

Using *Presence* as Adult Faith Formation

“Presence can embolden the laity to evangelize.”

Tina Baugh Gregory

Coordinator of Communication and Adult Enrichment
St. Michael Catholic Church, Livermore, CA

“If Confession is the most intimidating sacrament, receiving the Eucharist can become rote,” said Tina Baugh Gregory, coordinator of Communication and Adult Enrichment at St. Michael Church in Livermore, California.

With the intention of rekindling that sputtering flame of faith in those mechanically trudging up the aisle to Communion, St. Michael Church adopted *Presence: The Mystery of the Eucharist* as a parish-wide study leading up to the Feast of Corpus Christi.

Because COVID-19 had made in-person gatherings impossible, the parish shared the *Presence* videos on a video-conferencing site. People had the option to watch the videos at home or, for those who were still commuting to work, to listen in their cars. Volunteer leaders set up conference calls or video meetings to discuss the content.

“You don’t have to train catechists with *Presence*,” Gregory said.



“If you get somebody who’s a tiny bit open, who watches and participates in a discussion of *Presence*, that’s a game-changer.”



Tina Baugh Gregory

“You just find hosts and give them the leader’s guide; the video is the teacher.”

Gregory praised the *Presence* program as living up to modern expectations with “a beautiful balance of art and production. It really brings the Eucharist home,” she said.

Presence, comprised of three, thirty-minute episodes and offered in both English and Spanish, “is approachable but not dumbed-down,” Gregory said.

St. Michael’s has “a big to-do celebration” for Corpus Christi, Gregory said. Due to COVID, the procession had to shift from walking to a car parade.

“We had over 100 cars driving slowly through downtown,” Gregory said. “Our pastor was standing up in the backseat of a car, holding the monstrance through the sunroof!”

“It was pretty awesome,” she added.

Presence plays a big role at St. Michael’s. It’s used in a continuing education program for extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion as well as in the training of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion for the homebound; used in the English and Spanish RCIA programs; and is given to parents of children preparing for First Holy Communion as well as to those who are returning to the Church after a long absence.

“I have heard that several of our priests, as part of their spiritual direction in Confession, recommend that the faithful watch *Presence*,” Gregory said.



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