

New division created in Department of Evangelization

Father John E. Hurley has a vision for the Archdiocese of Baltimore's newly formed Department of Evangelization that is quickly taking shape.

Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien appointed the Paulist priest as executive director in May and said evangelization was one of his top priorities. After starting in July, Father Hurley has begun to ambitiously re-organize.

Two previous archdiocesan divisions, Evangelization and Catechesis and Ministry Formation and Development, have been merged into a new division called Catechetical and Pastoral Formation.

Ruth Puls, formerly the head of Ministry Formation and Development, became the director of the newly created division July 22. Carol Augustine, the director of Evangelization and Catechesis, is retiring Aug. 13 and is assisting in the transition.

"I think what I'm trying to do with the merger of these two divisions is to create a cohesive relationship between formation and catechesis," Father Hurley said. "Sometimes catechesis can be just perceived as more information for people to know and understand their faith. Ultimately what we're trying to do in catechesis is form well-informed disciples. We're also trying to form them as disciples of Christ."

He said people hunger for a better understanding of their faith and church and want to fill in gaps of knowledge.

"I think for all of us as disciples, even as priests, we always need to be looking at our ongoing formation," he said. "Just because we're ordained, our education and formation doesn't stop. Otherwise the message will get pretty boring out there, and it is pretty boring for some people and that's one of the components we need to address as we seek to energize and animate people about their faith life as disciples of Jesus."

Puls said Catholics will notice the entire archdiocese spotlighting evangelization.

“We’re looking at everything through the lens of evangelization, so looking at the connections of catechetical ministry and pastoral formation through the lens of evangelization is crucial to the mission of the church,” Puls said.

Puls and her staff will work with lay ministers to help make them more well-rounded. The division will encourage priests and lay ecclesial ministers in their roles as “formators.”

There will be five offices inside the Division of Catechetical and Pastoral Formation, including Catechist and Adult Faith Formation, Sacramental Formation, Marriage and Family Life, Hispanic Pastoral Formation and Pastoral Leadership Formation.

Lauri Przybysz will coordinate Marriage and Family Life, while Armando Garcia will coordinate Hispanic Pastoral Formation. The other three office leaders will be named soon.