

A Parish Mission on the Eucharist with *Presence*

“First Communicants exude excitement about the Eucharist. Where do we lose that? There’s such a huge need for teaching.”

Joan Henry and Susan Stallbaumer

Co-Directors of Parish Evangelization
Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Kansas

Susan Stallbaumer, the co-director of Parish Evangelization at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Seneca, Kansas, remembers a Mass in December 2019 with particular clarity. On that Sunday, as she had many times since her conversion to the Catholic faith nearly 20 years prior, she went up to the altar to be an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.

“When Father handed me the chalice,” Stallbaumer said, “I looked in it and I saw Jesus there. I could barely touch the sacred Hosts to hand them out.”

Stallbaumer and her co-director of Parish Evangelization, Joan Henry, were lifelong spiritual friends who had been on a journey of discovering what resources were available to enrich the faith of their parishioners. In 2017, Sts. Peter and Paul became a pilot parish for the Archdiocese of Kansas City’s New Evangelization initiative. The following year, Henry and Stallbaumer inaugurated their parish evangelization group after attending a convocation titled “Inflame Our Hearts, Homes and Communities.” And it was at that convocation that they learned about the resources available through FORMED from the Augustine Institute.



“I couldn’t do what I do without [the videos on FORMED]. People are so hungry because of what has been happening in the world. They’re looking, and that’s so exciting to see.”



Joan
Henry



Susan
Stallbaumer

For Henry, the programs on FORMED were the answer to a prayer.

“The Catholic faith is so deep and rich,” Henry said. “As children, we don’t have the capacity to take in what’s there.”

Henry would ask her husband, “Why aren’t there programs? Why aren’t there Bible studies?”

“You know, Joan, if you want to know more, it’s out there,” he told her. “You have to go look for it.”

After the parish got a FORMED subscription, Stallbaumer, inspired by her Eucharistic encounter, wanted to offer a course on the Blessed Sacrament using *Presence: The Mystery of the Eucharist*.

The first class was held in March 2020. Right after, the COVID-19 pandemic shut down the church and all its programs.

In the fall of 2021, Henry, Stallbaumer, and the parish evangelization team hosted a parish mission on the Eucharist, once again organizing the four evenings around *Presence*. Each evening included prayer, music, watching of a video, and personal testimonies. For the last week, a speaker came in from the archdiocese to lead attendees in a meditation on Jesus and the Last Supper. The parish also made available information about Eucharistic miracles.

Henry saw the mission as a way of starting “the understanding of Jesus truly present.”

In February 2022, Kansas City Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann offered Catholics several opportunities to “renew Eucharistic amazement,” a prelude to the USCCB’s three-year plan of Eucharistic Revival that begins on the Feast of Corpus Christi in June 2022.

“I think people are starting to understand the reverence for the Eucharist,” said Henry, who pointed to the scene early in *Presence* when two priests emerge from a burning church clutching the blessed Hosts that they had saved from the fire.

The programs on FORMED are “beautiful tools for us to use,” said Stallbaumer.

“The videos are so well done,” she said. “They are very engaging to young, middle-aged, and older adults.”



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