

Sowing Seeds on Fertile Ground – Towards a Catechumenal Model of the Christian Initiation of Children in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Pembroke

Description

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Abstract: Can moving toward a catechumenal model in the Christian initiation of children enable full, active and conscious participation of young families in the life and mission of the Church? This Doctor of Ministry thesis explores this question in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Pembroke as it continues the transition from a school based preparation model towards the catechumenal model. This study is of consequence to the Diocese of Pembroke in examining the current situation of the initiation process for children in parishes and may be significant for other Roman Catholic dioceses that are or will be making the transition to an initiation process toward the catechumenal model. As a work in practical theology, this thesis is framed in a practice-theory-practice method. Historical and contemporary theological perspectives that relate to the initiation of children were examined. Phenomenological research was utilized to gather data collected from the interviews of participants involved in the initiation ministry from five parishes in the Diocese. Interview participants included children, parents, parish catechists and pastors/parish administrators.

The findings from the research were analyzed and interpreted in conversation with the current theological vision of the Church concerning the catechumenal model. This analysis was viewed through the lens of five foundational components of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: the RCIA as the model for all catechesis, the gradual nature of initiation, the significant role of the faith community in the process, liturgical catechesis and the integral roles of parents, parish catechists and mentors in the catechumenal process. From this analysis, recommendations for best practices were formulated. Conclusions drawn from this study affirm that adopting a catechumenal model of the sacramental initiation of children can help to enable full, active and conscious participation of young families in the life and mission of the Church and further indicate the possibility of families, catechists and parishes to experience transformation in faith. The research study suggests that if the process is based on the catechumenal model, then transformation of families, catechists and priests and active, full and conscious participation of young families in the life and mission of the Church are more likely to occur.

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a period of purification and enlightenment. Sacred Chrism. Perfumed olive oil consecrated by the bisho The Roman Catholic Diocese of Pembroke (Latin: Dioecesis Pembrokensis) (erected 11 July 1882, as the Vicariate Apostolic of Pontiac) is a suffragan of the Archdiocese of Ottawa. It was elevated as the Diocese of Pembroke on 4 May 1898. The Cathedral of St. Columbkille in Pembroke is the mother church of the Diocese of Pembroke. Narcisse Zéphirin Lorrain (1882–1915). Patrick Thomas Ryan (1916–1937). Charles Leo Nelligan (1937–1945). William Joseph Smith (1945–1971). Joseph Raymond Windle (1971–1993).