INDY HOSTS NCEA 2008 CONVENTION!
Crossroads: Where Challenge Meets Opportunity

The Good Word from the Office of Catholic Education is published three times annually and shared with the following groups: Parish Administrators of Catholic Education, Catholic School Administrators, Pastors, Education Commission/Board Presidents and Friends of Catholic Education. Your contributions of ideas for stories and your comments are welcome.

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The Archdiocese of Indianapolis will proudly host the 105th annual Convention of the National Catholic Educational Association, March 25-28, 2008. An estimated 10,000 Catholic educators from across the country will participate in the convention at the Indiana Convention Center as well as many other planned activities around Indianapolis. A delegation from Indianapolis attended this year's convention in Baltimore in April and committees are now in place to plan for the 2008 event which will involve hundreds of local volunteers and Catholic school students. The theme for the convention is: "Crossroads: Where Challenge Meets Opportunity!"

Congratulations!
ICPI GRADUATES

Second year principals attend the Indiana Catholic School Principal Academy (ICPI) at Marian College. Cohort groups are made up of principals from throughout the state of Indiana. Exploring issues common to the educational profession and also unique to the Catholic School principalship, the program is coordinated by Sister Norma Rocklage, OSF.

Congratulations to recent ICPI graduates pictured here in front from left to right: Chad Moeller, Maggie Jackson and Yo McCormick; back: Scott Stewart, Al Holok, Joe Hansen, and Kent Clady.

BLESSED GRADUATES!

This spring over 1300 seniors will graduate from the seven archdiocesan high schools. The graduation rate based on the state’s new four-year cohort method is expected to be around 97 percent, as it was last year. About 94 percent of these students are expected to enter post-secondary education, with the majority attending four-year colleges. We tend to take such statistics for granted in a state where only about 76 percent of all students who enter ninth grade, graduate four years later. We are indeed, blessed!
Eucharistic Adoration at St. Lawrence, Indianapolis

A few eighth grade boys whispered “yesss”. Another girl silently pumped her fist. That’s how eighth graders usually react about extra recess. Except, that I didn’t say we were going outside for recess. I said we were going to Eucharistic Adoration.

Does their reaction surprise you? I am embarrassed to admit that I was surprised. As a youth minister and religion teacher, I might have anticipated their reaction. But, I underestimated how much the students would enjoy and desperately needed adoration. Here are some of their thoughts.

Adoration...

“… is like a doctor. It heals your soul” (Tommy).

“… is like a hummingbird. You have to listen very carefully to hear the hum of its wings” (Brooke).

“… makes me feel forgiven. I talk to Jesus about what’s going on in my life. I feel lighter, stronger and relaxed” (Jessica).

“… is an eye opener. You never know how much stuff you’ve been blessed with” (Cameron).

“… is like a butterfly in a cocoon. It’s a time to change yourself and the world with the help of God” (Patrick).

At St. Lawrence School, Indianapolis, the classes that are responsible for preparing mass in a particular week attend adoration the prior week. Kindergartners spend five minutes in the adoration chapel. Each ascending grade adjusts the time accordingly.

Father John Beitans explained, “Eucharistic Adoration is the time of inner healing, rest, and a special tender oneness with Jesus as God. Young people especially enjoy private prayer because they are often “talked at” by older people.”

Principal Betty Popp commented, “Over the summer our Catholic Identity Committee established goals to strengthen familiarity with the tenets of our faith. Father Beitans prepared a presentation for the staff so they could help the students understand and participate in adoration.”

“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6). Students gravitate towards what is comfortable and familiar. The earlier our youth are exposed to the practices of our Catholic faith, the more likely they are to participate in those practices throughout the course of their lives.

By Jen Wesolowski, Youth Minister and teacher at St. Lawrence Parish, Indianapolis

National Catholic Youth Conference 2007

The National Catholic Youth Conference for High School students will be held November 8-11, 2007 in Columbus, Ohio. The theme is “Discover the Way”. We will be traveling via 54 passenger buses, departing from five different Indiana locations: Indianapolis, New Albany, Richmond, Terre Haute and Columbus (exact locations to be announced). We will be staying in the Sheraton Suites on the north side of Columbus, Ohio. We have a Pre-Rally planned for October 28, 2007 at St. Ambrose in Seymour. Registration forms and more information can be found at www.archindy.org/occe/. Our Programs, Youth Ministry, Downloads or you may contact Kay Scoville at 236-1477, (800)382-9836, ext. 1477 or at kscoville@archindy.org.

Pilgrimage to World Youth Day 2008: Sydney, Australia

Archdiocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministries in the Office of Catholic Education is planning to join the pilgrimage to Sydney, Australia for the World Youth Day celebration. The trip is July 9-22, 2008. Our travel company is Youth In Europe and the cost will be $3,359 per person which includes: roundtrip airfare from Indianapolis, World Youth Day registration fees, ground transportation in Australia, meals, tour guide assistance, budget accommodations, daily Mass and prayer, the World Youth Day Journal and a t-shirt. Registration and information can be found at www.archindy.org/youth or you may contact Kay Scoville at, (800)382-9836, Ext. 1477 or at kscoville@archindy.org.

Jason Evert Addresses Junior High Students on Chastity

A Promise to Keep (APTK) and Youth and Young Adult Ministries (YYAM) in the Office of Catholic Education collaborated with the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend and the Diocese of Lafayette in April to host nationally recognized chastity speaker Jason Evert. Jason spoke to approximately 9,500 students making 15 presentations over a five day period.

Jason spoke to about 7000 of our high school students (grades 9 through 12) in April 2006. He was invited back this year to speak to junior high age students in our archdiocese. Jason uses humor and the Bible to reinforce the many reasons youth should remain chaste. A liturgy was integral to each presentation. Five archdiocesan high schools hosted students from their deaneries and beyond. Principals “moved mountains,” transporting students great distances to hear Jason’s message and to celebrate mass together. Students traveled to Indianapolis from St. Mary, North Vernon; St. Bartholomew, Columbus; St. Rose, Franklin; St. Susanna, Plainfield; and, Seton Catholic in Richmond. The response from students, teachers and parents has been overwhelmingly positive!

As parents, teachers and pastors, we want the best for our youth; but we don’t know how to talk with adolescents about sexuality and chastity. Jason Evert is a gifted presenter who challenges youth to think about what the way they communicate to others in how they dress, and in the music and movies they choose for entertainment. He uses examples and straight talk to illustrate to youth that they are a gift, and they deserved to be cherished, treasured and respected. He clearly says that to be valued and respected by others, a person must first respect oneself (hear a version of his presentation at http://www.catholic.com/seminars/evert.asp).

Thanks to every principal, teacher, parent, pastor, youth minister and parish leader who helped make these events possible. A special thanks to our high school principals and their teams, who worked hard to provide an environment tailored for this event. More important was the Christian spirit and positive energy that junior high students felt when they entered your schools.

By Margaret Hendricks, Program Coordinator of A Promise to Keep.
On March 3-4, 2007, youth from across the archdiocese converged on Our Lady of Providence High School in Clarksville for the Archdiocesan High School Youth Rally. This year’s theme was, “The Fantastic Four and Countless Other Supernatural Heroes!” After focusing on the Holy Trinity at three previous annual rallies, focusing this year’s rally on Mary and the Saints seemed like the next logical progression. The day started off with Keynote Speaker, Matt Smith, from MTV’s reality show, “The Real World.” Smith did a great job integrating faith with storytelling from his experiences as a reality TV star. Using both humor and personal vulnerability, Smith connected well with the youth, providing both an example and a challenge to be counter-cultural in a world that rewards conformity. “Sainthood is something we are called to – it’s not easy, but with God’s grace we can make it!”

After the keynote address, the youth were broken up into class groups for various “Mega-Sessions.” Freshmen and sophomores learned about John Paul II’s “Theology of the Body” and the call to chastity; juniors heard about leadership; and seniors attended a seminar about college and taking their faith into the “real world.”

Stories of Hope: Spring Break Mission Trip to New Orleans

Hours in the car heading south to a warmer climate. Sounds like a typical spring break. That is, until you throw in dry-walling, mowing, demolition and roofing. These were the spring break activities that awaited a group of high school students from the archdiocese.

Everyone has heard stories of the destruction on the Gulf Coast. Many of the youth had been there on previous trips, but the stories we heard from the locals were still sobering. The team I was privileged to work with had the opportunity to meet the owner of the home where we were doing dry-walling.

Hearing her story, we could not help but feel her pain and empathize with her. Her home was in St. Bernard Parish, an area that was hard hit by flood waters. She had lost everything except the clothes on her back and another set of clothes. Six feet of water in her home had destroyed everything.

What struck my team was how she wanted to do things for us – anything! After bringing us sodas and cookies, she wanted to know if there was anything else we needed or wanted – dinner, crawfish, you name it. Here we were, strangers in her home and she invited us to come back to stay with her any time. She told us that computers were not her forte, but she would answer the phone in the scheduling office. She was grateful for our help, but more importantly she wanted to pass it on and help someone else.

Another story that touched the team came from a gentleman who was doing framing on the same house. He had lost everything in the storm, but his response was astonishing. He said he could rebuild. He was young and had resources. There was time in his life to do these things. So, instead of working solely on his home, he was helping others as well.

On this trip, it was reaffirming to hear the stories firsthand from the people who experienced this disaster. I feel fortunate that I was able to work with this superb group of students to help bring hope to these families.

By Jennifer Sherburne, a teacher from St. Luke, Indianapolis, who served as chaperone on the trip.

The morning ended with the celebration of Mass where youth were reminded about the encouragement and strength the Eucharist gives us to become saints here on earth. Sainthood is a process, but it is something we are all called to. They were reminded that sainthood requires both our effort and God’s grace.

Participants had opportunities for the sacrament of reconciliation, as well as for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and a “Hall of Justice,” featuring service opportunities and other information. The day ended with a variety of mini-workshops to help youth grow deeper in their faith, concluding with a great talk by seminarian Peter Marshall, about his experience with Mother Teresa. Marshall reminded youth of their call to be saints – even when they fail. As Mother Teresa said, “We can do no great deeds – only small acts with great love!”

By Brian Kudro, youth minister at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish

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Annual Administrators’ Conference in Brown County

The annual Administrators’ Conference will be held on August 2 and 3, 2007, in Brown County State Park. Over 200 Catholic school principals, parish administrators of religious education and youth ministers gather each August to share, regenerate and reinvigorate their professional ministries. Administrators will have opportunities to attend liturgies, visit vendors and have time to enjoy the beautiful scenery of Brown County in addition to attending workshops and business meetings. This year the keynote address will be given by Tom Zanzig. Tom is a noted Catholic author, editor and consultant. He is internationally recognized as a leader in youth ministry and adolescent religious education.

Mrs. Jones Goes to Finland

Annette Jones, Principal of Immaculate Heart of Mary School (IHM) in Indianapolis, has been selected for the William Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program sponsored by the US Department of State. This summer Annette will spend four to six weeks in Tampere, Finland, “shadowing” the principal of an elementary school. Next year that principal will visit Annette at IHM and shadow her for a similar period of time as she goes about her duties.

TAP Teachers Receive Performance Pay Honored at Reception

Two hundred teachers representing the thirteen schools participating in the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) gathered at the Catholic Center on Tuesday, May 15, to celebrate. The event showcased the fact that the eight schools eligible for performance payouts met or exceeded their expected student achievement growth rates as measured by their ISTEP+ results for the 2005-2006 school year.

Teachers from Scecina Memorial High School, St. Barnabas, St. Jude, St. Lawrence, Central Catholic, Holy Spirit, Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Simon the Apostle recently received $248,000 in payouts based on their student achievement gains.

Other TAP schools in the archdiocese include St. Philip Neri, Holy Cross Central, St. Anthony, Holy Angels and St. Andrew/St. Rita Catholic Academy.

To learn more about TAP, visit their website at www.talentedteachers.org.

CONSUMED Retreat Changes Lives

“Lord, consume my life as you have allowed me to consume yours. Amen.”

It is First Communion season, and I notice that before little kids go up to receive the Eucharist for the first time, they are often so anxious to receive Jesus, they can barely sit still. Then, as I received the Body and Blood, I realized that after so many years, it had become a habit. I know now that I have seen it as an obligation rather than a privilege of immense magnitude. The archdiocesan CONSUMED Retreat in April forever renewed my experience of Christ as I receive Him every week. My experience was truly life-changing. I left CONSUMED a completely different person than when I arrived.

During the few short days that I was there, I found what it meant to fully engage Christ. Through constant adoration I felt the everlasting compassion that God gives to us regardless of how many times we disobey him. Not only did I become closer to Christ, I also felt that I became part of Christ. To become fully engaged in Christ, I must become Christ to the world even though the world tells me otherwise.

Christ doesn’t come to us only through the Eucharist; he comes to us through people as well. As I was listening to one of several witness talks, I caught myself asking questions about Jesus and what His crucifixion really meant to us as future Christians. Shortly after that particular talk, I spoke to one of several seminarians in attendance about Jesus’ death. I left the conversation with a much bigger light on what it meant for Jesus to die on the cross for us.

In what seemed to be an incredibly short time, I truly found what it means to be a Christian. “Consumed,” according to Webster’s Dictionary means “to engage fully.” This is the easiest way I can describe an experience like CONSUMED. Whether it was through Christ personally, or through one of his disciples there, I came to an immensely different understanding of Christ.

By Kevin Schmidt, a Senior at Tri-West High School and a parishioner at St. Malachy Parish, Brownsburg

The Good Word
Progress Matters: Why Value-Added?

It is vital that we understand why both student proficiency and progress are important. The first step is to be able to look at student progress over time and know how it relates to student proficiency. For years, archdiocesan schools have been able to say with a great deal of pride that our students achieve at high levels of proficiency on the Indiana Statewide Test of Educational Progress (ISTEP). ISTEP is a measure of students’ ability to demonstrate that they have mastered basic Indiana Academic Standards. The chart below shows the percentage of students passing both the English/language arts and mathematics assessments at grades three through ten for 2006-07.

The chart shows trajectories of average percentages of students passing the English/language arts and mathematics sections for the archdiocese (13,186 students), non-public schools (30,526 students), and public schools (604,694 students). The required level of proficiency on the ISTEP for No Child Left Behind is a 65 percent passing rate. Overall, this chart raises concern about the lack of growth at the upper grades, yet the archdiocese can be very pleased with the increase in student proficiency from third through tenth grade. A statement often made about our Catholic schools when looking only at proficiency is that given the students we receive and parent support we get—we should expect results like those presented above.

The graphic below illustrates why we need to look at both Proficiency and Progress and highlights the differences between the two:

Proficiency
• Measures a student's achievement at a single point in time
• Relates to a student's family background
• Compares achievement to a standard
• Critical to a student's post-secondary opportunities

Progress
• Measures a student's progress between two points in time
• Not related to a student's family background
• Compares students' performance to their own prior performance
• Critical to ensuring a student's future academic success

For the last five years, the archdiocese has compared ISTEP results from year to year using the Value-Added Model developed by Sanders and now administered by the SAS® EVAAS® Institute in North Carolina. The assumption of this model is that for a student to show progress, the student must achieve a “gain score” that is greater than one-year’s growth. This can be viewed as the impact that the school or the classroom teacher has made upon improving individual student growth. A more detailed explanation of this effect can be found in an article in Momentum, April/May 2007, “Teacher Impact on Student Proficiency and Growth” (see box above). Now that we have a method to demonstrate that our schools make a difference in improving student basic skills (Indiana Academic Standards), we must expand these efforts into higher order skills and other subject areas.

Momentum Article on Value-Added Assessment

The April-May 2007 issue of Momentum, the Official Journal of the National Catholic Educational Association, features an article on “value-added assessment” entitled “Teacher Impact on Student Proficiency and Growth.” It was authored by members of the Catholic Schools Team, Office of Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Indianapolis. The co-authors are: Dr. Ron Costello, Barbara Shuey, Peggy Elson and Kathy Mears. The article has been reprinted with permission and is posted in Items of Interest on the OCE Website, www.archindy.org/oce. Color hard copies are available from OCE upon request.
Dear Friends,

It seems as only yesterday that program year 2006-07 officially began, and though ministry work never truly ends, it does appear as though it is winding down.

What a good year it was! Youth Rallies and Retreats, Project EXCEED’s continued successes, ever increasing catechetical events and evangelizing moments all blended with increased efforts in child development and youth athletic and cultural activities. Kudos to all leaders who executed these tremendous successes.

Oh yes, there were challenges, too. But, finding solutions are viewed as opportunities for 2007-08.

Some of you will leave us this year – Pastors, Administrators, Teachers and Catechists – and, you will be missed. I thank all of you for your endless hours of dedication and service to advancing the educational ministry of the archdiocese. May God bless you!

As we seek some R&R during the summertime, we also gear up to face one of the most exciting opportunities for our archdiocese. We are hosting the NCEA National Convention with the theme: “Crossroads: Where Challenge Meets Opportunity,” in March of 2008. Let us all join together to make this the very best educational event to ever be held! May God continue to bless our work.

God bless,

Mickey

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