



NET MINISTRIES

NETWORKS

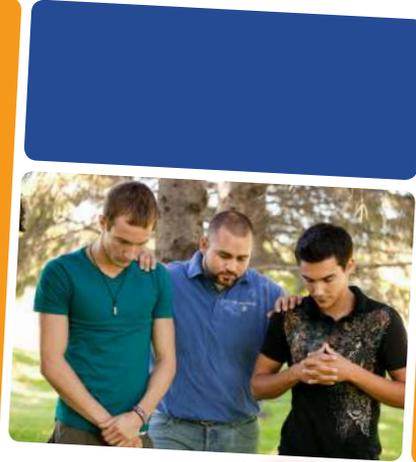
Winter 2013-14

Challenging young Catholics to love Christ and embrace the life of the Church

WHAT'S INSIDE: EXEC. DIR. / BISHOP COZZENS / EVANGELII GAUDIUM / SEMINARIAN BRUNCH / ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT / ALUMNI UPDATE

75%

of young people drift away from and abandon their Catholic faith after high school



IGNITING FAITH

A bold new plan by NET MINISTRIES

NET event from 60,000 to over 90,000. In order to achieve this aggressive goal, we decided to add a new NET team each year for five consecutive years, beginning this year, with the 2013-14 NET year.

INCREASING OUR IMPACT

NET's 5-year plan to increase our impact by 50% is well underway

In early 2012 we began having discussions with our Board of Directors on how to respond to the many requests NET receives from dioceses throughout the United States asking for help in responding to the devastating number of Catholic youth who are disengaging from their faith. The direction we received from our board was to survey our friends: bishops, priests, youth workers, benefactors, host homes, etc. to see what they thought our specific response to the appeal for more help should be. The overwhelming recommendation was that we should create and send out more NET teams.

Such was the beginning of *Igniting Faith*, a five-year plan to increase NET's impact by 50% - or, stated another way, to grow the annual number of youth attending an evangelistic

Significantly, the NET team added this year is Team 12 – a number imbued with all kinds of biblical significance. NET Team 12 is serving in the Diocese of New Ulm, Minnesota, spending about three quarters of its time at Cathedral High School, but also helping out at Cathedral parish.

During school hours, Team 12 is used as a resource by the religion teachers, augmenting their lesson plans with poignant dramas, humorous skits, and powerful personal testimonies. The team is also provided with a "NET room" on campus where students can drop by when not in class to discuss issues of faith. NET team members make the most of these student visits by trying to arrange a follow-up chat with them at the local coffee shop, where discussions may focus on who Christ is to them or on how to develop a deeper prayer life.

And it seems there is a fair amount of interest in meeting...

(continued on page 3)

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NET is under the ecclesiastical vigilance of the Most Reverend John C. Nienstedt, Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. It is governed by a national board of directors, is a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and has been audited by Lewis, Kisch and Associates, Ltd.

A WORD FROM NET'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

“Get off your butts!” This seems to be one of the main themes of Pope Francis’ recent Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. The Holy Father is challenging the Church, from bishops and priests down to you and me, to get out of our comfort zone and look for opportunities to share about Jesus Christ.

You have probably seen two of his oft quoted phrases in the secular press – “you should smell like your sheep,” and “the Church should be like a field hospital.” Both of these images suggest a Church whose ministers, whether religious or lay, professional or volunteer, are out among the people of our world who so desperately need to hear about God’s love and mercy. Pope Francis invites us to “get involved by word and deed in people’s daily lives” (EG 24).

We know this is particularly important in working with young people. Young people listen with their eyes. They need to see the Gospel message enflashed in another person’s life. This is the genius of the NET teams who enter into the daily lives of young people as living witnesses of Christ’s saving power. They proclaim the Gospel message, not just as a good idea, but as a lived reality that they themselves have experienced. God is alive! He is actively inviting people to a personal relationship with Him, and He is extending love and mercy towards us. And what we have experienced is freely offered to you. That is the message of the Gospel. That is the message the NET teams share with the young people they encounter.

In his exhortation, Pope Francis is trying “to stir up enthusiasm for a new chapter of evangelization full of fervor, joy, generosity, courage, boundless love, and attraction!” (EG 261). This describes the ideals the NET team members strive to live out. “Yet I realize that no words of encouragement will be enough unless the fire of the Holy Spirit burns in our hearts” (EG 261). Please join me in praying for our NET missionaries, that the Lord will release the full power of His Holy Spirit into the hearts of our team members.

And while we are at it, let’s pray that the Holy Spirit stirs afresh in our hearts so we, too, can get off our butts and enter into the Church’s great mission of evangelization.

Sincerely in Christ,



Mark Berchem
Founder and Executive Director



Increasing Our Impact (continued from front page)

...with NET team members. In just the short time since the team was introduced in September of 2013, thirty students have chosen to meet individually with a NET team member – and the experience was so positive that they all decided to meet with their NET mentor for a second time to learn even more about how to grow as a young disciple of Christ.

The NET team does not just sit around waiting for students to come to them, however. In fact, many of their evenings are spent attending school sporting events specifically to begin the process of getting to know students on a more personal level and then inviting them to attend a NET event or even join one of their faith discussion groups.

On evenings not devoted to a school event, NET team members spend time with the families who are hosting them

and are mindful of the opportunity they have to enliven faith there as well, frequently discussing matters of faith and inviting the family to join them for times of prayer.

In addition to expanding the number of NET teams, Igniting Faith is a plan that also calls for opening two NET regional offices. The first regional NET office will open in Cincinnati, Ohio in July of 2014, while the second regional NET office is slated to open in 2016 at a location yet to be determined in California. These offices will coordinate the activities of a NET team assigned to the same region and based in the same diocese as the NET office. Having a team available for recurring ministry will make it possible to establish youth ministry opportunities like the monthly Lifeline youth Mass and youth ministers' training currently available only at NET's headquarters in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Please join us in celebrating the success of the first year of Igniting Faith. Not only are we well on our way to achieving our goal to expand NET's impact with youth, but we also have received gift commitments totaling \$2.4 million of the \$3 million needed to fund the entire expansion plan. I wish to thank all the benefactors who have endorsed our Igniting Faith initiative with their generous gifts.

If you would like to join them in helping us raise the remaining \$600,000 needed to fully fund Igniting Faith, you can do so by using the gift envelope at the center of this newsletter and writing "Igniting Faith" on the memo line of your check or by visiting netusa.org/donate and selecting Igniting Faith from the "Designation" drop down menu in the top section of the page.

*- Jim Hastings
Director of Development*

NET'S ANNUAL IMPACT:

- More than **60,000** Catholic youth attend a NET retreat or event each year
- **1,000-1,500** attend our Lifeline youth Mass and event each month
- Over **100** youth ministers receive training at NET's headquarters monthly
- Continual fostering of vocations, with more than **100** alumni priests, religious sisters, religious brothers, deacons, and seminarians



WATCH OUR VIDEO:

- Visit www.netusa.org/IgnitingFaith

WAYS TO DONATE:

- Call 651.450.6833
- Online at www.netusa.org/donate
- Mail your check to NET Ministries using the envelope provided



BISHOP COZZENS' ORDINATION

NET alumnus bishop ordained on Feast of the Immaculate Conception

PRAEBE NOBIS
COR TUUM

"GIVE US YOUR HEART"



BISHOP ANDREW COZZENS (NET ALUMNUS 91-92) AT HIS DECEMBER 9, 2013 ORDINATION IN ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

NET alumnus Bishop Andrew Cozzens (91-92) was ordained a bishop for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, MN on December 9, 2013, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a date that he specifically chose due to his great devotion to Mary. He chose the motto "Praebe Nobis Cor Tuum," which translates, "Give us your heart." This motto is taken from the final line of a prayer by Saint Louis de Montfort to Our Lady. The prayer was dear to both Blessed John Paul II ("Totus Tuus" – the first line of the prayer) and Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta ("Praebe nobis cor tuum" – the last line of the prayer), to whom Bishop Cozzens has a special devotion. This motto expresses his desire to be united with the Heart of Jesus through the Heart of Mary and to lead others to this same union.

More than 100 NET alumni and staff attended the joyful episcopal ordination in St. Paul, Minnesota. Thanks to the generosity of a board member who owns a coach bus company, NET was able to shuttle alumni and staff from the NET Center to the Cathedral, to the reception, and back to the NET Center at the conclusion of the evening.

Bishop Cozzens wasn't the only NET alumnus in the sanctuary: Fr. Tom Margevicius and Fr. Jon Vander Ploeg served as chaplains by Bishop Cozzens' side; Fr. Brian Park also served on the altar; and seminarians Chad VanHoose and Joe Zabinski sang in the choir while Kyle Kowalczyk directed the schola. Other NET alumni priests were in attendance, as well as religious sisters and seminarians who had served with NET in previous years.

Bishops from as far as Colorado and Michigan were in attendance, as well as numerous other



BISHOP COZZENS IS ANNOINTED WITH OIL

bishops, hundreds of priests, and thousands of laypeople. During his address to the assembly, Bishop Cozzens said, "You and I must seek to live lives of holiness. You and I must become like Jesus – holy. What does it mean to be holy? It means to let yourself receive the love of God."

Later, he reminded us of his devotion to Mary, asking the assembly to turn our eyes toward Mary. He went on to say that we may sometimes feel far from her, as she was born without sin. However, it is sin that separates us from one another, and her sinlessness actually draws her closer to us. He concluded, "Let us ask her to give us her heart," a reminder of the motto he chose as bishop.

The entire ordination was a joyful celebration. NET Ministries

was pleased to be able to witness this holy event, and will keep Bishop Cozzens in our prayers as he begins this new journey in his vocation. We ask you to join us with your prayers.

Bishop Cozzens Celebrates with NET Ministries

On January 3, Bishop Cozzens was welcomed back to the NET Center to celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving with us. Hundreds of people, including current team members, NET staff, and many local alumni and friends joined us for both the Mass and a celebratory lunch afterwards. Bishop Cozzens was gifted a beautiful painting of Blessed John Paul II, which included Bishop's "*Praebe Nobis Cor Tuum*" motto, painted by NET alumnus Christopher Santer (94-95, staff 95-98).



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT: BISHOP COZZENS WAVES TO NET FRIENDS IN ATTENDANCE AT HIS ORDINATION / MARK BERCHEM AND CHRISTOPHER SANTER PRESENT BISHOP COZZENS WITH HIS GIFT AT THE NET CENTER / THE NET STAFF POSE WITH BISHOP COZZENS AT THE NET CENTER



THE FIREWORKS OF POPE FRANCIS' EVANGELII GAUDIUM

“A committed missionary knows the joy of being a spring which spills over and refreshes others.”



The 4th of July. I remember one year I went out with friends at night and we stood on the Smith Avenue bridge - the bridge that gives you the coolest view of the Cathedral of St. Paul towering over the State Capitol - and, with eyes tilted upward, we marveled at the beautiful designs of fireworks exploding in the night sky over the city skyline. In many places across the country, this scene is replicated in big and in small ways as we remember the story of our independence, our freedom from monarchical rule.

Without alluding to it himself in his recent Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG), Pope Francis is all about the fireworks of faith which need to be colorfully designing the night sky of today's post-Christian culture. The color of JOY is the one that most attractively colors that blackened sky. This joy comes into the hearts and lives of those who have encountered Jesus. “Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness” (EG, 1), and this type of joy is not only attractive and desirable, but also contagious.

Most of those who have served with NET have the experience of encountering that love for the very first time in our lives; we were (finally) convinced that we were lovable, despite our weaknesses and deficiencies. We worked hard each day to iron out tensions with our teammates. All the while, we were

deeply inspired by this newfound love and were compelled to share that love with all those whom we met.

Years after serving with NET, life makes it tricky to maintain that missionary zeal that we once had. In other words, many of us have either lost that joy because of personal and/or family situations, or maybe we have a diminished or skeptical joy because the gravity of current events, either national or global, making it almost impossible to see the impact that faith has in today's post-Christian society. Enter Pope Francis.

“I invite all [NET alumni], everywhere, at this moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting Him encounter [you]. I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. How good it feels to come back to him whenever we are lost” (EG, 3). Our lives have this tendency to be crusted over by a shell that we create through our failings, weakness, and illusory desires. But there's still gunpowder in our firework; we've just lost the bursting charge. We've forgotten how to light the match that will ignite the wick to set the firework off!

Pope Francis says, “When we live out a spirituality of drawing nearer to others and seeking their welfare, our hearts are opened wide to the Lord's greatest and most beautiful gifts.

Whenever we encounter another person in love, we learn something new about God. Whenever our eyes are opened to acknowledge the other, we grow in the light of faith and knowledge of God. If we want to advance in the spiritual life, then, we must constantly be missionaries. The work of evangelization enriches the mind and the heart; it opens up spiritual horizons; it makes us more and more sensitive to the workings of the Holy Spirit, and it takes us beyond our limited spiritual constructs. A committed missionary knows the joy of being a spring which spills over and refreshes others. Only the person who feels happiness in seeking the good of others, in desiring their happiness, can be a missionary. This openness of the heart is a source of joy, since 'it is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20:35). We do not live better when we flee, hide, refuse to share, stop giving, and lock ourselves up in own comforts. Such a life is nothing less than slow suicide (EG, 272).

Even though we alumni no longer travel in a NET van (and in reality, do we ever really want to again?), we can still be missionaries. Even though we don't minister to young people across the country, there are still lots of people - family members, co-workers, parish priests and volunteers, retail and grocery clerks, teachers, and professors - who

could benefit from our renewed evangelistic zeal - from encountering authentic joy in our hearts in even the most simple interaction.

Let's no longer waste time in self-pity for our current situation; let's no longer despair at current events which seem to be beyond our control; let's no longer be "evangelistically complacent" thinking that someone else will do it.

Right now, I hear Mark Berchem's words: "If not you, who? If not now, when?" As Scripture says, "Today is the day of salvation" (cf. Is 49:8; Lk 19:9; 2 Cor 6:2). Today, let's resume our mission: it is not something that I can uproot from my being without destroying my very self. I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world" (EG, 273). Let us rediscover the missionary zeal. Let us be missionaries of joy in our world which is at dire risk of being imprisoned by the darkness of the night.

What will it take to light your firework and cast its beautifully unique design into the night sky?

- Steve Villa
Alumni Relations, Music, and Drama Administrator

NET MINISTRIES VOCATIONS STATISTICS

We are excited to see so many of our alumni pursue religious vocations. Most of these alumni credit NET Ministries with being one of the influencing factors in their discernment of religious life. We credit the Lord for giving us the opportunity to evangelize and disciple these young men and women.

ALUMNI RELIGIOUS

- 60 ordained priests (including 1 bishop and 2 monsignors)
- 2 transitional deacons, soon to be ordained
- 35 religious sisters (including 1 Mother Superior)
- 5 religious brothers

12%
of NET alumni
have pursued
religious life.

4 1/2%
of NET alumni are
currently living out
a religious vocation.



NET ALUMNI SEMINARIAN BRUNCH

10 alumni seminarians studying in the Archdiocese of St. Paul & Minneapolis gather biannually for lunch

With more than 100 NET alumni religious (priests, sisters, and brothers), it is apparent that many NET alumni and current team members take the time to discern religious vocations while serving with NET. Some choose to serve with NET because they feel they may be called to religious life and want to experience fully living out the Gospel as part of a discernment process, while others are only truly open to discerning the religious life for the first time after having been surrounded by many religious sisters, brothers, and priests during the intensive 5-week missionary training that is required in order to serve with NET.

Whatever the case may be, with the majority of NET missionary training happening in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, MN, and with one of the largest seminaries in the country being located in close proximity to the NET Center, many young NET alumni men feel called to study at the seminaries in St. Paul, MN.

Of the 2-3 dozen NET alumni seminarians around the country, 10 are currently studying in the major and minor seminaries in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, St. Paul Seminary and St. John Vianney, respectively. Nowhere else could one find so many NET alumni seminarians in such proximity anywhere in the world.

The seminarians have made a point to meet once per semester for fellowship and encouragement over Sunday brunch. The first meeting was held on October 13, 2013.

During their time together they discussed what they gleaned from NET training and serving with NET, including speech, relationships, attitude, service, and generosity, and how they relate to seminary and priesthood. Chad VanHoose (05-06, Staff 06-11) commented, "As good Netters, we try to spread out. It was nice to spend time together that we don't usually get."

Not only are these 10 NET alumni studying in the seminaries in the Archdiocese, but 5 NET alumni priests and 1 NET alumnus bishop also serve in the area. Three of these men have been assigned to be a part of the formation process of young seminarians: Bishop Andrew Cozzens (91-92) and Fr. Tom Margevicius (84-85, 85-86) teach at the major seminary, while Fr. Michael Becker (87-88) is the rector of the minor seminary.



THOSE IN ATTENDANCE INCLUDED:

TOP ROW: NATE HASTINGS (11-12, STAFF 09-11), TIM SANDQUIST (12-13), JOHN DELOZIER (10-11),
KYLE KOWALCZYK (05-06, STAFF 06-08), BRIAN KLOEMPEN (08-09)

BOTTOM ROW: JOSH SALONEK (12-13), CHAD VANHOOSE (05-06, STAFF 06-11),
JOE ZABINSKI (11-12, 12-13)

UNABLE TO ATTEND: MATT REGAN (07-08) AND NICK WELTER (10-11)

SPOTLIGHT ON ALUMNI: HAYDEE CULLEN

NET alumna leans on St. Josephine Bahkita to help her through her struggle with Leukemia



MICHAEL, HAYDEE, MARIE (CELEBRATING HER FIRST COMMUNION), NOELLE, JOSH, AND ANNA CULLEN

Haydee (Kurr) Cullen served with NET Ministries in 1997-1998. She credits NET with the beginning of her faith education. She currently lives in Louisiana with her husband Josh, their four beautiful children, and one son waiting for them in Heaven. In June of 2012, Haydee was diagnosed with Chronic Myeloid Leukemia. This is her story.

I want to share how St. Josephine Bahkita is helping me through my most recent battle. My husband and I found out we were expecting another child in June of 2013. This was a blessing and shock all at once. My Leukemia doctor had told me that if I were to become pregnant, that I should immediately terminate. I looked at him and said, "No, that is never an option."

I found other doctors who would help me during this pregnancy, but I never expected to go in one day and have them tell me that they could not hear a heartbeat at 16 weeks. My soul was torn into pieces. How much more could God ask of me? I chose life, so where was He?

A few days later, the name Josephine Bahkita popped into my head, and I had a burning desire to look her up. I

sat at the computer staring at her story of how this saint was kidnapped, sold into slavery, cruelly treated, and then eventually sold to a good family in Italy. There she eventually became a Christian, and later entered the religious life. She would call God "Master," and when people would ask her how she was, she would simply reply, "I am as the Master wishes."

I started to cry and begged her to pray for me not to be imprisoned by my own bitterness. I wanted to have a heart like hers, even though she went through such terrible things.

So I continue to pray and ask her to help me to love and trust. I thank God that He gave us Jesus to show us the way and the saints who have gone before us to help us along our personal journey. St. Josephine is teaching me what true peace is. True peace is found on the cross. Peace is the very strength of God...it can carry you through anything. Peace reflects the truth of our hope. It is only through the cross that we can reach our resurrection. God promises us His own strength when we face our cross, so may God's peace be with you.



ALUMNI UPDATE

IN MEMORIAM



MARGUERITE LAMERS (83-84) passed away on November 23, 2013. Her laugh, smile, and "let's have fun" attitude were her hallmarks. May her soul rest in peace.

WEDDINGS

TRACIE (PETITTI) (10-11) and **BOBBY MOREN (10-11)** were married on November 9, 2013 at St. Norbert in Paoli, PA.

RUTH (KOSTOHRIS) (09-10, 10-11) and **DAN GLADITSCH (10-11)** were married on November 27, 2013 at Saint Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Buffalo, MN.



VICKY (GUERRERO) MILLER (00-01, 01-02, Staff 08-Present) and her husband Mark were married at St. Joseph in West St. Paul, MN on December 7, 2013.



MARIA (MANGAN) (05-06) and **JOSH GAMIAO (09-10, 10-11, Staff 11-Present)** were married at St. Peter's in Mendota, MN on December 27, 2013.

BIRTHS



SHANNON (POEPPING) (04-05) and **RAPHAEL SCARFONE (03-04, 04-05)**, along with children Shamus and Elena, welcomed baby Malachi Gabriel on September 16, 2013.



JILL (PIOTROWSKI) (00-01, Staff 01-04) and **MATT REISWIG (02-03, Staff 03-05, 08-Present)** are proud to announce the birth of their third child, Helen Genevieve, on October 12, 2013.

HADLEY (JAGOE) ADCOCK (08-09) and husband Joel welcomed twins Audrey Jane and Esther Katherine on November 3, 2013.



BEN FROST (02-03) and his wife Tisha welcomed their fourth child, Hazel Therese, on November 14, 2013.



MARIE (CRANLEY) FLANIGAN (00-01) and her husband Joe welcomed baby John Patrick on December 2, 2013.



PAUL TOMASELLO (03-04) and his wife Carolyn welcomed their second child, Eva Marie, on December 3, 2013.

ANDREA (SEARS) (04-05, 05-06, Staff 06-08) and **ERIC ZUCCO (04-05)** are proud to announce the birth of Joshua Eric on December 5, 2013.

MEG (WESTON) (10-11) and **MICHAEL ALFARO (10-11)** welcomed their first child, Christopher James, on January 4, 2014.

ANN (RILEY) (94-95, 98-99, Staff 99-06) and **BILL SCHMITZER (98-99, 99-00, Staff 00-03)** welcomed baby William "Billy" Joseph on January 9, 2014.



MATT VETTEL (05-06, Staff 11-Present) and his wife Anita welcomed their first child, Moses Benedict, on December 31, 2013.



ALISON DUFFY (Staff 10-Present) and her husband Eric welcomed their second child, Myles Robert, on January 17, 2014.

ANNIE (FOCHTMAN) (01-02) and **JASON GRANDELL** (00-01, 01-02) welcomed their first child, Teresa "Tess" Eleanor, on January 30, 2014.

VOCATIONS

MICHAEL SUMCIZK (12-13) has entered seminary for the Diocese of Fort Worth, TX.

BROTHER JASON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (PARROTT) (01-02) professed his solemn vows on February 11, 2014 in Redlands, CA.

NEW JOBS

JOSHUA DOWLING (07-08) is now the Parish Evangelization Coordinator at St. Joseph in Zephyrhills, FL.

A GREAT TIME TO BE ALIVE

It's a great time to be alive! Sure, our economy is sluggish and unemployment is high, but it's a great time to be alive.

Yes, politicians are redefining marriage and

abortion is available on demand, but it's a great time to be alive.

Yes, we're in the midst of a health-care debacle and the government is mandating coverage for contraception, but it's a great time to be alive.

Yes, our families and our Church are under a lot of pressure... *and that's precisely why it's a great time to be alive.*

Just as the formation of diamonds requires intense temperature and pressure (approximately 2000 degrees Fahrenheit at 90 miles below the earth's surface), Church history reveals that great saints are formed when the heat is on and the pressure is intense. Consider the great reforms that the Holy Spirit brought about through St. Augustine, St. Gregory, St. Francis, St. Dominic, St. Theresa of Avila, and St. Catherine of Siena. What do these brave Christians all have in common?

They were each under intense pressure because of the dark times in which they lived. Instead of letting the pressure crush them, they let God use the pressure to form them into diamonds (i.e. saints). More recently, consider that God brought about the Charismatic renewal in 1967, right in the midst of the so-called "sexual revolution."

Yes, we're living in difficult times, but as St. Thomas More put it, "The times are never so bad that a good man cannot live in them."

But, we're not just called to "live" in the bad times. We're called to bring the light of Christ into the darkness. God is calling us to be joyful evangelists. Pope Francis warns us (in his recent exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*) not to succumb to the temptation of "defeatism, which turns us into querulous and disillusioned pessimists, 'sourpusses.'" He stresses that we shouldn't "look like someone who has just come back from a funeral." The pope uses some form of the word "joy" 128 times in his exhortation. He isn't simply being optimistic, nor is he promoting some sort of "power of positive thinking" psychobabble. Instead, quoting Benedict XVI, our Holy Father writes, "Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which

gives life a new horizon and decisive direction." We can let the pressure crush us, or we can let God use the pressure to form us into saints. Here are three practical steps:

1. Live an Authentically Christian Life.

Pope Francis reminds us that "people prefer to listen to witnesses: they thirst for authenticity." We must allow the Gospel to transform our lives. I highly recommend my two favorite books: "The Fulfillment of All Desire" by Ralph Martin and "Fire Within" by Thomas Dubay. Why not pick one of them up and pray through it during Lent?

2. Give Your Life Away.

Pope Francis exhorts us to "get involved... in people's daily lives... standing by people at every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be." Over and over, our Holy Father exhorts us to serve those in need and not be afraid to touch "the suffering flesh of Christ in others." He goes on to say that if evangelizers want the sheep to hear their voice, they must be willing to "take on the smell of the sheep."

3. Share Your Testimony.

I'm sure you've heard that famous saying attributed to St. Francis: "Preach the Gospel at all times and, if necessary, use words." The problem is that St. Francis never actually said this. In fact, the Church has always taught that we must use words or people won't know the reason for our hope. Pope Francis writes, "Each of us should find ways to communicate Jesus wherever we are. All of us are called to offer others an explicit witness to the saving love of the Lord, who despite our imperfections offers us his closeness, his word, and his strength, and gives meaning to our lives." So go ahead, dust off your three-minute testimony, get out there, and share what Jesus Christ has done for you!

Yes, there are a lot of problems in our society... But it's a great time to be alive!



David Rinaldi
Program Director

Have something you'd like to share?
Submit your news to alison@netusa.org.



We'd love to hear from you!
Tell us about your experience with NET at
www.facebook.com/netministriesusa.

I was always religious, but was never confident. My small group leader taught me how to actually pray, which was something I had never really learned how to do. She also reminded me that it's okay that I don't know everything about being Catholic; we are supposed to always be learning.
-Youth, Age 15

This retreat changed my life, as well as the way how I think about life, and myself. It truly was one of the greatest experiences I have ever had.
-Youth, Age 13

I owe NET a lifelong debt for its encouragement of my vocation to priesthood at a young age.
-Priest who attended a NET retreat as a youth



NET MINISTRIES

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Discipleship Week, or D-Week, is a four-day retreat for Catholic teens ages 13-18. Young people experience the love, mercy and power of God. Many witness that D-Week has awakened or re-energized their relationship with Jesus Christ. Others speak of their faith "set afire" through the Holy Spirit. And still others share how Christ came alive for them in Eucharist, Reconciliation and Adoration. This year, D-Week will be coming to five locations:

Northern California
Duluth, Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota
Kansas City, Missouri
Victoria, Texas

Learn more, watch our video, or register at
www.netusa.org/dweek.

Alumni: We need you to help staff D-Week!
Apply at www.netusa.org/dweek.

DISCIPLESHIP WEEK 2014

For Catholic Teens Ages 13-18

