

INFORMED

THE FORMED NEWSLETTER FOR PASTORS AND PARISH LEADERS



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FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR

Dr. Ben Akers

ben.akers@augustineinstitute.org

As many of us take off for our summer vacations, it can be difficult to not do the same with our spiritual lives. To keep our prayer energized this July, FORMED is highlighting two programs that focus on conversion and renewal: *Metanoia* by Fr. Dave Pivonka and *Parish Renewal* by Tim Glemkowski, part of Revive Parishes. I encourage you to take advantage of any time off you have this summer and dive deeper into your faith—each of us needs constant conversion!

Some inspiring content on FORMED to re-energize the spiritual lives of your flock include *Maria Goretti: The Story of the Patroness of Modern Youth*, starring Martina Pinto, as well as the True Reformers episode on *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Soldier for Christ*. Our LECTIO series are also a great option to show your parishes to keep the faith alive, as Fr. Brian Geary shows us in this month's Pastor Spotlight. I also invite you to share our great content on FORMED Now, to include a new series called *Meet the Professors*, where we learn more about the intellectual backgrounds of our professors here at the Augustine Institute. And of course, make use of our content on evangelization to maintain fervor among your parish leaders! Two great options are *Evangelizing Millennials* and then seven consecutive episodes of *FORMED for Mission*, where we walk through Cardinal Ratzinger's Address to Catechists on the New Evangelization. If you are looking for more creative ways to keep the faith alive in your parish this summer, please don't hesitate to check out our leader's site: leaders.formed.org.

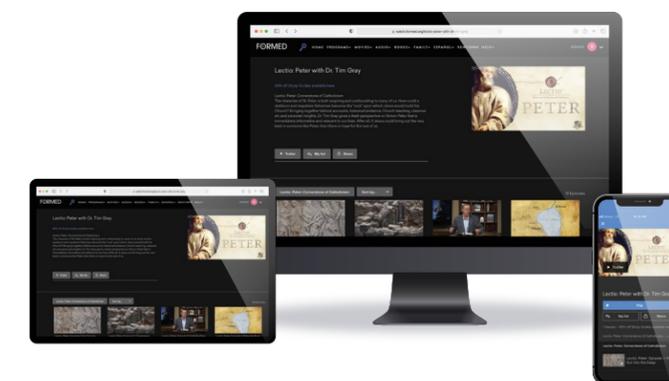
Traditionally, summer means downtime in parishes. Schools have dismissed their students, ministries have wrapped up their programs, and staff members shift into planning mode for the fall and winter.

Particularly this year—when parishioners are returning to in-person worship and gatherings—consider tapping the resources on formed.org to run a summer study to keep the flame of faith alive in your parish.

The Augustine Institute offers nine LECTIO studies, consisting of in-depth explorations of matters of faith and books of the Bible. Members of the Augustine Institute's Graduate School faculty serve as presenters for each topic, relating the faith to its roots in Scripture, teaching, and tradition. Prominently incorporating Catholic art, comprehensive study guides serve as companions to the video presentations and include five "Commit Days" for further study. The detailed leader's guide takes the work out of conducting a small group.

As your parishioners plan their trips to the mountains or the seashore, offer them a trip to meet Mary, our Blessed Mother; to become acquainted with the world of Mark, the first gospel writer; or to dive into St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians. Invite members of your congregation to explore one of these faith

topics: the Eucharist, prayer, salvation, evangelization, or the case for Jesus.



LECTIO: Peter

On the heels of the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul on June 29, consider offering parishioners the chance to get to know the cornerstone of Catholicism, St. Peter, in a deeper way. Dr. Tim Gray brings together biblical accounts, historical evidence, Church teaching, classical art, and personal insights to see how a stubborn and impulsive fisherman became the "rock" upon which Jesus built his Church.

After all, if Jesus could bring out the very best in someone like Peter, then there is hope for the rest of us.

HIGHLIGHTS ON FORMED

Is your parish ready for the post-COVID world?

The global pandemic affected our parishioners physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Yet viewed through the lens of redemptive suffering, the time away from busyness and distraction provided an opportunity for reflection on the vitality of our faith lives and that of our parish communities.

How will we reopen—tentatively? deliberately? hopefully? joyfully? The Augustine Institute provides resources on formed.org to inspire your parishioners and to give your parish a practical guide for strengthening its parish ministry.



Metanoia, a 4PM Media series, by Fr. Dave Pivonka

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus's first words are an invitation to *metanoia*—to repent, to change, to be converted. Beautifully filmed on location in the Holy Land, the series highlights the sacred places of the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, the desert of Jesus's three temptations, and many holy sites in Jerusalem.

Fr. Dave's preaching and personal testimonies from men and women—young and old, religious and lay—inspire viewers to seek to encounter Jesus and the new life to which he constantly invites us.



Parish Renewal, a Revive Parishes series, by Tim Glemkowski

This two-hour course is for every parish leader—from the pastor to each volunteer—to give a firm foundation for effective, evangelical, and sustainable parish ministry. Presented by published author, speaker, and renowned parish consultant Tim Glemkowski, each five- to ten-minute segment provides a launching point for parish staff or parish council discussion.

From chapters on the importance of the parish to accurately identifying root problems in our parish culture, this course can immediately begin to help you focus on what matters most.

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

The Augustine Institute offers resources on formed.org for your parishioners that illumine prominent saints' July feast days:



July 6 Saint Maria Goretti

Celebrate the feast of Saint Maria Goretti with *Maria Goretti: The Story of the Patroness of Modern Youth*. This beautifully made Italian film depicts the plight of the poor laborers of the time, struggling to survive in a swampy area with rampant malaria and extreme poverty. Tragedy strikes more than once for the Goretti family: sickness, death, and then a violent attack on the devout Maria.



July 22 Saint Mary Magdalene

Celebrate the feast of Saint Mary Magdalene with *Easter in Art: The Resurrection*. Dr. Ben Akers and Taylor Kemp delve into the theology behind Giotto di Bondone's famous fourteenth-century fresco, *Resurrection*, showing Mary Magdalene's encounter with the Risen Jesus.



July 31 Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Celebrate the feast of Saint Ignatius of Loyola with *Saint Ignatius: Soldier for Christ*, part of the True Reformers series. Against the background of the Protestant Reformation and a divided Europe, the Basque soldier Ignacio de Loyola sets out on an extraordinary interior pilgrimage of grace. Taught directly by God, Ignatius offers the Church a new spirituality of devoted service to Christ and founds the Jesuits, a religious order dedicated to evangelization.

PARISH SPOTLIGHT

The 1,800 families who belong to St. James Church in Belvidere, Illinois, do not only know their faith but are attuned to the rhythm of the Church's liturgical seasons and are devoted to service, said their pastor, Fr. Brian Geary.

But Fr. Geary also sensed an area that was lacking. His parishioners did not have a deep understanding of the scriptural roots of the faith—what Geary calls the “intellectual appropriation” that enriches the faith and helps Catholics get more out of the Mass and sacraments.

To fill that gap, St. James has offered four parishwide LECTIO studies scheduled for the fall: *Mary: The Bible and the Mother of God*; *Eucharist: Discovering the Mass in the Bible*; *Salvation: New Life in Christ*; *Prayer: Finding Intimacy with God*; and *Philippians: Life in Christ*.

“One thing that I love about LECTIO is the connection the series makes between Scripture and the faith,” Fr. Geary said.

He applauded LECTIO's theologians for their “engaging” video presentations that have led group members to new insights and connections.

For each LECTIO study, Fr. Geary committed to attending two to three meetings. After the group watched that week's video, the pastor conducted a question-and-answer session.



“I could see their eyes light up when they understood that Mary was the new Ark of the Covenant,” Fr. Geary said.

He has also noticed that daily Mass attendance has been growing among those who have participated in LECTIO studies, and in conversations, parishioners have thanked him for helping them “see the faith in a new way.”

“I would greatly encourage [offering LECTIO] if pastors want their parishioners to be deeply enriched, to get more out of Scripture and homilies, and to develop a deep prayer life,” Fr. Geary said.

“One of the attractive things for me,” he added, “is I didn't have to do much prep. The LECTIO theologians do the priests' work for them.”

FORMEDNOW

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| <p>The Theological Virtues What are the theological virtues and how do they impact our lives as Christians today? Dr. Ben Akers and Dr. Scott Hefelfinger dive into the theological virtues and discuss their place in God's plan for humanity.</p> | <p>Evangelizing Millennials How can the Church evangelize millennials? This four-part series walks through principles of evangelization and then draws out particular marks of evangelization needed to reach millennials today.</p> | <p>Meet the Professors How did the professors at the Augustine Institute Graduate School arrive there? In these conversations, the professors are interviewed about how they came to the Augustine Institute, what is unique about the school, and other aspects of their teaching lives.</p> | <p>FORMED for Mission: Cardinal Ratzinger's Address to Catechists Dr. Ben Akers and Taylor Kemp spend seven sessions (Episodes 4–10) on Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's Address to Catechists to examine this great theologian's guiding principles that should shape all efforts toward the new evangelization.</p> |