

## **Roman Catholic Community of Practice**

### **Notes from Session at REA Annual Meeting: Nov. 3, 2017**

Approximately 14 members attended.

Maureen O'Brien convened the meeting and expressed thanks to Tom Groome for his many years of service as convener. She invited participants to introduce themselves.

Announcements included two from Emanuel Magro of The Catholic University of America: they are launching a new international journal in evangelization and catechetics, starting December 2018; and CUA has a faculty opening in Catechetics. Further information is attached. Tom Groome announced the Credo series of Catholic high school textbooks, published by Veritas, which he edits. Another announcement was a one-year faculty opening for teaching in religious education at St. Joseph College in Alberta, Canada, 2018-19.

Maureen invited discussion of two questions:

- In our troubling and tumultuous times, what is *one educational practice* you are currently using to help foster “Learning in Encounter”—celebrating diversity, enhancing common ground, and other imperatives as suggested by our meeting theme?
- What is *one initiative* you'd like the Catholic Community of Practice to take in the coming 3 years—perhaps related to the meeting theme, perhaps not? How would you be willing to contribute to this initiative?

We spent most of our time on the second question, focusing especially on the issue of Millennials departing from the church and our responses. Highlights included:

- Eileen Daily summarized a recent *America* article showing creative outreach to Millennials in the Diocese of Bridgeport, CT; see <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2017/10/19/can-catholic-church-keep-millennials-passing-it>
- In Europe, the Millennials are already long gone; how can we in the US learn from their experience?
- Can US Catholic high schools tap non-Christian students more fully to enroll as the Catholic student population declines? What will be the impact?
- The Church has a crisis of credibility among young people, especially on issues related to women and LGBT people
- Parents are heavily involved in sports and music training for their kids, but not heavily involved in their catechetical training except Catholic school parents
- Recommendation of a Canadian program that has postgrads mentoring university students in growth in faith
- While many of us are seeing declines in church participation, we need to be aware that the picture is diverse in different parts of the country
- What are people looking for and how can we meet them?
- We can provide a counterframe to secularism, which people are finding to be bankrupt
- Helping students finding a compass for making their choices

- The C21 magazine at BC has an upcoming issue on keeping young people within Catholic ecclesial identity
- How are bishops responding to critical issues today, notably racism? relative silence after Charlottesville, working on a new joint statement on racism
- Tom mentioned that a new version of the *General Directory for Catechesis* is being written, and Boston College will have a conference about it

All agreed they would like to continue this discussion for the next few years. Maureen agreed to serve as convenor during that time. She will check into establishment of a dedicated web page on the REA website where we can have ongoing online discussion, post our relevant research, etc.

Respectfully submitted,

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