

They're Here! The "New Generation" of Catechetical Leaders



Jonathan F. Sullivan currently serves as the director of catechetical ministries for the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois and host of the Catechetical Leader podcast for the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership. Jonathan received his BA in theology and pastoral ministry from Quincy University and his MA from Aquinas Institute of Theology. He has made numerous presentations over the years on such topics as the use of technology in ministry, Catholics and the Bible, and the moral world of Harry Potter.

In addition to his professional interests Jonathan has played in the pit orchestra of a community theater production of *A Chorus Line*, had a photograph published on the cover of a magazine, and portrayed St. Peter in a one-act play.

Jonathan is an active member of the Knights of Columbus and enjoys reading, cooking, photography, and playing board games. He's not so crazy about yard work or buying shoes, but recognizes them as necessary evils in a fallen world. He and his wife are expecting their fifth child this fall. You can check out his Web site at: <http://www.jonathansullivan.com/about/>



David O'Brien currently serves as *Adult Education and Lay Ministry Formation Director* for the Archdiocese of Mobile where he provides both theological education and pastoral formation for lay ministers. Mr. O'Brien is also an adjunct faculty member at *Spring Hill College* in the Theology Department. He is a regular columnist for the *The Catholic Week*, Mobile's diocesan newspaper (www.mobilearchdiocese.org/catholicweek/cw.cfm) and the author of the Catholic IQ quiz in *Catechist Magazine*.

Dave brings 20 years of ministry experience and a Master of Divinity from the *University of Notre Dame*. His years as a Parish Director of Ministry, a university campus minister and a youth/young adult minister speak to a life immersed in the New Evangelization called for by Pope John Paul II. He has led mission trips to Australia and Mexico. Along with being a popular Lenten Mission presenter, Mr. O'Brien speaks nationally at conferences and parishes. His topics range from evangelization to social justice to radical living of the gospel. David resides in Mobile, Alabama with his wife and their four children.



Lisa M. Gulino is the Director of the Office for Religious Education in the Diocese of Providence, RI. She also serves as an adjunct professor at St. Joseph College, Standish, Maine, in their on-line Pastoral Ministry B.A. and M.A. program. She has been in some kind of ministry for more than twenty-five years in various positions (some volunteer, some professional). Lisa has a B.A. in Theology from Steubenville University and a Masters in Religious Studies from Providence College. She is in the midst of developing her DMin project as a degree requirement at Catholic University of America.

Her past ministry experience includes nearly eleven years as Director of Adult Education/Evangelization for the Diocese of Fall River. In her diocesan position she also served as Assistant Director for the R.C.I.A. and the RENEW Offices. She has been a catechist, parish director of Faith Formation and also a parish director of RCIA. Lisa also had experience in Campus Ministry at Seton Hall University where she advised the Pro-Life student group and listened to the concerns and joys of the students.



Armando Cervantes currently serves as the Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Orange, CA. He has 10 years of professional experience serving, challenging, walking with and sharing the Gospel with pre-teens, teens, young adults and adult in various ministries such as mission trips, retreats, pilgrimages, sports leagues, prayer retreats, missions and everything else in between.

One of his many passions is thinking outside the box and making ministry more real, authentic, experiential and life-giving. He is actively involved at the regional and national level with NFCYM and La Red.



Peter J. Murphy is the executive director of the Secretariat of Evangelization and Catechesis of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Murphy holds a bachelor's in theology and master's degrees in theology and counseling from Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. He has undertaken extensive post-graduate work in catechesis at The Catholic University of America and is currently completing a doctorate in ministry degree from the same institution.

At the Archdiocese of Washington, Murphy oversaw sacramental preparation and family life programming and helped revise the archdiocesan religion curriculum. He also trained catechists and assisted in implementing archdiocesan evangelization initiatives. From 2000-2003, Murphy served as director of student life and faith formation at St. Mary's College of Ave Maria University in Orchard Lake, Michigan. His teaching experience includes parish and high school catechism, as well as teaching and adjunct faculty work at Cathedral Elementary School, Gallup, New Mexico, St. Mary's College of Ave Maria University, and Mount Aloysius College in Cresson, Pennsylvania. In 2000, he worked as a missionary in Mexico, constructing homes and leading talks and prayer groups. He also implemented a grade school human sexuality and chastity program in Gallup, New Mexico. A Washington native, Murphy lives in Bowie, Maryland with his wife of 10 years and three sons. They attend Sacred Heart Parish in Bowie.



Brian Garcia-Luense serves as associate director of the Office of Continuing Christian Education and consultant to the Secretariat of Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. In May 2011 he was elected to serve as an at-large member of the board of directors of the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL). Brian spent several years in formation with the Capuchin Franciscan friars before discerning a vocation to lay ecclesial ministry. He holds the degree of Master of Divinity from the Catholic Theological Union at Chicago and is also a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts in Theology. His primary areas of theological interest are Scripture, systematic theology, and liturgy.

Staying grounded with the work "in the trenches", in collaboration with his wife Cristina (who is also a full-time lay ecclesial minister, serving as director of liturgy and music at a parish of 3500 families), he serves as coordinator of youth confirmation preparation at his home parish. His favorite leisure activities include hiking and camping and visiting his very large extended family. (His wife and he have between them 77 first cousins!)



Amy McEntee is an assistant director in the Office of Evangelization & Catechesis for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. She currently serves as the chairperson of the Executive Board for the National Catholic Young Adult Ministry Association and as the Catechetical Consultant for the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives at the University of Dayton.

Amy holds a BS in Education and taught high school English prior to entering the field of catechetical ministry. With ministry experience in faith formation for children, youth and adults, Amy has served as a consultant and presenter, most frequently in the areas of whole community catechesis, the use of social media in ministry and ministry to young adults. She will receive her MA in Theological Studies from the University of Dayton this fall.

In addition to her professional interests, Amy is an amateur photographer, avid reader, and reluctant runner. She loves to travel and can often be found in art museums, bookstores and coffee shops. Amy lives with her husband, Patrick, in Dayton, Ohio.



Adrián Alberto Herrera is an Associate Director for the office of Continuing Christian Education in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. He has served as consultant to the National Advisory Committee on Adult Religious Education, formerly known as NACARE.

He has written articles for several publications and developed materials for the USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis for Catechetical Sunday 2010. Adrián served as one of the six animators for the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership FCH "Forum on Catechesis with Hispanics". He is currently one of the planning committee members for NCCL 2011. He has been a catechist, youth Minister and Director of Religious Education.

Adrián received his BS in Microbiology and Chemistry from The University of Texas at El Paso and his MA in Pastoral Studies from the School of Theology at St. Mary's Seminary.

In addition to his professional interests, Adrián enjoys playing soccer (*he is a huge fan of the Argentina National Soccer Team*), likes to read books on World History and Ecclesiology, and if permitted likes to strum his guitar. He likes to spend time with his children and writes a blog about his reflections in Spanish.

<http://adrianalbertoherrera.wordpress.com>



Paul Jarzembowski has been the Director of Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Joliet since 2006. He is also the Executive Director of the National Catholic Young Adult Ministry Association (NCYAMA), a national network of dioceses and parishes and a resource provider for young adult ministry best practices across the country. He also serves as an advisor to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, DC, on issues of young adult ministry and evangelization.

Paul is a popular speaker on faith and film and is the author of the forthcoming book, *Spiritual Popcorn: Finding God in Your Favorite Movies*. He also reviews secular films from a Catholic Christian perspective on his blog, www.spiritualpopcorn.blogspot.com. He speaks and writes to adults of all ages on a number of topics and issues, especially young adult culture and evangelization, leadership in the church, young adult empowerment, the Bible (especially the prophets), Catholic social teaching, faithful citizenship, Ignatian spirituality, parenting young adults, and of course, film. Paul is also a graduate student at the Institute of Pastoral Studies at Loyola University Chicago, and lives with his wife Sarah in their home in Plainfield, Illinois.



Maria Cruz-Córdoba is currently serving as the Director for the Office of Religious Education for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. Maria teaches various formation and leadership workshops for Catechists and Parish Catechetical Leaders throughout the Archdiocese. She is a former Middle School Religion teacher and has more than six years experience as a Parish Catechetical Leader. Maria received her B.S. in Mass Communications from Florida International University and worked in the field of Television news as an over night writer for WSVN-7 and as an Associate Producer for WTVJ-4 in Miami, Florida. However, Maria's true calling began when she became a Catechist and discovered her love of Catechesis. Maria holds a Master's degree in Pastoral Ministries from St. Thomas University, Miami, Florida.

On a personal note, Maria is the mother of two teenage boys and one girl and is a few months shy of being married for 19 years. Maria loves dogs and is happy to have a large backyard where her four beloved pets can chase each other all day. Her home is in Rio Rancho, New Mexico and it has the best view of the Sandia Mountains.



Michael Lavigne is currently the Director of the Office of Lifelong Faith Formation for the Diocese of Portland, Maine. He has served in the Catholic Church for the past 16 years as a retreat coordinator, coordinator of youth ministry and religious education, diocesan leadership team moderator, coach, high school theology teacher and department chair and confirmation coordinator.

On the side he served as a member of the school committee of his hometown. He is a workshop presenter and retreat facilitator who covers a wide array of topics – from Chastity to Eucharist to the Dignity of Life. He is married to Lori and they are the proud parents of Michael Jr., Mariana, John Paul and Therese. Michael has earned undergrad degrees in psychology and communications, as well as a graduate degree in theology from Providence College.



Ansel Augustine presently works as the coordinator for Black Youth & Young Adult Ministry in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. He also works with the Campus Ministry at Xavier University of Louisiana. He worked in youth ministry for six years at his home church, St. Peter Claver Church in New Orleans, LA. Ansel received his Master's Degree in Pastoral Studies from Loyola University of New Orleans, and his Certificate in Youth Ministry from Xavier University of Louisiana's Institute for Black Catholic Studies.

He is also on the Faculty for the Institute for Black Catholic Studies. Ansel has also published various articles related to ministry and has done various workshops, conferences, and retreats around the country.



Sarah Yaklic, is the Young Adult Coordinator for the Archdiocese of Washington. She received her bachelor's degree in religion and politics from the Catholic University of America and recently began pursuing a master's degree in social work.

As young adult coordinator, she spends time getting to know young adults from across the Archdiocese and explores ways to connect them to our Church and into full parish life.



Dorothy Polchinski has been the Associate Director of Young Adult Ministry (Office of Formation and Discipleship) for the Archdiocese of Atlanta since February of 2006. She received her BA from Texas A&M, Commerce in Education. Later, she studied Theology abroad at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome, Italy, as well as at Franciscan University where she received her MA in Theology in 2006.

Dorothy has been involved in a variety of lay ministry roles for over 15 years. Her role as the Director of SonLife California college mission team even led her to a big win on The Price Is Right! Dorothy's love for serving the Church stems from her work with National Evangelization Teams, also known as NET Ministries, in which she worked as a Team Leader, Field Supervisor, and later as Director of Recruiting.



Julianne Donlon is the Adult Faith Formation Director for the Department of Education in the Diocese of Green Bay, WI. Julianne grew up in Hacketstown, Co. Carlow, Ireland, a small village set in the foothills of the Wicklow mountains. Since moving to the United States in 2001, Julianne has been a Director of Adult Faith Formation, Director of Religious Education and Youth Minister in addition to working in Catholic schools throughout the State.

Julianne graduated with a degree in History, a degree in Religious Studies and a Master's in Theology and Education from Mater Dei College, Maynooth University and Dublin City University in Ireland.



Megan Noll currently serves the Diocese of Superior, Wisconsin and directs the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry. She also worked at the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, handling NFP and family programming for three years. She received her B.A. in biology and music at Concordia College, Moorhead MN with an additional graduate diploma in theology for marriage and family from the Pope John Paul II Institute in Melbourne, Australia and an M.A. from Melbourne College of Divinity, Australia. She has given a variety of talks related to family life.

Megan is the oldest of eleven children and loves hanging out with all of them, especially her nieces and nephews. Her grandpa Noll lived with the family while she was growing up – intergenerational family life is such a gift! When possible, Megan likes to spend her time outdoors. Whether it be lake, stream or ocean, Megan enjoys swimming, kayaking, surfing and boating. Her travels have brought her to 20 countries!



Kevin Driscoll has served as Coordinator of the Diocese of Gary Office for Youth & Young Adults since 2003. Prior to that he served as Associate Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministry with the Diocese of Palm Beach in South Florida. Kevin brings over a dozen years of professional ministry experience at both the parish and diocesan levels. He served as a parish youth ministry coordinator at St. Walter Parish in Roselle, IL.

In high school, Kevin and wife Lisa were members of the youth ministry teen leadership board at St. Anne Catholic Church in Oswego, IL. Kevin, Lisa, and sons Brett and Joseph reside in Cedar Lake. Before settling into his vocation, Kevin served in various capacities in the radio industry and spent time behind the microphone as the PA announcer for Major League Baseball spring training games in Florida. Kevin owns a Masters in Pastoral Studies but is every bit as proud of his degree in Mass Communication from Illinois State University. (Ministry without marketing = no ministry!) Kevin's favorite part of the job is getting out of the office and doing youth and young adult ministry consultations at parishes, searching for exciting and effective new ways to do good ministry. To schedule a visit, contact him directly!



Miriam Hidalgo, is presently working as Coordinator of Catechesis for Hispanics at the Archdiocese of Hartford, CT, since December 2010. She is a member of the New England Diocesan Director's of Religious Education Conference, and a member of the committee for New England Convocation for Catechetical Leadership. She was born in Providence, Rhode Island and her parents are from Guatemala. She has one brother and two sisters, both of whom are married with three boys each.

Miriam received her Bachelor's of Youth Ministry from Providence College in 2006 and her Master's of Religious Education from Boston College's School of Theology and Ministry in 2010. Previously, she worked for two years as the Director of Religious Education at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Providence, RI. She also served for one year as First Communion Coordinator at St. Catherine Parish in Warwick, RI and for six years as the Hispanic Youth Outreach Sub-Coordinator for the Office of Youth Ministry of the Diocese of Providence. At the same time, she was coordinator of ministry with youth for six years at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Providence, RI. She presently dedicates some time volunteering in community organizations which attend to low-income children, youth, and families. Miriam enjoys spending her free time with her nephews, family and close friends. She enjoys Salsa dancing because it is healthy, fun, and decent, plus it's a great stress reliever!



Verónica Rayas Ph.D. is currently Assistant Director of Tepeyac Institute, the lay ministry formation center for the Diocese of El Paso. She holds a doctorate in Religious Education from Fordham University.

Verónica is a native of El Paso who recently returned home after working for the Archdiocese of New York.



Jenni Oliva is currently the Associate Director of the Nazareth Project of the John Paul II Center of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. In this role Jenni oversees all Marriage Preparation and Young Adult Ministry for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee as well as assisting in the many other ministries that come out of her office. Before working in the Nazareth Project, Jenni held ministry roles as a Parish Director of Religious Education, a Parish Director of Youth Ministry and as the Rector of Howard Hall at the University of Notre Dame. Jenni holds a Masters Degree in Pastoral Studies from Saint Francis Seminary and a Undergraduate degree in Theology and Behavioral Science from Mount Mary College.

In Jenni's free time she enjoys spending time with her family, baking and canning, and going to zoos. She is recently engaged and looks forward to celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage this fall with her fiancé Andy. (Andy hates going to the zoos, but loves Jenni; so he reluctantly goes)



F. DeKarlos Blackmon is the sixteenth Supreme Knight and CEO of the Knights of Peter Claver, Inc. DeKarlos, a native of Mobile, AL (the birthplace of Claverism), holds undergraduate degrees and graduate degrees to include a Masters in Business Administration with a concentration in Public Management as well as a Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry from Saint Mary's University of Minnesota.

DeKarlos served with distinction in the United States Army Chaplains' Corps. He is the pastoral associate and director of liturgy and music for Saint Joseph Catholic Church, and taught vocal music and theology at Pope John Paul II Catholic High School in Huntsville, Alabama. DeKarlos, who is married to Kanobia A. Russell-Blackmon of Mobile, is a member of the Grace Memorial Fund Review Committee in the Diocese of Birmingham, the National Association of Pastoral Musicians, the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership, the National Association for Lay Ministry, the American Legion, and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated. He is a former member of the Board of Directors of the Interfaith Mission Service of Huntsville.



James F. Gontis is in his 11th year as Diocesan Director of Religious Education of the Diocese of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He and his wife, Eva Marie, are blessed to be the parents of eight children. Jim has given numerous workshops pertaining to the Catholic Faith and has acted as Chairman for the committee that put together the Diocese of Harrisburg's *Formation in Christian Chastity Program*, which is being used in many dioceses throughout the country. Jim has had articles published or re-printed in several diocesan newspapers and Web sites.

Jim has also served as adjunct faculty at Messiah College, a private Protestant school in Grantham, PA and has taught the catechetics course in the Harrisburg diaconal program. He has twice taught a course on Catholicism. Prior to his current position in Harrisburg, Jim was a Theology teacher and Theology Department Chairman at Cardinal Brennan High School in the Diocese of Allentown, PA. He has also taught Junior High Social Studies. Jim earned his Bachelor's Degree at Adams State College in Alamosa, CO in 1990, majoring in History & Government. He got his minor in English Literature. He received his Master's Degree in Theology from Franciscan University of Steubenville. Jim is a 2nd degree Knight of Columbus and Vice-President for Programming of the Harrisburg Chapter of the Serra Club, which prays for an increase of vocations to the sacred priesthood and consecrated life.

Jim especially enjoys spending time with his family and a few close friends, playing and watching sports, especially baseball and football. He also enjoys listening to music, following the national political scene, traveling, visiting Catholic churches, and, when time permits, which is rare, he likes to go fly-fishing, (though he considers himself among the world's very worst fly-fishermen). Jim and his family reside in the Harrisburg area and are members of Holy Name of Jesus Parish, where Jim is a member of the School Board and the Church Design Committee.