

Status of Implementation of Synod Initiative III

Origin of the Report

At its January 26, 2008 meeting, the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC) considered a proposal to offer Cardinal Mahony six reports, one on each of the Initiatives of the 2003 Synod. The six reports would outline the work done throughout the archdiocese in implementing the six Initiatives. The APC appointed an ad hoc committee¹ to study the council's ability and willingness to undertake the reports. At the May 10, 2008 meeting, the APC heard the recommendations of the ad hoc committee. It had developed an extensive template for creating the reports and urged the APC to undertake them. The APC endorsed the reporting proposal, and identified Synod Initiative II (participation and accountability) as the topic of the first report, Synod Initiative VI (social justice) as the second report and Synod Initiative III (ongoing education and formation) as the third report.

Scope of the Report

The APC established a committee² to develop the report on Initiative III. The committee worked through the Regional Pastoral Councils (RPC) and their Synod III Committees to help it learn about regional and parish efforts to implement Initiative III. Information on archdiocesan education and formation was also given by the Office of Religious Education and other archdiocesan offices. The committee developed a survey instrument which was sent to each of the five RPCs and faxed to 285 parishes.

The instrument used the language of Initiative III: "Effective religious education and formation programs are to be offered throughout the archdiocese on all levels – children, youth, young adults and adults." The survey asked about the ongoing education and formation of adults and included scripture study, social justice education, opportunities for theological understanding, personal appreciation of all the sacraments, respect for diversity, spirituality and spiritual

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direction, as well as young adult programs. The survey was divided into two parts: Synod Specific and Other.

The cover memorandum sent with the instrument explained that the purpose of the survey was to identify and gather information about Faith Education and Formation resources that are currently available throughout the archdiocese. The memorandum stressed that the intention of the survey is to focus on identifying the broad range of relevant programs that have been effectively developed and used by Catholics in the Los Angeles area, including retreat and spirituality centers, and Catholic educational institutions and associations, as well as parishes. Because of the cultural diversity throughout the Los Angeles Archdiocese, the memo indicated that the survey sought to identify the range of languages used during the presentation of these programs.

The committee also concluded that, based on the work that is being done by the San Gabriel Regional Pastoral Council, one by product of this report will be to create an online database with drop down menus to assist Catholics in identifying what faith formation resources are available for them.

Development of the Report

The five Regional Pastoral Councils used the survey instrument (Addendum I) to estimate the extent of the implementation in the five regions of the Synod's call for effective formation and religious education programs at all levels. Approximately, **118 of 285 parishes reported back, or 41%** of parishes surveyed. The table below gives a breakdown of the survey responses by pastoral region. Addendum II at the end of the report lists the parishes that responded.

Table 1: Survey Responses by Pastoral Region

Pastoral Region	# of Parishes*	# of Parishes Responding	% of Parishes Responding
OLA	73	22	30%
SB	37	21	57%
SP	64	14	22%
SF	47	29	62%
SG	64	32	50%

*Number of parishes do not include Eastern rite parishes and missions.

Each of the five RPCs submitted a report on their region's implementation of Synod Initiative III, using the template recommended by the ad hoc committee. The committee has reviewed these individual reports and has synthesized them in the present report. The committee asks the APC to review its synthesis of the regional reports, to reflect on it, and to propose the APC's conclusions to Cardinal Mahony.

A Note on Language: Education and Formation

Often used interchangeably, "religious education" and "formation" are distinct movements within the process of evangelizing catechesis. The responsibility of passing on the faith which has been entrusted to us cannot be simply reduced to familiarity with the content, or the regurgitation of "knowledge" of the faith.

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In addition to appropriating the content of the faith we are also called to a *metanoia*, or a changing of mind and heart. Where education and formation are divorced one from the other, such a metanoia is often compromised, and our ongoing lifelong conversion to Christ is hobbled. Personal transformation through the deepening of our relationship with God and the participation in the full life of the Church which is the aim of the New Evangelization¹ (cf NDC 17.A), is supported and nurtured by both a solid grounding in the content of the faith as well as engaging in formational experiences that enable us to become a "new creation" in Christ. Essentially when education and formation complement each other we find both the truths of the faith articulated and Christian living practiced.

The formal documents of the Church themselves enumerate six tasks of catechesis which is, of its nature, evangelizing. Of these six tasks, knowledge of the faith is but a single task. Complementing "knowledge of the faith", solid catechesis is also characterized by liturgical formation, moral formation in Christ, education in Prayer, formation for Communal life and the formation of the baptized to participate in the missionary life of the community of believers within society as a larger whole. "These six tasks of catechesis constitute a unified whole by which catechesis seeks to achieve its objective: the formation of disciples of Jesus Christ."² They are interdependent, and are collectively "necessary in order to attain the full development of the Christian faith."³

What follows in this report is a reflection of the many opportunities, both educational and formational, which characterize the many efforts underway in the local parishes of the Archdiocese to nurture Christian discipleship.

¹ National Directory for Catechesis (NDC), 17.A (Washington DC: USCCB, 2005)

² NDC, 20

³ Ibid.

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Summary of Responses Regarding Synod Initiative III Ongoing Education and Formation: Adults, Young Adults and Youth

Before analyzing the data that was reported, we would like to acknowledge that, in retrospect, the survey was confusing to many who completed it. We incorporated the terminology addressing various catechetical and formation areas used in “Gathered and Sent” but there was some overlap in terms (for example, Scripture Study appears in both parts of the survey). In addition, some terms were too broad with no attempt to define what was intended by the term (for example, “theology”, “moral formation” and “knowledge of the faith”. Again, these broad topics overlapped several more specific areas, which made it confusing for the survey respondents.

Another issue which arose, and which is problematic for these kinds of surveys in general, are the questions of who completed the survey, how thorough their knowledge was of the faith formation opportunities in their parish, and how diligently they completed the survey. This obviously impacts the level of accuracy of individual surveys.

A further limitation of the survey is that it does not reflect the diversity of languages and cultures within which faith formation and religious education is delivered in the archdiocese. For example, it does not capture the rich creativity of several ethnic groups, where representatives attend an initial training or workshop in English, and then take the knowledge back to their community, translating the material into the language of the group. Also, the survey was not sent to Eastern Rite parishes/missions which include Cambodian, Vietnamese, Korean and Greek groups in the archdiocese.

Given that we have attempted to measure what has never been measured before, the survey still provides useful insights into the state of faith formation in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, although the data is not as reliable as we would have hoped. We have developed recommendations to help future committees to craft a better instrument for data collection.

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Synod-Specific Parish Programs

Scripture / Bible Study programs were found to be relatively widespread throughout Archdiocesan parishes as was evidenced by the feedback of parishes that responded to the survey. About 78% stated that they have some kind of Scripture program (77% for OLA, 83% for the SF Region, 71% for the SP region, 100% for the SG Region, and 43% for the SB Region). Bible Study, Adult Education, Little Rock, The Gospel of Luke, Estudio Biblico, Religious Ed, Adult Faith Formation, Escuelita, Formacion Basica y Avanzada en Sagradas Escrituras; Kids & Teens Bible Study; Women's Bible Study; Estudio Hombres/Mujeres; School; Scripture from Scratch; Proclamadores de la Palabra; Scripture Class; RCIA; Confirmation Preparation; Youth Ministry; Encounter with the Word; Encounter with the Faith; Communal Preaching, Blest Are We/Religion Curriculum, Sunday Prayer Group - Liturgy, Synopsis of Four Gospels, Tuesdays with St. Paul, Faith Sharing/Living Liturgy, A Survey of the Old Testament & Gospels, Hebrew Scripture, Christian Scripture, Advanced Scripture, and Sojourners are some of the names of the programs that deal with the Scriptures.

Social Justice programs also enjoyed strong and encouraging numbers as reported by respondents. Around 63% specified having Social Justice programs in their parishes (73% for OLA, 72% for the SF Region, 43% for the SP region, 72% for the SG region, and 38% for the SB Region). The program names are SVdP, Comite de Justicia, Get On the Bus, Comite Monsenor Romero, Social Justice, Just Faith, SOS, Loaves and Fishes, Detention Ministry, Comite Ecologo, Service Center, Right to Life, FairTrade Talk, Justice and Peace, One-LA, Social Justice Commission, Grandmothers for Peace, Social Concerns Group, Especialization de Catequesis Primaria, R.E., Confirmation, School, Adult Faith Formation, Grace Stewardship; Food Bank; Rosary Makers; Tecate Ministry; Social Concerns; Fair Trade Ministry; Dolores Mission & OL Guadalupe Outreach; Mission Haiti; Bulletin; Website; Respect for Life; Christ Our Life (Loyola Press); G.I.F.T. (Growing in Faith Together); LA Voice; Social Justice class; Social Services, St. Margaret Center, La Voice/Pico Prison Ministry, Blankets & Baskets for the Holidays, Angel Tags, Green Cross, Christian Witness, Morality, Modern Church, Juvenile Hall Ministry, Project Response, Catholic Social Teachings, Mexico Home Building, St. Francis Center Adopt-a-Family, Africa Outreach- Busesa Uganda, Winter Shelter, and Service Contract.

As far as providing **General Theology** programs, the responding regions just registered 36 % (59% for OLA, 34% for the SF Region, 14% for the SP Region, 50% for the SG Region, and 10% for the SB Region). The program names and methods of communication reported are as follows, Theology of the Body, Catechesis, Faith Formation, Parish & School, R.E.; Curso Basico; Catholics in Conversations; Adult Formation Series, G.I.F.T.; Theology on Tap; Parish Leadership

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Network LA (PLNLA); Confirmation; RCIA; Remembering Church; Women's Connection; Into the Fields; James Joyce Seminar; Communal Preaching, Focuatido Faith, Adult Education, Escuela de la Fe, Seminars/Workshops, ASIC, bulletin; the University Series, and website.

The **Sacraments** category got interpreted by some responding parishes as a header for the items under it but still managed to get a 36% coverage (0% for OLA, 21% for the SF Region, 79% for the SP Region, 66% for the SG Region, and 19% for the SB Region). Reported as program names for Sacraments are Wedding, Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, Sacramental Life Group, School; Adult Faith Formation; Christian Heritage/Worship, and RCIA.

Pre-Baptism has a high 79% program offering for all the parishes that reported (100% for OLA, 90% for the SF Region, and the same percentage as Sacraments 79% for the SP Region, 69% for the SG Region, and 57% for the SB Region). The programs they indicated are Baptismal Prep., RCIA, Programa Pre-Bautismal, Celebrating Life, Parents and Godparents Prep, Blest Are We (Sadlier) Infant Baptism; Pre-Baptism class; Preparation Classes, Meditation, Baptizing Your Baby, and Journey of Faith.

Very few parishes reported programs on **Post Baptism**. The total comes up to only 17% (32% for OLA, 14% for the SF Region, 14% for the SP Region, 16% for the SG Region, and 10% for the SB Region). The programs reported are Post Baptism; Mystagogy, Mystagogia (RCIA), all formation processes; Sadlier, Harcourt-Brace; Silver Burdett; Adult Faith Formation; Meditation, and Religious Ed. The San Fernando Regional Pastoral Council presented a Post Baptism program with several options to its parishes but launching such a program may take some time.

Reconciliation programs in parishes have a high offering rate of 75% (OLA reported 100%, SF Region comes up to 90%, SP Region has 100%, SG Region with 44%, and SB Region with 62%). Various programs for Reconciliation are R.E., RCIA, CCD, Pardon and Peace, SCORE, Sacramental Preparation; School; First Penance & Communion; RCL; We are Your People; St. Casimir Lithuanian Heritage (Grades 2-3/Every 2 years), Celebramos, and Parents of First Reconciliation Child.

75% of the parish reported having **First Communion** programs (100% for OLA, 90% for the SF Region, 93% for the SP Region, 47% for the SG Region, and 62% for the SB Region). The names of those programs are We Give Thanks & Praise; Sadlier; RCL/Benziger; Do This in Memory of Me; School; Parents of First Communion Child; Religious Education; Sacramental Preparation; Saturday School-St. Casimir Lithuanian Heritage (Grades 2-3/Every 2 years), and RCIA.

The **Confirmation** number is slightly higher with 76% (Regional percentages are as follows, OLA, 100%, SF Region, 90%, SP Region, 93%, SG Region, 50%, and SB Region, 62%). Catequesis Familiar, R.E., CCD, SCORE; Onlight; Faith First, Confirmation I & II; Confirmation for Adults & Teens; RCIA; Liguori; Parents of Teens & Teens; Saturday School-St. Casimir Lithuanian Heritage

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(Grades 10-12/Every 2 years), Youth Ministry, and P. Educacion Religiosa make up the list of Confirmation programs.

Pre-Matrimony (Marriage Preparation) tallied to a decent 52% for the parishes reporting (50% for OLA, 79% for the SF Region, 57% for the SP Region, 41% for the SG Region. and 29% for the SB Region). Various programs listed are Mentoring and Counseling, Engaged Encounter, Marriage Prep.; FOCCUS; Marriage Info. Day; Regional Marriage Prep.; Archdiocesan Program, Deacon; Marriage Prep; Marriage Encounter; Individual /Archdiocesan, Christian Lifestyles, and CANA/Zoar. Many parishes refer couples to the Archdiocesan Office of Family Life and do not have their own program.

Very few parishes reported having any kind of **Post-Matrimony** (Marriage Spirituality) program or ministry. The number of parishes that reported having this program is only 24% of the total respondents (32% for OLA, 31% for the SF Region, 29% for the SP Region, 13% for the SG Region. and 19% for the SB Region). The Synod Initiative Committee III of the SF Region is currently working on a project that will deal with this. Current Programs include Marriage Spirituality, Marriage Encounter, Just Starting, CANA/Zoar; City on the Hill; Couplehood & Tools, Couples for Christ, and Adult Faith Formation.

34% of the reporting parishes indicated they have some form of program or ministry to encourage **Respect for Diversity** (36% for OLA, 38% for the SF Region, 36% for the SP Region, 47% for the SG Region, and 5% for the SB Region). Programs dealing with Respect for Diversity include Support for Parents With Homosexual Children, Multicultural Groups; Multilingual Celebrations; Catholic Jewish Dialogue; Parish Clubs, Blest Are We; Joint Liturgies; School; Adult Faith Formation; School Philosophy; Gay & Lesbian Support Group; Fil-Am Ministry; Spanish Community Group; Chinese Community Group; Annual Carnivals/Fiestas, Simbang Gabi, and Knights of Columbus.

Spirituality programs figured in 52% of the reporting parishes (55% for OLA, 41% for the SF Region, 64% for the SP Region, 69% for the SG Region, and 29% for the SB Region). They are as follows, REAP, Legion of Mary, Retreats, Hombres de Fe, S.E.E.L., Centering Prayer, Mujeres de Fe, Mensajes de la Paz, Retreats at all levels; Into the Fields; Mission speakers; Spirituality Sessions; G.I.F.T.; Prayer Group; School; Adult Faith Formation; Campus Ministry; Adult (Fall) 3-day retreat at mission (in Lithuanian), Lenten Retreat for Leaders in parish (in Lithuanian), Blue Army, Meditation, and Religion 101.

The number of parishes that specified having **Spiritual Direction** programs is 37 which translates to 31% of the total that responded (41% for OLA, 31% for the SF Region, 50% for the SP Region, 28% for the SG Region and 14% for the SB Region). Programs and ministry names include: Adult Education; Priests Do Come, and Spiritual Direction.

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Other Programs

In this section, we tried to capture as much information as possible about all the different ways that the archdiocese engages in catechesis, religious education and faith formation. We probably tried to be too all encompassing, resulting in some overlap of topics and themes, which, in hindsight, were confusing for the survey respondents. One example is Bible/Scripture Study which appeared under Other, but also appeared under Synod-Specific as Scripture. The percentages are not consistent between the two sections, which likely mean that some parishes repeated their answers in both sections while others just completed the information in one section.

Bible/Scripture Study under Other shows 67% of parishes reporting have some kind of Bible/Scripture Study formation (OLA 30%, SF 45%, SG 27%, SP 17% and SB 22%).

Other significantly prominent faith formation programs include programs for **coming back to the Catholic faith**: 40% of parishes responding indicate they have some kind of programs to welcome back returning Catholics (OLA 30%, SF 15%, SG 14%, SP 6% and SB 14%).

55% of the reporting parishes indicate they have a **Charismatic Prayer Group** (OLA 30%, SF 47%, SG 13%, SP 11% and SB 16%). 69% of reporting parishes indicate they have some kind of devotions (OLA 30%, SF 57%, SG 19%, SP 17%, and SB 24%).

Only 42% (OLA 29%, SF 17%, SG 14%, SP 13%, and SB 8%) of the reporting parishes state that they have some kind of **Evangelization** program or ministry. It may be that in some parishes evangelization is infused into other ministries. Alternatively, evangelization may still not be very strongly on the radar in many places, despite the Cardinal's pastoral statement on evangelization in May 2008.

A very small percentage of parishes have any kind of **Ministry for Gay and Lesbian Catholics**...only 9% of those parishes reporting (OLA 30%, SF 6%, SG 2%, SP 0% and SB 0%). Perhaps not surprisingly, given the Archdiocese's significant Hispanic population, over half of the reporting parishes (53%) indicated they have **Quinceanara Preparation** programs (OLA 29%, SF 34%, SG 16%, SP 9% and SB 9%). Again, not surprisingly, 80% and 84% respectively of the reporting parishes said they have **RCIA and Religious Education** programs (why isn't this a higher percentage?), although only 55% have a **Pre-K program**.

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Young Adult Ministry

Many parishes cluster for ministry with Young Adults. The survey showed about 37% of responding parishes have Young Adult Ministry (45% for OLA, 52 % for the SF Region, 71% for the SP Region, 22% for the SG Region, and 10% for the SB Region). The activities reported were Prayer Services, Social Gatherings, Inspirational Talks, Bible Study, Choir, Spiritual Growth Sessions through Formation and Catechesis, Support of Parish Activities, and Fellowship. The total percentage of Young Adult Ministry for the Archdiocese including all parishes that did not respond is 15%. With clustering, there is sharing of resources and personnel. If clusters are identified, there may be better participation or inclusion of those parishes that do not have the ministry for the Young Adults. Renew International's *Theology on Tap*, a program sponsored by the Archdiocesan Office of Religious Education, is a significant program available to young adults throughout the archdiocese, usually running through the Summer months on a regional basis.

Other Resources

This report documents the incredible commitment to Adult Education by the parishes in the five Pastoral Regions of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. The extensive listing of ongoing education at the parish level is commendable and reflects the Mission of Jesus, "Go, teach."

Due to the limitations of time and personnel, this report does not document the wealth of Adult Education being carried on in and by the Departments of the Archdiocesan Catholic Center, the colleges and universities and the Institute for Tribunal Studies, now titled "International Institute for Theological Studies (IITS). Neither does it reference the collaboration efforts between Archdiocesan Offices and local colleges and universities which offer CEUs, under-graduate credit and graduate credit for sponsored programs (e.g. Bible Institutes, Advanced Catechetical Ministries).

Following is a brief summary of some of the major activities of the departments, schools and IITS:

A. ARCHDIOCESAN OFFICES

1. Office of Religious Education

- Religious Education Congress
- Regional Congresses (5)
- Training for Catechists at all levels, and in *multiple languages* (Early Childhood, Elementary, Junior High, Youth, Young Adult, Adult)

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- Bible Institute (English and Spanish)
- Advanced Catechetical Ministries (Master Catechist - English & Spanish)
- National Certificate Program for Youth Ministry
- Specialized Training for generation- and need-specific catechetical ministry
- Ministry Formation (local centers)
- Consultants for Parish-based Initiatives

2. Department of Catholic Schools

- In-services for Religious Teachers
- In-services for Principals – *Catholic Identity*
- Advanced Catechetical Ministries (HS Religion Teacher Certification)

3. Office of Justice and Peace

- Parish Social Ministry programs (English and Spanish), including JustFaith, Catholic Social Teaching
- Global Solidarity programs through Catholic Relief Services
- Domestic Anti-poverty programs through the Catholic Campaign for Human Development
- Programs/resources/advocacy on issues, such as immigration, environment, poverty, etc.
- Regional Social Justice Representatives for outreach to parishes, schools

4. Office of Family Life

- Marriage Preparation (English and Spanish)

5. Office of Safeguard the Children

- VIRTUS® Trainings for Adults

6. Office for Worship

- Liturgical and renewal (multicultural and multilingual) celebrations at the parish level
- Archdiocesan liturgical celebrations

7. Vicar for Women Religious

- Dialogue between the Ordinary of the Archdiocese and the Major Superiors of Women
- Dialogue between the Regional Bishops and the Major Superiors of Women and Men Religious
- Advisory Committee of Major Superiors
- Orientation and ongoing assistance for Women Religious coming from other countries
- Annual National Retirement Appeal

8. Office for Continuing Education of Clergy

- New Pastors Program
- Parish Transition Program
- Ongoing Education Opportunities for Clergy

B. HIGHER EDUCATION

1. Loyola Marymount University

- Numerous institutes, in-services, seminars, classes and degree programs
- LMU's School of Education Partnership Programs with Archdiocese of Los Angeles, e.g., The PLACE Corps (Partners in Los Angeles Catholic Education) teaching service corps

2. Mount St. Mary's College

- Numerous institutes, in-services, seminars, classes and degree programs

C. INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

1. Programs for Tribunal Staff Development
2. Master of Tribunal Studies
3. Certificate of Tribunal Studies
4. Doctor of Ministry
5. Summer Courses in *Canon Law* for the Angelicum (Pontifical University, Rome, Italy)

Notable Successes

- It is clear from both the survey of parish and school activities, as well as the overview of what is taking place at the Archdiocesan level, that religious education and faith formation opportunities abound in our archdiocese. The opportunities have deepened and become more sophisticated in response to the needs expressed by the general Catholic population of the Archdiocese. For example, the Religious Education Congress in Anaheim was initiated as a catechetical resource, much in the vein of the current Regional Religious Education Congresses. Over the years, the RE Congress has broadened and grown exponentially, not just in terms of the scope of the workshops, which cover a range of different ministries from social justice to a youth track, but also correspondingly in the diversity of Catholics who attend Congress. Congress today reflects a much more expansive faith formation approach - it's not just for catechists anymore!!! It has evolved to become the single, largest gathering of its kind in the nation, resourcing catechetical, liturgical, spiritual and general ministry practitioners.

- In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles it is possible to do almost any type of ministry preparation formation from certification programs to MAs, MDivs, and PhDs at three colleges/universities and through multiple programs offered through the ADLA or in conjunction with the ADLA (e.g. the University of Dayton online programs and the International Institute of Theological Studies).

- This focus on ministry preparation and leadership development has yielded concrete results in many areas of parish life throughout the Archdiocese. Of particular note are:
 - The Bible Institutes in both Spanish and English have graduated multiple cohorts of lay men and women who return to their parishes as a resource to provide parish-based Bible Study. In the decade-and-a-half since this development of parish-based leadership was initiated over 2000 adult learners have been exposed to the riches of the biblical tradition of the Church and have become resource leaders for their local parishes.

 - Since the publication of "As One Who Serves", the pastoral statement on parish leadership written by Cardinal Mahony in 2005, almost 50 Pastoral Associates

have been commissioned or are in formation to provide pastoral support at the parish level.

- The Archdiocese has overseen the certification of more than 9000 catechists who successfully completed the requirements of the California Catholic Conference of Bishops for catechist certification at the basic (foundational) level.⁴ In addition, over 500 Master Catechists have been certified. The parishes of the Archdiocese benefit from the volunteer service of these catechetical ministers and leaders in many ways reaching beyond formal catechetical programs as these men and women of faith are using their knowledge and skills to enrich the faithful in their parishes.
 - Dozens of lay people, ordained and religious have been trained in Catholic Social Teaching and inspired to develop social justice ministries in their parishes. Lay involvement and investment in our parishes has flourished because of the focus on providing ministry, leadership and faith formation opportunities.
 - The formation of Spiritual Directors both by Mount St. Mary's College and Loyola Marymount University has been an incredible gift to the local Church. The certification programs thorough which men and women across the Archdiocese have received formal training have resulted in a profoundly crucial spiritual resource which these men and women put in service of their local faith communities.
- Ministries to teens and young adults continue to grow and flourish with creative approaches being adopted within different ethnic groups. For example, in the Hispanic community there is a program which mixes older teens in youth ministry with younger adults.

⁴ Basic Catechist formation is formally offered in English, Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese.

Challenges & Possible Future Directions

- One of the major challenges, which is also a strength, is the sheer size and scope of the archdiocese. There is no local church in the nation which enjoys the cultural and linguistic diversity that is manifest in the tri-county geographical territory which constitutes the Archdiocese. This diversity is at once both a wonderful gift and a significant challenge. To provide formational services across the breadth of such diverse needs is an awesome task. While catechists and other ministerial leaders engage in wonderfully creative approaches to formation, there remains much work to do in this regard. While parish ministry leaders often lament what they have *not* accomplished in their service of the people whom they serve, it is important to acknowledge the incredible work that *is* actually accomplished by so many for the good of God's people.
- Not unrelated to the size and scope of the Archdiocese is the challenge of communication. The majority of Catholics has limited awareness of any faith formation opportunities beyond the immediate boundaries of their parish. There is not a faith formation/religious education "portal" that captures the hundreds of faith formation opportunities. Local communication at a parish level tends to remain insular and parochial, resulting in people just not being aware of the richness of formational opportunities that are available in their immediate and proximate neighborhoods.
- Inter-parish communication challenges are often paralleled by intra-parish communication challenges with respect to faith formation opportunities. While the Archdiocese has developed a number of different ways to communicate to the parishes (the ACES email system which replaced the broadcast fax, the ACC Newsbriefs and the Justice and Peace Newsblast distributed via email, and The Tidings), these methods still only reach the most engaged Catholics. Local adaptation and appropriation of these resources remain a challenge. Leveraging the new technological tools for communication remains haphazard. Consequently, all too often, information about workshops etc. which are disseminated to pastoral leaders, does not reach the people in the pews, even within the one parish community.

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- Parishes vary widely in the resources, both human and financial, which they can leverage to provide faith formation and religious education. The issue of resources reiterates the importance of inter-parish communication discussed above and the need for parishes to share catechetical and faith formation resources. A lack of both human and financial resource investment ultimately costs more to a parish community than can be saved and the ability to provide quality formational resources to the local parish community is compromised. “The single most critical factor in an effective parish catechetical program is the leadership of a professionally trained parish catechetical leader.”⁵
- There is still a preponderance of time, money and energy invested in the formation of children rather than in the formation of adults. Most parishes struggle to balance the demands of the forming children and teens, while adults to a large degree remain under catechized and “with unconverted corners [in their] hearts”⁶. Despite the call of multiple church documents, both by the universal and national Church, as well as the focus of the ADLA’s Office of Religious Education, most parishes are still not fully committed to forming an adult church by emphasizing adult faith formation and ongoing conversion.

⁵ National Directory for Catechesis (NDC), 54.B.5

⁶ “A Fresh Encounter with Jesus Christ: Directions in Evangelization,” Cardinal Roger Mahony.

Recommendations

- Parishes should be strongly encouraged to use the resources available in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles for the ongoing formation of lay leadership. It is recommended this process start with “small steps”, such as parishes beginning to invite a neighboring parish to participate in faith formation and catechetical opportunities. The Regional Pastoral Councils are positioned to play a significant role in inter-parish collaboration by bringing together parish leaders, both lay and ordained, professional and volunteer, to share ideas and best practices.
- The admirable efforts to institutionalize and build an infrastructure to support lay leadership formation should continue and be reinforced. Even in this difficult economic climate, parishes should be strongly encouraged to use the resources available in the ADLA and invest in parish-based leadership.
- More effort and resources should be concentrated on post-sacramental follow up. We invest time and energy in forming children, teens, and adults at significant sacramental moments of their lives (baptism, First Communion, Confirmation and Matrimony), but once these sacraments are completed, many of those receiving initiation into these sacraments fall away from Mass attendance and parish involvement.
- The Archdiocese of Los Angeles should continue to embrace, explore, promote and encourage the use of technology to enhance programs for faith formation and Catechetical training.
- **Future survey recommendations:**
 - A glossary of terms should be provided to reduce the possibility of survey participants duplicating data reported or assigning it to different categories.
 - More attention should be paid to collecting information which is age group specific and language specific to get a more comprehensive snapshot of what is happening in the ADLA.