

Transfiguration Parish Pastoral Council
Monday, May 21, 2007

Formation Report

Our Sunday and Wednesday GIFT programs came to an end this past weekend for the 2006-2007 catechetical year. Overall the year went well and our catechists did a great job in committing themselves to the programs and sharing their faith with the children/youth. There are always items we need to work on better on such as parents getting their kids to the programs on time, coming to the scheduled sessions on a regular and consistent basis, as well as fully understanding the importance of our liturgical year. I will be focusing a lot of my efforts on correcting these areas in the coming year, as well as some other issues I first want to discuss with our new pastor.

-The GIFT programs will most likely begin again after the summer on September 9 for our Sunday families and on September 12 for those families involved in our Wednesday GIFT programs.

Our Wednesday afternoon GIFT process (4:15-5:15 pm) went well for its fifth year in existence. There were about 8-10 children who came faithfully most Wednesday's of each month. This group was led this year by Raquel Stekardis and I was pleased with her dedication and creativity to the program throughout the year. This process ended last Wednesday for the current catechetical year.

Our Middle School GIFT process was both a challenge and a joy for me this year. There were about 22-25 youth who came to that process almost every Wednesday (some weeks there were more kids, and some weeks there were less) with their doubts, questions, and challenges of faith for this DRE. None of the kids were bad but some were more of a challenge than others which tried the patience of their catechists. However, I must say that all of the kids who came on a regular basis are good. There are a few of these youth who have a deep faith and it was good to be in their midst week after week throughout the year. You parents should be proud of your young sons and daughters for they are responding to the call of Jesus to be His young disciples. They will not tell you they love their faith, or that it is cool to read the Bible but some of them are doing just that. It is neat to me to see that faith alive in the hearts of our young people.

There were a couple of items that significantly impacted our Middle School GIFT process this past year. They are as follows: Due to our confirmation process this past year John Underwood was not able to be part of our Middle School GIFT process as much as he was last year. He was missed by all and hopefully that will change in the year to come. The other item that impacted MS GIFT had to do with the night that confirmation fell on which was Tuesday. With confirmation on Tuesday and MS GIFT on Wednesday evenings, one of those programs suffered in attendance during the second half of the year, and that was our GIFT process. As I see it, it is not so much the night that MS GIFT falls on, but the style of GIFT itself. Right now we have a strictly classroom catechetical model which needs to be changed to more of a youth ministry model. I have talked to John about this and we are dialoguing and trying to come up with

a different model for our youth and their families for the new year beginning in September. This will have to be discussed at length with our new pastor and presented to you folks when we have something more concrete on this matter. I will keep you informed on this issue as it evolves.

There have been a number of our children/youth who have received sacraments this past year. There were a total of 30 children who received the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Eucharist this year. (By the time of the Council meeting all but one of the 30 families will have received First Eucharist.) We have been privileged to have 2 individuals to come into the faith through the RCIA process; Wendy Nelson on April 22 and Whitney Bartley to receive sacraments on May 26. We have had a few babies baptized from last August until now. And of course, we cannot forget our 45 of our youth who were confirmed this month. Let us continue to pray for all of these people who received sacraments this past year.

This past year I once again participated in our Wednesday morning bible study during the entire year. During the Advent and Lenten seasons I led the study focusing on the upcoming Sunday readings each week we met. Both in the Advent and Lenten studies there were about 6 to 8 folks who participated in the studies faithfully. In the Lenten series we met for six weeks in a row and the numbers stayed about the same for the entire season we met. The folks who attended both sessions had a good time and we all learned from one another. I intend to do something with this group in the coming year. I will let you know what it is once I have it scheduled with those folks.

Our annual Vacation Bible School will take place June 17-21 from 6:30-8:30 pm. The theme for this year's process will be "Avalanche Ranch: A Wild Ride Through God's Word" and it will be filled with a lot of fun for all involved. A number of folks have come forward to cover many of the major components of the process. It is not too late to sign up your children for it, or to volunteer your time to help out as an adult leader. Our next planning meeting will be on Wednesday, May 23 @ 7:00 pm in Room D of the Parish Center. The final planning meeting will take place on June 13 @ 7 pm in Room D of the Parish Center. We will set up church and the lower level for this process after the 10:00 am mass on June 17.

Adult Faith Formation Programs

The third and final gathering for our Fifty-Five and Over gatherings took place this past Saturday, May 19. Fr. Jerry Timmel from St. Ignatius parish came and spoke to the group on aging with grace as a Christian. There were about 10 present for this gathering and they all had a good time socializing, dialoguing with Fr. Jerry, and having lunch. Plans are already in the works for gatherings for this group for the new year of programs beginning in late September.

Regional Collaboration Events

-On May 12 there was a mother/daughter program sponsored by St. Albert the Great parish and held at Standard Country Club. There were a total of about 170-190 mothers/daughters at this event and we had about 5 women from our parish who brought

daughters, mothers, and grandmothers to the event totaling about 13 from TOOL at this regional get together. It seems as if all the parishes in our region were represented at the gathering held for mothers/daughters on May 12. That was a great showing for a regional process which hopefully will happen again at future events.

-The Pastoral Associate at Mother of Good Counsel, Kathy Easley, and I are planning joint programs between our two for the coming catechetical year. There will be a gathering for the women of both parishes on October 6 at the Cathedral. There will be a joint middle school retreat in January and a women's retreat on March 1 for all of the women of our parishes for the region. These are just a few items regarding formational programs for MGC & TOOL.

-The next meeting for the staffs, support personnel, and council members of the parishes with Northeast 9 Region will be held on Thursday, June 6 from 11:30 am-1:30 pm at St. Margaret Mary parish. This meeting includes lunch and any of you on the Pastoral Council who are interested in coming to that gathering, are more than welcome to join us. This gathering of all those involved in any type of ministry within the parishes of Northeast 9 region to come together to collaborate on our common ministries and how we can help out one another as ministers in the church in our various parishes. Brian Reynolds, Chancellor of the Archdiocese, will be present for this gathering and speak on the safe child environment process that every parish has to have been a part of by now. There seems to be some rule changes with regard to this process such as that every parish needs to be in 100% compliance with the process regarding their adult volunteers (those 18 years of age and older) who work with our children/youth in any of our programs. Currently we are about 90 percent compliant with the Archdiocese. I am sure we will have to be certain that all adults helping out in any of our programs must be certified at some point during the fall so we will be in compliance with the Archdiocese.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Sugrue
Director of Formation