

“Be Merciful as the Father”

Course Descriptions for Ministries Day 2016

“...Dear brothers and sisters, I have often thought of how the Church may render more clear her mission to be a witness to mercy; and we have to make this journey. It is a journey which begins with spiritual conversion. Therefore, I have decided to announce an Extraordinary Jubilee which has at its center the mercy of God. It will be a Holy Year of Mercy. We want to live in the light of the word of the Lord: “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful” (cf. Lk 6:36). And this especially applies to confessors! So much mercy!

This Holy Year will commence on the next Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and will conclude on Sunday, 20 November 2016, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe and living face of the Father's mercy. I entrust the organization of this Jubilee to the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, in order that it may come to life as a new step on the Church's journey in her mission to bring the Gospel of mercy to each person.

I am confident that the whole Church, which is in such need of mercy for we are sinners, will be able to find in this Jubilee the joy of rediscovering and rendering fruitful God's mercy, with which we are all called to give comfort to every man and every woman of our time. Do not forget that God forgives all, and God forgives always. Let us never tire of asking forgiveness. Let us henceforth entrust this Year to the Mother of Mercy, that she turn her gaze upon us and watch over our journey: our penitential journey, our year-long journey with an open heart, to receive the indulgence of God, to receive the mercy of God....”

*Pope Francis, at St. Peter's Basilica,
Announcement of the Jubilee Year of Mercy*

Two Hour Workshops:

Catechist Orientation: (2 hour morning session)

Summary: The *Catechist Orientation* serves as an introduction to the ministry of catechesis. Topics include: a brief historical perspective of catechesis in the Church, spirituality of the catechist, the catechetical process, and ecclesial methodology. This session is open to all adults and is a requirement for catechetical certification.

Presenter: Jason Gale is the Director of the Catechist Formation Program at Aquinas College. He is married with 4 children and lives in Dickson, TN. He has an undergraduate degree in Theology and Catechetics from Franciscan University of Steubenville as well as a Master's Degree in Theology from Franciscan. He has also completed a Master's Degree in Theology and Catechetics from the Maryvale Institute in Birmingham, UK and is currently working towards an Ecclesial License in Catechetics from Maryvale.

Better Homes and Pardons – The Raw Power of Mercy to Transform Family: (2 hour afternoon session)

Summary: Priests and counselors alike tell us that an unforgiving heart is paramount to spiritual and emotional cancer on a person and family, whereas forgiveness frees the heart to love. Tom McCabe, author, educator and speaker, distinguishes between imperfect and perfect forgiveness, shares seven blessings that befall the forgiving family and identifies, through interesting studies, the debilitating effects if they fail. In this Year of Mercy, Tom explores how mercy and compassion renew the family.

Presenter: Tom McCabe is an educator, writer, consultant and frequent conference speaker with 20 years of experience serving diocesan and parish structures in the areas of evangelization, catechesis, marriage and family, and parish strategic planning. Since earning his master's degree in Theology, Tom has worked extensively within the Catholic Church at many levels, from parish, to Catholic schools to diocese. Tom is a Diocesan Representative with Ascension Press and co-author of *Living a Joy-filled Marriage*, a virtue-based life skills program and designer of a practical resource called the *Marriage Action Plan* to help couples create a concrete plan to grow in love. A frequent speaker on family matters and evangelization, Tom and his wife, Rosemary, live in Georgia with their six children.

One Hour Sessions:

The ABCS of Mercy

Summary: As children, our parents and teachers drilled into us our “ABCs,” as a foundation for learning to read. We had to learn them by heart, so that we could learn how to sound them out in actual words. Now, it is time for us to learn the ABCs of Mercy, to learn them by heart so that mercy, as a way of life, becomes second nature to us. The letter “A” stands for Ask for Mercy, “B” for Be Merciful to Others, and “C” for Completely Trust in Jesus. Practicing these three, mercy will fill all that we do.

Presenter: Deacon Bill Jacobs is privileged to serve the people of Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Alcoa. Born in New York, he moved from Wellington, Florida to East Tennessee 5 years ago with his wife, Toni. He has a BS in Biology from SUNY at Stony Brook, a Doctor of Osteopathy degree from the New York College of Osteopathic Medicine, and an MA in theology from the Saint Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary in Boynton Beach, FL. A practicing physician, Deacon Bill works for the Department of Veterans Affairs at the Knoxville Outpatient Clinic.

One Hour Sessions Continued:

Apologetics Part I

Summary: Apologetics is the art of sharing the faith with non-Catholics in a way that they can understand and appreciate. It relies upon the principles shared by all Christians: Sacred Scripture, history, and common sense. The class will address frequently asked questions about the faith and specific ways to respond to those questions. We will also examine, in a respectful way, some of the basic principles of Protestant Christianity in order to gain a better appreciation of our differences and similarities. This season is independent of Apologetics Part II and attendees need not attend both but different material will be presented at this session.

Presenter: Father Michael Sweeney, pastor of Blessed Sacrament in Harriman, St. Ann Church in Lansing, and St. Christopher Church in Jamestown and Chaplain, State Prison Complex - Wartburg, Tennessee

Apologetics Part II

Summary: Apologetics is the art of sharing the faith with non-Catholics in a way that they can understand and appreciate. It relies upon the principles shared by all Christians: Sacred Scripture, history, and common sense. The class will address frequently asked questions about the faith and specific ways to respond to those questions. We will also examine, in a respectful way, some of the basic principles of Protestant Christianity in order to gain a better appreciation of our differences and similarities. This season is independent of Apologetics Part I and attendees need not attend both but different material will be presented at this session.

Presenter: Father Michael Sweeney, pastor of Blessed Sacrament in Harriman, St. Ann Church in Lansing, and St. Christopher Church in Jamestown and Chaplain, State Prison Complex - Wartburg, Tennessee

The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Works of Mercy

Summary: During the Year of Mercy, called by Pope Francis, we examine the works of mercy, corporal and spiritual, with Our Lady, the Blessed Virgin Mother of God. The works of mercy are: To feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to house the homeless, to visit the sick and imprisoned, to bury the dead; to instruct the ignorant, to counsel the doubtful, to admonish sinners, to bear wrongs patiently, to forgive offences willingly, to comfort the afflicted, to pray for the living and the dead.

Presenter: Rev. Dr. John Arthur Orr, ordained to the Priesthood in 2001, Father Orr serves as Pastor of Saint Joseph the Worker Catholic Church, Madisonville, TN. He has published numerous books and articles including: *Year of Mercy Pilgrimage* (2016), *The New Evangelization: Pastoral Reflections on the Sacraments* (2015), *Reason in Wojtyla / John Paul II* (2014), *The New Evangelization: Pastoral Reflections on the Creed* (2013), *Dogmatic Questions and Answers for the Year of Faith* (2012), *The Second Vatican Council and the Interpretation of Sacred Scripture* (2011), "Catholic Church Music in Theory and Practice" (2004/2005) and "John Paul II in *Laudato si'*" (forthcoming). Besides working with people in RCIA in various parishes, Father Orr taught "Readings in Philosophy", "Music Appreciation", "Ecumenism", "Morals" and "Basic Doctrine" at Knoxville Catholic High School for six years.

The Byzantine Catholic Churches

Summary: The *one* Catholic Church is a communion of more than twenty individual churches. Each church within the Catholic communion has its own liturgy, spirituality, discipline, and theological emphasis. While most Christians in the United States are familiar with the Latin (Roman) Catholic Church, this session will introduce participants to some of the *other* Catholic Churches. Particular emphasis will be placed on exploring the differences and complementarity between the Latin and Byzantine Rites.

Presenter: Fr. Richard Armstrong, Diocesan Assistant Director of Christian Formation and Pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church in Knoxville.

Canon Law on Marriage and Family

Summary: The Law of the Church translates the doctrine on Marriage and family life into concrete rights and duties for the Christian Faithful. This talk will explore the Code of Canon Law of the Catholic Church in order to highlight the good news about the Sacrament of Marriage and the nurturing of family life.

Presenter: Fr. David Carter, JCL, is the Pastor and Rector of the Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul in Chattanooga, TN. He is also the Vice-Chancellor for Canonical Affairs for the Diocese.

Catechists in the Classroom

Summary: Who are you, Catechist? What role do you have in the formation of learners and knowing them and their families? How do you plan and prepare for each week's lesson? When do we pray and what kind of prayers do we use? Does discipline have a place in the time we have together? What techniques are available to help others learn about our Catholic Faith? Let us spend some time together exploring the questions and resources.

Presenter: Carol A. Nichols, M.Ed., Catechetical Consultant with Pflaum Publications.

CCD as a Faith Community

Summary: We can shape our class into a welcoming, supportive environment that will encourage the growth of faith and friendship. Specific strategies to recognize traditional classroom expectations and transform these into guidelines appropriate for learning while building lasting relationships with God and with classmates.

Presenters: Marty and Chris Silver, 5th grade catechists at St. Dominic Church in Kingsport for over 20 years.

Dynamic Religious Education Classes

Summary: We can create a lively learning environment to minimize disruption and maximize attention, enjoyment, and learning for the members of our Religious Education Classes! Specific strategies for recognizing and addressing learning differences and translating “paper and pencil” approaches into active, effective, and memorable lessons.

Presenters: Marty and Chris Silver, 5th grade catechists at St. Dominic Church in Kingsport for over 20 years.

Fr. Michael Gaitley's "The Second Greatest Story Ever Told"

Summary: This book explores the message of Divine Mercy and its relation to the stories of Poland, St. Faustina, St. Therese of Lisieux, Our Lady of Fatima, St. Maximilian Kolbe and St. John Paul II.

Presenter: Deacon David Luchon is assigned to All Saints in Knoxville. In addition to assisting priests at Mass, Deacon David teaches four weekly adult faith formation classes, two at All Saints and two at St. Thomas in Lenoir City. He also participates in two weekly men's groups. After retiring as Diocesan Finance Officer in 2014, he serves as a Special Advisor to Bishop Stika and various diocesan Boards of Trustees. Deacon David married his wife Christine in 1989 and they have two sons, Jacob and Joshua.

The Gospel as Mercy

Summary: At the end of the Gospel at every Mass, the text of the Gospel is revered with a kiss and a prayer is quietly spoken, “Through the words of the Gospel may our sins be washed away”. It is not an empty gesture. The words of the Gospels are full of mercy, forgiveness and truth. We will explore certain passages and parables of Mercy from the Holy Gospels and include some ideas for evangelizing based on mercy found in the Gospels.

Presenter: Deacon Tim Elliott is the Director of Deacons and Deacon Formation for the Diocese of Knoxville. He is also the Director of Facilities, Coordinator of High School Religious Education and Confirmation at All Saints Parish in Knoxville, TN.

Hungry for Mercy?

Summary: Jesus is in need in the neediest of our brothers and sisters. Are you able to see hunger, thirst, nakedness, homelessness, sickness and imprisonment in those closest to you? We will discuss and examine the spiritual and corporal works of mercy and shift our perspectives on what it means to truly feed those who hunger.

Presenter: Annie Nassis is the Director of Youth Ministry at All Saints Church, Knoxville. She also serves as the manager for Catholic HEART Workcamp Knoxville each summer. She is passionate about service, Volunteer football, travel, and music.

The Mass—Encountering the Mystery of Mercy

Summary: In the encyclical *The Mercy of God*, St. John Paul II said that the Paschal Mystery—Christ’s suffering, death and resurrection—is “the culmination of the revealing and effecting of mercy.” In a special and unique way, the Mass makes present the Paschal Mystery, and so the Mass is the place, writes Fr. Cantalamessa, preacher to the papal household, “where the mercy of Christ is not only recalled but received, experienced, and consumed.” In this workshop we will walk through the Mass and examine the different ways in which God’s mercy is made present for us and for the whole world.

Presenter: Father Randy Stice, Pastor of St. Mary Church, Athens and Director of the Office of Worship and Liturgy for the Diocese of Knoxville.

Mercy and End of Life Decisions

Summary: The Christian meaning of ‘mercy’ is quickly being eroded and substituted with various meanings much at odds with our Catholic faith, particularly as it is applied to suffering and death. Euthanasia, literally meaning “good death,” has gained in popularity such that we find passive and active measures of it in most living wills. This presentation will examine the Church teaching regarding the Christian and salvific meaning of human suffering, care for the seriously ill, and end of life decisions. Important distinctions will be made between what we call *ordinary care* (e.g., nutrition, hydration, basic care and comfort) from that which constitutes *medical treatment* and the principles that help us to discern between what is obligatory treatment and that which is optional. Discussions will include *palliative care* (treating pain). We will also examine a diocesan approved (free) “Advance Care Plan” (a *Loving Will* as opposed to a *Living Will*) and “Assignment of a Health Care Agent” (someone who can make medical decisions on your behalf should you be incapacitated). Throughout this presentation, the spiritual meaning of this important part of life’s journey will be highlighted. Packets of information and resources will be provided.

Presenter: Paul D. Simoneau Lt. Col USMC (Ret.), Vice Chancellor for Administration, and Director of the Office of Justice and Peace for the Diocese of Knoxville. Paul has a Master’s degree in Theology with a concentration in Bioethics through Holy Apostles College and Seminary, receiving his certification through the National Catholic Bioethics Center. He has spoken throughout the diocese on this subject. He has been with the Diocese of Knoxville for 10 years.

Parish Facilitators of Adult Faith Formation engage in a significant work of Mercy:

The nuts and bolts of successful facilitator training.

Summary: There is a longing in hearts to come to know more about God, and to know him intimately, to grow in our life of faith and prayer but do not know where to turn. Many complain that they are not being sufficiently nourished in their parishes, but do not come forward to “make it happen”. When asked to lead a study, a discussion, or to facilitate a book study, the response often is, “But I received poor catechesis myself, I don’t know the answers to deep questions, I can’t possibly do this.” This presentation will prepare anyone to “facilitate” (not teach) and accompany others in our common journey to God, and thus to practice an important “spiritual work of mercy”.

Presenter: Sister Mary Timothea Elliott, RSM, MA, SSL, SSD, Director of Christian Formation, Diocese of Knoxville.

The Powerful Mercy of Suffering

Summary: The Latin word for mercy is Misericordia or “the Misery of the Heart”. There is a beautiful relationship between misery and mercy that we find not only in the person of Christ, but we find throughout Sacred Scripture, the lives of the Saints, and in our everyday lives. This presentation will explore this spiritual link of mercy and suffering.

Presenter: Jason Gale is the Director of the Catechist Formation Program at Aquinas College. He is married with 4 children and lives in Dickson, TN. He has an undergraduate degree in Theology and Catechetics from Franciscan University of Steubenville as well as a Master’s Degree in Theology from Franciscan. He has also completed a Master’s Degree in Theology and Catechetics from the Maryvale Institute in Birmingham, UK and is currently working towards an Ecclesial License in Catechetics from Maryvale.

Reaching Beyond the Classroom

Summary: We can harness the energy and enthusiasm of our students to touch the community with the love of God. Specific strategies for planning successful Christian service projects.

Presenters: Marty and Chris Silver, 5th grade catechists at St. Dominic Church in Kingsport for over 20 years.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation: Channel of God's Mercy

Summary: "Why do I have to confess to a priest?" "Why can't I just tell my sins to God?" "I'm not a bad person. Why do I need to go to Confession?" Bob Hunt will address these questions and others as he presents the Sacrament of Reconciliation from the perspective of Sacred Scripture, the Church Fathers and the Catechism. Rather than a means of punishing those who have been unfaithful, the sacrament is God's gift of mercy to His people and a source of strength for the journey.

Presenter: Bob Hunt has been teaching the Catholic faith for over 30 years, as a Catholic high school teacher, RCIA team member, Adult Faith Formation instructor, CCD catechist, and homeschooling father. His articles have appeared in The Knoxville News Sentinel, the East Tennessee Catholic and Catholic365.com. He is the author of "Thy Word: An Introduction to the Bible for People in the Pews."

Safeguarding the Dignity of our Global Brothers and Sisters

Summary: Learn how the US Catholic Church answers the Gospel call to love our brothers and sisters around the world. This interactive presentation will provide you with unique ideas to address global issues through the lens of global solidarity, charity and justice. Our time together will hopefully leave you feeling energized as a messenger of mercy.

Presenter: Augusto Michael Trujillo is the Relationship Manager for the Southeast Regional Office of Catholic Relief Services and works with the dioceses of Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama. He also facilitates CRS Southeast relationships with diocesan communication directors and promotes the many faith formation programs of CRS like CRS Rice Bowl and fair trade. Michael speaks on the work of the Church in development/humanitarian aid, global solidarity, hunger, charity and justice.

Starting in the Middle: Building a Successful Youth Ministry Program

Summary: With the anticipated change in Confirmation to 5th and 6th grades, youth ministry will take on a greater role in the ongoing faith formation of our youth. This course will provide practical tips to help parishes strengthen youth ministry programs, particularly with middle school students. An engaging and vibrant outreach to young adolescents in middle school will provide a solid foundation to high school and young adult ministries.

Presenter: Dave Wells is the Adult Faith Formation Director at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Knoxville. He and his wife Stephanie are the parents of two teenage sons, and he has been an active supporter of youth ministry for several years. In September 2015, Bishop Stika appointed him chairman of the St John Paul II Commission on Youth and Young Adult Ministry. He is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Theology from the Augustine Institute in Denver, CO.

Understanding the Mercy of God through Our Family Experience: Finding the Sacred in the Ordinary

Summary: Families are conditioned to view themselves as those who engage in the ordinariness of life. For the most part, families still see the need to go out of the family circle to find Jesus. In reality, the family is the first school of forgiveness and mercy. The God of the Prodigal Son, along with a sacrament that offers total forgiveness, are possible and real only when we have experienced forgiveness and mercy in our family of origin. This presentation will explore a process for promoting a family spirituality.

Presenter: Marian Christiana, Diocesan Coordinator of the Office of Marriage Preparation and Enrichment for the Diocese of Knoxville.