

Christian Formation Course Presentation of Certificates Participants Response – Patricia Bogan

Good afternoon Bishop Michael, special guests, Sisters, families and friends.

It is a great privilege to speak on behalf of this remarkable group, my fellow Christian Formation Course classmates. It has been a daunting task to encapsulate three years into a few moments, as well as a challenge to explain how this course became a life-changing event for us. I echo their words this afternoon.

You could say we were naïve, a little ‘wet behind the ears, a motley crew as we initially gathered in January 2007, filled with trepidation and uncertain of what lay ahead. But we were united in our commitment and strong desire to rediscover our Catholic faith.



Each Tuesday evening became more than a journey from home to Lochinvar; it evolved into a weekly pilgrimage. The Holy Spirit worked overtime as we struggled and puzzled, we read copiously and handed in what seemed like volumes of homework. At the same time, we were ‘blown away’ by the richness and diversity of our faith.

Over the years, we completed many units covering a broad spectrum of our religion. For some it was the first time they had opened a Bible and actually understood its passages; or delved into our prayer life. It was a first to investigate our chequered Church history, our sacred Liturgies; to really explore Eucharist or learn about the ‘real’ Jesus. Moral Theology was tricky. I quote, “The course helped me to see my friend Jesus and know that no matter what rules are out there, HE will support and care for me.”

We have been transformed due this course. I quote, “Three years ago I was unformed, drifting. Knowing God, but more head than heart.” Today, we have a greater appreciation and love of our faith, and while we may look the same, we FEEL very differently.

At times this course became a sacred thread that unified us. We shared many joys, the birth of a grandchild, birthdays, family reunions and special occasions. We also sustained

each other through the death of a parent, diagnosis of serious illnesses and their subsequent treatment or surgery. I quote, "It has made my life journey easier and given me a feeling that I am not walking it alone." We have grown into an authentic Jesus community.

This course has been empowering, enriching and enlightening, but if we could condense it into one word, it is "GIFT". Our presenters gifted us with their wonderful intellect; we gifted each other with strength and encouragement, we now go forward to gift ourselves to others in a huge variety of ministries and roles. I quote, "This course gave me hope and the gift of confidence to speak out to others about our faith."

This all sounds so serious, so holy, but we had heaps of FUN too. As we quickly gelled, one of us hit upon the idea of getting together socially. So began our hilarious gatherings with husbands, wives, children and nuns (line dancers amongst them!). This same classmate 'created' a new name; we are now "Twecians", which best describes our solidarity. I quote, "The friendships which have been made are special and will last forever."

Our fervent hope is that most adult Catholics could embark on this Formation Course, it would completely uplift and grow our parish communities. I quote, "The course was eye-opening, scary, exhilarating, heart warming and such a tonic." See how much they are missing?

Naturally, there are many thanks to be made.

We were the first group to participate in and complete this extensively reviewed Course. I guess you could say; we were the guinea pigs! We commend all who worked on the revision; we are indebted to you for your skill and foresight.

We find it difficult to convey our deep gratitude to these inspirational presenters; Bridgette, Lynnie, Ellen, Patricia, Virginia, Louise and Patricia (It's a great name!). Also; Wendy, Therese, Anne, Steve, Theresa, Loretto and Irene. I quote, "Their own belief in the message was obvious from their passion in presenting that message on to us." We will always carry a part of you in our hearts.

We thank Colleen, our esteemed TWEC Co-ordinator, who not only oversees this course, but each week stayed up late to bid farewell and wish us a safe trip home. And Margaret, who took care of our many secretarial needs.

We are grateful to Bishop Michael, a keen supporter of adult formation in our diocese, and without whose endorsement, this Course could not be possible.

But the utmost appreciation goes to our own families, whom we 'deserted' on 106 Tuesday nights, 5 Saturdays and 11 Sundays (Yes, I did count!). Without your continuing love, encouragement, understanding and listening, as well acceptance of our commitment, we would not be here today.

The Vision of the Christian Formation Course is, "Come and See, a journey to discover our own potential." Part of its Mission is to "allow participants to explore their life's journey ... and to live more deliberately as Jesus disciples." These profound words have become a reality for us. I conclude with one further quote, which says it all, "To be given the opportunity to know God more intimately on an adult level has been an overwhelming experience, the best three years of my life." Amen!!!!

Sunday April 11, 2010