



NET MINISTRIES

NETWORKS

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

NET MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER: WINTER 2018-19



NET ACQUIRES YDISCIPLINE

YDisciple, a leading resource in youth small group discipleship, has been under the care of the Augustine Institute of Denver, Colorado for the last seven years. The Augustine Institute recently invited NET Ministries to take on ownership of YDisciple and bring it to the next level.

YDisciple is currently being used by over 1,000 parishes around the world providing video lessons, discussion guides, parent resources, and training to help teens grow as disciples. It is one of the leading digital Catholic evangelization platforms in the world, empowering faithful adults - parents, volunteers, and parish staff - to accompany teens in a small group setting. YDisciple is not just "another program." It is an apprenticeship in the Christian life. The trends in Catholic youth ministry and parish ministry in general are moving toward more small faith communities and small groups, and YDisciple is the only resource on the Catholic youth market designed with small groups in mind.

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**NET is under the ecclesiastical vigilance
of the 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
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DEAR FRIENDS,

Many Catholic people are rightly disturbed by some of the challenges facing the Church right now. Many of us are eagerly awaiting the results of various meetings to see what the bishops are going to do to begin solving this crisis of confidence. The bishops have some important work to do, no doubt. But there is a bigger player here - the Holy Spirit!

For those who are older, you might remember the turbulence of the 1960s and 1970s. Those years saw a seismic change in the culture. Led by the hippie culture, those were the days of free love and mood-altering drugs. There was a rejection of Christian morality and a rejection of authority. Do what you want, what makes you feel good, live for yourself. The culture was losing its Christian moorings.

At the same time, the Church was going through its own trauma. The aftermath of Vatican II saw massive defections of clergy and religious. Clerical garb was abandoned in an effort to blend in. For all intents and purposes, catechetical formation stopped. We suffered through a multitude of liturgical abuses. As we are now coming to find out, there was also another more damaging abuse going on. At the very time when the broader world and culture desperately needed what the Church could bring, the Church was sidelined by our own struggles.

God's plan for the human race will not be thwarted by our weaknesses, sins, or confused thinking. The instinctive response of the Holy Spirit when the life of the Church looks to be flailing and lacks vitality is to breathe new life through renewal movements. Back in the '60s and '70s, the Church saw the Holy Spirit birth a variety of renewal groups and apostolates, many led by the lay faithful. One such renewal movement gave birth to NET Ministries. NET came to birth through the power of the Holy Spirit working in the hearts and minds of lay people who were aflame with faith and wanted to share their faith with others.



It seems to me we are at a very similar place today. Our culture is in crisis. Family life continues to struggle. More couples are choosing to live together than to get married. Marriage has been redefined away from God's plan and there is great confusion regarding gender, identity, and dignity. The world so desperately needs what the Church has to offer - faith in Christ and life as His disciples.

But once again the Church finds itself mired in its own crisis. People are leaving or losing confidence in our leaders. Resources, both human and financial, are being diverted from outreach and mission. Legal inquiries are popping up all across the country. Many of the faithful are angry, frustrated, or discouraged.

There are important questions to be asked and problems to be solved. And the Holy Spirit continues to raise up lay communities and apostolates that carry on the work of Christ. NET is one of many of these Holy Spirit inspired apostolates. Don't let our current climate cause you to lose hope. God will accomplish His plans using His faithful people, both lay and religious.

I am guessing that 99% of the people reading this are just ordinary lay people like me. Don't underestimate the Holy Spirit's power and persistence to work through you. Yes, pray and support our bishops and priests. We have been blessed with many good ones. But we all have an important part to play. We need more saints!



Pray, strive to live a holy life, and look for ways to share your faith in Jesus Christ. That is what our NET missionaries are doing each and every day. Thank you for your financial and prayer support. Let's all let the Holy Spirit use us to renew the world!

With great hope,

Mark Berchem, MSW, MTS
Founder and President
NET Ministries, Inc.



YDISCIPLE *(continued from cover page)*

Since 1981, NET Ministries has trained nearly 3,000 young adults in how to share their faith through personal witness to junior high and high school youth through retreats, personal outreach, and discipleship. More than 2 million young people have attended one of over 33,000 retreats that have been led all across the country. With the acquisition of YDisciple, NET Ministries will be able to broaden its outreach across digital platforms, meeting teenagers where they are at.

“We are excited about the future of YDisciple under the leadership of NET Ministries. Now more than ever, the formation of our youth is critical to the future of our Church, and access to quality, winsome content is essential. We applaud NET Ministries in their mission to serve youth in this way, and look forward to continuing our collaboration in the future.” – Augustine Institute

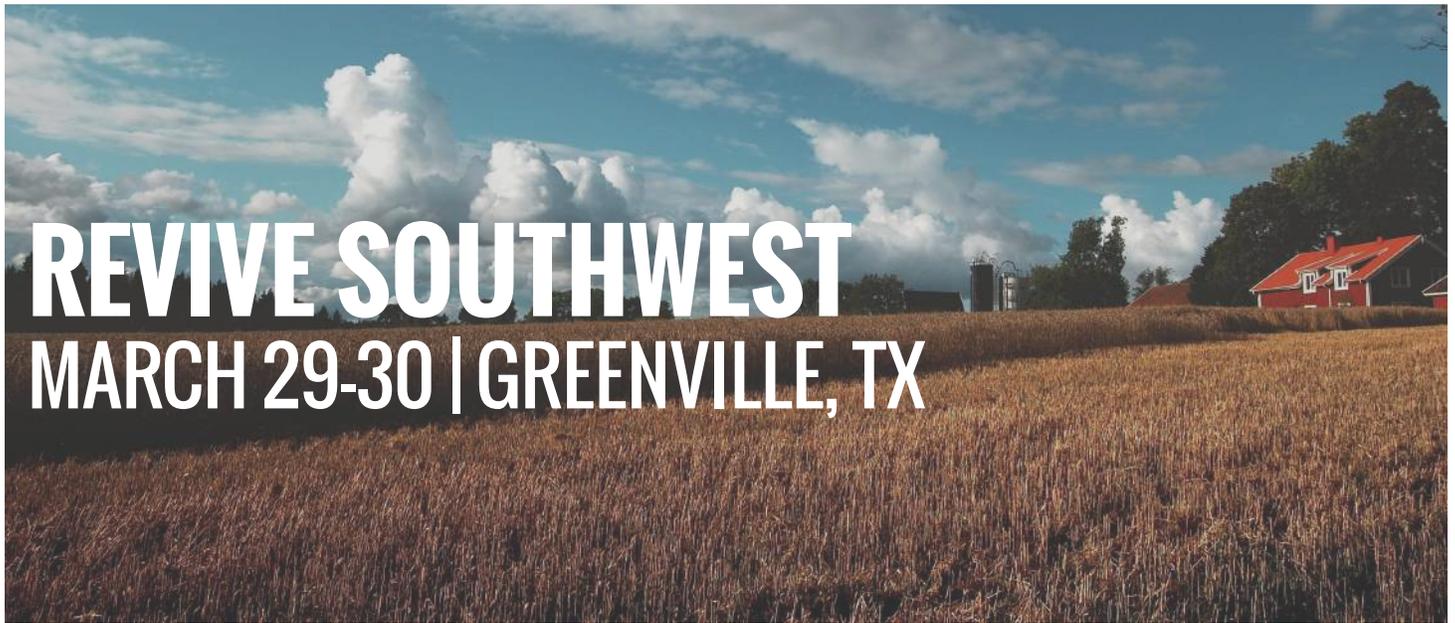
There is a sense of urgency in the Church to be reaching our young people with the Gospel. The truth is, we are faced with the sobering reality that according to a recent study, 74% of former Catholics left between the age of 10 and 20, with the median age being 13 years old. Many of these young people leave because they felt alone in the Church, as if no one really cared.

NET Ministries believes they can do more to reach these young people, and feels the need to train even more faithful adults, beyond the 176 young adult missionaries each year, to evangelize young people. Those adults need high-quality resources to empower them to share the faith in a way that is relevant and engaging. “We think we have a game changer,” says NET Ministries Founder and President Mark Berchem. “For years we have been looking for ways to assist parishes, many of which don’t have a youth minister, after the NET team has completed their ministry at that parish. YDisciple will now enable us to give them the tools to continue to walk with their own young people.”

Over the next 6 months, NET will be getting input from leaders in the field, creating new and updated content, and expanding leader training.

Stay up to date with this new initiative at www.netusa.org/ysdisciple.





This March 29-30, NET Ministries is partnering with Holleman Farms to present a retreat weekend for the whole family entitled "Revive Southwest". The retreat is open to all alumni, host families, and donors, and will take place at the Holleman's family farm in Greenville, TX, just outside of Dallas. Although the retreat is primarily for those involved with NET, anyone who needs a weekend revival to awaken the Holy Spirit in their life and enjoys spending time with other mission driven Catholics is welcome to come.

This is the second year Revive will be presented, in hopes of providing an opportunity for those in attendance to be revived in their faith, reconnect with old friends, and meet new people who also see that evangelization is the main way we will renew the Church.

The weekend will include dynamic presentations, quality praise and worship, an anticipatory mass on Saturday night, and plenty of opportunities to relax in an environment set apart from everyday life. Holleman Farms is fully functioning, and those on retreat will be welcome to milk a cow, pet a pig, chase a chicken, collect eggs, fish, walk, and groom a horse.

R.W. and Kristina Holleman are both NET alumni, having served in 1990-91 and 1989-90, respectively. Their two eldest children, Cole and Kate, also served with NET, Cole in 2014-15 and Kate in 2017-18. The retreat will also be a family affair, open to families with children of all ages, with activities for kids planned throughout the weekend.

To learn more, or to register for the weekend, visit www.netusa.org/revive.



BANQUET SEASON: MINNESOTA AND OHIO BANQUETS

Spring is a time for renewal and growth, and this is no different for NET Ministries. Each spring, NET hosts the annual Catholic Youth Benefit Banquet in St. Paul, and, after the success of last year's Modern Missionaries Fundraising Banquet in Cincinnati, will once again host a banquet in Ohio. These banquets serve as opportunities to further share the vision of NET's evangelistic mission to Catholic youth, reconnect with our donors, and build new relationships to reach out to even more youth in the future.

This year, the Minnesota banquet will be held on Thursday, April 4 from 6:00 - 9:00 PM and will include a social hour, dinner, and a keynote address. Archbishop Hebda, two of the local NET teams, and NET's Mission Staff will also be in attendance for the event, which will be held at St. Paul RiverCentre. Historically, over 650 people attend the Catholic Youth Benefit Banquet annually.

Preparations are also underway for our second annual Modern Missionaries Fundraising Banquet, which will be held at the Receptions Conference Centers in Loveland, Ohio on Wednesday, May 8 from 6:00 - 9:00 PM. Archbishop Dennis Schnurr, the Cincinnati Regional NET Team, and NET staff will attend the social hour, dinner, and keynote address to speak into the impact that NET is having in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

This year, we are excited to announce that Fr. Mike Schmitz from the Diocese of Duluth, Minnesota will be presenting the keynote address for the Ohio banquet. Fr. Mike is a nationally renowned youth speaker, who is known for his dynamic and engaging presentation style. A sample of one of Fr. Mike's talks can be found on the banquet webpage at www.netusa.org/ohiobanquet.

Both banquets will be critical in bringing the Gospel to even more Catholic youth as NET continues to expand both in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Cincinnati and across the United States. If you are unable to attend, you can still make a gift to support NET's outreach at www.netusa.org/donate.

For more information and for sponsorship opportunities, please contact Anne Michalak at annem@netusa.org or by calling (651)450-6833x126. Registration for both banquets is now open online.

Minnesota Catholic Youth Benefit Banquet

www.netusa.org/banquet

Register by March 22, 2019

Ohio Modern Missionaries Fundraising Banquet

www.netusa.org/ohio banquet

Register by April 24, 2019





THE NET MINISTRIES PODCAST

Our podcast is now available in video format! Audio only versions are still available wherever you listen to podcasts, including Apple Podcasts. Video versions of our episodes are now available on YouTube and Facebook. Look out for more interviews and the last installments of "The Wapo Sessions," filmed during Fall Training at Camp Wapogasset in Wisconsin. New podcasts are available each month.

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