

From the P.A.'s desk

Youth Ministry:

A few weeks ago at the Parish Pastoral Council we started talking about some of the most pressing and needed agendas of the parish. Almost immediately we started talking about the need to focus on youth ministry, primarily anyone in middle school, high school, and early college. At Mass each week I'm very aware of the young people within that age group, and the missing piece of parish life that fails to address their needs and wants. A few days after Pastoral Council, I sat down with our Faith Formation Director, Mary Moomey, and Kaylie Willoughby, and Shavonne Shanteau. We talked on what can be done now, as well as what we as a parish need to do in the future to address this great need in our church, or any faith community today. We have scheduled a meeting on Saturday October 22, right after Mass at about 5:45, to start brainstorming on this topic. All are welcome to attend, including parents and teens.

RCIA:

Perhaps you or someone you know has been wondering about becoming Catholic. Perhaps this pondering has occurred over some time, or is a recent thought. Perhaps your or their thinking is energized by the Spirit, prompting you or them to investigate further. Know that the Church offers a way of discernment, a process called the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults). The process involves learning more about the Christian way, and following an apprenticeship of prayer, worship and Catholic practices. This year we are looking at having four people participate in this process, which will start meeting as a group on Thursday October 6 at 4 pm. This year's group is made up of the Lloyd family (Aaron, Sydney, and Natalie) who are unbaptized, and Alan who was baptized Lutheran. The Lloyd family usually attends on Sunday and sits in the back of the middle section on the northwest side. If you see a young family back there, please make them feel welcomed. If you would like to know more about the RCIA, please contact Jerry at the parish office.

Evangelization and Reaching Out:

The last few weeks I've been writing about the Church entrusted with the mission of Jesus to evangelize. However, the laity has a special role in reaching out to unbelievers that cannot be undervalued. You are the ones that will bring the faith to your families, the culture, and the world you live in. If you cooperate with the grace of the Holy Spirit and dare to accept the mission Jesus wishes to share with you, many people will be brought to the Church. There are really two different ways to evangelize: indirect evangelization and direct evangelization. Indirect (implicit) evangelization is making known the Gospel message by our actions, the way we live and what we do. Direct (explicit) evangelization is speaking to a person or a group of people about specific aspects of the Gospel message, with the intention of sharing the faith with them. While both forms of evangelization are good, in our world and society today, the direct and explicit form of evangelization is needed more. Why? Because in a culture that is becoming increasingly secular, people are not familiar with the message and teachings of Jesus. Unless they hear it specifically and intentionally, they will not get it.

In order to love Jesus you have to know Him. To have head knowledge about Jesus is not the same thing as knowing him personally. I often tell people that Jesus is more alive today than he was 2000 years ago, and then ask them how that can be? Whereas 2000 years ago he was one person inspired by the Holy Spirit, today

there are millions of us who have collectively embraced his vision for the world and are inspired by the Holy Spirit alive and living in each one of us.

So where do we begin? We first must call on the Holy Spirit by name and ask for His help or we will not be successful in the mission. He is the one who converts hearts. Without the Holy Spirit, Jesus stays in the past and the Gospel is a dead letter. Without the Holy Spirit, the Church is simply an organization and its mission a manner of propaganda. But with the Holy Spirit, God is alive and living with us, and the Risen Christ is here, forming us to be the Body of Christ in the world.

The Holy Spirit gives us the grace, courage, and power to bring Jesus to others, and we will be promoting various forms of adult faith formation in the next year to help us learn the language of evangelization, which simply is sharing faith verbally with each other. There are the adult faith sessions right after the Sunday 9:30 Mass for the next four weeks, and during Advent I'll begin a weeknight evening Bible study on Discipleship. Next Lent we will offer similar Soup Supper meals, but I'll do them connected to an adult faith topic on conversion and our call to holiness. Recently too I ordered an excellent faith sharing series called Alpha, which looks at the message of Jesus and why it's important in our world today. I'll be working some of those into our schedule as well. Faith Formation is not just for children anymore, and in fact, the Church teaches that Adult Faith Formation is the most important form of faith formation in any parish.

Don't be afraid to join a program or invite someone you know to do the same. In the Bible we hear over 400 times the words: "Do not be afraid!"

There can be many obstacles to preaching the Good News, many hardships to overcome, and a sense of awkwardness about sharing the faith. But, Jesus has overcome all those and is alive. Step out of your comfort zone and act...remember those who are ashamed of Jesus before others, He will be ashamed of before His Heavenly Father. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

All Saints and Souls Day Celebration & Pictures of Departed Loved Ones:

As we move into the beginning of the end of the liturgical year, we celebrate All Saints and All Souls Day. All Saints Day is a solemn celebration in the Roman Catholic Church and is a Holy Day of Obligation. This year all Saints Day is Tuesday November 2 and the very next day on Wednesday November 3 is All Souls Day. The beautiful reality about Catholicism is that we believe that death does not divide the one family under God. Some of God's people are still alive on this earth (you and me), and some of God's people are alive in the next world with the Lord. All Saints and All Souls Day celebrate the reality that we still are all God's one family. As a way to remember and celebrate All Saints and All Souls Day, I'd like to invite you to bring pictures of your departed loved ones to display in church throughout the month of November. The pictures and photos will remind us of those members of our family who have gone before us in faith to live with the Lord. I'm thinking of putting the display up on tables near the white northwest wall of the church, but I'm open to your suggestions. Please remember to put your name on the back of the photos so we can return them to you at the end of November. Please bring in your pictures to me by the weekend of October 30, or any time after that.