

KNIGHTS OF MALTA

Summer 2007 Newsletter

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF THE SOVEREIGN MILITARY ORDER OF MALTA



In the Winter issues of 2005 and 2006 we introduced the Knights and Dames of Malta to Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien, Archbishop for the Military Services, and the Catholics Seeking Christ movement. *Catholics Seeking Christ* is a peer to peer evangelization among active duty Catholic young adults in our military. In fact over the last few years The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta has acknowledged the needs of the Archdiocese for the Military Services by awarding a grant of \$25,000. In addition a number of individual Knights and Dames have also contributed money to help this cause. The *Catholics Seeking Christ* movement is alive and well and continuing to thrive.

Recently Pavel Reid, *Catholics Seeking Christ* Director, traveled to Guam to educate members of the base chapel. Mr. Reid asks supporters to please pray that the spiritual beachhead established in Guam will grow and that it will make a successful leap to Japan and Korea in a few months.

In a recent issue of *AMS News*, Mr. Reid published an article on evangelization which I thought would be of interest to our readers — '*Catholics Seeking Christ - Why Evangelize?*'

Bill Dinger
Communications Committee
Chair

Catholics Seeking Christ – Why Evangelize?

By Pavel Reid



Why evangelize?

Why do we reach out to others and bring them into the Church? Is this just a way of recruiting new members to an organization that we hold dear? Is that all that *Catholics Seeking Christ*, the Archdiocese for the Military Services' young adults evangelization ministry, is all about?

This is partly what we are about. But it's not the whole story.

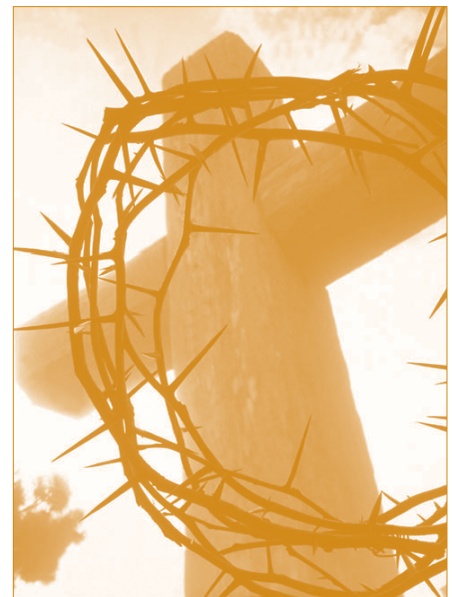
We know that in America today there is a falling participation rate by young people in the life of the Church. We can measure this falling rate in many ways. Fewer attend Mass on Sundays throughout the year. Fewer hold to the Church's teachings. Fewer call themselves Catholics when they grow up and move out of their parents' homes.

We evangelize because we want to see the Catholic Church continue to grow and prosper in this country. But there is something much deeper to our motives.

Bowling leagues face similar falling participation rates among the young. So does General Motors as they lose younger customers to Toyota. Indeed, many venerable community-building and social service organizations are attracting fewer young members.

But the Church is more than a corporation, more than a community service organization, more than a bowling league. While we do seek to encourage younger Americans to participate more and more deeply in the life of the Church to sustain the Church, we also understand that the Church plays a role in our Country and the spiritual lives of our younger countrymen that no other organization can.

In short, while there are many organizations that make our lives and our Country



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Catholics Seeking Christ – Why Evangelize?

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better by building our communities, our economy, our sense of identity and connection with others—only the Church can save us. The Church alone is the ‘dispenser of the Mysteries of Christ.’ (1 Cor. 1:4) Only the Church is the ‘pillar and foundation of truth.’ (Tim. 3:15)

Only in the Church can we have a true and personal encounter with Jesus the Christ. (See ‘Dominus Iesu,’ No. 16-17) And all of us, young and old stand in need of that encounter.

All men and women, every one of us, are created to encounter Christ and to enter into communion with God. Not just a relationship with God – everyone is already in a relationship, whether a good or bad one, whether we know it or not, with God. Jesus came to transform everyone’s relationship with God into a communion, a sharing of love and life

analogous to, but even closer than, a marriage. Entering the Church is akin to entering into a marital communion with God. The Church both is this communion and exists to bring us into this communion. And She is the only organization that has that identity — God has only one bride, the Church, and humanity has only one Groom, Christ.

We, the members of the Church, evangelize then, not only because we value belonging to the Church and want to share this belonging with others. We evangelize because we know our need of Christ and the need of all men, all generations, for Christ. We evangelize because we have been evangelized and simply must share our encounter with Christ with others. We evangelize because this encounter has brought us into communion with God, has brought us into his Church, has made us Catholics.

We evangelize because this is who we are: *Catholics Seeking Christ*.

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THE **B**ereavement Committee

We are very saddened to inform you that the former President of the American Association, Richard Conway Casey died on March 22, 2007.

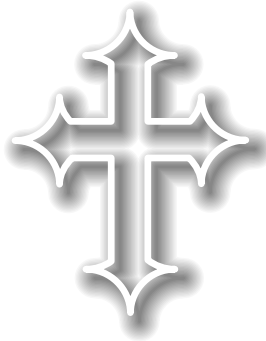
Judge Casey was the first blind trial judge appointed to the federal bench, nominated by President Clinton in 1997. Among the high-profile cases over which he presided: the constitutional challenge of the federal Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act and the prosecution of organized-crime leader Peter Gotti. After graduating from Holy Cross and Georgetown Law, Judge Casey was a federal prosecutor in Manhattan from 1960 to 1963 and then joined Brown & Wood, where he spent 24 years as a litigator before becoming a judge.


A Mass of Christian Burial was held for him on March 27th at St. Patrick’s Cathedral. His Eminence Edward Cardinal Egan celebrated, with numerous other bishops and priests concelebrating. The New York Area of the American Association provided an honor guard of over twenty Knights and Dames.

The Bereavement Committee is responsible for providing funeral honors for deceased members of the Order. Funeral honors, which are conducted at the request of the family, include arranging for the attendance of Knights and Dames, providing an honor guard, assisting in the use of robes and the pall of the Order, and attending to other appropriate details.

Families of deceased Knights and Dames may request funeral honors by contacting the Chairman of the Bereavement Committee, John Leopoldo Fiorilla, at 212-661-6222, or directly through the Association’s office at 212-371-1522. If possible, at least 48 hours notice should be provided.

The Bereavement Committee also needs volunteers who may be contacted on short notice to participate in funeral Masses. Those interested in serving should contact the Chairman.



 here are times in life when you recognize that a truly extraordinary moment took place, one that is graced and life-changing. For me and for many others such a moment was *Soy catequista: the Dignity, Vocation, and Mission of the Catechist*.

Soy catequista — I am a catechist — was a consultation, a coming together of catechetical ministers from all across the country that took place at the University of Notre Dame from November 7 to 9, 2006. *Soy catequista* had two objectives: first, to examine and emphasize the dignity, vocation, and mission of catechists, and, second, to surface effective catechetical approaches being used in Latino communities in the United States.

Writing about *Soy catequista* in an article for *Catechist* magazine, Dr. Jerry Baumbach, a participant in the consultation, stated: ‘I would propose that in the years to come, a consultation entitled ‘*Soy catequista: the Dignity, Vocation, and Mission of the Catechist*’ will claim its place among notable historic moments in the life of the Church in the United States.’

Father Virgilio Elizondo, a founder of the Mexican American Cultural Center, also participated in the consultation. On the last day he told us that “*I felt throughout this just an incredible sense of excitement.*” Father Elizondo noted that he had been fortunate in his lifetime to experience first hand four core moments—the catechetical movement with Father Johannes Hofinger, the birth of the RCIA with Christiane Brusselmans, the found-

ing of the Mexican American Cultural Center, and now *Soy catequista*. ‘I feel that I’m at the fourth one of those gatherings today. . . . It always seems so simple but it’s so incredibly profound—retrieving the real dignity and role of *catequista*.’

What happened at *Soy catequista* that touched hearts so deeply? What was the seed that began it all? How can we share this moment, this movement, with catechists throughout the United States?

ORIGINS

The idea for a consultation on catechesis in Latino communities came to me as I reflected on the following exhortation of our Bishops in *Encuentro y Mission*: ‘Be relentless in seeking ways to promote and facilitate the full cooperation of Hispanic Catholics into the life of the Church and its mission’ (60). In seeking an effective way to do this, I invited diocesan leaders attending the April 2004 NCCL Annual Meeting in Albuquerque, NM to a luncheon meeting. The question we examined was: ‘How can we meet the needs of recent immigrants to the United States who may be coming from different models and have different expectations of catechetical approaches?’

With the enthusiastic response from the participants of this meeting, the idea of a national symposium on catechesis in the Latino communities began to take shape. Olga Villa Parra, former Director of the Midwest Hispanic Catholic Commission, recommended meeting with members of the Institute for Latino Studies at Notre Dame to

discuss the possibility of planning this symposium.

As a result of that conversation and a subsequent meeting with Most Reverend James A. Tamayo,

Bishop of Laredo and Chairman of the USCCB Bishops Committee on Catechesis, the event started to take shape as a consultation, *Soy catequista: the Dignity, Vocation, and Mission of the Catechist*.

A MOMENT IN TIME, A MOVEMENT FOR THE FUTURE


Soy catequista began on a glorious autumn evening at the University of Notre Dame. In my welcoming remarks to the fifty-five other participants, I reiterated the purpose of the Consultation: ‘*We need to tell the stories of the good that is done by catechists among Latinos. Listen, go home and share.*’ Share. From the beginning, our goal was not just to hold one event, but to use that event as a basis for a program that could be replicated. *Soy catequista* was envisioned as a movement to uplift catechists throughout the nation.

As stated earlier, *Soy catequista* had two objectives. Both were articulated well by Dr. Tim Matovina in his opening remarks. Of the first he explained: “*And so we want to examine much more deeply and examine with you the dignity of the vocation of the catechist, the calling. People*





TCCHCC Honors Jack Rudin and Rory Kelleher, KM At the Flower Ball

 On Wednesday, April 18, the Terence Cardinal Cooke Health Care Center held its major fundraising event, the Flower Ball. Over 500 of the Center's friends, trustees, and benefactors gathered in the Grand Ballroom of The Pierre Hotel to honor Jack Rudin and Rory Kelleher. Mr. Rudin received the Center's Terence Cardinal Cooke Partnership Award, given each year to a community leader whose work with the less fortunate reflects the Center's mission. Mr. Kelleher received the Mary White Commitment Award.

For many years, Mr. Rudin has taken great personal interest in the Center's residents. He has sponsored the Jack and Susan Rudin Multimedia Center, which houses an extensive collection of periodicals,

books and DVD's in addition to a bank of computers, all of which keep the residents in touch with the outside community.

Mr. Kelleher's personal involvement as a deeply engaged volunteer is a source of pride and inspiration to other volunteers and staff. In addition to being a member of the Center's Board of Trustees, he has for many years rendered faithful assistance at Sunday chapel services and has been a stalwart supporter of the Center's Pastoral Care Program. Mr. Kelleher's devotion to the TCCHCC residents is admirable. He has also been a consistent contributor and participant in the Center's varied fundraising activities and events. Mr. Kelleher is a partner with the firm of Sidley, Austin, Brown & Wood LLP.

CALENDAR OF NATIONAL EVENTS ORDER OF MALTA MEETINGS

Board of Councillors Meeting:
September 6 – New York City

National Membership Conference:
September 28–30 – New Jersey

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land:
October 4–11

Malta Human Services Foundation Board: November 8 – New York City

Board of Councillors Meeting:
November 8 – New York City

Annual Meeting:
November 9 – Annual Meeting of All Members – New York City

Investiture: November 9
– New York City

Annual Dinner:
November 9 – New York City

Abriendo la Puerta / Opening the Door

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who are called to be catechists are called by God; it's a ministry of the church. No more — 'I'm a volunteer.' ¡'Soy catequista!'"

As for the second objective, Dr. Matovina referred to some of the challenges the Church faces today. However, he continued, “. . . we also know there are some great things going on and we want to focus on those. To inspire one another, what's going on that works in Hispanic catechesis.”

And so *Soy catequista* proceeded to examine these two issues by engaging the wisdom of each person in attendance. The power of *Soy catequista* resulted in large part from the synergistic interplay between the presentations, the *testimonios*, and the discussions.

WHAT'S WORKING IN COMMUNITIES

The second objective of *Soy catequista* was to surface different types of effective catechetical approaches utilized in Latino communities in the United States.

From the many nominations that were received, thirteen catechists were selected as *testigos*. The *testigos* spoke about their ministry and the challenges they encounter while working with adults, children, and families in a variety of cultures. Their *testimonios* provided concrete examples of catechesis that is working in Latino communities. The commitment, creativity, and personal witness of these catechists, as well as the opportunity to share ideas, were critical components of the consultation.

In thanking the people who gave *testimonios*, Father Elizondo said “*The testimonials have been the core of this presentation, because this is where it is happening. We can always talk about it, you're doing it. God Bless You! And believe me there's much more fruit then you'll ever begin to realize.*”

SOY CATEQUISTA, THE PROGRAM

The event of *Soy catequista: the Dignity, Vocation, and Mission of the Catechist* was the first step.



Those present were challenged to share the vision and the wisdom of the presentations with the people in their dioceses and parish communities. *Soy catequista* is meant to *Abrir la Puerta* — open the door.



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