

Small Christian Communities Newsletter

Office of Worship, Diocese of Belleville, 2620 Lebanon Ave., Belleville, IL 62221

Searching for God in the Sound of Silence

“Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.” 1 Kings 19:11-13

Can't you relate to the noise in Elijah's life? Don't some of the conversations you have with your children or spouse occasionally end up in earthquakes—eruptions that lead to the escalation of voices or opinions and then the stomping of feet and slamming of doors (like mountains splitting and rocks breaking)? We run around putting out fires and very seldom slow down long enough to recognize the presence of God—the sheer silence of God—in our midst. Small Christian Communities offer us the opportunity to slow down and to quiet down—the opportunity to



stand at the entrance of the cave and breathe in the peace and quiet needed and yet ignored in our lives today.

Hopefully this next issue of the *SCC Newsletter* will help you discern the best resource for the small groups in your parish and then place an order without traveling any further than the nearest computer or phone. Once again, [we are inviting parishes to order their own materials](#) for this next season of small Christian communities.

Reports from various parishes to the Diocesan Core Committee for Small Christian Communities on last season's offerings led to the following suggestions.

Many people chose titles from the Impact Series – there was such a great variety. “Longing for the Holy—Spirituality for Everyday Life” is based on the gentle spiritual guidance and practical wisdom of best-selling author, Father Ron Rolheiser. It was ideal for small group faith sharing and personal reflection. Both of those resources are available through RENEW International. Many groups who chose “Longing for the Holy” will continue with it this season as well. And, of course, those communities who prefer lectionary-based materials will find information once again on the *Quest* materials.

Our new offering will be the Threshold Bible Study from Twenty-Third Publications. More

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Special points of interest:

- “Impact” Series from RENEW International
- *Quest* from the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut
- *Threshold Bible Study* from Twenty-Third Publications

information on that series can be found on page 4.

As was mentioned in the Fall newsletter, please know that there are people available to assist you if there are questions. The diocesan core committee is happy to assist your parish in whatever way they can. Call on them if you need them. Their names are included later in this newsletter.

Please continue to support and nurture each other in this ministry. We believe that Small Christian Communities help provide the opportunity to experience the sound of sheer silence that people desire.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Office of Worship at 235-9601 or at worship@diobelle.org or any member of the diocesan core committee.

RENEW International Series Makes an *Impact*

The *Impact* Series continues to be a popular resource. Created by RENEW International, *Impact* is designed to connect faith to the fullest possible range of human concerns and personal issues. Participants are led by this series not only to prayerful reflection and fruitful sharing, but beyond

to concrete actions that positively influence attitudes and behaviors. At the heart of the Series lies the social inquiry process: Observe>Judge>Act. Each book in the series proposes a set of sessions, so that across a period of time the participants have time to observe, to bring the fruit of

these observations to their sharing; to measure these against the Gospel; to reflect on how the Gospel calls them to respond, and to commit themselves to concrete actions both as individuals and as a group. The time between the meetings serves for putting these *(continued on page 2)*

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“Impact” Series

commitments into action, and for making further observations in preparation for the upcoming meeting.

The *Impact* Series is divided into four families of human and spiritual concerns: **Sacramental Pathways; Faith in Daily Life; Spiritual Awakenings; and Discipleship in Action.**

The offerings are as follows:

SPiritUAL AWAKENINGS

At Prayer with Mary

John Phalen, CSC & James Posluszny, CSC

Presents a very accessible image of Mary, as one who strove to live as God asked. In reflecting on her true character — her deep faith, her humanness, her poverty, and her struggles — we are inspired to follow Mary’s example. (7 sessions) **Code: 16 IS \$3.50**

Awakening the Mystic Within

Frank X. Tuoti

A clear, inspiring introduction to contemplative prayer that will fire the hearts and stir the souls of those beginning the contemplative journey. Learn more about this refreshing, meditative way to connect with the Spirit. (6 sessions) **Code: 17 IS \$3.50**



FAITH IN DAILY LIFE

Making God Visible: Parenting Young Children

Kathleen O’Connell Chesto

Provides an opportunity to pray over and share the realities of parenting today with the age-old wisdom of the gospel. Excellent support for parents, grandparents, and others who want to share with children gospel values that often run counter to those promoted in our world. (6 sessions) **Code: 23 IS \$3.50**

Finding God@Work

Gregory F. Augustine Pierce

In a convenient pocket size (8¼ x 5¼). Six faith-sharing sessions guide the participants on

a quest: can God be found at work? If so, how? The book encourages readers to consider their experience of work, both positively and negatively. These realities are then set in counterpoint to relevant passages from the Bible, and to principles of Catholic social teaching. (6 Sessions) **Code: 25 IS \$6.95**

Make Media Work for You

June Dwyer Castano

TV, the Internet, Radio, Magazines... Find yourself complaining about the endless feed of information and images? The author presents many practical initiatives for small groups to maximize the media’s potential in the Christian life, and to recognize media as a communication tool used by people of both good and evil intent. (6 sessions) **Code: 13 IS \$3.50**

Grieving the Death of a Loved One

Elizabeth M. Collier, M.S.

Contains topics related to the stages of grief and its emotional and spiritual aspects. Personal stories, including the author’s own loss of her husband when she was 29, illustrate the topics and are related to readings and suggested actions. (6 sessions) **Code: 24 IS \$3.50**

Nurturing Our Commitment: The Early Married Years

Maureen S. Hagan

Encourages couples in the early years of marriage to cultivate their relationship through the fruitful sharing of feelings and emotions. Couples will discover how the graces from this sacrament flow through them as they live out their marriage vows. (6 sessions) **Code: 20 IS \$3.50**

Strengthening Family Life

Catherine Martin

Offers hands-on exercises in prayer, reflection, and discovery of family life. Sessions progress from “Your Family” through “Families with Strengths You Admire,” ending with “Families Around the Globe.” (6 sessions) **Code: 4 IS \$3.50**

The World of Work

Edmund Flood
A close look at the complex reality of work — demand for increased skills, job insecurity, stress and work-family conflicts—to develop a genuinely Christian response. (7 sessions) **Code: 7 IS \$3.50**

DISCIPLESHIP IN ACTION

Beginnings: Human & World Issues

Mary C. McGuinness & Thomas A. Kleissler

Explores the integration of faith and action — Christian responsibility — in a variety of settings and situations. Acts as an excellent springboard for faith sharing and a vibrant call to action in various arenas of our world, including family, civics, work, and society. (8 sessions) **Code: 1 IS \$3.50**

Ending Hunger in God’s World

Art Simon

A comprehensive look at hunger in today’s society, including its many causes and misconceptions about why people are hungry. Explores ways to help the hungry, and addresses contradictions between God’s intention for the world and widespread hunger. (6 sessions) **Code: 8 IS \$3.50**

Reflections on “Dead Man Walking”

Helen Prejean, CSJ & Lucille Sarrat

Coauthor Sister Helen Prejean, Nobel Peace Prize nominee and best-selling author of *Dead Man Walking*, presents a compelling exploration of the death penalty. Catholic social teaching and Jesus’ example serve as the lens for reflection. Popular with students, as well as with adults. (6 sessions) **Code: 21 IS \$3.50**

Embracing Life

Michael T. Mannion

A beautiful reminder that each person and all creation is sacred. Raises various life issues, such as abortion, euthanasia, domestic violence, capital punishment, and ecological responsibility, and calls us to respond in faith. (6 sessions) **Code: 15 IS \$3.50**

Civic Responsibility: What’s It All About?

Mary Ann & Steve Jeselson

Encourages us to become more well informed about the important issues that touch our lives, and more importantly, impels us to take action in a wide variety of ways. (6 sessions) **Code: 5 IS \$3.50**

Beyond Black & White

Danny Duncan Collum

Unfortunately, racial issues still threaten the peace of our homes, communities, and nation. The author asks us to look at how Scripture can guide us in dealing with racial issues, and offers a reminder that religion crosses racial boundaries. (6 sessions) **Code: 18 IS \$3.50**

Series from RENEW has "Impact" on life

Discipleship of Nonviolence

Mary Elizabeth Clark, SSJ

World events force us to recognize violence as a part of our society, but we don't have to accept it. Looks at the underlying causes of violence within our own hearts, as well as its effects. Explores ways to confront the culture of violence and seeks to follow Jesus as a true disciple. Session 7 speaks directly to the violence of terrorism.

(7 sessions) Code: 6 IS \$3.50

SACRAMENTAL PATHWAYS

Preparing for Your Child's Baptism

Catherine Martin

Preparing to welcome a new child into your life? Whether a new or expectant parent, god-parent, or grandparent, discover how you can best nurture the faith life of your little one — beginning with the sacrament of baptism. Explores the sacrament, its symbols, and significance in the faith formation of all Christians.

(6 sessions) Code: 10 IS \$3.50

At Home in the Catholic Church

Charles Pinyan

Helps both new and longtime Catholics recognize and appreciate the many riches of the Catholic faith, celebrate what it means to be Catholic, and grow in awareness of the faith.

(6 sessions) Code: 9 IS \$3.50

Forgiveness and Reconciliation by Jean

Marie Hiesberger

An invitation to understand more profoundly people's desire to be forgiven and the steps we may want to take to live reconciled lives. In making the connection between the healing power of God and forgiveness, this book helps us see the reconciling richness of the sacraments and how to live in the freedom of God.

(6 sessions) Code: 26 IS \$6.95

In Memory of Jesus: Reflections for Parents Whose Children Are Preparing for First Eucharist

Maureen S. Hagan

Helps parents to prepare themselves and their children for the sacraments of first Reconciliation and first Eucharist. Offers thought-provoking suggestions of what parents might want to communicate to children as they grow in their faith.

(6 sessions) Code: 3 IS \$3.50

IMPACT SERIES SAMPLER AND DISCOUNTS FOR GROUP PURCHASES

Looking for engaging materials to guide faith sharing and lead it to action? The "Impact" Series offers a new way to join faith sharing with contemporary issues. So that SCC leaders and Core members can select themes for faith sharing that best suits the members of their groups and their interests, RENEW International offers an "Impact" Series Sampler: one copy each of 15 different "Impact" books.

"Impact" Series Sampler (pack of 15 different books) 1-15 IMS \$44.95 IMPACT Sampler: Set of 15 booklets

And because we know that most of you like every member in a group to have their own copy of faith-sharing resources, RENEW offers special prices for group purchases of single titles in the "Impact" Series. See below for the discount rates on packs of ten copies; these prices are valid only while current stocks last.

Code: IS 10 \$32.00 Pack of ten copies of any single title in the IMPACT Series, except those below:

25 IS 10 \$63.50 Pack of ten copies of Finding God@Work.

The threshold is a place of transition, a condition into which God invites us in order to transform us. The threshold of God's word bids us enter that space where God's truth, goodness, and beauty can shine into our lives and fill our minds and hearts. The threshold is holy ground, a sacred space and a graced time. There God can teach us because God opens our lives to his word and fills us with the Holy Spirit of truth.



- Threshold Bible Study

26 IS 10 \$63.50 Pack of ten copies of Forgiveness and Reconciliation.

You can place your order by calling RENEW toll free (for orders only/para pedidos solamente) at 1-888-433-3221.

For other questions or assistance, please contact the Office of Worship at 235-9601.

Spring/Summer "Quest" 2010

The second resource is familiar to many small Christian communities. *Quest* is published by the Archdiocese of Hartford in Connecticut. It is a lectionary-based reflection booklet that covers 18 weeks of readings from the Sunday scriptures. Each weekly unit offers the elements for a complete small community session: suggestions for creating a reflective environment, opening prayer, introductory focus questions designed to tap into some basic human experience addressed by the week's scripture, commentary on one or more of the lectionary readings for the upcoming Sunday, several experience-based faith sharing questions, suggestions for individual or group response in action, and a closing prayer.

The spring materials are available and will

cover the 18 weeks beginning January 24 and ending May 23. Summer Reflections 2010 covers the 15 weeks beginning May 30 and ending September 12. All materials can be ordered by contacting the Archdiocese of Hartford at 1-860-761-7450. You can also visit the Quest website at www.sccquest.org.

For other questions or assistance, please call the Office of Worship at 235-9601.



HELPFUL HINT: It is *very important* to continue to keep a Parish Core Committee and Coordinator for Small Christian Communities in order to maintain and encourage the communities in your parish. The Parish Coordinator and Core Committee should be individuals willing to promote and support the communities without impairing them.

Spring 2010

Suggested Timeline

January Sign-Up Weekends*
Bulletin and pulpit announcements*
Order materials from publishers

Suggested schedule for implementation of Spring parish program

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Week of February 14 | Week 1 of Program |
| Week of February 21 | Week 2 of Program |
| Week of February 28 | Week 3 of Program |
| Week of March 7 | Week 4 of Program |
| Week of March 14 | Week 5 of Program |
| Week of March 21 | Week 6 of Program |

* Dates for bulletin and pulpit announcements and sign-up Sundays are scheduled by the parish.

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Discover the Assurance of Divine Wisdom and Grace with Threshold

Threshold Bible Study is a new Bible study for a new era — a dynamic, informative, inspiring, and life-changing series that helps you learn about Scripture in a whole new way. Each of its theme-based books will help you to **explore new dimensions of your faith and discover deeper insights for your life** as a disciple of Jesus.

The threshold is a place of transition, a condition into which God invites us in order to transform us. The threshold of God's word bids us enter that space where God's truth, goodness, and beauty can shine into our lives and fill our minds and hearts. The threshold is holy ground, a sacred space and a graced time. There God can teach us because **God opens our lives to his word and fills us with the**

Holy Spirit of truth.

Threshold Bible Study is a thematic Scripture study program, designed for both personal study and group discussion. The characters, places, and images that you will encounter in each of these topical studies will help you explore new dimensions of your faith and discover deeper insights for your spiritual life.

Each book of Threshold Bible Study contains a section called "Suggestions for Individual Study" and another called "Suggestions for Group Study," offering ideas and support for people using this work in a variety of contexts. Each book also contains "Suggestions for Facilitators" for each of the six group sessions that may be used to supplement the personal study of each individual.

Threshold Bible Study contains no separate leader's guide, study guide, or answer guide. **Everything required for a parish Bible study is contained in one book.**

Order a copy of several different titles to review with your parish leadership.

Threshold Bible Study is ideal for Bible study groups, small Christian communities, adult faith formation, Sunday school, neighborhood groups, family reading, as well as for individual learning.

Books can be ordered by visiting the website www.pastoralplanning.com

For other questions or assistance, please contact the Office of Worship at 235-9601.