

Encounter Jesus: ChristLife conference to teach Catholics how to make disciples

By Elizabeth Lowe

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Sharon-ann Guerieri credits a faith series she completed at church with transforming her from someone who sat in a back pew and had minimal parish involvement to increasing her parish participation and forming a personal relationship with Jesus.

"I feel closer to the Lord," said Guerieri, a parishioner of St. Joseph in Fullerton. "I feel a deeper sense of spiritual journey now."

The program Guerieri completed was ChristLife, which works to help participants develop a relationship with Jesus and equip them to share him with others.



Guerieri plans to attend the ChristLife national training conference March 26-28 at St. Philip Neri in Linthicum Heights.

The conference aims to teach participants how to organize and train a parish team to implement ChristLife in parishes.

"Having a ministry whose sole mission is evangelization sets it apart from other ministries," said Father Erik J. Arnold, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Ellicott City. "The mission of ChristLife is to bring out the Gospel to the world around us."

While not everyone who completes ChristLife becomes involved with a new ministry, Father Arnold said, "they're more deeply engaged in the Mass because they're more deeply engaged with Jesus."

An Ellicott City-based apostolate, ChristLife is offered in three, seven-week courses: Discovering Christ, Following Christ and Sharing Christ. Our Lady of Perpetual Help and St. Philip Neri offer the series.

Since completing ChristLife, Guerieri, the St. Joseph parishioner, has become a lector, volunteer at parish events and ChristLife facilitator.

"This (ChristLife) makes you a more altruistic person," Guerieri said. "It changes your mind about putting yourself out there for someone else. It moves you."

ChristLife changed the life of Ryan Sosebee, 28, an OLPH parishioner.

"I grew up in a Protestant family that really didn't practice our faith," Sosebee said, "and after Discovering Christ I converted."

Sosebee, who was received into the church during the Easter Vigil in 2011, encourages young people to try the Discovering Christ course.

"It's a great way to expose young people to what it means to know and be in relationship with Jesus," said Sosebee, who will help facilitate the conference. "For me, personally, it was life-changing and I believe it can be that for other people. I want, more than anything, for all people to come into a relationship with Jesus. It's the greatest thing in the world."

For information or to register for the conference, visit christlife.org.

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