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### From the Facilitator

by Jennifer Ludtke

WDREF Facilitator

*"I can live for two months on a good compliment."*

– Mark Twain

I remember the hard work of college, especially writing papers... researching, pondering, revising, fine-tuning, tightening the language, finally handing it in with a sigh of relief. The ability to write clearly and concisely was a hard-won skill. The other day, the parish secretary complimented me on how clear and concise my bulletin announcements were. A minor thing without doubt, but it felt rather nice to be recognized for a skill I had worked hard to develop.

As the year begins, what do you notice about those with whom you work – priests, parents, children, teens? What are the minor things that reflect hard-won skills? During the August WDREF meeting, I noticed that every representative listened intently, with open minds and hearts. This reflects an incredible desire to empower PCLs (parish catechetical leaders) in their professional and spiritual growth. WDREF reps, this compliment goes out to you...well done!

But what is the greatest compliment? I believe it is to be so free from our own ego that God shows in everything we do. We become transparent to the grace of the One for whom we work. How wonderful if our words and example lead others to encounter Christ. And while this may not be easy, it's a hard-won skill worth developing! This year, as we acknowledge and compliment good work by others, may we seek to deserve this greatest of compliments.

I look forward to seeing you all at the WDREF Conference in November. And may the Holy Spirit guide and strengthen us – individually and as Church – throughout the challenges and joys ahead.

*God bless you all – Jenny*

### WDREF Calendar

**September 21, 2014**

Catechetical Sunday

**September 24, 2014**

Conf. Grant Apps Due

**October 1, 2014**

Award Submissions Due

**October 31, 2014**

Conference Registration Due

**January 19-20, 2015**

WDREF Board Meeting

Registration Deadline: Oct. 31, 2014

## 2014 WDREF Conference

*We Are A People Of Faith*

November 13-14, 2014 - Waupaca, WI



The 2014 WDREF Conference “We Are A People of Faith” is just around the corner on November 13-14 at the Waupaca Ale House in Waupaca, WI. The two days will focus on building up a strong community of believers based on the lived faith of the saints of the past and the saints of today.

### Keynote

Keynote Speaker Matt Weber will inspire you to bring your faith alive with both holiness and humor. Weber is a Harvard graduate, and a producer for Catholic TV where he hosts a weekly segment called “A Word With Weber,” airing internationally to over 10 million viewers. Additionally, he is a frequent contributor to the Huffington Post and has authored the book “Fearing the Stigmata.”

The title for the book comes from an experience from his fourth grade Catholic School teacher’s explaining St. Francis of Assisi’s stigmata as being a result of him being “a good Catholic.” In response Weber went home to do a little more sinning to ensure that he would not suffer the same fate! As an adult he reflects often in his presentations on the ongoing tension between wanting to be holy, but not wanting the cost to be too high. He will be leading us in further exploring this tension between the joys and challenges of living out our faith on a daily basis. For a further taste of Matt check him out on [YouTube](#).

### Schedule

#### Wednesday, November 12

3:00-6:30 pm Registration/Check-in  
7:00 pm Pre-Conference (Free)  
9:00 pm Social  
“Wine, Cheese, and Chocolate!”  
at the hotel.

#### Thursday, November 13

7:00 am Continental Breakfast  
(Registered hotel guests only)  
8:00-9:30 Registration & Exhibits  
9:30 Welcome & Gathering Prayer  
10:00 Session 1: Matt Weber  
Re-Imagining the Young Catholic  
Imagination: Witness Through  
Joyful Storytelling  
Noon Lunch & Exhibits  
1:30 pm Breakouts

- Julianne Stanz — Helping Catechists be Great Evangelizers
- Kathie Amidei - Faith, Family, Evangelize

3:00 Exhibits  
4:00 Celebration of the Eucharist  
5:30 Social  
6:00 Awards Banquet & Entertainment

#### Friday, November 14

7:00 am Continental Breakfast  
Registered hotel guests only  
8:00 Registration & Exhibits  
9:00 Prayer, Session 2: Matt Weber  
Strategies for Innovation &  
Authenticity in the New Evangel-  
ization: An In-person & On-line  
Approach  
11:30 Lunch  
12:30 Session 3: Matt Weber  
Remaining Catholic: A Reflection

on Why This 30 Year Old Still  
Goes to Church (Yet Doesn’t  
Always Like It)  
2:30 Closing Prayer

### Registration

The registration fee is \$150 for WDREF members and \$180 for non-members. The registration form is available online at [www.wdref.org/Events.html](http://www.wdref.org/Events.html) or from your local representative. Please register by October 31.

### Accommodations

Accommodations for the conference can be made at the Comfort Suites Foxfire. A block of rooms is being held under the name “WDREF” with rates starting at \$85. To reserve your rooms please call: (715) 942-0500.

### Grant Availability

Grant monies are available for the conference. Grant applications are due September 24, 2014. Visit [www.wdref.org/ScholAwards-Grants.html](http://www.wdref.org/ScholAwards-Grants.html)

### Questions?

For more information or general questions about the conference please contact Pam Fischer at (920) 726-4228.



## DARE

Under Construction...

## Mareda

Over the summer months, plans were firmed up for programs in the coming year. They include:

**September:** Retreat Best Practices at INSPIRIO Youth Ministries, Stone Bank

**October:** Multiculturalism and Ministry, presented by Manuel Maldonado, at St. Paul the Apostle, Racine.

**December:** Advent Morning of Reflection at Cardinal Stritch University

**January:** An inspirational ministry mixer - Praise and Worship with Wine and Cheese, at St. Katherine Drexel, Beaver Dam

**February:** Annual Meeting with the (Arch) Bishop – Bishop Don Hying, at St. James, Menomonee Falls

**March:** Faith, presented by Jean Marie Weber, at St. Mary, Waukesha

**April:** Catechesis for Special Needs Workshop at St. Stephen, Oak Creek

**May:** Biennial Retreat, facilitated by Joe Paprocki, at Siena Retreat Center, Racine

Mareda and the entire Archdiocese is eagerly awaiting the promulgation of Archbishop ListECKI's Synodal Declaration, a follow up to our Synod held in June, due out September 14.

## MDREO

The Executive board met in August to finalize plans for the 2014-15 program year:

**September:** Convocation with the Diocese of Madison

**October:** Vicki Thorn

**December:** Hispanic Ministry

**January:** Sacramental Prep (Focus: Reconciliation and Eucharist)

**February:** Day of Recollection at Camp Gray

**March:** Social Justice and Servant Leadership

**April:** Marriage (hopefully post-Synod of Bishops topics)

**May:** Fun Day (one possibility: Beloit Snappers game)

Our Jack McBride Recipient has been named. Rob Olsen has served in Faith Formation for over 25 years and will be awarded at our convocation in September.

Lastly, our executive board sent our Bishop, Robert Morlino a congratulatory letter on the occasion of his 40th anniversary to priestly ordination and 15 years as a Bishop.

## Pro-CLAYM

While we do not formally meet during the summer months, preparation is underway for our new Field Meetings format. The ProCLAYM board will be bringing our meetings “out into the field” three times a year (one stop in each of our three districts/regions). All members of the organization will be invited to these meetings, which will include board business and diocesan reports, discussions, presentations, prayer and fellowship. These meetings will

be held in November, January and April. Normal board meetings will be held at the diocesan complex the other months.

In an effort to boost membership, a mailing was sent to all parishes in the diocese with an introductory letter and an invitation to join us for a meeting. We are discussing another mailing to the pastors of parishes where the PCL is not currently participating in ProCLAYM, explaining our mission and goals in hopes of getting their support in encouraging staff to join.

Our kick-off this year is scheduled for Friday, September 5. We will be rolling up our sleeves and pitching in at St. John the Evangelist Homeless Shelter helping prepare the building for guests this winter.

Finally, we are getting down to the little details in preparation for hosting the WDFEF Convention this November. We can hardly wait to see you all!

## SUMMIT

Under Construction...

## Province Dialogue: “Professionalism of the PCL”



On May 14, 2014, a very interesting and fruitful discussion took place with eight diocesan catechetical leaders and the WDREF Board. The subject of this annual province dialogue was “Professionalism of the PCL (parish catechetical leader).”

Present from the diocesan offices were Gary Pokorny (Milwaukee), Peggy Schoenfuss (Superior), Dr. Joe Bound and Sr. Jackie Spaniola (Green Bay), and Michelle Nilsson and Lindsay Becher (Madison). Joining us from the diocesan offices via the Internet were Ann Lankford (LaCrosse) and Patrick Delaney (Madison).

The first question was a simple one: Using 1-3 words, describe what a PCL looks like. Responses included: Good communicator, patient, holy, do-er, creative, motivated, organized, Christ-centered, witness, active listener, committed prayer life, pastoral, loving, joyful, reflects Jesus, compassionate, persevering, excited, functions without sleep, welcoming servant, thinking with the church, respectful, humble, teacher, lifelong learner, sincere and connected.

We recognized that the background and education of PCLs varies widely. While some PCLs have BAs or MAs, there are many dedicated, faithful PCLs who don't have formal training or education.

Many resources are currently available to support PCLs in their efforts to develop as professionals. These include: Diocesan workshops and program days (both educational and networking), local PCL organization meeting days (both educational and networking), college and university courses, WYRE ministries, guest speakers, SOWDI in Madison, Code of Ethical Standards, spiritual direction, current books, NCCL's Catechetical Leader magazine, retreat centers, USCCB online materials, certification programs, YouTube, mentoring programs, WDREF, cultivation ministries, national organizations (such as NCCL, NFYCM, FCH, NCPD), gifts and talents of parishioners, learning from those we minister to and with, staff orientations and district meetings.

When people were asked to note which of the current resources are most helpful to PCLs, the top responses were:

1. Local PCL Organization meetings and networking
2. Certification programs
3. Staff orientations
4. Mentoring programs
5. Current books and literature such as NCCL's Catechetical Leader magazine
6. Diocesan workshops

*(Continued on next page)*

## PROVINCE DIALOGUE: “PROFESSIONALISM OF THE PCL” *...continued*

One of the difficulties in participating in these opportunities is that pastors and Pastoral Council members might not believe that a level of professionalism is necessary. Too often, educated, fulltime PCLs are let go and replaced by part-time people with no background. There isn't the expectation that part-time PCLs should also be professional. But, everyone should be growing in their professionalism from the beginning of their service, even those who are not paid for the ministry they are doing. Let's stop calling people “just a volunteer” when they are performing a professional role. Even pastors who seem supportive of professionalism in this ministry are often so conscious of the costs that finances form the basis for their decisions.

If we want the ministry of the PCL to be seen as a professional vocation, PCLs also need to treat it as such. PCLs need to dress, act and talk like professionals.

After describing the current situation, the discussion turned to the future: Are there concrete opportunities for WDREF, the Local PCL Organizations and dioceses to work together in new or more intentional ways to advance professionalism among the PCL ministry? Four ideas surfaced:

1. Priests and parishes need to hear that PCLs are professionals. Make it an expectation that priests and PCLs meet monthly to share thoughts, ministerial developments, vision, etc. Ann Lankford is working on the creation of an agenda for this type of meeting in her diocese.
2. Create a checklist/evaluation to send to parish councils asking them to review their catechetical formation in the parish. Share a description of a good PCL from a credible source. Questions on the checklist should show what it takes to be a good PCL, e.g. attends professional meetings, etc.

3. Meet together with priests on the subject of professionalism of the PCL, include expectations, resources, etc. Ask some priests/deacons who already view this as a professional ministry to assist with talking points and Q&A.
4. Hold regional meetings where primary needs and concerns could be conveyed to the Bishop. PCLs could put their concerns in writing. DCLs could bring those concerns to the Bishop and then give his feedback on the items, advocating for the voice of the PCL.

As these four ideas were discussed, the group gravitated towards the second one because we can move forward on this item without having to engage other groups at this initial stage. U.S. Catholic magazine recently had checklists for parishes which we could review. Sr. Jacki commented that she already has a request for a checklist like this.

We are not trying to create an evaluation tool for PCLs. The checklist would indicate what is needed from the parish to create and support the position of a professional catechetical leader. For example: Do you pay for the PCL to attend workshops and professional meetings geared towards the education/formation of the PCL? In responding to the items on the checklist, parishes would be analyzing their current situations and learning what they are doing well and what needs improvement.

We should consider making a video on the day-in-the-life of a PCL to show what the position entails. The video could include interviews with PCLs, pastors, etc. A team of four will meet to develop a draft of this plan. Each diocese and local PCL organization will review the plan and offer input. While most items in the checklist would be universal, there could also be small sections with items unique to a particular diocese, e.g. Green Bay has specific requirements related to textbook selection. We look forward to the development of this tool for parishes.

# Who's Who Moment ...

## WDREF Members in the Spotlight

With the unexpected events of this summer, we decided it was time to highlight WDREF, itself, in the Who's Who. Why WDREF? Here are the reasons, from present to past:

- The unexpected death of Lee Nagel, former diocesan director of Total Catholic Education in Green Bay, left a void in many people's lives. It left an especially large void in NCCL (National Conference for Catechetical Leadership) where Lee had served as Executive Director for the past 7 years. In an emergency meeting, NCCL's Board of Directors discussed how to keep the organization moving forward in the days/weeks/months ahead until a new Executive Director could be hired. Many names were discussed as possible Interim Administrators. The Board appointed Joanie McKeown as Interim Administrator of NCCL's internal operations. (President Bill Miller was tasked with handling NCCL's liaison relationships with other organizations.)
- Joanie McKeown had previously been elected to two terms on NCCL's Board of Directors. She was (and is) serving as NCCL's Treasurer and CFO as she took on most of the responsibilities of NCCL's Executive Director. And, Joanie is a product of WDREF! She has participated in almost every WDREF Conference for the last 20 years, served on WDREF's Board and various committees, and helped to write and publish WDREF's two books, "Employing Parish Catechetical Leaders" and "Best Practices in Catechesis on the Sacra-

ments." "WDREF has been an important part of my life since the early 1990s," said Joanie. "The professional and ministerial information and networking with my peers from across the state have been important in the development of my skills. If it wasn't for WDREF, I could not have stepped into the leadership position at NCCL after Lee's death."

- Mike Westenberg, WDREF member and PCL (parish catechetical leader) in the Diocese of Green Bay, also had a high-profile position in NCCL. In May, he completed his second term on NCCL's Board of Directors. So, of the 9 elected Board members from across the United States, made up of diocesan directors, diocesan staff, PCLs, and university academics, PCLs who were WDREF members (Mike and Joanie) filled two of the nine seats for the last 5 years. Quite an accomplishment considering the thousands of people who could have been elected.
- Pam Fischer, also a WDREF member and PCL in the Diocese of Green Bay, serves as the PCL rep from Wisconsin on NCCL's Representative Council. Her voice is especially important because only 12 provinces have PCL representation. Her voice from WDREF represents our PCL ministry in a broader way than just being a Wisconsin voice.
- Pam serves in a long line of PCL reps to NCCL. When NCCL's Representative Council was formed over 25 years ago, WDREF was the first to send a province rep. to serve on the Council, giving

WDREF a voice at the table on the national scene and influencing the national agenda for professional catechetical ministry.

- WDREF's two publications, mentioned earlier, are sold nationally by NCCL, a sign of the quality of these products, which are serving the broader catechetical ministry beyond the boundaries of our state.
- Through WDREF's annual dialogue with the diocesan catechetical leaders, WDREF provided input on national publications by the USCCB, including, the "National Directory for Catechesis" and "Our Hearts Were Burning Among Us."
- Formed in the 1980s, WDREF was the first province or statewide organization in the country for parish directors/coordinators of religious education.
- WDREF was created with the help of the diocesan directors/staff of each of the five dioceses in Wisconsin. The diocesan members recognized the value of having PCLs from across the state come together to share ministry ideas, to hear and discuss new concepts and methodologies, and to offer support to each other in our ministries.
- The list of diocesan supporters of WDREF is too long to include, but continues to the present day.
- We congratulate WDREF for its role on the local, province and national scenes!

First and foremost, the organization has lost a great man... Lee Nagel. Lee died on May 26, a few short days after the annual conference. The organization is in the process of hiring a new executive director.

The 79th Annual NCCL Conference will be held in Buffalo, NY May 17-21, 2015. Speakers include Bishop Richard Malone, Br. Mickey McGrath and Jerry Galipeau. The theme of the conference is Encounter the Joy of the Gospel. For the most up-to-date information visit [www.nccl.us](http://www.nccl.us).



## Highlights from the May 2014 National Conference

- Sherry Weddell was a keynote speaker who discussed Energizing the Church. One key way to do that is to form intentional disciples. She focused on how we need to take risks for Christ. We have to adapt our ministry to where the people are...we need to remind our communities to reach for the stars...their faith.
- Jared Dees was the speaker at the PLC forum and he shared that we need to be disciples, servants, teachers and leaders as catechetical leaders. It is our mission to evangelize our communities. We need to be witnesses to our students. Pass on our faith!
- The Intercultural and Technology perspectives were also shared by Alejandro Aquilera-Titus and Daniella Zsupan-Jerome. Alejandro shared with us that St. Paul brought inculturalism to the forefront.

The key point that he shared with us was about relationships. As Pope Francis has said, "It is not about issues, it is about relationships." Daniella shared that technology can bring us closer in these relationships. Tweeting and texting can bring us closer. Technology is reshaping how we do things, it is reshaping how we share with one another. We need to do it effectively.

- The last two speakers, Mary Birmingham and Dorothy Mensah-Aggrey reminded us that we are the models and to never lose sight of what we are truly here to do... serve the Lord. We need to be bold and courageous. It is a way of life.

Visit [www.nccl.org](http://www.nccl.org) to learn more about NCCL.

## Become a WDREF Member!

Become a member of WDREF and take advantage of these great benefits:

- Network with others in the field
- Share best practices & resources
- Engage in continuing education
- And more!

Joining your local organization automatically makes you a member of WDREF. Check the list below to find your local organization, and visit the **Our Organization** page on the Web site for contact information. A portion of your local dues helps support WDREF activities and projects.

### *Local Organization Presidents:*

#### **DARE**

Diocesan Association of Religious Educators (La Crosse)  
Contact: Lynn Meyer  
St. Joseph Church  
1709 Wyatt Ave.  
Stevens Point, WI 54481

#### **MAREDA**

Administrators of Catechetical Leadership in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee  
Contact: Heather Warner  
St. Mary Catholic Church/St. Mary By The Lake  
225 S. Hartwell Ave./7605 Lakeshore Dr.  
Waukesha, WI 53186/Racine, WI 53404

#### **MDREO**

Madison Directors of Religious Education Organization  
Contact: Tiffany Topel  
St. Francis of Assisi  
324 E. North  
Jefferson, WI 53549

#### **ProCLAYM**

Green Bay Association of Religious Education Administrators  
Contact: Mary Carter  
St. John the Baptist  
915 Ivory St.  
Seymour, WI 54165

#### **SUMMIT**

Superior Mutual Ministry Team  
Contact: Gwen Nies  
St. John the Baptist  
PO Box 7  
Webster, WI 54893

## WDREF Executive Team



**Treasurer - Danelle Kegley**  
**Facilitator - Jennifer Ludtke**  
**Secretary - Kathy Cornette**

Learn more about our executives...  
[www.wdref.org/OurOrganization.html](http://www.wdref.org/OurOrganization.html)

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## WDREF Mission Statement

As the statewide organization of professional catechetical leaders, the Wisconsin Directors of Religious Education Federation (WDREF) promotes ministerial and professional development and provides ongoing formation, advocacy, support and recognition to our members through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.