



Dear DREs and Youth Ministers:

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From the Youth Ministry Office:

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The Burned-in Hand Imprint with the Sign of the Cross

As I mentioned, all my articles for the year are focused on the Sign of the Cross. This month I'm writing about the Sign of the Cross with the burned-in imprint of a human hand left by a visitor from Purgatory.

"Purgatory!?" you might be saying, "Isn't that kind of 'old school'? Do we still believe in *that*?" Before you roll your eyes, put this down, or fast-forward to the next article, just listen to the story and consider the evidence. The Church teaching and the documentation speak for themselves.

Close to the Vatican, alongside the Tiber River in Rome, stands a beautiful neo-Gothic church (the only one in that style in the whole city) which is called the "Sacred Heart of Suffrage." In this context, the word "suffrage" refers to the help given to the souls in Purgatory. In a room in the sacristy, one can view a small but fascinating collection of pieces of evidence. Each of the exhibited objects bears visible, physical traces left by souls in Purgatory. The collection is known as the *Piccolo Museo del Purgatorio* or the Little Museum of Purgatory. The church and the museum represent two sides of Purgatory: the collection offers impressive bits of tangible evidence for the harrowing existence of souls there, while the Church itself displays the spiritual work of mercy and charity for the suffering souls as practiced from the beginning in the Catholic Church. The great central triptych in the church, representing the Sacred Heart and the poor (or holy souls) and various saints, has been referred to by Pope Benedict XVI as, "a visual compendium of Catholic doctrine on Purgatory." The paranormal specimens in the *Museo del Purgatorio* and a few other additional items are the best documented paranormal evidence to be found in relation to contacts with the dead.

So, let me tell you the story of the burned-in hand imprint and the Sign of the Cross because these are "Exhibit 7b" found in the museum.

On the eve of All Souls' Day, November 1, 1731, the abbess of the Poor Clare Monastery of St. Francis in Todi (Italy) received an unusual visitor. It was the soul of a deceased priest, Fr. Panzini, the former abbot of a monastery in Mantua (Italy). He asked Mother Isabella Fornari, to pray for his soul and for his release from Purgatory. It is unknown whether they had ever met during his lifetime, but it is clear that she was a holy woman and her prayers were effective. Finally, to convince her of the reality of his visit and his sufferings, he left one mark from his left hand, plus the Sign of the Cross burned deeply into the wood of Mother Isabella's work table, one of the same hand on a sheet of paper, and finally touched her sleeve. This touch burned through two layers of clothing. The charred fabric from her sleeve and chemise is also displayed.



Exhibit 7b: Same left hand and cross on wooden table of Mother Fornari.

Gerald J. M. Van Den Aardweg, Ph.D., is a Dutch psychotherapist in private practice. He writes in his book, *Hungry Souls: Supernatural Visits, Messages, and Warnings from Purgatory* (2009), "The very basic Jewish belief in what Catholics call Purgatory, as it is apparent from the second book of Macabees, has not changed very much over the centuries. Even now, the orthodox Jews who accept the Talmud—the traditional explanations of the Mosaic laws—believe in a period of purification after death (up to a maximum of 12 months). The purification is effected by a suffering that is often described as burning in a fire. The person who has been very wicked cannot be purified and is relegated to eternal Hell. The fire of purification and the fire of Hell are seen as the same, the 'Gehinnom.' The sons of the departed therefore

have the duty to recite the 'kaddish' for their deceased parents for one year; this prayer is thought 'to help raise the soul to its ultimate destination in God's presence.'"

"These Jewish beliefs and customs relating to the dead must be very similar to those in the time of Our Lord, and they help us to understand what the first Christians believed. No doubt the early Christians adopted the idea of Purgatory itself, as well as praying for the dead and making sacrifices for them—including offering the Mass—from the Jewish mother religion. This is likely the simple explanation why the New Testament only makes indirect references to Purgatory: there was no doubt of its existence. Purgatory and charity for the dead must have been an integral part of the Christian faith and practice from the earliest beginnings."

"A moving early Christian account of a manifestation of a 'poor soul' can be found in the 'Acta' of the martyrdom of St. Perpetua from Carthage, described by the young martyr herself in the year 202 during her stay in the dungeon before she and the other Christians were thrown to the wild animals. In a vision she saw her deceased seven-year old brother, Dinocrates, in a pitiful condition, in a gloomy place 'with many others, flushed with heat and thirsty.' There was a basin full of water but its edge was so high that the boy could not drink."

"Then I awoke and knew that my brother was suffering. But I trusted that I could help him out... And I prayed day and night for Dinocrates, with sighs and tears, so that he

might be given to me." Then St. Perpetua got a second vision and saw her little brother, healthy, freshly washed, and playing cheerfully. The basin had lowered, and he could drink as much as he wanted. "Then I awoke and knew that my brother's punishment was over."

"The notion of Purgatory and the belief that the living can come to the aid of the suffering souls there are anything but medieval inventions. Affirmations of the ancient Church fathers show that the Apostles themselves professed them. St. John Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople around the year 400, said that the Apostles ordained the commemoration of the departed during holy Mass, as it is a great help for them. 'As we have learned from the Apostles, praying for the dead is helpful to them,' preached St. Augustine (354-430), who

wrote and taught a great deal on Purgatory."

What about those encounters with the dead that are facilitated by a seer, or someone who claims they can put you in

touch with your deceased loved one? The Catholic Church has always urged us not to try to communicate with the deceased in this way (CCC 2116). People who claim they can do this are almost always connected with the demonic or imposters.

Poor souls can never be summoned by us, but are permitted by God on occasion, to make an appearance to ask for prayers. Praying for the dead is a spiritual work of mercy. (CCC 1030-1032)

"For those who (at death) find themselves in a condition of being open to God, but still imperfectly, the journey towards full beatitude requires a purification, which the faith of the Church illustrates in the doctrine of Purgatory." – Blessed John Paul II

NCYC...Keep the NCYC participants in your prayers. The event takes place November 17-19 in Indianapolis. For those not going to NCYC this year, please consider participating in the opportunity listed below:

In-services by Vicki Thorn - Wednesday, November 16, 2011

- 8:30 - 12:30 Post Abortion Aftermath and Healing St. Mary's in Sleepy Eye (Presentation to professionals and other adults)
- 2:15 - 3:15 "What They Didn't Tell You in Sex Ed" St. Mary's H.S. in Sleepy Eye (Presentation to Sleepy Eye & New Ulm Catholic School 9 - 12 grades)
- 7:00 - 8:00 "What They Didn't Tell You in Sex Ed" St. Catherine's in Redwood Falls (Presentation to diocesan RE students, 9th - 12th grades and their parents)



Upcoming 2011-12 Dates

Wed, Nov 16-Sun, Nov 20	National Catholic Youth Conference-dept early am on Wed, arrive back Sun		Indianapolis, IN
Mon, Dec 12	DRE/YM Gathering	10:00 am – 3:00 pm	Center for Youth Ministry
Mon, Jan 9	DRE/YM Gathering	10:00 am – 3:00 pm	Center for Youth Ministry
Mon, Feb 6	DRE/YM Gathering	10:00 am – 3:00 pm	Center for Youth Ministry
Mon, Mar 12	DRE/YM Gathering	10:00 am – 3:00 pm	Center for Youth Ministry
Mon, Apr 16	DRE/YM Gathering – Curriculum Day	10:00 am – 3:00 pm	Pastoral Center, New Ulm
Sun, Apr 22	Junior High Festival	11:00 am – 5:00 pm	TBA
Mon, May 21	DRE/YM Spring Fling	Noon-4:00 pm	TBA

Check out Riverbend TEC! For more details and an application check out the Web site: <http://riverbendtec.org/>

RB239	January 14-16, 2012	Bird Island, MN
RB240	February 18-20, 2012	New Ulm, MN
RB241	March 17-19, 2012	Winsted, MN
RB242	June 23-25, 2012	Bird Island, MN

From the Religious Education Office

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Techno-Catechesis: How to Use New Tools

by **Bryan Reising**

Technology and Catechesis – can the two be used in the same sentence? Does technology help or hinder our evangelizing and catechizing mission? Well – there is so much on the web, so much technology out there, and it changes so fast, where do we even begin? We begin with prayer, then we learn and discover, and then we dive in. Nothing can replace face-to-face evangelization and catechesis, but technology can be a tool to reach out to more, invite more, engage more, evangelize more, catechize more, and involve more!

Desktops, Laptops, iPad

With early models starting in the early 1970s by HP, to more sophisticated desktops by Apple and IBM in the late 1970s through the 1980s, to the Desktops of today which includes webcams, microphones, and programs to make movies, presentations, and graphics; desktop computers are as common as the television set. Parish and diocesan offices rely on the desktop computer for information and communication.

Laptops and netbook computers made its way into public use as early as the mid 1970s to the early 1980s. Today, laptops have many of the features of the Desktop – some with docking stations to a hard drive and network. Like the desktop, the laptop is important to gather information and communicate for parish and diocesan leadership. And it is more portable – so it can be an office on the go.

iPad, developed by Apple, is a flat screen touchable computing tablet. Its uses are even greater than desktops and laptops because they are very portable. It can even be used as a still life and movie camera. They are used personally by consumers, but also the business world is using them for greater productivity and less paperwork. At the NCCL Conference last

year I sat by a colleague of mine who was using it while attending a learning session. Instead of writing notes feverishly, she would merely take pictures of the PowerPoint presentation so that she would have important information for her ministry. The iPad can also be used to read books like the Bible, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and pertinent documents of the Church (as well as for pleasure reading).

These tools can be used for research, note taking, online courses, prayers experiences, social networking with those in your faith community, around the diocese, and around the world.

iPhone and Androids

It is interesting that while the sales of Desktops are flat and laptops are growing, smart phones like the iPhone are exploding in sales. Aps (Applications) are used on smart phones to easily find Web sites and information. This can be helpful for faith formation by exploring mobile Web sites that have aps like www.mobile.vatican.va and <http://www.catholictv.com/catholic-iphone.aspx>.

Cell Phones and Texting

Cell phone usage has increased in the past several years because they are portable and they can help keep track of family and friends. Young people

today commute with the cell phone through texting. Texting their friends and family has become the primary way for young people to communicate besides face-to-face contact. Youth ministries have discovered Web sites that relay information and invitation through mass texting:

<http://masstextmessaging.com/best-mass-texting-reviews.html> and <http://hackingchristianity.net/2011/04/churches-youth-groups-mass-texting-for-free.html>.

iPod

iPod and iTunes revolutionized the way we listen to music, audio books, view videos, and with accessories, the iPod can pick up AM/FM radio signals and television programming with a cable. Learning new music for the liturgy and listening to Christian and Catholic praise music can be opportunities for formation as well as audio books with religious content.



Pope Benedict XVI uses an iPad to Twitter

PowerPoint

PowerPoint is a computer program for catechists wishing to add to their catechetical presentation via a slide show. With words and images, students are able to learn through viewing PowerPoint slides. Necessary tools include a laptop or computing tablet and a LCD projector to display the PowerPoint. You can also use music and sound effects with PowerPoint.

University of Dayton's Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF)

For the almost 3 years, the Diocese of New Ulm has been partners with the University of Dayton's VLCFF. University of Dayton is a Catholic, Marianist University known for innovative ways of learning. VLCFF offers 6-7 cycles of courses per year. During some cycles, nearly 1000 students are participating – and it is growing. Several 5-week courses and 3-week seminars are offered. Some of the courses include Introduction to Catechesis, Catholic Beliefs, Church History, Sacraments, "Media, Faith and Values," Parish and Social Action, Praying with Children, and a Vision for Catholic Youth Ministry. Online courses are also offered in Spanish. In addition to help equip our catechists and others, certificates for catechists and others are offered through VLCFF. For further information, see: <http://vlc.udayton.edu/> or click the following to become a new student: http://vlc.udayton.edu/profile/become_student.php.



World Wide Web – Blogs, Facebook, Google+, Twitter, YouTube

Sir Timothy John "Tim" Berners-Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web, launched public access to the World Wide Web on August 6, 1991. Since that time, the World Wide Web expanded to include company Web sites, information Web sites, social networking, music and video, and so on. Today it is used by all entities of the Church, from the Vatican Web site to parish Web sites. Catholic universities like the University of Dayton are using the web for formational purposes.

Blogs are virtual diaries, commentaries, or news stories that give information regarding virtually everything. It is being used more and more within Church circles: from young adults who attend World Youth Day to give a day-by-day account of the experience to the USCCB reporting on daily events

to Joe Paprocki's Catechist's Journey blog for catechists: <http://catechistsjourney.loyolapress.com/>.

Facebook is a social network site used by over 800 million users. It is used to keep up with family and friends, sharing daily events, photos, and videos. It even has a chat feature. Events can be posted on Facebook. Professionally, parishes, youth ministry groups, Catholic ministries can have Facebook pages in order to promote their ministry, their events, and invite people to join.

Google+ is a new social network Web site used by over 40 million people which started in late June 2011. Like Facebook, it can be used to communicate with family, friends, and professional purposes. The circles are grouped in categories such as Family, Friends, Work Colleagues, Parish Catechetical Leaders, Youth Ministers and you can just view a stream from one of your circles. It also has a video hangout where ten people or less can communicate through video and audio. To sign up for Google+, click: <http://www.google.com/intl/en/about/products/index.html> and scroll to Social and click Google+ to sign up. Then you can include Bryan Reising in one of your circles.

Twitter is another social network where people can network with each other through using less words (140 characters or less) called tweets. It can be used as a microblog to cover events such as a conference as well as communicate where people will be to meet for Church events and other events.

Apple TV and the Future

Apple TV was introduced in 2007. It is versatile in use and uses Airplay (wireless transfer from the internet to TV) to stream videos and audio from the web onto TV. The potential for this is to have a media library of evangelization and catechetical resources at our fingertips.

And what is in store for the future? Check out the following YouTubes to see what is possible for the future regarding augmented reality: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7_mOdi3O5E and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HW9gU_4AUCA.

Some more information on the future of technology: http://www.ted.com/talks/pattie_maes_demos_the_sixth_sense.html and User Interface: http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/john_underkoffler_drive_3d_data_with_a_gesture.html. These future technologies may become reality as we create new ways we can communicate, create, evangelize and catechize.

Upcoming Gather for December 12

10:00 am-3:00 pm

Center for Youth Ministry

Our speaker will be Katie Smith-Myott from Loyola Press. Please RSVP Cindy soon: cblickem@dnu.org.

Upcoming Opportunities

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Advent Prayer Service

Invite your families to come to the Advent Prayer Service on Sunday, December 11 starting at 4:00 p.m. at the Church of St. Aloysius in Olivia. Bring your Baby Jesus from your nativity scene for a blessing from Bishop John LeVoir. Bring baby clothes for our mission in Guatemala and local charities. Bring your monetary donations for First Choice Pregnancy Services in New Ulm.



University of Dayton's VLCFF: Cycle 1: January 8 - February 11

(Registration: Opens 9/27/11; Closes 1/14/12)

- Catholic Beliefs
- Christology
- Church History 1
- Communication and Community
- Conscience
- Designing a Parish Catechetical Plan
- Designing and Implementing Adult Learning and Faith Formation (AFL 7)
- Digital Catechesis: Web Literacy
- Ecclesiology: Beginnings of the Church
- Ecclesiology: Reframing Church
- Ecumenism
- Facilitating Adult Learning and Faith Formation (AFL 4)
- Faith and Human Development
- Foundations and Vision for Adult Learning and Faith Formation (AFL 1)
- Images of Jesus
- Introduction to Catechesis
- Introduction to Liturgy

- Introduction to Paul's Life and Letters
- Introduction to Practical Morality
- Introduction to Prayer
- Introduction to Scripture
- Islam
- Marianist Studies: Community
- Marianist Studies: Education
- Marianist Studies: Mary, Holy Possibility
- New Testament
- Old Testament
- On Bended Knee (Seminar)
- Our Hearts Were Burning (Seminar)
- Roman Missal
- Sacraments
- Spirituality and Inclusive Faith Communities
- Survey of Catholic Doctrine
- Survey of Catholic Social Teaching
- Theological Reflection: Key to Connecting Faith and Life
- Vision for Catholic Youth Ministry
- Vocation, Spirituality, and Discipleship of Catechists



Evangelization and Adult Faith Formation Designates

If your Area Faith Community or parish already has a designate for Evangelization and Adult Faith Formation, please e-mail Cindy to confirm who it is. If you currently do not have a designate, contact the pastor about appointing someone and forward that name to Cindy: cblickem@dnu.org. We are hoping to have some great opportunities and resources for both evangelization and adult faith formation, hopefully starting this spring.

Mohr Catechist Formation Fund A Gift for You, Catechists, Youth Team Members, Teachers of the Religion

This scholarship fund is a great gift for your catechists, teachers, youth ministry team, and many of you! You can receive scholarships for Faith Formation Day and other catechist formation opportunities, opportunities outside the diocese like the NCCL Conference, online courses through the University of Dayton's VLCFF (Virtual Learning Community of Faith Formation), and even some college courses on faith formation. An application is on our Web site: <http://www.dnu.org/word/documents/MohrScholarship-CatechistFormationFund-Application.pdf>. Please submit your applications soon!

VIRTUS

All Catechists are required to:

1. Have a background check before beginning to volunteer;
2. Sign Forms A & B of the diocesan sexual misconduct policy before beginning to volunteer;

3. Attend VIRTUS training within 60 days of beginning to volunteer;
4. Do the online training as assigned. This is to be done as soon as possible – communicate this with your catechists, volunteers, and youth ministry adult team.

The VIRTUS training is for ages 16 or older. An individual must be 18 to serve alone in a ministry with minors. If you have a question about VIRTUS, please contact Margy Manderfeld at **507-233-5305**. Please do not contact VIRTUS directly unless you need a password.

The following are some VIRTUS trainings scheduled for volunteers and employees:

- 11/10/2011 6:30 PM - Granite Falls - St. Andrew
- 11/16/2011 5:00 PM - New Ulm - St. Mary
- 11/21/2011 6:30 PM - Willmar - St. Mary
- 11/30/2011 6:30 PM - Tracy - St. Mary

Remember: Also schedule Lessons Three and Four for October or early November.

This year we offer VIRTUS Lessons 3 and 4 in a combined session this fall. Please schedule your Children's Training for October or early November (**deadline for the report to be sent to the Safe Environment Office is November 30, 2011**). In addition, schedule make up sessions (deadline for make-up sessions reports to be turned into the Safe Environment Office by March 1, 2012).

Remember, Opt Out Forms are accepted (and signed by the parent) before your training in the fall. After that initial training, Opt Out Forms are not provided to the parents. Please be sure to provide the parent/guardian with a copy of the Parent Handbook as required by the Charter so that they can train their child at home. To access the Parent Handbook in English or Spanish, log on to our VIRTUS account, go to the Educators tab, then to Lesson Plans, Step 2: Click here to read or print *Teaching Touching Safety*.

Thank you for sending in your catechists lists to Cindy. Please respond to the Safe Environment Office's request for any updates or corrections.

Interested in a Masters in Theology, Religious Education, Pastoral Ministry, Parish Administration, or Canon Law?

- St. Mary's University of Minnesota: www.smumn.edu/ipm. (They offer MA or a Professional Certificate in Pastoral Ministries or Pastoral Administration; they also offer a Graduate Certificate in Canon Law)
- St. Paul Seminary Graduate Program for Lay People: www.saintpaulseminary.org (this includes an optional online distance learning degree. Their

degrees include an MA in Theology, Pastoral Ministry, and Religious Education).

From NCCL

Even though Catechetical Sunday is over, NCCL has a couple of items that you may be interested in:

1. **Musings: Becoming Who You Receive**
This book is ideal for adult faith formation and can be a great benefit in RCIA, for catechists, and parents. Besides offering a reflection on the Sunday gospel, this book offers a question with lines for the reader to share some musings. It also includes six pages on key changes in the language of the people's response in the new *Revised Roman Missal, Third Edition*. Rather than simply focus on the change of language, the book offers an excerpt from a story that contains a deeper understanding of the meaning associated with the change of words. This is an exclusive NCCL product.
2. **Do This in Memory of ME**
This distinctive one-inch lapel pin is composed of a high-shine gold chalice with a white enamel host positioned on top. It is surrounded by the phrase, "Do this in Memory of ME." This pin, which carries the words of the catechetical theme for this year, is ideal for Catechetical Sunday and a reminder to all catechists of their role to present lifelong catechesis for the Eucharist. It is also an excellent insignia for Eucharistic ministers as well as a gift for children receiving their First Eucharist. This is an exclusive NCCL product.

To see these materials, go to <http://tiny.cc/nsio5>; to order these go to: <http://tiny.cc/wu17m>

National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL) Membership

The cost of an individual membership to NCCL is only \$60.00. This is only \$5.00 a month. Receive CL (Catechetical Leader) Magazine, CL Weekly from Lee Nagel every Monday, discounts on resources, and information on the national conference and regional workshops! *Use the Mohr Scholarship Fund for this opportunity!* For further information, check out the Web site: www.nccl.org. For information on the national conference, go to www.nccl.us. Check out this NCCL Conference promo: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpP8NvJlwBE>.

Parish Catechesis Question

How do you use technology for your ministry? What tools do you use and how do you use them for evangelization, catechesis, youth ministry, and parish ministry in general? Send your ideas to: breising@dnu.org.

