



A Catholic Movement of Spirituality for Older Adolescents and Young Adults

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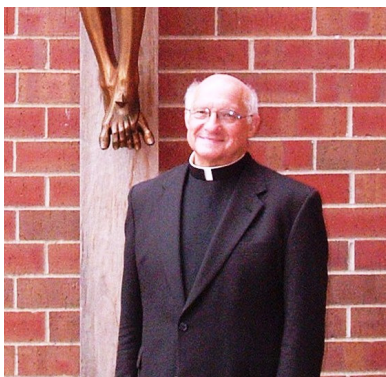
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**TEC Co-Founder Father
Matthew Fedewa will
celebrate the 50th anniversary
of his ordination on June 8.**

NEWS RELEASE

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TEC CO-FOUNDER FR. MATTHEW FEDEWA CELEBRATES 50 YEARS AS A PRIEST, JUNE 8, 2008 *Co-Founder of international Catholic youth movement marks 50th ordination anniversary*

By Mary Lovee Varni

(Festus, Mo.)... **Father Matthew Fedewa**, who co-founded the Teens Encounter Christ (TEC) Movement in 1965, will commemorate a half century of service as a Roman Catholic priest on June 8. "Of those 50 years, many have been spent in the TEC ministry," said Ronald Reiter, TEC Conference executive director. "Throughout his priestly vocation, Father Matt has been a living witness of Paschal Mystery spirituality – which is the central message of both our Catholic Faith and the TEC Movement."

Father Fedewa currently serves as spiritual director at St. John Vianney Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. where he continues "to encounter "TEC sons" I have not yet met. These seminarians are from dioceses as diverse as Anchorage, Alaska and Owensboro, Ky. and many in-between. Like Paul journeying and finding Christians he had not known, I rejoice with these young men as they tell of the graces received through the TEC retreat and TEC Movement," he explained.

One of his seminary students, Benjamin Hadrich, of the Duluth, Minn. Diocese, shared that, "in looking back on my TEC experience, I can see many seeds planted in my faith that are beginning to grow at the seminary. My first experience of Eucharistic Adoration took place at a TEC retreat. I also began to read my bible seriously for the first time because of a talk given by a man who is now a brother seminarian. **And I heard my first call to the priesthood while on TEC.** I can see a connection between these events and our daily prayer routine at St. John Vianney," Hadrich said.

Helping young people find Christ is what inspired Father Fedewa to hold the first TEC weekend 43 years ago. As a high school teacher he realized his students needed to be transformed by the Gospel beyond religion classes and the retreats available at the time. So when local Catholic adults asked for his help in creating a faith encounter for their youth – similar to what they experienced through the Cursillo movement – he accepted.

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The first TEC weekend was held Oct. 9-11, 1965 at a former nurses' residence hall on the Sisters of Mercy Hospital Campus in Battle Creek, Mich. Dorothy Gereke, the hospital administrator, assisted Father Fedewa organize the structure of the new ministry and continued on as coordinator of the weekend experience for the next three years in the Diocese of Lansing.

Gereke honors Father Fedewa by saying: "It is an honor to thank God for the gift of Father Matthew Fedewa, who is such a powerful witness to the love of God to me, and so many others around the world. During the past 46 years we have worked on many projects together, but notably developing and bringing to birth, with the grace of God, the Teens Encounter Christ Movement. Following Jesus in the Paschal Mystery is the theme of his daily life challenges as a pastor, teacher, spiritual director, counselor and friend. He is deeply respected for his humility, integrity, honesty and openness to God's will and plan for his journey. He respects the tradition of the past and balances his hopes and dreams of the future with prayer and meditation. Father Matt is truly a passionate follower of the Good Shepherd. He is a humble servant of the Lord. He is a holy priest. He is a faith-filled prophet. He is a hope-filled leader. Fr. Matt acts justly, loves mercifully and walks humbly with God."

Since that time TEC has expanded into 58 dioceses throughout North America, South America and Europe, currently helping thousands of young people each year deepen their relationship with Christ and discern their vocation. **In addition, similar movements have adapted Father Fedewa's retreat model to serve other groups within the Church** including Troops Encounter Christ, Handicapped Encounter Christ, Residents Encounter Christ and Deaf Encountering Christ and Koinonia.

In addition to his duties at the seminary, he still devotes much of his time to TEC. For example, **Father Fedewa served on all three TEC Spiritual Directors Workshop teams in 2001, 2003 and 2007; helping other clergy, religious and lay leaders alike teach Paschal Mystery spirituality to Catholic young people.** He continues to be a spiritual director for local TEC retreats across the country. In addition, in 2006, he and Gereke made presentations at a special TEC founders dinner in St. Louis, Mo., and will do the same in Michigan later this year.

"It's humbling to know that a 'senior high retreat' created 43 years ago continues to truly be the 'blind date' in which the Christ we love and serve and the youth we love and mentor encounter one another," the priest said. **"Several years ago, on a trip to Prague in the Czech Republic, I spoke with the couple who were leading the TECs there. They shared that 40 TEC weekends had been held. Young people who grew up under the atheistic communist regime were encountering Christ in His Paschal Mystery.** For many, it was their first knowledge of Jesus."

Many TEC leaders will be present June 8 at a special Mass and celebration commemorating Father Fedewa's 50th ordination anniversary in Westphalia, Mich., hosted by his family. Two of his siblings also serve the Church in religious vocations: Msgr. Sylvester Fedewa, a retired priest who helps at St. Mary's Parish in Westphalia, and Sr. Joanne Fedewa, a member of the Sisters of Living Word, and active member of Christ the King Parish in Flint, Mich.

To learn more about the TEC Movement, contact the TEC Conference at (636) 933-9233, office@TECConference.org; or online at www.TECConference.org.

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