

News Release

Newman Theological College launches Benedict XVI Institute for New Evangelization

Edmonton, January 25, 2014 – Newman Theological College is pleased to announce the establishment of a new institute that aims to serve the New Evangelization by developing and offering innovative programs in faith formation and catechesis.

“The Benedict XVI Institute for New Evangelization is intended to meet the real needs of the Catholic Church in Canada today”, College President Dr. Jason West said in announcing the initiative. Course offerings will be aimed at ordained ministers, religious, and lay people, at a variety of levels. “The institute will ensure that the Gospel is presented anew to the various segments of society in Edmonton and throughout Western Canada.”

Blessed Pope John Paul II first called for a “new evangelization” some 30 years ago, and encouraged renewed efforts in proclaiming the Gospel to all who seek the truth. This “new evangelization” would be “new in its ardour, method, and expression.” Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI made the New Evangelization a central theme throughout his papacy, and so was a natural source for the name of the new institute. In his vision of the New Evangelization, Benedict XVI encouraged a particular outreach to baptized Christians who have heard about Christ, but for whom the Christian faith has lost its personal meaning and transformative power.

The Benedict XVI Institute is in part a response to the call of Archbishop Richard Smith, who identified faith formation as a key priority for the Archdiocese of Edmonton in his Pastoral Letters of September 2011 and September 2012. It also implements proposals of the XIII General Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith, held in Rome in October 2012. Among other things, the synod bishops called for good catechesis of adults and strong formation for catechists. They also asked all Catholic universities and theological faculties to consider the New Evangelization an integral dimension of their mission.

“Essential to the new evangelization is the witness of those who have been formed in the beauty of the Gospel and shaped by its transformative power”, said Archbishop Smith. “I am very excited by the possibilities that this new institute will offer to those who seek to grow in their relationship with Christ and serve the evangelical mission of the Church.”

The Benedict XVI Institute currently offers the following programs:

Online Faith Formation

A comprehensive selection of courses on various aspects of the Catholic faith, all offered online, which can be taken individually for interest, or applied toward a specialized Certificate in Catholic Studies.

Enculturation Program for International Priests in Western Canada

Designed to strengthen the ministry of priests whose native culture is not Canadian.

“Treasures of the Faith” Seminar Series

Noon-hour seminars designed to explore the treasures of the Catholic faith through reading foundational texts that have shaped Catholic Tradition – free of charge and open to all.



Aboriginal Studies

Include a noon-hour seminar series “Medicine Wheel Teachings - Stories and Journeys from Canadian Catholic Aboriginal Communities.”

The Institute and the directors of its programs are responsible to the President of Newman Theological College. Dr. West said he looks forward to seeing the Institute grow in its offerings to the Catholic community locally and across Canada.

“The Benedict XVI Institute for New Evangelization will ensure that the need to be authentic disciples of Christ and to bring the message and example of our faith to those on the peripheries of the Church and society remains an integral part of our mission.”

For more information on the Benedict XVI Institute for New Evangelization, visit www.newman.edu.

For more information contact:

Michelle Maxwell
Newman Theological College
780.392.2455