



“Through the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist every Christian is called to participate actively and co-responsibly in the Church’s mission of salvation in the world.”

- U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium

“The eyes of faith behold a wonderful scene: that of a countless number of lay people, both women and men... untiring laborers who work in the Lord’s vineyard. Confident and steadfast through the power of God’s grace, these are the humble yet great builders of the Kingdom of God in history.”

Pope John Paul II,
The Lay Members of Christ’s Faithful people, n. 17



“How abundant our faith, how merciful my God! It’s like I’ve been in a dark room and someone lit a match. The match lit a candle—I look forward to the electricity to see the whole room! Thank you, thank you, to all who are taking the time to teach me.”

(RCIA and Adult Education Team Member, Parish Deanery Representative for Justice and Peace)

LFI Participant Comments

“The Mass has come alive for me. My parish family is closer to my heart, and I have a much deeper appreciation of the sacraments.... I can become so impassioned. So much has ‘fallen into place’ that I now feel comfortable discussing and sharing my faith confidently.”

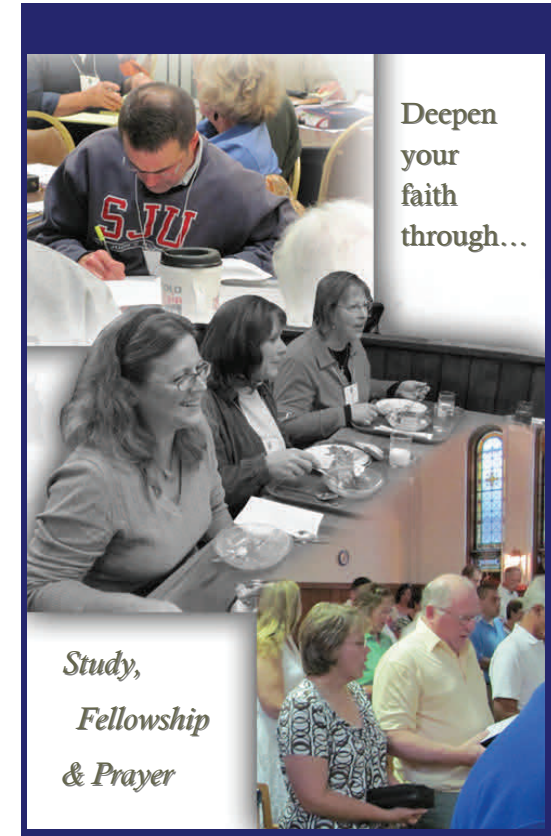
(Catechist, Parish Religious Education).

Office of Ministries & Social Concerns
Diocese of La Crosse
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Postage

The Lay Formation Institute



DIocese of LA CROSSE

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The Mission

The mission of the Lay Formation Institute, or LFI, is to help lay men and women to deepen their knowledge of the Faith and develop their pastoral abilities, so that they may answer with confidence the call of the Second Vatican Council to spread the Gospel in word and deed, acting as a leaven in their parishes and in the world. This is all the more vital if they serve the Church in some official capacity. Completion of the LFI qualifies Catholic School Teachers, DRE's, CRE's, Youth Ministers and Catechists for advanced certification.

The Format

The program consists of classes that meet one weekend per month (Friday evening to Saturday evening), September through May, for two years at St. Anthony's Retreat Center in Marathon. A new cycle is begun every two years. The curriculum covers such areas as:

- Introduction to the Liturgy of the Hours
- Sacred Scripture
- The Profession of Faith
- Liturgy and Sacraments
- Life in Christ: Christian Morality
- Spirituality and Prayer
- Introduction to Church History
- Vatican II
- Vocation of the Laity
- Introduction to Catechesis and Evangelization
- Ministry in a Multicultural Church
- Outreach to the Poor and Suffering
- Introduction to Marriage and Family Ministry
- Overview of Youth Ministry



Specialized 'Tracks'

The two-year cycle concludes with a *Leadership in Christ* weekend devoted to specialized "tracks" focusing in more depth on areas of practical, pastoral service. Each participant is invited to select among these tracks, which include such areas as:

- Catechesis and Evangelization
- Adult Faith Formation
- Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)
- Pastoral Care of Marriage and the Family
- Liturgical Ministry
- Catholic Social Action
- Youth Ministry
- Jail Ministry

Please note that completion of the Lay Formation Institute is a normal prerequisite for diocesan Leader of Prayer training. A significant number of LFI graduates go on to become Leaders of Prayer for their parishes.

Spiritual and Community Formation

The goal of the Lay Formation Institute is to address not only the academic and practical formation of its participants, but their spiritual and community formation as well. For this reason, the program includes:

- Morning Mass on all the Saturdays, with LFI students assisting in the liturgies (the Director of the Office of Sacred Worship coordinates liturgical preparation and formation)
- Liturgy of the Hours prayed each morning and evening on the weekends
- Other devotions
- Shared meals and social time

These aspects develop the spirituality of the participants and foster bonds of friendship that endure well beyond the conclusion of the program.

Continuing Education

Periodic continuing education seminars are offered to LFI graduates within the Diocese. They are also encouraged to continue their personal development with the help of a spiritual director and participation in retreats.



Entrance Requirements

Candidates may apply from any parish or religious institution of the Diocese of La Crosse (with a maximum of three from any one parish). A candidate must be a practicing Catholic and be recommended by his or her pastor. Participants typically are sponsored by their parishes in exchange for a commitment to provide service to the parish. The cost for the Lay Formation Institute is \$750 per person per year, which covers all tuition, books, overnight accommodations and meals*.

How to Apply

Anyone interested in enrolling in the Lay Formation Institute should speak first with their pastor. They may then call the Office of Ministries and Social Concerns or send an email indicating their interest. Please note that space in the Lay Formation Institute is limited and applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

*Each year, the gifts of many to the **Diocesan Annual Appeal** help support the Lay Formation Institute, keeping tuition costs modest for both parishes and individuals.