

Parable RCIA Supplement

RCIA Supplement for the January/February 2012 issue of *Parable*

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Dear Friends,

The Christmas Season lasts until the Baptism of Our Lord (January 9), but it can be hard to keep a sense of celebration when the workaday world starts back up well before then. The long, cold stillness of the New Year beckons and just ahead of that is Spring with all her promises of new life. But we must get through the winter first and its natural stillness and frozen calm can be an ideal time to delve ever deeper into our faith lives. Early darkness and a late rising sun, while bleak, offer ample time for quiet reflection about how closely we strive to make our paths like Christ's. We offer this supplement to aid you as you cultivate a deeper relationship with God and his Church.

I have always loved this time of year, when the hectic days of Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas (a time when my family celebrates seven birthdays!) are over and there is nothing left to do but bask in the clean, unbroken snow of the New Year. This is my second year making a contemplative weekend retreat in late January and sometimes amidst the presents and decorating and parties, the thought of my little room at the top of the stairs at Our Lady of Hope House of Prayer in New Ipswich, NH, is a golden rope of peace that I cling to! If you don't know about this little clapboard gem not far from Manchester, run by the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary, then I urge you to check it out. (<http://www.presentationofmary.com/retreatwork.html>).

The Sisters are lovely, there is Mass, Vespers, Rosary, Adoration and all of the wonderful home cooking you can eat, as well as a library of spiritual reading, fires in the fireplace and even a small labyrinth in the garden for walking meditation. Right now I am counting down the days and planning all the lovely conversations I will have with my God. If you've never made a contemplative retreat, I cannot recommend it enough. It is so very important to set aside time for communion with Christ, with all worldly distractions held at bay. I hope you will give it a try!

In this edition of the *Parable RCIA Supplement* I am full of questions for you! It is my hope that the questions I pose about some of the featured articles will prompt discussion amongst your RCIA candidates and catechumens and provide you with further opportunities to convey the richness and beauty of our Catholic faith.

In Christ,
Dana Laviano

If you have questions regarding RCIA or continuing adult education, contact Eileen Smith, Director of Evangelization, esmith@rcbm.org or 603.669.3100.

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CHURCH HISTORY

Why don't we elect our bishop?

Dear Father Kerper (Parable, page 10)

In this column, Father Kerper gives an excellent explanation of Apostolic Succession, whereby Jesus sent the original Twelve Apostles out to found and minister his Church and they in turn, sent more successors out. This continued through time to the bishops who lead us today. This is what is meant when the Catholic Church is referred to as the "One True Church."

- How does Apostolic Succession differentiate us from other faiths?
- Did you know that the definition of a "church" must include the ability to trace its lineage back to Christ?
- What other Church is also recognized as having Apostolic Succession?

THE BIBLE

Parable of the Talents

Bishop's Message (Parable, page 6)

Jesus often spoke to people in parables, which are stories with a moral lesson, used to teach a religious belief. The parable of the talents is just one of 37 parables to be found in the Bible!

Do you have a favorite parable? Have you read all of the parables? Did you ever think you understood a parable's meaning only to have it explained differently? Do you find it easier to learn when parables are used or do you prefer a more straightforward style of communication?

THE CATECHISM

Parable of the Talents

Bishop's Message (Parable, page 6)

In Bishop Libasci's first column and again in his homily (on page 20), he references a line from *The Baltimore Catechism*. This was the first catechism written for Catholics in North America and was the standard from 1885 through the 1960s. For those new to the faith, its question and answer format, "Who made you?", "God made me." is vastly different from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) now used worldwide. There is still an American version of the Catechism (*The United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* or the CCA), published by the USCCB which is often used in tandem with the CCC.

COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Saint Peter

Profile in Holiness (Parable, page 29)

Cynthia Nicolosi paints an excellent portrait of the flawed and gifted first Pope. People often think of sainthood as an impossible ideal of holy perfection meant for someone other than ourselves, but many of the Twelve Apostles were converted and redeemed sinners.

- How does Cynthia's exploration of Saint Peter's character and even lack of "qualifications" for the job of founding Christ's Church, help us in our understanding of how God might call us to serve him knowing full well how sinful we all are?
- Does this portrait of Saint Peter change how you think of sainthood and its possibilities for everyone?

ONGOING FAITH FORMATION

We Are Called

Marriage & Parenting (Parable, page 8)

Becoming Catholic challenges us in many ways and one of them is the Church's admonition to foster vocations in our homes. Many people, despite recognizing their parish priest or other clergy as "a treasure" are loathe to cast their own children in such lifetime roles. Getting to know our consecrated religious as people is one step toward having a fuller, more accurate view of what sort of life such callings are made of.

Questions for Discussion:

- What other suggestions does Danielle Bean make in her column?
- Do you promote vocations in your home?
- What is your understanding of "a calling"?
- Do you or anyone in your family have a personal relationship with a clergyman or consecrated religious?
- How has that changed your view of vocations?