Adult Faith Formation Matters ... A Lot!

The Call to Reorient Our Ministerial Priorities and Practices
Plan for Today

Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: Overview

Landscape of Documents on AFF: In Brief

Living the Priority: Implications and Challenges
WHAT is Adult Faith Formation and WHY does it matter?

• That “by which people consciously grow in the life of Christ through experience, reflection, prayer, and study.”
• Lifelong growth in discipleship
WHAT is Adult Faith Formation and WHY does it matter?

• Dimensions of Christian life: knowledge of the faith, liturgical life, moral formation, prayer, belonging to community, missionary spirit
WHY does it matter?

Just one-third of U.S. Catholics agree with their church that Eucharist is body, blood of Christ

BY GREGORY A. SMITH

(Avalon Studio via Getty Images)
Seven-in-ten U.S. Catholics believe bread, wine used in Communion are symbolic.

% of U.S. Catholics who ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Believe church’s teaching about transubstantiation: 31%</th>
<th>Believe bread and wine are symbols: 69%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28%</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Know church teaching about transubstantiation</td>
<td>Think church teaches bread and wine are symbols</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure what church teaches</td>
<td>Know church teaching about transubstantiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unsure what church teaches</td>
<td>No answer</td>
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Note: Figures may not add to 100% or to subtotals indicated due to rounding.
Source: Survey conducted Feb. 4-19, 2019, among U.S. adults.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
The great danger in today’s world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, ...
“... the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience. ...
“Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. ...
“God’s voice is no longer heard…”  (EG, no. 2)
Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us

• 1999
• 20th anniversary
Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us

• Intro – A Renewed Commitment
• 1 – A New Focus on AFF
• 2 – Qualities of Mature Adult Faith and Discipleship
• 3 – A Plan for Ministry: Goals, Principles, Content and Approaches for AFF
• 4 – A Plan for Ministry: Organizing for AFF
• Conclusion – Our Hope for the Future
Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us

• A Renewed Commitment to the Priority of AFF
A Renewed Commitment to AFF

Adult Catholics:
• mature in faith
• well equipped to share the Gospel
A Renewed Commitment to AFF

• profound, lifelong conversion
• a comprehensive, contemporary synthesis of the faith
A Renewed Commitment to AFF

• “the central task in [the] catechetical enterprise”

• “the axis around which revolves the catechesis” of all others (no. 5)
A Renewed Commitment to AFF

• “at the heart of our catechetical vision and practice” (no. 6)
A Renewed Commitment to AFF

• “real change in emphasis and priorities”
A Renewed Commitment to AFF

• “new ways of thinking and acting”
• For faith and missionary dynamism
A Renewed Commitment to AFF

“To awaken ... a passion for renewal”
Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us

• Part I – A New Focus on AFF (as a Priority)
The Priority of AFF

• “always needed and must be a priority”
The Priority of AFF

“Every Church ministry will be energized through a dynamic ministry of adult catechesis” (no. 39).
The Priority of AFF

• the point of reference
• the organizing principle
• at the center
The Priority of AFF

• “Yet despite the consistency and clarity of this message, the Catholic community has not yet fully heard and embraced it.” (no. 43)
Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us

• Part II – Qualities of Mature Adult Faith and Discipleship
Mature Adult Faith & Discipleship

“The maturity of Christian faith can blossom at any age.”
(no. 48)
Mature Adult Faith & Discipleship

• Living Faith
• Explicit Faith
• Fruitful Faith
Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us

• Parts III and IV – Planning: Strategy and Organization
Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us

• Strategy:
  • Goals
  • Principles
  • Content/Dimensions
  • Approaches
Three Major Goals

(1) Invite and Enable Ongoing Conversion to Jesus in Holiness of Life
Three Major Goals

(2) Promote and Support Active Membership in the Christian Community
Three Major Goals

(3) Call and Prepare Adults to Act as Disciples in Mission to the World
Conversion
Community
Discipleship
Basic Principles (select)

• Strengthen the role and mission of the family in Church and society
Families, become what you are!

I now wish ... to invoke the fire of the Spirit upon all the world’s families.
Basic Principles (select)

• Give AFF the best of our pastoral resources and energies
Basic Principles (select)

• Use the catechumenate as an inspiring model for all catechesis
Basic Principles (select)

• Let AFF programs be centers of service and inculturation
Content/Dimensions

Four pillars of *Catechism*

[Image]

Community
Missionary Discipleship
Community
Mission
Faith
Liturgy
Prayer
Moral Life

Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us
Various Ways to Approach AFF

• A comprehensive, multi-faceted, and coordinated approach
Various Ways to Approach AFF

- Liturgy
- Family/Home Activities
- Small Groups
- Large Groups
- Individual Activities
Various Ways to Approach AFF

• “Whatever approach is used, each parish needs to consider seriously how it will make the life-long faith formation of its adult members its chief catechetical concern.” (no. 112)
Organizing for AFF

• Parish
• Diocese
Organizing the Parish

• The Parish is the Curriculum: “the success of such efforts rests very much on the quality and total fabric of parish life.” (no. 118)
Organizing the Parish

• Assessing and shaping parish culture
Organizing the Parish

• **Leadership roles:**
  - Pastor/pastoral leaders
  - AFF leader
  - AFF team
  - Catechist(s) of adults
Organizing (Arch)Diocesan Support

• 1: a clearly stated vision
• 2: a clear strategy
• 3: adequate personnel and resources
Implementation

Study the plan

Analyze the situation

Develop action steps

Prepare your leaders
Second Vatican Council (1962-1965)

• Council of renewal: renewed identity for renewed mission
Second Vatican Council (1962-1965)

• *Lumen Gentium* – *Light of the Nations*
Second Vatican Council (1962-1965)

• Universal call to holiness
• Vocation and mission of the laity
  • Co-responsibility for the mission of the Church
  • Full, active, conscious participation
Second Vatican Council (1962-1965)

- Sacrosanctum Concilium – on the liturgy
- Lumen Gentium – on the Church
- Apostolicam Actuositatem – on the lay apostolate
- Ad Gentes – on the Church’s missionary activity
- Gaudium et Spes – on the Church in the world today
Pope St. Paul VI

• Deepening the renewal of the mission-identity of the Church
• Evangelization – the defining mission of the Church
• Catechesis within the umbrella of the mission of evangelization
Pope St. Paul VI

• *General Catechetical Directory* (1971)
• *Evangelii Nuntiandi* – on evangelization (1975)
• Synod on Catechesis (1977)
Pope St. Paul VI

• “The Church ‘exists to evangelize,’ ...”

(EN, no. 14)
Pope St. John Paul II

• Renewal of catechesis within evangelization
• Vital role of family life and mission of laity
• Call to new evangelization and mission
• The call to holiness in the Third Millennium
Pope St. John Paul II

- *Catechesi Tradendae* – on catechesis (1979)
- *Familiaris Consortio* – on the family (1981)
- *Christifidelis Laici* – on the laity (1988)
- *Redemptoris Missio* – on mission in the Church (1990)
- *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997)
- *Novo Millennio Ineuntae* – on the Church in the new millennium (2001)
On Catechesis

• The early Church: “...the whole of the efforts within the Church to make disciples...” (CT, no. 1)
Catechesi Tradendae

On Catechesis

• “At the heart of catechesis we find ... a Person...” (CT, no. 5)
On Catechesis

• “Aim ... to put people ... in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ...” (CT, no. 5)
Catechesi Tradendae

On Catechesis and the Kerygma

“Catechesis ... is no less evangelical than the kerygma...” (CT, no. 25)
On Catechesis and Evangelization

“a moment or aspect of evangelization”

(CT, no. 26)
On Catechesis and Evangelization

• “no separation or opposition between catechesis and evangelization.”  (CT, no. 18)
Catechesi Tradendae

On Adult Faith Formation

• “the principal form of catechesis” (CT, no. 43)
Catechesi Tradendae

On Adult Faith Formation

• “to be effective, [catechesis] must be permanent” (CT, no. 43)
On Catechesis

• “Catechesis is that particular form of the ministry of the word which matures initial conversion to make it into a living, explicit and fruitful confession of faith” (GDC, no. 82; NDC, no. 19)
On Evangelization and Catechesis

• “Catechetical renewal should be based thus on prior missionary evangelization.” (GDC, no. 57)
• “Catechesis must always be considered a priority in evangelization.” (GDC, no. 64)
Ecclesia in America

“The religious situation of young people and adults calls for a catechesis which is more kerygmatic and more organic in its presentation of the contents of the faith” (no. 69)
Pope Benedict XVI

- Refocus on the Person of Jesus of Nazareth
- Champion of Catholic Education and Faith Formation
- Co-responsibility of the Laity
- Synod on the New Evangelization
Pope Benedict XVI

• “Being a 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.” (DCE, no. 1)
Pope Francis

• The call to missionary and pastoral conversion, missionary discipleship
• Culture of encounter and culture of accompaniment
• Kerygmatic and mystagogical catechesis
• Reproposing the call to holiness
Pope Francis

- *Evangelii Gaudium* – on the joy of the Gospel and missionary discipleship
- *Amoris Laetitia* – on the joy of love and family life
- *Gaudete et Exsultate* – on the call to holiness
Pope Francis

“All Christian formation consists of entering more deeply into the kerygma, which is reflected in and constantly illumines, the work of catechesis…” (EG, no. 165)
Pope Francis

“The first proclamation ... the principal proclamation, the one which we must hear again and again in different ways, the one which we must announce one way or another throughout the process of catechesis, at every level and moment.” (EG, no. 164)
USCCB

- To Teach as Jesus Did (1972)
- Go and Make Disciples (1992, 2002)
- Communities of Salt and Light (1993, 2006)
- Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium (1995)
- Sons and Daughters of the Light (1996)
- Blessings of Age (1999)
- **Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us** (1999)
  - National Directory for Catechesis (2005)
  - Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord (2005)
  - United States Catholic Catechism for Adults (2006)
  - Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers (2014)
  - Living as Missionary Disciples (2017)
Archdiocese of Atlanta Pastoral Plan

• Centrality of AFF recognized
• Prioritize adult catechesis with a focus on family faith formation
Recap of Key Documents

• Priority of evangelization, catechesis, and discipleship formation: *Evangelii Nuntiandi, Catechesi Tradendae, Evangelii Gaudium*

• Full vision and understanding of catechesis/faith formation: *General Directory for Catechesis* and *National Directory for Catechesis*

• Adult Faith Formation: *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us* (see also *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community, Sons and Daughters of the Light, et al.*)
Living the Priority: Implications and Challenges
Organizational Implications

• Parish: culture, leadership, and resources
• Diocese: supporting parishes
• Are our best efforts/resources going toward AFF?
An invitation...

• How to use the vision for AFF in OHWB as a catalyst for the pastoral, mission-oriented renewal called for in *The Joy of the Gospel*
Translating the priority for today

• Challenge of language: “AFF” not always understood
Translating the priority for today

• Importance of evangelization, parish renewal, and role of the family – see next session!
Translating the priority for today

• **From silos to collaboration**
  - Moving from narrow to broad understanding of AFF
  - Not in competition with other ministries—enhances and serves
  - Connect the dots among ministries
  - Heighten awareness and relevance: who are your adults and what are their needs?
The call to change, renewal

“Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: ‘We have always done it this way.’”

(EG, no. 33)
## Recap: Priority of AFF

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<tr>
<th>OHWB</th>
<th>Landscape of Teaching</th>
<th>Implications</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevant</td>
<td>• Rich context</td>
<td>• Room for growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging</td>
<td>• Renewal of catechesis</td>
<td>• Parishes and chancery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>• Advancing mission of evangelization</td>
<td>• OHWB as catalyst for EG, culture change</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Where do we go from here?

(1) Attend the next session on evangelization!
Where do we go from here?

(2) How is the Lord calling me to grow personally as a disciple, in my family life, in my ministry/work, in my parish community?
Where do we go from here?

(3) (Continue to) Be an Advocate

• Address misconceptions about catechesis
• Strive for culture change
Where do we go from here?

(4) Read, study, discuss, and pray about AFF (individually and as a team)

• What would it look like for your parish to make adult discipleship the center of catechesis/ministry?
Where do we go from here?

(5) In light of your role:
• How do you/your parish currently support AFF?
• How might you take the next step to advance AFF?
Where do we go from here?

Chancery/OFD:
• What does prioritizing AFF entail today?
• Strategy, personnel, resources
• Certification review
Questions for Discussion

• What’s working well? What challenges do you face?
• What questions do you have?
• How can the Archdiocese/chancery support you better?
Thank you!

archatl.com/ofd