an encounter with the Truth. The journey is not static, but dynamic, messianic, prophetic, and pneumatic. The ability, in union with their pastors, of the people to transmit the faith concretely exists and should be appreciated and celebrated. This is a gift, which should be received and developed through catechesis, formation, and prayer. With every gift, there is a corresponding task. In this case, there is a duty to share the gift of faith.

The truths of the faith are communicated not only to the clergy and experts, but to the whole People of God. They are often transmitted through popular piety and devotion, which are an expression of the sensus fidei fidelium. Popular piety and devotions are manifestations of an authentic theological life, animated by the action of the Spirit who has been poured out into our hearts (Rom 5:5). There is a spirituality present, incarnated in the hearts of even the simple to whom the Lord has revealed these things. (cf. Mt 11:25; cf. EG 124) Popular piety, often found among the poor and simple, is a genuine, personal expression of faith which can enrich the whole Church and is often a reminder that the people themselves are children of a God.

Devotion and acts of piety can be a true theological locus for the new evangelization. Having spent nine years in Mexico, I think of the evangelizing power of the Virgin of Guadalupe who appeared to Juan Diego and who miraculously appeared on his tilma. A simple yet beautiful image led to the conversion of a whole people and fosters great faith and devotion to the Virgin and her Son. Popular piety can be manifested in devotions, art and architecture, shrines, pilgrimages and processions. These devotions allow the Church to see concretely how the faith has been incarnated and are useful in deepening and revitalizing spirituality. They can attract others in a secularized culture. They are not only useful for evangelizing but also are a way that some of the faithful exercise their co-responsibility for the Church's evangelizing mission, using popular language and customs. In this way, the people can be true protagonists in their evangelizing mission.
The Church that goes forth: Pastoral Conversion

Pope Francis has a dream for missionary Church that goes forth from its comfort zone. Obedient to the Lord’s command to *put out into the deep*, it ventures forth for a big catch. The Holy Father exhorts us to be in a *permanent state of mission*, which really means:

To go forth to meet without keeping a safe distance; to take rest without being idle; to touch others without fear. It is a matter of working day by day in the *fields*, where God’s people, entrusted to your care, live their lives. We cannot let ourselves be paralyzed by our air-conditioned offices, statistics and our strategies. *(POPE FRANCIS, ADDRESS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF CELAM, 7 SEPTEMBER 2017)*

Today, we lament rapid secularization and declining Mass attendance and participation in parish life. A generation ago, Saint John Paul II called for a new evangelization that would address this changed situation and would make use of new methods to reinvigorate evangelization efforts. Pope Francis wants us to engage modern culture and to read it in light of the Gospel, so that we may be more effective in our daily attempts to evangelize. More than ten years ago, the Latin American bishops, aware of the drastic cultural changes and difficulties in transmitting the faith, attempted to address these challenges with the Aparecida document, a document whose strategies Pope Francis is bringing to the universal Church.

What are the highlights of this approach to evangelization? First, there is the idea that we are all missionary disciples. We are first disciples, then missionaries. We are subjects who announce the Gospel and subjects to whom the Gospel is announced. Christ gives the Church a missionary mandate to preach the Gospel to all the nations *(Mt 28:19-20)*.

To be a missionary is not just for those who go off to a foreign land; rather, it is the task of the whole community to be missionary — to be an evangelizing community. Anointed by the Spirit and sharing the dignity of the children of God, all are responsible. The Church by her nature is missionary. There is a firm bond between discipleship and evangelization. The Church is called to announce the Gospel of Mercy from which she lives and is constantly evangelized herself. The Holy Father says:

> Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are “disciples” or “missionaries”, but rather, we are “missionary disciples”. *(EG, 120)*

Second, evangelization involves human promotion, which must be expressed in the Church’s evangelizing work *(EG, 178)*, including her charitable works. Charitable works are characteristic of a Church that goes forth to the peripheries. Her works are signs of mercy. They are not just the works of individuals or works that gain salvation. The Church’s charitable work is part of the social Gospel and represents a dimension of evangelizing that fosters a space for fraternity, justice, peace and dignity. This social dimension of evangelization prevents the faith from becoming privatized, individualistic, or abstract. In the early Church, charitable works attracted non-believers, gained their respect and admiration, and brought some to the faith. The sincere charity of Christians gave living witness to the faith they professed. Charity remains essential to evangelization in a secularized world.

Third, evangelization requires pastoral conversion at all levels of ecclesial life. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis writes:

> The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and, in this way, elicit a positive response from those whom Jesus summons to friendship with himself.” *(POPE FRANCIS, APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION EVANGELII GAUDIUM, 27)*

A missionary church by its very nature has an unceasing duty to be pastorally converted; the Church is in a *permanent* state of mission. This pastoral conversion means that evangelization can never be reduced to mere administration or maintenance of current structures; that would mean stagnation and gradual decline.
Pastoral conversion involves finding new ways of making known the heart of the Gospel – the beauty of the salvific love of God manifested in Christ Jesus. These new ways might include the restructuring of Christian communities based on the need to proclaim the Gospel; creating new spaces for authentic fraternity and places where the Gospel can be heard; giving some priority to young people; and, really involving the laity, assisting them to accept responsibility for their vocations and for the mission that lies ahead.

Pastoral conversion involves recognizing that, while the family remains the primary locus of evangelization, many families are hurting and struggle to hand on the faith. They need the support of the Church and their neighbors. Pastoral conversion means challenging the idea that resources must be used simply to maintain the status quo, which often is unsustainable. Throughout the United States, many formerly-robust parishes and schools have had to merge, share pastors, or even close. School buildings are being rented out to charter schools and Catholic parishes are wondering how they will reach and catechize the young. Pastoral conversion means being bold and creative, challenging the idea that “we’ve always done it that way.” (cf. EG 33)

It implies creating communities in which Christians can come to know their faith and deepen it, receiving the faith in a healthy supportive way, so that as missionary disciples are sent forth into the world, they can respond to challenges, attacks, and being discounted. The communities themselves can become places of both fraternity and solidarity, places where people feel welcome and at home.

The new way of thinking includes giving a priority to youth. There is an upcoming synod on youth and young people have developed a preparatory document for the synod. Many young people struggle, because the faith has not been properly transmitted to them. Young people struggle, not only with existential questions, but also with practical problems like finding work, and spiritual problems like having a sense of belonging to a community of faith in a period of increasing secularization.

Last July at the Convocation of Catholic Leaders, Hosffman Ospino presented the stark reality:

In 1991 about 3 percent of the U.S. Population self-identified as non-religiously affiliated or “nones.” Today, 26 years later, about 25 percent of all people in our country self-identify as such. The trend is very clear. We know that about 20 million people in our country who were born and raised Catholic do not self-identify as such anymore. It is likely that many of them, especially those who are young, joined the ranks of the nones. (Hosffman Ospino, “Keynote Address,” Convocation of Catholic Leaders, Orlando, July 2, 2017, in Origins 47/11 (July 20, 2017) 165.)

Are we passionate about our youth? If we are, then this means being willing and open to accompanying them personally, even if this makes demands on our time and energy. A passion, born out of love, means providing sound catechesis and formation, so that amid the pressures of a secular culture, they can verify their experience against the Tradition, learning to use their freedom to make wise choices that lead to authentic human flourishing.

Our great Tradition must contribute something to the culture – something of the true, the good, and the beautiful – that will support young people in their journey. The beauty of Catholicism – in art, architecture, music, and in its liturgical, spiritual and intellectual tradition – cannot be hidden but must be re-proposed. The Catholic intellectual tradition also can support many young people who are confronted with scientism, an ideology that exalts the scientific method, while excluding the life of faith.

Young people as members of the holy, faithful people of God should be taken seriously, and their gifts should be appreciated. The institutional Church might seek out the expertise of the young as a precious resource, especially in fields like social communications and marketing, for the purposes of evangelization.

Pastoral conversion involves helping the laity to accept responsibility for evangelization and to really live their vocations. I am grateful for the service of the bishops, priests and deacons, who work tirelessly for their flocks; however, the clergy are a distinct minority, who place themselves at the service of the lay faithful so that the laity might be protagonists in the evangelizing mission of the Church.
Of course, this mission is not carried out primarily within the walls of the church. Instead, the laity are called to be missionaries in their homes, neighborhoods, and workplaces and to transform those places with the Gospel. The laity need to be equipped for evangelization in the world. The Church goes forth to those places where the laity live and work to transmit the Gospel. This awareness must be a stimulus to deeper pastoral conversion, so that the structures, programs, and pastoral activity might be more effective in announcing the Gospel.

Finally, pastoral conversion involves a change of style and not in a merely superficial way. The Gospel must communicate the tenderness and mercy of God and the beauty of Christ. Harshness, severity, and being judgmental, in word and attitude, seldom, if ever, are effective strategies. Pastoral conversion means transmitting the faith in a language that people can understand and transmitting in a personal way – one on one.

This change in style also means being with the poor, ministering to them and learning from them (cf. EG, 198-200), gradually being transformed into a Church of the poor. While financial resources are important, when the faithful repeatedly hear calls for money, without a corresponding announcement of the joyful Gospel message and a genuine concern for the salvation of souls, they quickly become disheartened. The People of God want a Church that speaks for them with integrity and defends them. The proof of the change in style will come in the consistency of Christian witness.

Conclusion: Sharing the Dream

Now it is time for you, the Church of Brooklyn, to be missionary disciples – to put out into the deep for a great catch of new disciples. Recall that at the calling of the first disciples (Luke 5:1-11), when Jesus told Peter to put out into the deep, Peter was skeptical; nevertheless, he obeyed and was astonished at the great catch of fish. Aware of his sinfulness, he asked the Lord to depart, but Jesus refused. Instead, he called him to be a fisher of men. He left everything to follow Jesus. He became a disciple and a missionary.

At the conclusion of Saint John’s Gospel (John 21:1-14), the Apostles were again fishing and hadn’t caught anything. The Risen Lord told them to cast their nets, and they caught one hundred fifty-three large fish. With the Lord Jesus, all things are possible. The mission is daunting, but it is our mission: to make sure that “the joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and minds of all who encounter Jesus” (EG, 1). That is Pope Francis’ dream for the Church – right here in Brooklyn, and he wants this to be your dream too. So, be bold! Be creative! And put out into the deep!
Staff Contact Information

Theodore Musco ............................................. 718.281.9544
Secretary, Evangelization and Catechesis. ... tmusco@diobrook.org

Nelsa Elias .................................................. 718.965.7300 ext. 5558
Facilitator, Catechetical Program Outreach ........ nelias@diobrook.org

Christine Georgi ........................................... 718.965.7300 ext. 5417
Registrar ..................................................... cgeorgi@diobrook.org

Reverend Joseph Gibino ................................. 718.965.7300 ext. 5559
Coordinator, Curriculum and Degrees ................ jgibino@diobrook.org

Krzysztof Gospodarzec ................................. 718.281.9544
Liaison, Polish Community ................................ krzysg29@hotmail.com

Martha Hernandez ........................................ 718.965.7300 ext. 5540
Administrative Assistant ............................... mhernandez@diobrook.org

Reverend James Kuroly ............................... 718.281.9544
Chaplain, Youth and Young Adult Faith Formation Programs ................................. jkuroly@diobrook.org

Lucia Morales ............................................. 718.965.7300 ext. 5518
Specialist, Catholic Youth Ministry Initiative ................... lmorales@diobrook.org

Paul Morisi .................................................. 718.965.7300 ext. 5556
Director, Youth and Young Adult Faith Formation .................. pmorisi@diobrook.org

Maria Plasencia ........................................... 718.965.7300 ext. 1036
Administrative Assistant ............................... mplasencia@diobrook.org

Christian Rada ............................................. 718.965.7300 ext. 5541
Director, Marriage, Family Formation, and Respect Life Education .......... crada@diobrook.org

Joann Roa .................................................... 718.965.7300 ext. 2440
Director, Adult Faith Formation .......................... jroa@diobrook.org

Clendy Calderon (until July 3, 2018)
Executive Administrative Assistant, Secretary for Evangelization and Catechesis

To be determined
Specialist, Special Needs Religious Education

Catholic Youth Organization Staff

Robert Caldera .............................................. 718.281.9549
Director ...................................................... rcaldera@diobrook.org

Annmarie Creighton ...................................... 718.281.9548
Administrative Assistant ............................... acreighton@diobrook.org

Keith Goldberg ............................................ 718.281.9550
Sports Coordinator ........................................ kgoldberg@diobrook.org

George Simone ............................................ 718.399.5928
Technology/Sports Coordinator ......................... gsimone@diobrook.org