

Archbishop Naumann's Pastoral Visit  
Church of the Holy Cross  
January 17, 2015

### **Conversion**

There are several ways in which Holy Cross encourages conversion of heart. First of all, we provide the opportunity for the sacrament of Penance Wednesday evening and Saturday afternoon, as well as before the Spanish Masses Tuesday evening and Sunday afternoon. Communal Penance services take place in Advent and Lent. Last year, Holy Cross held days of recollection, one in English and one in Spanish, at the beginning of Lent, which were very well attended. These included the sacrament of Penance. During Lent, parishioners participated in weekly Bible Study groups to deepen their faith. These also were very popular. We are planning to repeat these. Throughout the year, there is a Bible Study Sunday mornings which examines the Sunday Mass readings. It has gone very well. The Adoration Chapel enables parishioners to spend time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. This private prayer enriches their experience of the Eucharist, especially on Sunday. This is the focal point of parish life. Parishioners participate well. They sing out, and few leave early.

### **Evangelization**

1. Outreach to new parishioners. The Elizabeth Ann Seaton Women's Circle makes contact with and delivers welcome bags to new families. Plan to establish a "phone buddy" to make ongoing contact throughout the year to invite them & inform them of parish events.
2. Intentional hospitality is a priority that came out of our best practices assessment. We are disseminating this priority to leaders of all parish groups. We understand that people like a personal invitation and we are challenging our parishioners to move out of their comfort zone and work on a sense of inclusion.
3. RCIA Program. We have a strong RCIA team of 8 persons who help Father Mike lead Faith inquiry sessions in the fall and then the Catechuminate program that extends until after Easter. This year we had 2 adult catechumens and 4 candidates.
4. Rediscover Catholicism Book Program. One of our parishioners received a book at his home parish and suggested we do that here. At the Christmas masses, we distributed 1000 wrapped

English books and 500 Spanish books, funds were donated by parishioners. It was very well received and we have plans for various discussion groups after Lent, led by parishioners.

### **Catholic Education**

At Holy Cross Catholic School our Catholic religion is not just a class period for teachers and students that is preceded by Math and followed by English. Our Catholic faith is infused into the very fabric of our school and witnessed in a variety of ways:

Every month teachers and students focus on a virtue, a saint and a Bible verse and apply them to their daily activities. For example, this month the virtue is courage. Teachers may direct their students to act courageously at recess, by standing up for fellow students who are not picked for a team. This process continues at home, as parents are asked to record how their son or daughter is exemplifying the virtue, saint or Bible verse of the month, and report back their success to the teacher.

Teachers at Holy Cross are excited to attend School of Faith class each month, and utilize the Lighthouse CD series to augment their faith formation. This makes them more effective mentors to our 270 young Catholic men and women. The Lighthouse CD series is provided to parents at little or no cost to assist them in the continuation of faith building at home.

Generous donations fill our Guardian Angel fund, which in turn provides tuition assistance to those in need. I know of no student who has left Holy Cross because they could not afford tuition.

Holy Cross Catholic School is in the fifth year of the AdvancEd accreditation process, with our final team visit scheduled for late April. Our three goals for accreditation are to increase Catholicity, increase reading comprehension across the curriculum, and increase outreach to the Latino families of our parish.

Our Religious Education Program serves 110 students and 135 families. We provide two sessions per week, catechizing the children in English, and providing an adult family program in Spanish for parents.

There are 60 young people preparing for Confirmation this April. This includes seventh and eighth grade students from the school and religious education program as well as twelve high school students. The two-year Confirmation program offers five components designed to enrich the faith life of each candidate. They include prayer and worship, catechesis, community life, leadership development, and justice and service. In the second year of the program, candidates create a project to highlight their justice and service experience and present it to the parish at a service fair. All 2<sup>nd</sup> year candidates attend a retreat to further enrich their faith life.

At Holy Cross, our Catholic faith is not a part of what we do, it is who we are!

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## **Stewardship Report**

A Stewardship Committee<sup>i</sup> for the parish was re-established this past summer with a vision that the people of Holy Cross would be able to identify their gifts, receive them gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them lovingly with others and return these gifts to God with increase.

Currently, the committee is working on selecting a gift discernment program that we hope to pilot this spring, which will help people discover what their strengths are and how they might use them in their lives for God's purposes.

We work to communicate the message that stewardship is a way of life through a regular scriptural reflection in the parish bulletin, weekly email messages, the parish website, our annual appeal materials and ministry fair.

In an effort to responsibly develop and manage our material and financial resources, our parish Finance Committee<sup>ii</sup> meets monthly with Fr. Mike to monitor the parish budget and to advise him on financial decisions. Holy Cross recently completed a review by the archdiocesan internal

auditor and we were found to be compliant with archdiocesan accounting practices. Also, we have made an online giving option available for parishioners and sponsored an Estate Planning workshop in collaboration with the Catholic Foundation of Northeast Kansas.

Lastly, we have made significant progress on our capital campaign, *One Faith, One Future*. To date we have pledges and gifts totaling \$1,585,459 and have received \$779,418, keeping us on track to begin the renovation of our worship space this spring.

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<sup>i</sup> Stewardship Committee members include Jane Carrigan, Lisa Hageman, Brenda Holcomb, Pat Sheldon, Ron Stallbaumer, and Tom Yankee. Staff: Robert Bacic.

<sup>ii</sup> Finance Committee members include Linda Arensberg, Mike Cillessen, Patrick Davis, Burton Huerter, Paul Richmond, Bill Reitingen and Ryan Siurek. Staff: Mark Engen, Allison Carney and Robert Bacic.