

The Best of Quest

Introduction

Originally produced by the Pastoral Department for Small Christian Communities (Archdiocese of Hartford), *The Best of Quest* represents a collection of selected units from across the 30 year corpus of *Quest* and *Summer Reflections*.

Selected from various years during the time of their publication, the featured weekly units reflect the proposed session format at the time they were written. The format that corresponds to the rubrics: Hearing the Lord's Gospel - Hearing the Gospel's Lord represents the session format proposed in the more recent years of publication.

Written seasonally each year, the original weekly units often contained references to contemporaneous events in the church and society. Slight modifications have been made where these occur to remove what now might be an anachronistic distraction.

The Best of Quest appears initially focused on lectionary Year C. Year A and Year B editions will follow.

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The Quest Story (1986-2017)

What would eventually emerge as *Quest*, the lectionary-based resource for small Christian communities began in 1986 as the immediate follow up to the archdiocese's participation in the Renew program. Upon the completion of the Renew experience and taking seriously the feedback of Renew participants ("If these small groups are such a good thing, why do they have to end?"), then Archbishop John Whealon established the Pastoral Department for Small Christian Communities to build on the experience of the Renew program.

From its inception the department sought to promote and support the development of small church communities as basic units of parish in a long-term vision for parish as "a community of communities", a Eucharist-centered community becoming a more relational church for an ever more relational world.

As one of the first projects of the new office, its first Director, Priscilla (Pat) Linehan quickly gathered a team of writers to prepare Sunday scripture-based reflection material to continue to support small groups that formed during the Renew experience. Following the Renew pattern, this initial effort prepared material for six weeks in the fall and six weeks in the spring.

Joined on the staff by Sr. Joan Bernier, SND, Bro. Robert Moriarty, S.M. succeeded Pat Linehan as Director of the office in 1989. By that time, it was becoming clear that on their own initiative many of these parish small groups that emerged during Renew were now moving on to become continuing parish-based small Christian communities. As one small community member charmingly put it at the time: "We're meeting even when we're not supposed to." Thus it was

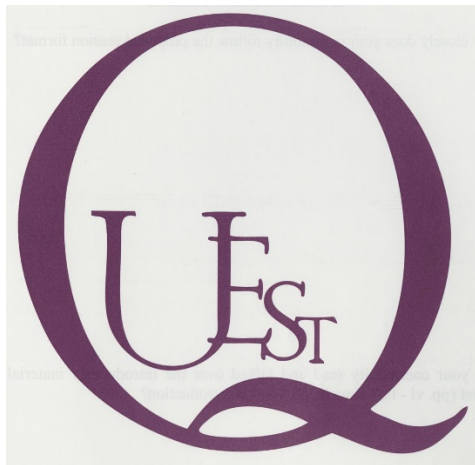
clear that there was a need of lectionary-based resource material that would support these communities for more than six weeks at a time.

With the word spreading, already in the 1986-89 time frame, that the Archdiocese of Hartford was producing materials for these post-Renew groups, requests to be able to share these materials were coming from other dioceses in the U.S. and Canada which were also looking to support their developing small Christian communities.

Beginning then, in 1989, the move emerged to extend the number of weeks of the year for which resource material was being produced. Over time, the reflection booklets expanded to cover all the weeks of the year.

In the early years, each edition carried a distinctive theme and a title to reflect that theme. *Quest*, the theme and title selected for the fall 1991 booklet was subsequently adopted as the permanent title/logo for what would become the two annual editions, (fall and spring.)

Already in the summer of 1990, Sr. Joan took it upon herself to prepare photo copied reflection material for the summer weeks. This material, known as *Summer Reflections* would come to be developed in full booklet form.



In 1991, the soon to be ordained, John McHugh offered his artistic talents that would soon transform the presentation of the booklets. Ordained in his mature years, Fr. McHugh, a professional graphic artist in his earlier years, began by lending graphic design to the titles of the weekly units and the booklet's cover. What has since become the *Quest* logo was his first contribution. In the years since, Fr. McHugh's contributions expanded to the inclusion of the full four-color artwork that came to be a hallmark of *Quest's* presentation. Fr. McHugh's widely appreciated contributions to *Quest* captured the spirit of John Paul II's thought when he spoke of beauty leading us

to the threshold of mystery.

While serving as an art instructor at East Catholic High School, Manchester, CT and later as a free-lance artist, Aleta Gudelski served over the years to enhance the presentation of *Summer Reflections* with her finely wrought line drawings.

Promoted basically by word of mouth over their decades long run, *Quest* and *Summer Reflections* eventually made their way to dioceses, parishes and individuals in every state in the union, save one, and to communities in about 12 English-speaking areas around the world. For a time *Quest* was also translated into Chinese and posted on a website in Beijing. For a number of years the Pastoral Department for Small Christian Communities also produced a Spanish translation of *Quest*.

Produced fresh every season, *Quest* was prepared by diverse teams of nine people each. Totaling more than 100 people over the years (men and women, married and single, religious, priests,

deacons and seminarians of the archdiocese), *Quest* and *Summer Reflections* were written by the church for the church as acts of stewardship.

Members of *Quest* Writing Teams Over the Years

Agnes Allen	Richard Dalidowitz	Jo Ann Ionnatti, O.P.
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Eduardo Barrios	Rev. Michael Dolan	Gregory Kay
Suzanne Battos	Rev. Joseph T. Donnelly	Dawn Kelly
Gail T. Bellucci	Glen Dmytryszn	Eileen Kelly, C.N.D.
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Evelyn Clark	Rev. James Gregory	Rev. Jose Mercado
Karen A. Coakley, SND	Carol Hanlon	Raymond J. McGiveney
Rev. Henry Cody	Ivan O. Hawk	Ann Marie McGovern
Joseph Colletti	Den. Timothy Healy	Patricia McKinley
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Rev. John Conte	Ryan Hinton	Joanne Moran
Johanna Cooke	Den. John Hoffman	Robert K. Moriarty, S.M.
Rev. George Couturier	Sean Hoffman	Betsy Morrison
Kenneth Dagliere	Barbara Jean Daly-Horell	Jack Morrison
Claire Dalidowitz	Myles Hubbard	Pamela Morrison-Wolf
Cathleen Murtha, D.W.	Dcn. Eugene Phaneuf	Nancy Stimac
Brandon Nappi	Elissa Rinere, C.P.	Dorothy Strelchen, SND
Mary O'Brien, C.P.	Linda Roberto	Timothy St. Onge
Mauryeen A. O'Brien, O.P.	Ann Rodgers, C.P.	Daniel Stypa
Ellen O'Connor, SND	Den. Ramon Rosado	Andrea Sullivan
Den. Martin O'Connor	Michael Ruminski	Cori Thibadeau
Mary Ellen O'Driscoll	Dcn. Richard L. Santello	Patricia Torre, D.W.
Rev. Robert O'Grady	Rev. Thomas Sas	Walter Twachtman

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