



## Religious Certification in the Diocese of La Crosse



### Why Is Ongoing Personal Faith Formation Necessary?

Growing in the Catholic Faith through study and prayer is a life-long process. It is essential, above all, for any adult who teaches the Catholic Faith to receive ongoing formation in order to properly hand on the Faith to the next generation. Ongoing faith formation is necessary as “the quality of any form of pastoral activity is placed at risk if it does not rely on truly competent and trained personnel” (*General Directory for Catechesis*, n. 234). Therefore, the pastor, Catholic School and administrator are to attend to this most important task by advertising and organizing faith formation opportunities.

The Religious Certification Program for the Diocese was standardized. Therefore, all those who are professional staff in a Catholic School are to receive Basic and Advanced Certification based upon Sacred Scripture, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and Magisterial Documents.

### The levels of Religious Certification?

There are two levels of Religious Certification in the [Christ the Teacher] Diocese of La Crosse. Basic Certification consists of receiving faith formation in Doctrine, Scripture, and Methodology. (See the following information for further details.) Advanced Certification consists of receiving 90 hours of faith formation in Doctrine, Scripture, and Methodology.

### How do I obtain Religious Certification?

Catholic school teachers, in their first year, and at the latest in their second year, are to attend three

face-to-face sessions provided by the Diocese to receive Basic Certification. These sessions are from 8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Feedback has been excellent regarding these sessions. The content of these sessions and time of year include:

- 1) Teaching as Ministry, Life in Christ and Prayer – August
- 2) Sacred Scripture and Prayer – October
- 3) Sacraments and Prayer – November.

Listings of exact dates and sites are provided in the Schools newsletter. A Bible and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* are required for each session.

4) Symbolon Part I is also to be completed as part of Basic Certification.

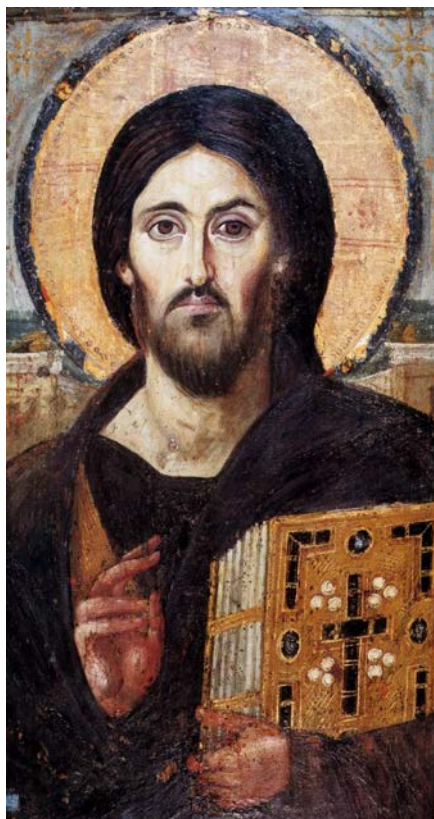
There are different ways to receive credit hours for Advanced Certification, which are spelled out below. Certification should be obtained over a five-year period, after receiving Basic Certification, from:

- Diocesan Conferences that provide six hours a year,
- school offerings that provide six hours a year, and
- individual self-study, best completed with a study group,

for six hours a year using approved resources.

Basic Certification and Advanced Certification are accepted from other Dioceses upon approval by the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization.

Regarding the time that is spent preparing to teach second grade or sixth grade, for example, while it is necessary and helpful for personal growth, is not considered part of Certification hours. The faith formation for certification is to be formation at an adult level.



A priest from the Diocese or an approved speaker with a degree in Catechetics, Theology, Christian Ministry or related field may present teachings for certification credit.

Any speaker from outside the Diocese, with the proper credentials, is to receive permission to speak in the Diocese through the Chancery. A speaker request form can be found on the Diocesan website and must be submitted before inviting the speaker. If a speaker is invited a second time, the speaker form is to be re-submitted.

Another way to receive certification credit is to view approved resources such as the “Biblical Walk through the Mass” or “Oremus (Let Us Pray)”, Programs that have been used by teachers and received strong evaluations. Bible Studies and Faith Formation Studies on FORMED, completed with a group, may be used for certification credit. Workshops from Franciscan at Home are a preferred means of obtaining certification as they are specifically geared toward Catholic School Professionals. The approved list of resources can be downloaded from the Diocesan website. Go to the main page, click on Office and Ministries (top, right-hand corner), click on Catechesis and then Certification Resources. Many resources can be checked out for free rental from the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization. **Note:** Participation in discussion questions is always to be part of receiving credit. If there is not an opportunity for discussion, each participant is to write a paragraph in response to the following questions: What is the most important point that you learned? In what way will this deepen your personal relationship with Jesus and His Church? How will it affect your daily commitment to prayer?

Certification credit may also be earned through courses on Scripture, Doctrine or Methodology from a Catholic College or

University that are taught by a Catholic professor (12 hours of credit per 3 hour course and 6 hours of credit for a two hour course). Further, credit may be earned by attending seminars or conferences in which the teaching applies to Scripture, Doctrine (Theology) and Methodology. Discussion questions or a written response to the three questions are required.

### **How are the Certification Hours recorded?**

Every person who teaches the Faith in a Catholic School and/or Parish Program is to have a certification folder. Credit hours are to be recorded in the following areas: Diocesan Conferences, Catholic school sessions, parish inservices and group or individual study. Answers to discussion questions are to be kept in the folder along with certificates of completion for seminars etc. All forms can be found on the Diocesan website: click on Office and Ministries, click on Catholic Schools and then certification.

### **What follows Adv. Certification?**

After completion of Advanced Certification, renewal of certification is necessary. It is recommended that renewal hours include all three areas of Doctrine, Scripture, and Methodology. Formation in the Faith is a life-long process in order to grow in our love and commitment to Jesus Christ. Twelve hours of certification credit per year for an administrator and school teacher are necessary for renewal.

### **Why is Religious Certification so Important?**

Formation for Administrators, Catholic School teachers follows upon a longstanding requirement in the Diocese that those who are to be teachers and witnesses of the Catholic Faith are to be receiving ongoing personal faith formation. According to the *General Directory for Catechesis* from Rome, “...Diocesan pastoral programs must give absolute priority to the *formation of lay teachers/catechists*” (n. 234). Therefore, it is necessary to plan for and participate in formation that assists a teacher “to mature as a person, a believer and as an apostle” (n. 234, 238).

