
◆ Youth Ministry: In Touch ◆

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Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau

Fall 2009

The Youth Conference needs your help!

By Leigh E Sterten

I think most of you know that we begin planning the Diocesan Youth Conference well in advance, typically the September before the event.

The conference for 2010 will take place March 26-28 and will feature Anna Scally as keynote speaker and DJ. Anna was last with us for the 10th anniversary conference, so it has been a while!

In order to make this event the best it can be, I rely on a parish (or two parishes coming together) to serve as the planning team. Typically, we meet twice in the fall and twice in the spring.

Tasks include brainstorming the theme, identifying workshop topics, and preparing morning prayer and the closing liturgy. There are also quite a few on-site tasks, such as introducing the speakers.

Pat Hutcheson, from Branson, offered these words of wisdom on flockNote recently, so I'll let the voice of experience tell you more:

"To add from my 'experience...' The experience of being the planning team is great for the kids. It really promotes community and leadership skills, as well as

helping them to understand more about liturgy. The planning team is also responsible for hanging the banners from the past and current years and any 'set-up' that needs to take place on Friday evening before the conference. Also, to have



someone in place to check-in groups and distribute T-shirts, etc. on Friday night until 7:30-8:00 p.m. and again on Saturday morning. And of course to help with the clean-up after the conference on Sunday. It is a LOT of work, but a truly amazing and rewarding experience." Thanks, Pat!

So, Branson has generously offered to serve once again as planning team, and Poplar Bluff has expressed

an interest but would need another parish to join them.

I need to move pretty quickly on this, so before I accept Branson's offer (they planned it in 2008, so are willing to let another parish experience it), I need to know if there are no other parishes either willing to join Poplar Bluff or take this on for 2010.

Distance is no issue! We have a large diocese, and it is my job to travel it, so do not place that limitation on yourself. Ideally, you would have about eight to 12 youth and several adults willing to commit to the meetings, which I try to keep to 90 minutes.

You will have some "homework," tasks that we will begin at meetings (like preparing a prayer service) that would need to be completed before our next meeting, but no special skills are required. Like Pat said, I will teach the group what they need to know about planning and liturgy.

What do you think? Contact me right away if you are interested or if you just need more information. Or check out the conversation on our flockNote feed: www.flocknote.com/feeds.php?feed=21236¬e=11986.

From the Director . . .

Dear Friends:

Greetings! If you are reading this on the “alabaster” paper on which we have printed it for the past sixteen years, this is truly the end of an era! So, if you have not already made the transition, please go to www.dioscg.org, click on the OYM logo at the bottom of the page, then sign up for our electronic newsletter on our home page in order to continue receiving it.

As mentioned last month, we are also encouraging you to subscribe to our feed on flockNote, the only way that you will continue to receive more timely emails and information from the office. Go to www.flocknote.com/feeds.php?feed=21236 and subscribe today!

As I write, camp is just one day away from concluding this season. I owe a huge debt of thanks to Virginia Sander for getting our storm-ravaged east-side camp in shape! She and so many volunteers went above and beyond... and yet, there is more work to do!

Thanks also to Mandy, our west-side director, for managing five weeks of camp—in a row! If you have heard the news, you know that the fact that we were “flu-free” for eight total weeks of camp is no small feat. And thanks to Scott, who stepped up to cook for all three weeks in Fredericktown. Along with Bobbi in the west, these camp cooks have an enormous task each summer.

We are still planning a survey for you all sometime soon, so stay tuned. And we are attempting to firm up regional meeting dates/trainings, so thanks in advance for replying to those emails. The office is here to serve you, so please call us anytime that we can be of any assistance to you in your ministry with youth. We exist to help you—pure and simple—so as I like to say, please put us to work!

God bless you and your ministry with youth. Peace!

Leigh E Sterten, Director of Youth Ministry

Notre Dame’s ND Vision program

By Leigh E Sterten

This summer I had the privilege of observing both the ND Vision and ND Vision CYM programs, sponsored by the University of Notre Dame. I strongly urge you to consider sending youth to the former and yourself to the latter.

The program for youth has this as its mission: “ND Vision invites young people to explore God’s call in their lives, and to respond to that call with courage and faith through daily choices as well as life-long commitments.”

ND Vision helps youth explore the concept of vocation in its deepest sense, the universal call to holiness, by virtue of baptism. Youth are both chaperoned and led in small groups by Mentors-in-Faith, well-formed and trained Notre Dame students, many of whom study theology.

They also employ Models-in-Faith, men and women from the Christian tradition, who guide the small groups in prayer and learning, people such as Joan of Arc and Maximillian Kolbe.

Young people get to listen to keynote speakers, experience mini-musicals based on Scripture, pray in a variety of ways, and enjoy recreation and free time on Notre Dame’s campus.

In short, it is a great program for helping youth recognize and take to heart the call to serve and lead in the church.

Concurrent to that, ND Vision CYM treats adults to many of the same program elements—sometimes through shared keynotes, many times



separate—to help them strengthen and deepen their faith. As an adult, you are truly free to be an adult all week, never having to worry about the youth.

These five-day conferences were available four weeks this summer; a fifth week is planned for 2010. For more information on both events, please visit vision.nd.edu or call 574.631.7425. I promise it is worth the fundraising, travel, and extra planning to participate in and send youth to these amazing conferences.

RESOURCE PAGE

Welcoming the Stranger Among Us

By Leigh E Sterten



I had an epiphany flying home from Rwanda via the Nairobi (Kenya) airport in 2004. One of my close friends in the group had had her seat assignment changed. She was no longer in an aisle seat, she was now in a center seat, away

from the rest of us in the group. After a brief period of being upset, we stood at the British Airways gate awaiting a gate agent who could fix this problem. I stood with her and waited.

An American man approached us, clipboard in hand. He asked if we would mind if he got his group loaded into the gate area first. We said, “of course” and asked about his group. We had seen people walking around the airport with plastic bags reading “IOM” and wondered what it stood for. He shared that he worked with the International Organization for Migration and had well over 150 men, women, and children who had been displaced from their homes, living in camps, awaiting new lives, some for as many as ten years.

As the agent began to process people through the gate, my friend and I stood back, smiling at the children and adults, watching people who had no more than the clothes on their backs leaving for the U.S., U.K, Europe, and Canada—half a world away—to begin new lives. As tears welled up in our eyes, we looked at each other and said, “It kind of puts it all in perspective, doesn’t it? A middle seat for an eight hour flight doesn’t seem so bad now.”

I carry this lesson, this insight, with me today—we both do and often remember the experience. It is part of who I am and what I believe.

CONTEXT

I write this piece having just celebrated Pentecost and knowing that hundreds will gather for Encuentro at Notre Dame University this weekend. I write having witnessed recent developments in our government regarding its stance toward immigrants from Mexico and Central and South America and the reactions from some of our citizens. And I write having listened to the frustration of youth ministry leaders wondering why Latino youth do not attend their programs and prefer Spanish-speaking groups. All good reasons to reflect on the words of our US Catholic bishops, in their pastoral statement, *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity*, published in 2000. What follows will be a brief overview of some of the key points in this document.

WE ARE CALLED

The bishops issue several calls in their statement, asking us to remember our past as an immigrant church, and calling the entire church to conversion, communion, solidarity, and a new evangelization.

They wrote, “We reject the anti-immigrant stance that has become popular in different parts of our country, and the nativism, ethnocentricity, and racism that continue to reassert themselves in our communities. We are challenged to get beyond ethnic communities living side by side within our own parishes without any connection with each other” (2).

The bishops remind us that even the Holy Family of Nazareth were refugees, epitomizing the plight of so many of our brothers and sisters. Indeed our Jewish Patriarchs were nomads, giving voice to the call to understanding throughout Scripture. Writing in the wake of Pope John Paul II’s Jubilee Day celebration for Migrants and Refugees, the bishops set forth a vision for our

church that calls us to action today.

A CALL TO CONVERSION

Our bishops acknowledge that we as a church, as clergy, as parishioners have failed our recent immigrants many times. “At times their legitimate desire to worship in their own language, according to their own traditions, has not been satisfied. Some have been turned away by pastors or find their petition for a Mass in their own language and share in parish facilities opposed by members of the parish community” (23).

The bishops call on us to remember our own heritage, that most all of our ancestors came here as immigrants. They write of “critics of multiculturalism,” who “want immigrants and other distinctive groups to shed their languages, customs, and identities as quickly as possible, to become Americans ‘just like the rest of us.’ But ‘the rest of us’ are, in fact, a culturally plural society—Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and Muslims; believers and non-believers; Southerners and Northerners; Irish, Italian, and Mexican—proud of our heritages and proud to be Americans, all at once” (24).

The bishops wrote about the competition for resources in parishes and the need for wisdom and charity on the part of all in determining new Mass times and new use of facilities. Just because what we are used to seems like “the norm” does not mean it is the only way to be parish. And they address cultural fears, which they say are difficult to overcome because they “are unacknowledged or unclear” (26). There are fears for those seeing change in their parish communities and fear for those seeing their cultural traditions and language disappear. Education is the key to overcoming ignorance and fear.

A CALL TO COMMUNION

The bishops remind of us the basic human dignity

and worth of all people. Taking away a person’s culture is an extreme assault on that dignity. We are called to promote intercultural communion and to ensure that those charged with ministering among recent immigrants are skilled and equipped.

In 1985, the pope warned against rushing the process of assimilation for immigrants in the name of unity and those words remain ever so true today. Communion means extending hospitality, welcoming, fostering communication, and tending to special needs, such as the needs of young people. Our structures and systems must be evaluated and made more accommodating of multiple cultures living in one diocese, in one parish.

***The Church supports
the human rights of all people
and offers them pastoral care,
education, and social services,
no matter what the
circumstances
of entry into this country.***

US Catholic bishops

TWO CALLS REMAIN

The bishops close first with a call to solidarity, again echoing the frequent words of Pope John Paul II, who reminded us of the need to stand “with those who are suffering, vulnerable, and in need” (51). Indeed, this is the call of the Gospel, of our one Lord.

We must stand against discrimination but also against unfair employment practices, substandard housing and education, and the lack of proper medical attention for those whom society disregards. Simply put, the call to solidarity means overcoming all racism.

Our church is called to what the pope referred to as a “new evangelization,” one in which we are drawn “out of [our] unawareness to a conversion of heart through which [we] are able to offer a genuine and suitable welcome, to share together as brothers and sisters at the same table, and to work side by side to improve the quality of life for society’s most vulnerable measures” (55); this represents the pouring out of Jesus’ Spirit on his followers.

This all-to-brief summary should encourage readers to read and learn more. Visit www.usccb.org/mrs/welcome.shtml for more about this statement and this ministry.

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IN TOUCH . . . WITH RESOURCES

Media Mindfulness: Educating Teens About Faith and Media, Gretchen Hailer, RSHM and Rose Pacatte, FSP. Saint Mary's Press, 2008. \$25.95

Growing up in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Sr. Gretchen was the archdiocesan media consultant, who would “equip” my youth ministry leader with bizarre movies and film strips for our meetings!

I say bizarre because they always made us think and we remembered them. Now “Sister Media” (Gretchen) and “Sister Catechist” (Rose) have teamed up to offer us this “information-packed resource that also shares their sense of fun and exploration” (I’m reading bizarre!).

This book is written for youth ministry leaders, catechists, and high school teachers. If you are any one of those, I highly recommend that you check out this book. I’m sure it’ll be memorable!

Passing on the Faith, Revised: A Radical Model for Youth and Family Ministry, Merton P. Strommen, PhD and Richard A. Hardel, DMin. Saint Mary's Press, 2008. \$24.95

Having long been a fan of the original book, I am very excited to see that it has been revised. The data tell us that focusing on families in youth ministry is crucial.

From the Introduction: “This book is about passing on the faith from generation to generation, throughout the milestones of a person’s life. Faith is created and nurtured by the Holy Spirit through the Gospels. The vision underlying the RADICAL model was developed in light of the theological principle that faith is formed by the Holy Spirit through personal, trusted relationships, often, but not always, in our own homes.”

Idea Corner

by Leigh E Sterten

Here we are again, sorely in need of good ideas to share with the rest of the diocese... Alas, I will do my best!

The issue that I seem to hear about over and over is the use of technology in youth ministry. In fact, I have given workshops on the topic and can tell you that there is a huge continuum of belief and practice on this one.

So, why not begin the year by doing a little survey, finding out which social networking sites your youth use, e.g., Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, etc. What you do with the information is of course totally up to you.

If it were me, I would see how I might be able to have an official youth ministry program presence in those places, in order to stay in touch with young people and also remind them that the church is part of their lives.

What about creating a youth ministry Twitter account and sending a daily prayer to all the youth (a challenge in 140 characters, indeed)? Or a question each evening: When did you see God today?

At the very least, you can provide parents and the parish a glimpse of the pervasiveness of these media in the lives of youth in the parish. It may open a few eyes!

**Hey, we are on Facebook:
Search for
“Springfield
Cape
OYM”
and join our group!**

Friend me while you are there: Leigh Sterten Officeym

Youth Ministry: In Touch is a publication of the Office of Youth Ministry, 601 S Jefferson Ave, Springfield, MO 65806. (417) 866-0841. Email: lsternten@dioscg.org. The purpose of this publication is to serve as a means of communication between the OYM and the youth ministry community in the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. Letters to the editor are welcome; letters must be signed and are published at the discretion of the editor. Ms. Leigh E Sterten, Director and Editor Mrs. Rosie Francka, Administrative Assistant




Keeping In Touch




Important Dates, Programs, Meetings, and Events

<p>SEPTEMBER 7 Labor Day—the unofficial end of summer. School is back in session; welcome to all youth entering youth ministry programs in parishes.</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER 13-16 Leigh is away at a meeting for the NFCYM at St. Meinrad in Indiana.</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER 15 NCYC groups! Due: balance of registration fee, rooming list & hotel deposit, all forms. Contact us with any questions. Thanks!</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER 19 <i>Tentative</i> rescheduling of youth ministry training day at St. Peter in Joplin, 10-4. All regions welcome, lunch will be provided, no charge.</p>	<p>OCTOBER 15 NCYC groups! The balance of your hotel bill is due. Also, last day to cancel (minus \$45) and last day for substitutions (\$25).</p>
<p>OCTOBER 15 Catholic Center staff has day of reflection offsite; offices will be closed for the day.</p>	<p>NOVEMBER 19-21 NCYC with 20,000 teens and adults in Kansas City, MO! Check out the virtual pilgrimage at MyCatholicVoice.com to follow along!</p>	<p>NOVEMBER 26 Thanksgiving holiday, Catholic Center offices are closed. Thanks for serving the youth of our church!</p>	<p>NOVEMBER 27 Second holiday to recover from the Turkey hangover or coma you may experience. Catholic Center offices also closed.</p>	<p>DECEMBER 8 Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, a holy day of obligation. Catholic Center offices closed in observance.</p>
<p>DECEMBER 24-25 Christmas holiday, rejoice in the coming of our Savior! Catholic Center offices are closed.</p>	<p>DECEMBER 31 New Year’s Eve 2009... where did the year go? What youth ministry resolution will you make this year?</p>	<p>JANUARY 1 New Year’s Day and Feast of Mary, Catholic Center offices are closed in observance.</p>	<p>JANUARY 18 Martin Luther King, Jr. day, Catholic Center offices are closed.</p>	<p>JANUARY 25-31 Annual Membership Meeting of the NFCYM in Los Angeles, Leigh will be in attendance and therefore out of the office.</p>

FEBRUARY 7
Superbowl and Souperbowl Sunday! Raise money for your favorite local cause and report it at souperbowl.org.

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What, no regional meetings? We need to get these scheduled, so watch your email for questions on when you are available to meet and please respond. Thanks!