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## **Maryvale Certificate in Catechesis Program provides confidence to pass on the Catholic faith to others**

Carol Harnett

How often are we as Catholics asked questions about our faith that we struggle to answer? How often do we wish we could be more confident in teaching the faith to children, adults, family members and those in our parish and school? Do you wish to learn more about your faith but do not have the time to attend regular classes? Have you ever thought of studying through distance learning?

The Maryvale Certificate in Catechesis is a two-year distance learning program for those who would like to know more about their Catholic faith in order to pass it on to others, as Our Lord instructed (Matthew 28:19). The content of the program is based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church, so that students come to a better knowledge and understanding of this wonderful document.

The program is run by the Maryvale Institute, a Catholic institute in Birmingham, England, which specializes in teaching the Catholic faith, theology and philosophy through distance learning. Maryvale Institute has recently been acknowledged by the Congregation for Education in Rome for its outstanding teaching and has been awarded the status of an "Ecclesial Institute" or, more properly, a "Higher Institute of Religious Sciences," the first in the English-speaking world.

Maryvale has a number of partnerships with dioceses around the world, including the Fargo Diocese, so the program is available to those living in and near the Fargo Diocese. The program will start Jan. 14 when two members of the Maryvale staff, including the program director, will fly from England to Fargo to introduce people in this area to the wonderful material in the program. The day will include teaching, Mass, lunch and times of fellowship. There also will be opportunities to ask questions.

All Maryvale programs are designed so that students are introduced to the material before they take home specially written course books that guide them through the program. Each year of the Maryvale Certificate in Catechesis, there are three such study days and a retreat day. All the way through the program students are supported and guided in their study by the course books, as well as regular email contact with the course director. Advice is given by their personal tutor who reads and grades their work and sets targets for the next assignment.

The program is geared toward learning the faith so that it can be passed on with confidence. Therefore, each study day has a workshop; a practical aspect that turns the theory into practice.

Study days combine teaching, liturgy, fellowship and prayer, so all dimensions of the Christian life are fostered. At the end of the day, the whole person has been nourished and supported.

The program follows the structure of the catechism so that after an introduction to catechesis, the catechism and the foundations of faith, students then study who Jesus Christ

is, the church, the place of Mary in Christ and the church, and they complete Year 1 with a module on methods of catechesis.

Year 2 introduces sacred Scriptures, liturgy and sacraments, Christian morality and Christian prayer. The practical side of passing on the faith — catechesis — is developed and explored through the workshops, which are begun in class and completed at home.

Assignments of about 1,500 words are turned in for each of the course books (modules). Those are a mixture of practical exercises and essays. Students also turn in a short evaluation of the workshops.

*If you would like to know more about the Maryvale Certificate in Catechesis program, contact Katie Dubas at [katie.dubas@fargodiocese.org](mailto:katie.dubas@fargodiocese.org) or (701) 356-7908. Registration for the program is preferred by Dec. 15.*

*To learn more about the Maryvale Institute, visit [www.maryvale.ac.uk](http://www.maryvale.ac.uk).*

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