

HEARTBEAT



EVANGELIZATION IN THE "YEAR OF FAITH"

Father Bill McCann, Rector

SUMMER 2013

EVANGELIZATION IN THE "YEAR OF FAITH" 1

PATTI CARRASCO, DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 2

LYNNE AVITIA: DIRECTOR OF RCIA (RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS) 3

LAURA BERNAL, DIRECTOR OF THE PRE-SCHOOL (MARY'S LIL LAMBS) 4

As you may know, this year is declared to be the "Year of Faith" throughout the universal Church. It is a year in which the Church is reflecting on the gift of faith with a special emphasis on evangelization. Evangelization is simply the mission of the Church to make Christ known and "to make disciples of all the nations." (Matt 28:19)

On the parish level, evangelization especially takes place through the passing on of our faith to our children through our catechetical programs. We also evangelize through our RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) process by which adults are instructed in our Catholic faith and encouraged to live as disciples of Jesus.

With this in mind, I would like to take this opportunity to draw attention to three ministries operating in our parish: 1) our catechism program for children and youth, 2) our RCIA process, and 3) our fledgling preschool program.

I would like to introduce you to the people who are coordinating these ministries and allow them, in their own words, to describe what has been going on with their respective ministries. Sometimes we are not aware of the "little miracles" that are taking place in our midst. I think you will be impressed, as I am, with what has been taking place with these particular ministries and the unseen efforts of our parishioners to bring our faith to others. ■

OUR MISSION AT CATHEDRAL OF IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY PARISH

We the people of the Cathedral are a multicultural, Roman Catholic community of believers on a faith journey. We answer the call of our Baptism to serve God as Disciples of Christ and seek to evangelize

people of all walks of life. We serve God and each other by ministering in our parish, our community, and our homes, through lives rooted in the Word, Worship, and Service. ■

PATTI CARRASCO, DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Patti Carrasco

Patti Carrasco is “Miss Patti,” the Director of Religious Education at the Cathedral of IHM. The program offers classes for grades K-12, and parents are encouraged to enroll their children every year, not just for sacramental preparation.

Youth ministry, coordinated by Robert Hernandez, is a vital part of the program. It provides many spiritual retreat opportunities for our youth, who demonstrate their growing sense of discipleship through the generous service they provide the parish.

Patti’s job involves a lot of planning, inviting, and scheduling, but she says her most important work is to aid parents in bringing their children into a growing relationship with Jesus. “I do not do this by myself,” Patti said. “Father Bill is an incredible mentor, sounding board, and advisor who states that the religious education of our children is a priority for the parish.”

Marie Ferguson, Patti’s assistant, comes in weekly to enter computer data and keep things organized.

Last year (2012-13), over 60 catechists and aides provided classes for nearly 400 children and youth. In July 2012, 56 children attended a fun and joyous Vacation Bible School, successful due to the involvement of enthusiastic adult and youth helpers.

This year (2013-14), 120 children will be preparing for First Communion, 22 youth for Confirmation, and 10 children for reception into the Church at the Easter Vigil. Classes will begin the week after Labor Day. Youth classes will begin with a White Sands excursion and full moon Mass on August 25.

More adult catechists and aides are needed. Please call the office (575-524-8563) if you would like to help. Registration for all classes is under way in the parish office. The cost is \$35 for the first child in a family, \$20 for the second, and \$10 for each additional child.

Patti is a New Mexico native, born in Gallup and raised in Los Lunas. She graduated from NMSU in 1980. Married to Greg Carrasco for 33 years, she is the mother of six children.

Patti first answered the call to ministry at age 16 when she taught a summer class for older children preparing for First Communion. Later, more formally, Patti served as the Coordinator of Liturgy at St. Albert the Great Newman Parish from 2004 to 2010. She began her position as Director of Religious Education at the Cathedral in May 2012.

Patti also is very involved in music ministry. She said, “I lead the 8:30 A.M. choir at St. Albert’s Newman Center each Sunday, provide music for funerals and weddings, and am very blessed to occasionally cantor for diocesan Masses.”

The desire to fulfill Christ’s command to spread the Good News leads Patti to seek the Way through daily Mass, Bible study, and prayer.

“I believe that every step of our journey with the Lord is intentional,” said Patti. “I never envisioned myself as a director of religious education, but my life experiences have been a perfect preparation. As a teacher and singer, I learned to be comfortable in making presentations to groups; as a mother of six children close in age, I became a flexible manager; as a coordinator of liturgy, I attended conferences which schooled me in many areas of Church teaching. ■

LYNNE AVITIA, DIRECTOR OF RCIA (RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS)

Lynne Avitia is the Director of RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) at the Cathedral of IHM. She coordinates classes for any and all adults who are seeking any and all sacraments. She also welcomes Catholics who need no sacrament preparation but simply want to learn more about "our beautiful faith."

In 2012, the program had twenty-five participants seeking sacraments and 3 to 5 more who wanted to learn more about their faith. Sponsors also attended when possible.

Lynne's job is to schedule, advertise, and support the program. She works one-on-one with the participants, conducting interviews and obtaining paperwork for sacraments. She also assembles instruction books, orders supplies, and does other odd jobs called for by the ministry. She is assisted by Cordy Medina.

The RCIA program uses a curriculum developed by the Association for Catechumenal Ministry.

All RCIA instructors (there are about 8) are priests, deacons, and theology-trained laypersons.

Born and raised in Las Cruces, Barbara Lynne Gose married her childhood sweetheart, Florencio Avitia, Jr. at San Albino Parish in 1979. They were blessed with three children, two of whom are "dwelling in heaven." She has taught part-time at Doña Ana Community College for 23 years, using the remainder of her available time to serve the Church and the community.

Lynne was first called to the Church's teaching ministry after losing her son, Sammy, to neuroblastoma, a particularly menacing form of cancer. During the ten months of Sammy's illness, Lynne's family experienced a time of complete fear – calling for complete faith. By the time he died on July 15, 1994, at the age of 3, Sammy had left a spiritual legacy that enriched the lives of them all.

"During Sammy's illness," said Lynne, "he experienced some miraculous visions – from the comfort of angels, to the peaceful presence of our Blessed Mother, and finally to the strength of Jesus,



Lynne Avitia

himself. He shared his experiences and helped all of us accept his suffering and death."

After Sammy's death, Lynne sought to ease her grief through service to others. In 1995, called to work with youth, she and Martha Beasley established the Life Teen program to serve IHM and Holy Cross combined. Lynne continued her work with teens for 13 years.

After a few years' hiatus from ministry, at Fr. Bill's request, Lynne assumed the role of RCIA Director in August 2012. For Lynne, after working with youth groups and youth confirmation, it seemed a natural progression to work with adults preparing for their sacraments.

"I continue to work in ministry," said Lynne, "because my son made me understand the importance of faith, of serving others, and of living with an eternal perspective."

To learn more about RCIA, call the Cathedral at 575-524-8563. ■

LAURA BERNAL, DIRECTOR OF THE PRESCHOOL (MARY'S LIL LAMBS)



Laura Bernal

Laura Bernal, "Miss Laura," is the Director of the parish preschool, Mary's Lil Lambs. The school, which is located at the west end of the parish's old school building, serves children, ages 2 ½ to 5.

Tuition for part-time (8:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.) is \$355 plus tax per month. Tuition for fulltime (8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.) is \$467.90, including tax, per month. Child Care Assistance payments are accepted.

Laura provides two snacks during the day, but children must provide their own lunches.

The school offers outside and inside activities, which include among others, reading Bible stories, learning about the Fruits of the Spirit, and singing songs from the Mass.

"We even have a little church in the classroom called "Father Bill's Church," said Laura.

"We help our families in any way we can," said Laura. " We have a monthly Family Night, so families can get to know each other and spend time learning about the Lord. We plan to do fundraising for Family Tuition Assistance."

Laura, who is the mother of 5 children and grandmother of 6, is married to her best friend, "a wonderful man named Stan."

Laura grew up in San Francisco, CA, where her family attended Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church. "OLPH, we called it," said Laura. "My parents read the Bible to us, took us to Church, attended prayer meetings, and always talked to us about God." This led Laura to want the same kind of relationship they had with the Lord.

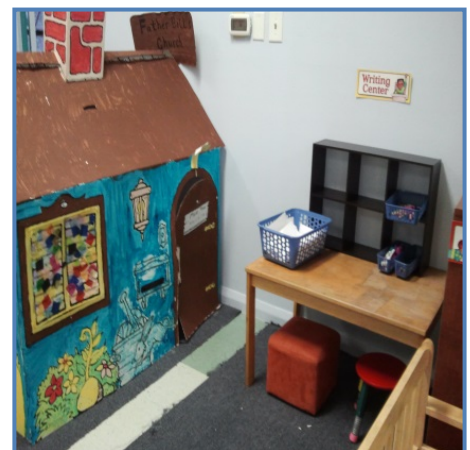
Laura always loved school and was influenced by many of her teachers. "I always had a leaning toward being someone that made a difference for children," said Laura. This led her to become a teacher. She has worked at Head Start, various elementary schools, and Christian preschools in California and in Albuquerque and Las Cruces, New Mexico, for 15+ years.

Not long after Fr. Bill came to the Cathedral, Laura decided to ask him what plans he had for the old school. He responded by asking her what she had in mind. Laura said, "How about a preschool?"

After months and months of acquiring classroom supplies, furniture, toys, and office equipment, much of which was donated, and dealing with zoning changes, the preschool was finally ready to open in August 2012. "We started with about five students and grew from there," said Laura.

To learn more, call Laura at 575-639-1301. ■

Fr. Bill's Church



Editor: Madeleine Vessel; 575-644-7290; madeleinevessel@mac.com