



# Catholic Faith in Action:

## A Means to Live Out the New Evangelization



Catholic Diocese of Peoria

**“We assemble as a Church to praise and thank God,  
to love and serve our neighbor, and to announce  
the Good News.**

**The grace and goodness of Christ is so wonderful,  
how could we not share the experience with  
absolutely everyone we meet?”**

**Most Reverend Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C., D.D.**

Office of Evangelization  
512 E. Kansas Street  
Peoria, IL 61603  
(309) 682-5823  
(309) 682-6030

E-mail: [evangelization@cdop.org](mailto:evangelization@cdop.org)

Website: [www.cdop.org/evangelization](http://www.cdop.org/evangelization)  
Catholic Faith in Action Seminar:  
A Means to Live Out the New Evangelization

## Purpose

The purpose of *Catholic Faith in Action* is twofold: to facilitate *metanoia* for individuals and to initiate renewed involvement in evangelization. *Metanoia* is a Greek word used in the gospels and it is described as “a radical conversion, a profound change of mind and heart” [EN 10]. The change of mind and heart or transformation is necessary to become engaged in the Kingdom of God. What happens to an individual is vitally important because of what should emerge from *metanoia* – the desire to tell others. Telling others in its simplest form is evangelization. This has been the Catholic Church’s mission since its beginning and Pope Paul VI reminded us in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* [On Evangelization in the Modern World], that the “key words of Jesus Christ’s evangelization, are available to every human being as grace and mercy” [EN10]. As Catholic Christians, we should experience *metanoia* and be evangelizers to those around us.

1. *Catholic Faith in Action* was set in motion in the late 1970s when Deacon Gregory L. Serangeli supplemented the *Life in the Spirit Seminar* by incorporating Scripture readings and journaling as homework assignments for *Seminar* participants to do and then share at their next seminar meeting. A handout was developed that included a teaching as well as daily readings of Scripture focusing on the themes of the seminar to be journaled. The *Life in the Spirit Seminars* began with the team presenting a New American Bible and a spiral notebook for journaling to the participants. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal Office adapted the practice through its promotion and presentation of *Life in the Spirit Seminars* throughout the diocese.
2. During the 1990s, Msgr. Thomas Monahan of the Rockford Diocese advised Deacon Greg to uphold the Charismatic Renewal in a “fully Catholic and fully Charismatic” manner. To carry out this counsel meant a revision of *Catholic Faith in Action* to convey its fully Catholic intent and incorporate doctrine from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. In revising the supplement to the *Life in the Spirit Seminar*, Deacon Greg teamed up with Deacon Robert J. Pomazal. Deacon Bob added the *Catechism* references to be used with journaling and updated the *Catholic Faith in Action* program.

Under the direction of Deacon Bob, the St. Edward’s Prayer Group in Chillicothe took the *Catholic Faith in Action Seminar* to parishes and vicariates during 1998, the “Year of the Holy Spirit.” St. Edward’s Prayer Group continues to serve the Renewal presenting the *Seminar* upon request.

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Deacon Gregory L. Serangeli is currently Director of the Office of Evangelization, Spiritual Advisor to the Peoria Diocese Catholic Charismatic Renewal Board, and serves as deacon at St. Edward’s Parish in Chillicothe, Illinois

Deacon Robert J. Pomazal, Ph.D., is Vice Chancellor/Marriage Desk for the Diocese of Peoria, Spiritual Director for the St. Edward’s Prayer Group, and serves as deacon at St. Edward’s Parish in Chillicothe, Illinois.

Mary Diane Valentine, Ph.D., provided the editing services for the manuscript.

**Additional reference materials:**

**On Evangelization in the Modern World (Evangelii Nuntiandi)**

Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Paul VI, (December 8, 1975). Available from:

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_exh\\_19751208\\_evangelii-nuntiandi\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html)

**Go and Make Disciples, A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States**

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Committee on Evangelization, November 18, 1992. Available for order from the USCCB 800235-8722 or free on the USCCB website.

<http://www.usccb.org/evangelization/goandmake/index.shtml>

**Chariscenter USA**

The National Service Committee is a body of leaders in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal who work together to serve the Lord in renewing the grace of Pentecost in the life and mission of the Church. For more information please, visit the Chariscenter website.

<http://www.nsc-chariscenter.org/>

***Catechism of the Catholic Church (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.)*** 1997. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Available for order from the USCCB 800-235-8722 or free access on the USCCB website.

<http://www.usccb.org/catechism/text/>

## Catholic Faith in Action Seminar

### Invitation

This is an invitation to a deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit and is extended to all believers in Jesus Christ. It is an opportunity for learning and experiencing personal spiritual growth. The only thing needed is openness to a movement of the Spirit.

To prepare individuals for more activity and experiences with the Holy Spirit, the *Catholic Faith in Action Seminar* is presented in eight weekly sessions with a series of talks and discussions. The first week is an introduction to the *Seminar*, which is a fully Catholic adaptation of the *Life in the Spirit Seminar*. Topics include the following:

- Introduction to the Catholic Faith in Action
- God's Love
- Salvation
- Preview of the New Life in the Spirit
- Receiving God's Gift
- Release of the Holy Spirit
- Growth Through Ongoing Conversion
- Transformation in Christ

One opportunity during the *Seminar* is for participants to receive what Jesus described in Acts 1:4 as “the promise of the Father,” a release of the power of the Holy Spirit. Following an introductory overview, the next four sessions prepare participants for this transforming event, while the last two sessions provide the guidance needed to integrate this yielding to the Holy Spirit into their daily lives and their local parish community.

### More of the Holy Spirit

During the Last Supper, Jesus assured His disciples, “I will pray to the Father and He will give you another Advocate (Counselor), to be with you forever” (John 14:16). Jesus knew when He was no longer on earth, His disciples, limited to their own strength and ability, would not be able to live the kind of life to which He had called them. He pledged to them the very Spirit of God as a helper. Ten days after Jesus ascended into heaven and on the Jewish feast of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit assuredly came down upon and filled each of them with Himself. Ever since that time, the third person of the Trinity has remained with the Christian people. We celebrate this event every year on Pentecost as the birthday of our Catholic Church.

When Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council in 1963, he prayed,

“Renew in our day, O Lord, your wonders as in a *new* Pentecost.”

His prayer was answered because the new Pentecost has been happening. Just as those 120 men and women who were gathered at that Jewish feast over 2000 years ago were transformed and empowered for their witness and mission, Catholic Christians today are also experiencing the Holy Spirit in a transforming and empowering *personal* Pentecost.

This experience of a *personal* Pentecost is a *renewal* of an individual. It is deemed an integral part of the renewal of the Church, which was initiated with Vatican II.

- ∞ **Pope Benedict XVI** pointed out what is occurring within the Church when he said, "What the New Testament describes ... as visible signs of the coming of the Spirit is no longer merely ancient, past history: This history is becoming a burning reality today."
- ∞ **Pope John Paul II** praised the Pentecost renewal when he said, "The vigor and fruitfulness (of this renewal) attests to the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit at work in the Church."
- ∞ **Archbishop John Myers**, Archdiocese of Newark, extolled the prayer labors when he said, "This is one of the many authentic prayer movements in the Church initiated and sustained by the Holy Spirit."
- ∞ **Fr. Kilian McDonnell** described charisms from this personal renewal (baptism in the Holy Spirit) as ministries. These "are not peripheral but the equipment" to do the ministerial service toward the Church and the work of evangelization. More specifically, he stated: "Charisms are ministries of the Church to the world." The charisms are oriented toward evangelization. From that, we can understand the importance of baptism in the Holy Spirit and its relationship and support of evangelization.

Building on the sacramental life of the Church, the Holy Spirit received in Baptism is being "fanned into flame" (2 Timothy 1:6). The flame is showing what Pope Benedict describes as "a burning reality" with confirmable results. Catholics filled with and led by the Holy Spirit are living a more deeply committed Christian life. They are receiving and using the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and contributing to a stronger spiritual life in Christian community within the universal Church. They are visible signs of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church today.

## Historical Note with Format Overview

The *Catholic Faith in Action Seminar* is a Catholic adaptation of a highly successful series known as the *Life in the Spirit Seminar*.

The *Life in the Spirit Seminar* began in the early 1970s shortly after the birth of the Charismatic Renewal at Duquesne University. For over 30 years these structured seminars provided the background and guidelines for teams of individuals to help others experience the release of the Holy Spirit, or as it is also called, the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In the early days Catholics who experienced this release were sometimes referred to as Catholic Pentecostals because charisms (or gifts of the Holy Spirit) are released which were just as those experienced at Pentecost (Acts 2). The early references to Catholic Pentecostals often created misunderstanding with more traditional spiritualities within the Church. Now the expression for Catholics receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit is commonly termed “charismatic.” The movement of the Holy Spirit in this way is manifested at the heart of the Catholic Church and identified as the Charismatic Renewal.

A team manual, first published in 1971, established the pattern for the *Life in the Spirit Seminar*. In 1979 a Catholic Edition emerged, and in 2000 a second edition was published. In parallel with these developments, the prayer group at St. Edward Church in Chillicothe, IL, successfully built upon the manuals and advanced a new program called *Catholic Faith in Action*. This program brings a Catholic emphasis and consciousness with an inclusion of the Mass, Eucharistic adoration, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and other Catholic traditions while retaining the essential structure and outlines of the topics contained in the *Life in the Spirit* model.

Following the Introduction, the format for *Catholic Faith in Action* consists of seven weekly sessions with a session lasting about two hours. Each session is organized as follows:

- 15 minutes - Opening prayer plus praise and worship
- 30 minutes - Talk given by a team member (with possible brief witness talk to reinforce the topic of the session)
- 45 minutes - Group discussion
- 15 minutes - Wrap up and explanation of assignment for the next week (consisting of daily readings from Scripture and the Catechism and journaling.)
- 30 minutes - Fellowship (optional)

Because the readings and journaling address the topic of the session talk, it is preferable to distribute each assignment *prior* to the seminar. One successful way to accomplish this is to schedule the introductory session where the program is outlined and the first assignment is distributed. This brings the actual program time commitment to eight weekly sessions.

The eight-week Catholic Faith in Action Seminars can be adapted to meet the specific needs and schedules of parish communities. For example, the Diocese of Rockford presented its seminar on three successive weekends. To use the weekend format, please see details in Appendix A.

The following pages contain the materials for distribution at the *Catholic Faith in Action Seminars*.

## Catholic Faith in Action

### Introduction Session

#### Praying with Scripture, Journaling and Study

As we begin the *Catholic Faith in Action Seminar*, we will be using the Bible as a significant resource for growing in our understanding and love of God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit want to reveal themselves to you during these next seven weeks. It is for this reason that we should become dedicated to reading the assigned Scripture passages each day and meditating upon them.

We would suggest that you use and bring with you a modern, reliable translation of the Bible, such as the *New American Bible* (NAB), the *New Jerusalem Bible* (NJB), or Catholic versions of the *Revised Standard Version* (RSV), or the *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV). It is best not to rely on one of the paraphrased Bibles (e.g., *The Living Bible*) because the true meaning of many passages can be lost in the paraphrase.

As you begin to pray with Scripture, the following thoughts and guidelines may be helpful.

#### *Spend Some Time Getting Ready*

Try to set aside a quiet time each day when you are most alert, preferably the same time each day. Allow about fifteen minutes to a half an hour, or more. What you do immediately before prayer is important. Normally, this is something we should not rush into. Spend a few moments quieting your mind and relaxing, settling into a prayerful but comfortable position.

In listening to anyone, whether it is another person or God, we should try to tune out everything except what the person is saying to us. In prayer this can be done best in silence and solitude since God usually speaks softly and the world is loud. Quiet is an ideal environment; however, it may not be possible because of the noise and activity of our lives. Do the best you can and know that success in gaining quiet time takes practice. Also, keep in mind that it is not necessary to exclude all thoughts of our commitments and activities of our lives. Anxiety in this regard could become a distraction itself. Try to ignore distractions rather than attacking them head-on.

Remember too, that God reveals himself in ways other than through Scripture. Sometimes in preparation for prayer we can yield to His presence around us: listen to spiritual music, smell the coffee, feel the upholstery against our skin. God's presence is as real as the things around us are.

Begin your prayer time by praising and thanking Jesus for some particular blessing you recognize in your life. Or, if you can't think of anything in particular, just thank Him for giving you this quiet time. This does not have to be a long prayer. For instance, "Thank You, Jesus, for the children being back in school," or "Thank You for helping with that difficult situation with the boss today," or simply "Praise You for the beauty of your creation." You are developing an intimate relationship with the Lord so feel free to use your own words and avoid "churchy" sounding prayers, unless this is the way you always talk. As you become accustomed to praying this way, you will begin to experience a growing desire to simplify your prayer and simply praise and thank the Lord. Next, ask the Father for forgiveness of any particular area of sin in your life. This time is not meant to be spent in an extensive examination of conscience. Rather, it is a simple acknowledgment of our sinfulness made specific by asking for

forgiveness of the most recent or most conscious sins. Just be humble and honest with our Lord. After asking the Father's forgiveness, thank Him and praise Him for forgiving and forgetting your sins.

These preparatory steps help to free us from distractions and obstacles that might keep us from hearing God's message in His holy Word.

Now ask that the Holy Spirit will be present in your heart and mind to guide you in your understanding and acceptance of what God is saying to you in the particular passage that you are about to read. Also, ask the Holy Spirit to protect you from any deception by the evil one.

Now you are ready to begin reading the passage of Scripture for the day.

### *Listen as You Read God's Word*

God invites us to listen as we read His Word. This is the basic attitude of prayer. Ask God for the grace to hear what He says.

Begin reading Scripture slowly and attentively. Do not hurry.

After you have read the passage once, go back and read it a second time. In the second reading, picture in your mind that Jesus, the Son of God, is speaking directly to you, alone. Take in the passage and let it come alive within you.

If the passage recounts an event of Christ's life, be there in the mystery of it. Share mentally with the persons involved. Respond to what Jesus is saying.

Some words or phrases will carry special meaning for you. Let them soak in.

At times, you will become aware of things and experience feelings that catch your attention. They may be very profound, but normally you will sense subtle impressions such as:

- you feel a special closeness to Christ,
- you experience God's love,
- you feel spiritually uplifted,
- you are moved to do something,
- you feel peaceful,
- you are happy and content just to be in God's presence.

This is the time to pause. *This is God speaking directly to you in the words of Scripture.* Do not hurry to move on. Wait until you are no longer moved by what you are experiencing.

On the other hand, don't get discouraged if nothing seems to be happening. Sometimes God lets us feel dry and empty in order to let us realize it is not in our own power to communicate with Him or to experience consolation. God is sometimes very close to us in His seeming absence. (Psalm 139:7-8 states: Where can I hide from your spirit? From your presence, where can I flee? If I ascend to the heavens, you are there; if I lie down in Sheol, you are there too.)

A humble attitude of listening is a sign of love for Him and a real prayer from the heart. This method of using our imagination when we read Scriptures (meditation) is at times difficult and slow, but it will become more rewarding the more we grow in its use. Don't give up. Just ask Jesus to help when you get discouraged and don't seem to be getting anywhere. As Americans we are looking for progress and getting somewhere. We have to step outside of our culture to realize that is not necessarily God's way for us to meet with Him. And we know He is there – we need to trust Him when we're learning how to listen.

### Journaling

After you are finished reading and meditating, write a letter to Jesus, thanking Him for whatever particular message you received while reading. At first it may only be, "Dear Jesus, thank you. I love you. Your friend, \_\_\_\_\_."

However, with continued prayer and spiritual growth, your "love letters" to Jesus will become longer and longer. Write to Him as you would a friend that you can see, hear and touch - a real live person in your life - for He is real. He is alive and He wants to be the most important person in your life.

These letters will be the basis of our sharing in our small discussion groups. They will also be a source of inspiration for you during dry times in the future and a record of your spiritual progress as you grow in your personal relationship with Jesus.

### Study and Reflection

As Catholics we believe that God speaks not only through Scripture but also through the teaching of the Church. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) is a valuable source of insights into God's action since creation and in our lives right now.

Throughout the *Catholic Faith in Action Seminar*, selected Scripture passages and paragraphs from the *Catechism* are suggested for you to read. These examples will help to connect the theme of the week's seminar to your daily lives as Catholics. You may also want to use the insights you gain from the *Catechism* as material for your reflection and journaling. Expect God to impress things on your mind as you read, reflect, and focus on these holy spiritual activities. This is a form of His speaking to you! And it may unexpectedly happen outside your quiet time, but be sure to note it in your journal. Nothing is impossible with God.

## Catholic Faith In Action

### Seminar Week 1 – God's Love

The Old Testament sets the stage for the full expression of God's love in His Son Jesus. As we read and pray certain passages from the Old Testament, we can become more deeply aware of how much God does really love us. We need to know and experience God's love if we are to develop into the people He wants us to be. This is especially important if we do not love ourselves as we should. Knowing our faults and failures and our sinfulness, we may question how God could really love us.

By praying with Sacred Scriptures we will become more aware and convinced of God's total and unconditional love. This conviction that God loves us with an infinite love and that nothing we do will change this fact should be the foundation of our relationship with Him. We must come to know Him as a loving, kind, forgiving Father who welcomes His errant children with open arms. He is a Father who loves us more than we could ever imagine being loved. God, the Creator of the universe, the person who made all things out of nothing, loves us. He wants to care for us, share His divine life with us, and bring us into perfect union with Him, for all of eternity.

When we are convinced that we are loved, only then can we be open and honest. Then there is no need for pretense or sham. Then we will begin to live in freedom and in sincerity.

An awareness of God's great love for us can lead us into a greater depth in our prayer lives. Deeply aware of His loving presence we want to whisper in the quiet of our hearts, "I love You too." This type of prayer of the heart is the beginning of contemplative prayer. As we experience His loving presence within us, we no longer require words or thoughts. We simply rest in His presence. We are aware of God; we are known and loved at the very core of our being. This becomes the basis for our whole spiritual growth.

First, we *know* with our minds that God truly loves, but then we must become *convinced in our hearts* so that we can respond to His great love. This conviction will be ours when we hear God Himself telling us of His great love for us. Listen to His word in the Scripture readings each day.

#### Daily Reading Assignments

<u>Date</u>	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Catechism</u>
Day 1	Isaiah 43:1-3	CCC 50
Day 2	Psalms 139:1-6	CCC 210
Day 3	Ezekiel 34:11-16	CCC 214
Day 4	Isaiah 49:1-6	CCC 218
Day 5	Jeremiah 31:31-34	CCC 220
Day 6	1 John 4:16-18	CCC 221
Day 7	John 3:16-18	CCC 609

## Catholic Faith in Action

### Seminar Week 2 – Salvation

In the first seminar we focused on God's love for us. The second seminar will also be about God's love, but with a different viewpoint - we will now look at our response, our acceptance of that love.

The Fourth Eucharistic Prayer that we pray at Mass captures the scope of God's plan:

Even when (man) disobeyed you and lost your friendship, you did not abandon him to the power of death, but helped man seek and find you. Again and again you offered a covenant to man, and through the prophets taught him to hope for salvation. Father, you so loved the world that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior.

By dying on the cross, Jesus became our Savior and offers us the gift of salvation. It is ours to accept or reject. He does not force anything on us.

The question is often asked: "Have you been saved?" implying, "Are you going to heaven?" The answer is not found in a simple one-time commitment or acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord and Savior. From a Catholic perspective the answer is, "Yes, many times," since salvation is not just for the future. We tap into God's salvation and are *saved* from the effect of original sin at Baptism. We are *saved* again and again from the power of sin in our lives through repentance and ongoing conversion. And finally, those who "endure to the end" (Revelation 2:26) will be *saved* eternally from the presence of sin in heaven.

As good as salvation is, some people stand at the threshold and hesitate. Some feel unworthy of such love as they begin to contemplate the fact that God, the Creator of the universe, gave His only Son's life so that we may have eternal life. Others are still too strongly attached to the temporary pleasures of the world we live in. God is calling all of us to trust, to be reconciled with Him, to repent with honest and sincere hearts so that we can receive His gift of salvation. There is no love here on earth that can compare, so let us not look for a human comprehension or understanding of love that we have known. Always look instead to God.

#### Daily Reading Assignments

<u>Date</u>	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Catechism</u>
Day 1	Micah 4:1-6	CCC 54
Day 2	Isaiah 55:9	CCC 122
Day 3	Psalm 45:1-9	CCC 207
Day 4	John 11:21-27	CCC 55
Day 5	Romans 5:6-8	CCC 604
Day 6	Isaiah 53:4-6	CCC 1505
Day 7	Colossians 1:13-14	CCC 517

## Catholic Faith in Action

### Seminar Week 3 – Preview of the New Life in the Spirit

Throughout the ages, prophets predicted the day would come when God would give His Spirit freely to men. Those who turned to Him and received His Spirit would be changed. They would receive new life. We remember this event in the third glorious mystery of the Rosary, “The Descent of the Holy Spirit.”

Jesus' promise to fulfill that prediction happened on Pentecost when the disciples were gathered together in prayer and the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of tongues of fire. They began to prophesy and heal the sick; they prayed in tongues and proclaimed the Good News boldly. And thousands of Jews became believers in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

We received the same Holy Spirit in our Baptism and His presence in us was strengthened in Confirmation. For many of us, however, the fullness of the Holy Spirit's action in our lives is still awaiting our invitation.

We can experience the Holy Spirit in the same way the first disciples did. And when the Holy Spirit is released more fully in us, we will begin to experience a new kind of life. We get to know God in a new way and we become changed people. Then, as we continue to grow in faith, we want to reach out and serve others. God equips us with the spiritual gifts we need to do His work.

Jesus told us, "I have come that you may have life and have it in abundance" (John 10:10). This abundant life is not only a promise of spending eternity with God in heaven but a new life here and now. We receive it by yielding to God to have Him more active in our lives.

Our daily readings this week will reveal the extent of this promise.

#### Daily Reading Assignments

<u>Date</u>	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Catechism</u>
Day 1	Ezekiel 36:22-28	CCC 1287
Day 2	John 14:15-18	CCC 729
Day 3	Acts 2:1-14	CCC 696
Day 4	Acts 19:5-7	CCC 1288
Day 5	Galatians 5:16-23	CCC 736
Day 6	1 Corinth 12:4-11	CCC 801
Day 7	Ephesians 2:19-22	CCC 756

## Catholic Faith in Action

### Seminar Week 4 – Receiving God’s Gift

The topics covered thus far have been *about* God’s love, salvation, and new life. These became more personalized through the sharing of personal experiences by the speakers. This has been a time of preparation, and, through prayer, you may also have begun to experience a new closeness to God.

The next step is yours. Living a committed Christian life and putting our Catholic faith into action affects everything we do. We cannot straddle the fence; there is no room for being lukewarm (see Revelation 3:16).

John the Baptist, the prophet who prepared the way of the Lord, preached one basic message, “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand” (Matthew 3:2). Throughout the New Testament, the need for repentance and forgiveness is preached. Repentance was the path, which prepared the way for the coming of the Lord, and Jesus is calling us to repentance as we prepare our lives for His coming to us in a deeper way.

Repentance involves sorrow for our sins, turning toward God, and reorienting our lives. It involves a fundamental change of attitude, a conversion of heart *towards* God and *away from* sin. In addition, we are told, “Declare your sins to one another, that you may find healing” (James 5:16). For Catholics, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is the way we live out this command. We are invited by God to receive His gift of forgiveness for *any* sins through the Sacrament, but confession of *serious* sins to a priest is *necessary* before Catholics can partake of other Sacraments, particularly the Holy Eucharist. It is also recommended as a first step when making a deeper commitment to our Lord.

Repentance requires honesty with ourselves. Many times “pet” sins have become a part of our lives, and we have learned to rationalize away their sinfulness. Perhaps you have a habit of gossip, or drinking too much, or some form of impurity. Maybe it is being judgmental or selfish. Whatever your personal weaknesses may be, it is impossible to repent until we call them sin and no longer make excuses like, “That’s just the way I am.”

#### Daily Reading Assignments

<u>Date</u>	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Catechism</u>
Day 1	Psalm 51	CCC 1850
Day 2	Isaiah 1:16-18	CCC 1430, 1431
Day 3	1 John 2:1-6	CCC 1422, 1424
Day 4	Psalm 32	CCC 1502
Day 5	1 John 3:4-10	CCC 385
Day 6	John 20:20-23	CCC 1447
Day 7	Hebrews 10:11-18	CCC 1442

## Catholic Faith in Action

### Seminar Week 5 – Release of the Holy Spirit

Next week, after our opening time of praise and a brief teaching, prayer teams will be available to pray with you for the release of the Holy Spirit, commonly referred to as ‘baptism in the Holy Spirit.’ This release of the Spirit is an internal religious experience (or prayer experience) in which Christ is experienced in a personal way. It involves openness to the power of the Holy Spirit whom we received in Baptism and Confirmation, and this empowerment usually leads to a deeper devotional life and an attraction to prayer, Sacred Scripture, and the Sacraments of the Church. With continued nurturing, this event will be the beginning of a lifelong process of growing closer to God.

As you prepare for this important event in your spiritual life, keep in mind that what happens to others may or may not be the same thing that happens to you. Pray to be completely open to the love that God wants to express *personally to you* next week and in the days, weeks, months and years ahead. This is only the beginning of a life long journey with Jesus.

Be open to receiving *all* of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that the Lord wants to give you (see 1 Corinthians 12:1-11). When you are prayed for, a word may seem to come “out of nowhere” or a Scripture passage may come strongly to mind. This is the Lord speaking. As you pray, you may “run out of words” and sense strange sounds wanting to come from your lips. Verbalize them; the Lord may be giving you the gift of tongues to praise Him. It is a heavenly language but if you feel nothing, that is okay too. God is still moving within you.

During the coming week, you may experience feelings of unworthiness, or you may feel reluctant or apprehensive because it seems that what you are doing is strange or unnecessary. These are fairly common reactions at this place in the *Catholic Faith in Action Seminar*, but recall God's call to you and focus on that. Review your journal and see how he has been preparing you for this event.

Finally, be assured of the prayer support, which is being offered to our Father for you this week. If you are concerned about anything or if you have any questions, call your group leader or any one of the team members. Do not let doubt or Satan keep you from receiving answers to questions and the assurance Jesus wants you to have. Sometimes we can rationalize away what God wants to do.

#### Daily Reading Assignments

<u>Date</u>	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Catechism</u>
Day 1	Matthew 18:1-4	CCC 576
Day 2	Acts 2:33-36	CCC 731
Day 3	2 Corinthians 12:1-10	CCC 273
Day 4	Luke 6:27-36	CCC 2842
Day 5	Matthew 11:25-30	CCC 2603
Day 6	2 Corinthians 6:14-18	CCC 1179
Day 7	2 Corinthians 4:1-6	CCC 298

## Catholic Faith in Action

### Seminar Week 6 – Growth Through Ongoing Conversion

To some extent we all have a limited view of God. We confine His actions in our lives to what we think and expect Him to do. But as we grow in our relationship with Him, we recognize more completely who He really is. We recognize His role in life's "coincidences" and in the goodness that flows from people who are close to him. Growth in love is always a manifestation of the Holy Spirit within us, working through us and upon us.

This new life in the Spirit is not something to be experienced only at prayer meetings, or in a church on Sunday, or in our prayer closet, or alone by ourselves. This new life means just that, a *changed life*, a new person, different from what we used to be. And this change is a growing experience, a daily walk (and struggle) in a new life.

Nourishment is a necessity for growth. As we strive to put our Catholic faith into action, daily prayer will be a *must*. Scripture reading and meditation is a *must*. Listening to God is a *must*. Through our devotion and meditation, through self-discipline and the encouragement of others, the Father will direct our continued life-in-the-Spirit.

As Catholics we can anticipate a deeper devotion and love for the Eucharist and commitment to Eucharistic Adoration. Our lives will revolve around Jesus and the Mass. A hunger for scriptural understanding and spiritual reading will be aroused. Satisfy this hunger by reading. Follow these inclinations and desires of your heart. Do not stifle these quiet inner suggestions by thinking they are ridiculous or by putting them aside. As you continue to grow, there will be times when you feel the intensity of God's love. Bask in God's love and enjoy it, for there will also be days when your spiritual life seems dry, and God seems distant. These dry *desert times* provide a different kind of opportunity for continued growth, provided you maintain your devotion to daily prayer, scripture reading and listening to God.

Growing in Christ is similar to growing like a child. There are times when you will jump, run, skip, laugh, and delight in your relationship with Jesus. There will also be times when you stumble, slip, and skin your knee when you fail to listen or disobey. Our Lord *is* love. He is always there ready to pick us up and to address all our feelings and all our needs, but we must give Him the freedom to move.

#### Daily Reading Assignments

<u>Date</u>	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Catechism</u>
Day 1	Philippians 1:18-19	CCC 2697
Day 2	Philippians 2:1-11	CCC 1694
Day 3	Philippians 2:12-18	CCC 1070
Day 4	1 Peter 4:7-19	CCC 1434
Day 5	2 Timothy 4:1-5	CCC 2015
Day 6	Romans 6:1-11	CCC 1694
Day 7	John 15:1-8	CCC 787

## Suggested Supplementary Reading List

(\* denotes Imprimatur)

### Life in the Spirit

1. Steve Clark, *Baptized in the Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, Dove, 1976.
2. Fr. Robert DeGrandis, SSJ, *Coming to Life*, 1987
3. Bishop Edward O'Rourke, *Gift of Gifts*, Paulist Press, 1977
4. Kilian McDonnell and George Montague (ed), *Fanning the Flame*, Liturgical Press, 1991.
5. Chariscenter USA [www.nsc-chariscenter.org](http://www.nsc-chariscenter.org)
  - ∞ *The Gifts of the Holy Spirit*
  - ∞ *Charismatic Prayer Meetings*
  - ∞ *Prayer Ministry*
  - ∞ *Understanding & Exercising the Gift of Prophecy*
  - ∞ *Living Baptized in the Holy Spirit*

### Prayer

1. \*Fr. Michael Scanlan, TOR, *Appointment with God*, Franciscan Press, 1987.
2. \*Terry Matz, *Lost in God*, Liguori, 1994
3. \*Fr. Thomas Green, SJ, *Opening to God*, Ave Maria, 1977.
4. \*Fr. Thomas Green, SJ, *Prayer and Common Sense*, Ave Maria, 1996
5. \*Benedict Heron, OSB, *Channels of Healing Prayer*, Ave Maria, 1989

### Discernment

1. \*Fr. Michael Scanlan, TOR, *What Does God Want*, Our Sunday Visitor, 1996
2. \*Fr. David Lonsdale, SJ, *Listening to the Music of the Spirit*, Ave Maria, 1992
3. \*Fr. Thomas Green, SJ, *Weeds Among the Wheat*, Ave Maria, 1984.

### Scripture

1. \*Fr. Mark Link, SJ, *Path Through Scripture*, Tabor, 1987
2. \*Fr. Oscar Lukefahr, CM, *A Catholic Guide to the Bible*, Liguori, 1992
3. Jeff Cavins, Ascension Press
  - ∞ *The Great Adventure: A Journey Through the Bible*
  - ∞ *Adventures in Matthew*
  - ∞ *Adventures in Acts*

### Catholicism

1. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Second Edition, Catholic Book Pub. Co., 2000
2. \*Austin Flannery, OP, (ed), *Documents of Vatican Council II*, 1992
3. \*Bishop Donald Wuerl, Ronald Lawler, OFM Cap, Thomas Lawler, *The Teaching of Christ*, 4th Ed., Our Sunday Visitor, 1995
4. \*Fr. Mark Link, SJ, *Path Through Catholicism*, Tabor
5. \*Fr. Oscar Lukefahr, CM, *We Believe - A Survey of the Catholic Faith*, Liguori, 1990
6. \*Fr. Oscar Lukefahr, CM, *The Privilege of Being Catholic*, Liguori, 1993

1. \*Susan Muto & Fr. Adrian van Kaam, CSSp, *Divine Guidance*, Servant, 1994
2. Fr. Benedict Groeschel, CFR, *The Reform of Renewal*, Ignatius, 1990
3. Fr. Benedict Groeschel, CFR, *Heaven in Our Hands*, Servant, 1994
4. Fr. Benedict Groeschel, CFR, *Healing the Original Wound*, Servant, 1993
5. \*Fr. Michael Scanlan, TOR, *The Truth About Trouble*, Servant, 1989

## Catholic Faith in Action

### Seminar Week 7 – Transformation in Christ

As we move into the final week of the Catholic Faith in Action Seminar, the transformation of our lives is just beginning. Our true identity as Catholic Christians continues to mature; in the weeks to come, the Holy Spirit will become increasingly visible in our lives - visible to ourselves and to others. The Holy Spirit is at work, transforming us, and making us holy. But that's not all.

It is common to experience a joyful honeymoon time with God in the weeks following the release of the Holy Spirit. In time, however, we recognize that the *Catholic Faith in Action* is not just a *God and me* kind of relationship. The gifts we have received are not just for us and our personal growth; the Holy Spirit is also encouraging us to share our "new life" with others. The focus moves away from *me* and toward *others*. As Pope Paul VI said, "The Church exists to evangelize."

But not only do others need us, we also need them. God has given us the gifts of the Holy Spirit (charisms) to steer us and to make us more effective in carrying out our mission in life. Although the dramatic gifts like healing and prophecy can attract a lot of attention, we need to learn about and recognize all of the gifts God is giving so that we can allow them to unfold. Our faith community provides a very helpful environment for the discernment and development of our gifts.

Each of us belongs to various communities: our individual families, our neighborhood, our parish, our business associations, our friends, our prayer group, our Bible study group, etc. They are all important, but the role of a "gift-sharing" community with similar experiences of the Holy Spirit will be especially helpful in nurturing the new relationship we have established with God. Our faith community has another but often overlooked branch - the Saints in heaven. It can be very beneficial to study their lives and allow them to become our models. We can also ask for their intercession.

Finally, as we conclude the seminar, we need to be aware that baptism in the Holy Spirit is not an inoculation against trials and difficulties. We are still human beings living in a sinful world. There will be challenges to our faith. But we now have a new power to overcome these difficulties and a prayer community to provide strength and encouragement.

#### Daily Reading Assignments

<u>Date</u>	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Catechism</u>
Wednesday	1 Peter 1:22-25	CCC 2767
Thursday	James 1:14-26	CCC 2847
Friday	James 5:7-12	CCC 736
Saturday	Hebrews 13:1-9	CCC 2447
Sunday	Galatians 5:13-26	CCC 2515
Monday	Galatians 6:1-10	CCC 2030
Tuesday	Ephesians 4:25-32	CCC 2444 & 2842

Note: After completing the *Catholic Faith in Action* Seminar, you may wish to continue the practice of readings from Scripture each day. One suggestion is to use the daily readings for Mass. These are found in the missalette or any of the Catholic daily devotional guides, for example, *One Bread One Body*, *Living Faith*, or *Magnificat*.

## Appendix A

### Rockford Diocese Weekend Model (3 Saturday Morning Sessions including complimentary lunch)

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday

9:00 am	Opening Remarks
9:15 – 10:20	Introductory talk Seminar #1 “GOD’S LOVE”
10:20 – 10:45	Break
10:45 – 11:40	Discussion Groups
11:40 – 12:00	Lunch
12:00 – 12:35	Seminar #2 “SALVATION”
12:35 – 1:20	Discussion Groups
1:25 pm	Closing Remarks
1:30 pm	Depart

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday

9:00 am	Opening Remarks
9:10 – 9:40	Seminar #3 “THE NEW LIFE”
9:40 – 10:15	Discussion Groups
10:15 – 10:30	Break
10:30 – 11:00	Seminar #4 “RECEIVING GOD’S GIFT”
11:00 – 11:40	Discussion Groups
11:40 – 12:00	Lunch
12:00 – 1:25	Prayer for the Baptism in the Holy Spirit
1:25 pm	Closing Remarks
1:30 pm	Depart

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday

9:00 am	Opening Remarks
9:10 – 9:40	Seminar Talk #5 “GROWTH”
9:40 – 10:15	Discussion Groups
10:15 – 10:30	Break
10:30 – 11:00	Seminar Talk: “GIFTS”
11:00 – 11:40	Discussion Groups
11:40 – 12:00	Lunch
12:00 – 12:40	Seminar Talk: “WHAT IS A PRAYER MEETING?”
12:40 – 1:15	Abbreviated Prayer Meeting
1:15 pm	Closing Remarks
1:30 pm	Depart

## Appendix B

### Practical Ways to Live Out the New Evangelization

#### With Family and Friends:

Show the love you have for God in word and action. If you have difficult relationships, pray for guidance on how to handle things and trust the Holy Spirit to show you what to say and/or do.

Forgive someone who has wronged you. Ask for forgiveness from someone you have wronged. Try to keep doors open in these important relationships.

Be open to share your personal faith story of how God has worked in your life when the opportunity arises. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring you circumstances where “the time is right” to tell your story. If you feel shy or uncomfortable, practice what you might say.

Invite others to join you for Mass, a parish activity, or attending prayer group without indicating a sense of judging where they are spiritually.

“Preach the gospel at all times – if necessary, use words.” (St. Francis of Assisi) Be an example on how a believer in Jesus Christ acts and speaks.

#### At Mass:

Be friendly and move to the center of the church pew because that is an occasion for others to join you and offers an opening to meet those you do not know.

Smile and share the love of God in you with others especially during the Sign of Peace.

Pray for opportunities to share your story of faith with others.

#### In the Parish:

Serve your parish as a Eucharistic minister, lector, choir member, whatever area you sense God is leading you in.

Invite someone to attend RCIA inquiry classes or prayer group and then go with them.

Learn more about how to evangelize people. The Church is rich with information on evangelization and how to do it. Join or start an Evangelization Team in your parish.

#### In the Diocese:

Attend the annual Charismatic Conference and You Are Called Conference and take people who have never attended before.