



Catholic Diocese of Richmond  
1820 Bicentennial 2020

## Office of Christian Formation

Volume IV, Issue 15, December 2020

Greetings!

May our Prayers for you this Advent/Christmas fill you with...

**Gratitude**

**Peace**

**Renewal**

**Joy**

**Wonder**

*Emily Bernadette Megan Niva Sheri*

Emily Filippi  
Director, Office of Christian Formation  
Acting Director, Office of Ethnic Ministries

## It's time for Advent Already?!



So many of us are reeling from the stress, heartache, and grief that we did not see coming in 2020. Where was God in the midst of it all? Where do we go from here? Our weary souls need quite a bit of preparation to celebrate the joy of the upcoming season.

Our children have endured the same trials we have. Their favorite activities, playdates, school systems, and routine of life have all been turned upside down. However, in the way they respond, they witness an important truth to us.

When the first news of quarantines and lockdowns broke, it was the weekend of my daughter's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. Her birthday party and her preschool class—the two current joys of her life—were both disappearing. Our hearts were heavy, but it was my daughter who broke the silence. “So Mommy and Daddy will never leave for work?! YAY lockdown! Can I go play now?”

A few months later, when my daughter had her drive-in preschool graduation in a parking lot with a makeshift megaphone, she still picked out her prettiest dress and beamed with delight at the “silly” way we did things.

When we canceled our Disney trip, my daughter “had an idea!” and down the stairs came a mini-Cinderella and a 2-year old Sherriff Woody several minutes later. We played imaginary park and dressed up for days as princesses and characters.

How are young children consistently able to adapt while the adults struggle? I found my answer in the beatitudes: “Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.” They aren't distracted, and they witness to us every day the grace and delight He brings to our lives.

While the Church has suffered the ability to be fully the in-person community we all treasure, the Domestic Church has had its chance to shine. As a parent, I had always thought that I needed to structure *all* faith teaching to my children. But that's not how Domestic Church works. I attend, and my children witness to me, if I pause long enough to observe it.



We hear parents exclaim often that they don't know how to teach the faith. Perhaps it's time we start telling them the only tool they need is the natural wonder of their children, for God sent us the child Jesus to teach the world, not the other way around.

The idea of doing something big and structured for my faith this advent seems daunting and exhausting. So instead, I'm going to do something little and natural. I'm going to watch my children, and let them witness to me the hope, joy, and peace of the season. For they are of clean heart, and they see God everywhere.

Wishing you a child's sight and imagination as we journey toward the child Jesus this Advent.

Written by Megan Cottam, Associate Director in the Office of Christian Formation

[Click here](#) to download a printable version of this reflection.

## You want to know this!



**LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTRY  
INSTITUTE**

The Lay Ecclesial Ministry Institute (LEMI) will begin accepting applications in January 2021.

For more information about LEMI, visit <https://richmonddiocese.org/office/lemi/>

**Prepare for Sunday!**  
A video reflection from Fr.  
Michael Renninger

Each week, Fr. Michael Renninger leads a bible study on the upcoming Sunday Scripture readings. Feel free to share this free resource with your Pastor and your parish. [Click here](#) to view these 30 minute reflections.

December 10, 2020

**Catechesis Café: Final Videos in USCCB Series**  
*Evangelizing the Culture and the Inculturation of the Faith and Catechesis in Dialogue with the Wider World*  
[Register here](#)

[December 15](#)  
[7:00 - 8:30pm](#)

[December 16](#)  
[10:00-11:30am](#)

### Quenching Others' Thirst

*How do we offer those we encounter a drink of the Living Water that quenches their thirst and soothes the growing sense of hopelessness many people are experiencing today?*

*There is an urgent need to share the Good News of the promises of God; to be Living Water to others.*

All ministers are invited to join the next **RCIA Roundtable** as we watch and discuss a presentation by Becky Eldredge on how we share the hope of our faith with others.



Register by clicking the time that is best for you.

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December 15, 2020

**USCCB Survey: All Lay Leaders**

The USCCB would like to learn more about the realities facing lay ecclesial ministers across the country.

[Click here](#) for the survey.

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January 15, 2021

**Catechist Lists (Virtual and In-person)**

Please include name and email of all children, youth, and adult catechists currently serving in your parish.

Send the list to: [learn@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:learn@richmonddiocese.org)

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January 21, 2021

*Facing Difficult Social Issues in the Parish* by Carole M. Eipers (Twenty-Third Publications) – a book study. Look for registration info later this month.

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April 15, 2021

*Nurturing the Faith of Young Families: Early Childhood Spirituality and the Domestic Church*

Virtual Training for Catechetical Leaders

Details coming soon!

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***Christian Formation supports, educates, and empowers ministry leaders to become Spirit-filled disciples leading others to Christ.***

Office of Christian Formation | Catholic Diocese of Richmond | (804) 359-5661  
[lcf@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:lcf@richmonddiocese.org) | <http://richmonddiocese.org/office/christian-formation/>

STAY CONNECTED

