

Insights
In Liturgy

By Thomas J. Driscoll



**Catechesis:
Conversion
Therapy**

More than an inquiry class geared around a specific textbook, the catechumenate was and may again become a process of publicly preparing and receiving members into the Church. The primitive Church only admitted to Baptism those in whom it observed the faith of conversion and whose manner of life it had tested. It did not admit without preparation, tests, nor without guarantees. The motivation behind this philosophy was the prospect of an immanent Parousia (final revelation of the glory of God) and the need to preserve the purity of the community.

Tertullian observed that Christians are not born but made. The catechumens were honed down by the discipline and teaching until they were resilient, sharp and glowing. The catechumenate offered a structure in which one's conversion could be brought to a point strong enough to endure the sharing of faith in common. Catechesis was not an education about religion, but conversion therapy. Conversion was perceived to be less about doctrinal formulae than as about coming to faith as a way of living together in Christ. This radical unity of faith is lived in communion with God and among his holy ones.

Classically, there are three criteria for admission to baptism. First, sorrow for sins. Justin insisted on the point and cited Isaiah 1:16-20, "... cease to do evil, learn to do good ...". Second, there was faith in the Church as the teacher of

truth. This requirement demands thorough preliminary instruction. Finally, there must be transformation of life. One must live "as Christ has enjoined." (St. Justin, "First Apology") The period of formation was submitted to the discernment of the community, which judged the aptitude of the candidates on the basis of these criteria.

The implication is that the process of conversion must be seen as a public, liturgical event. "The Church claims that conversion as its own and gives itself to the catechumens in return." (Aiden Kavanaugh, "The Shape of Baptism) Private inquiry classes and quiet unannounced receptions into the Church at daily Masses are the opposite of the demands of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. To convert is to publicly confess one's faith and to be accepted by our Church.

How long did it take to undergo this transformation of life? While the norm was two to three years, the patristic writers present a flexible approach: "Let the catechumen be instructed for three years. But, if a man be earnest and persevere well in the matter, let him be received, because it is not the time that is judged, but the conduct." (Hippolytus, "Apostolic Tradition")

People who feel that the process of conversion can be accomplished in 40 days or three months sell short the faith of the Catholic Church. There is great wisdom in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults' call for the two- to three-year span for the process of conversion.

The criteria for admittance to the Church — sorrow for sins, faith in the Church and transformation of life — take time!

**Lay Evangelization Celebration
Scheduled Aug. 21-23 in Hartford**

Catholics from all along the Eastern Seaboard will gather for the third annual National Catholic Lay Celebration of Evangelization Aug. 21-23, in Hartford, Conn.

Parish groups, lay people, priests, bishops, deacons and religious from varied backgrounds will participate. The celebration has a threefold purpose: celebration of Jesus, celebration of being further evangelized and celebration of the message of Jesus being proclaimed throughout the East Coast in various ethnic cultures.

Scheduled are major addresses, prayer, praise, music, liturgical worship, seminars and workshops. The theological and scriptural basis of proclaiming the Good

News will be presented, as well as numerous working models of evangelization in the United States.

Two additional topics will be addressed in separate events sponsored by the National Lay Celebration of Evangelization. A full day of Preaching Workshops will be offered to all involved in the

oral proclamation of the Gospel, with the theme "Preaching for Evangelization in the Vatican II Church." And the "Youth Evangelizing Youth Weekend" will give younger people the opportunity to concentrate on their needs.

In the past, a number of Rochester diocesan parishes

have sent delegates to the conference. Many have noted its unusual enthusiasm and worth and have returned to their parishes with a greater interest in spreading the Gospel message. Additional information about this year's celebration is available from Judith Slivick, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624, telephone (716) 328-3210.

**Irondequoit
Knights Fete
Molinari**

More than 150 persons gathered for the recent Irondequoit Knights of Columbus annual awards dinner during which Joseph Molinari was named Knight of the Year, and Dr. and Mrs. Robert Bosco were named Family of the Year.

Molinari, a member of the organization for the past 17 years and a past grand knight, was cited for working "diligently to better the underprivileged in and around the greater Rochester area through his commitment to the knights."

The Boscos are members of Christ the King Parish and are active in several local societies. Dr. Bosco helped to organize the Squires Circle this year, and both have been prominent in local K of C projects.

A special award was also given to Mr. and Mrs. Bernie Bromka "for their outstanding contribution to the charitable and beneficial work of the Knights of Columbus."

At Your Parish . . .



Corpus Christi

In what was described as a "huge success," members of Corpus Christi School's class of 1926 gather for a portrait at a recent reunion. Those present were identified by Dorothy Bohrer Chappell as, left to right, (seated) Rose O'Neill Carroll, Genevieve Hanlon Pethick, Dolores Dunnigan Dickson, Father Walter Carron, Dorothea Quinn Gage, Dorothea Day Noon, Mary Elman Wackerle, and Mrs. Chappell; (standing) Lauretta Lennon Gould, Theresa Coyne Tschetter, Harriet Schultheis Warth, Clara Shoniker Suhr, James McAvinney, John Callan, Lawrence Wilcox, Herbert Godon, Mary Murray Samuelson, Rhoda Gage Allart and Pete Culross, who took the picture.

Holy Trinity

An old-fashioned country fair has been scheduled at Holy Trinity Church, 1460 Ridge Road, Webster, July 9-11.

The fair will run from 6 p.m. to midnight, Thursday and Friday, July 9 and 10, and from 1 to 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. to midnight, Saturday, July 11. Skydiving shows are

scheduled at 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday, and a fish fry from 5 to 8 p.m. Friday, and a chicken barbecue from 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday.

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