

**Disciples in Mission - Cluster 21 Reflection Day –
June 14, 2008 – 9am-12noon - Cathedral Guild Hall**

People who attended the Day of Recollection from Cluster 21 – ** 32 people

- *Priests:* Fr. Kevin Martin, Msgr. Paul Stefanko
- *Religious:* Sr. Theresa Rand, RSM, Sr. Juliette Michaud, RSR
- *Sacred Heart – St. Dominic:* Lori Arsenault, Ann Boyle
- *Cathedral:* Mary Ibrahim, Dianne Fazio, Betty Cyr, Elaine Thornton, Dorothy Berti, Thom Novak, Peter Lancia, Molly Harvey, Anne Manganello, Vicky Thompson, Bernadette Feldbauer, Ralph Bolduc, Carol McLaughlin, Donna Lebel, Laurie Larou, Kathleen Ferrante, Brad Enna, Gary
- *St. Peter's:* Debra and Vic Pizzuto, Salvatore Bonetti, Mary Ann Bonetti, Sal Raia, Maria Douglass, Lucy Burke, Frank Gianattasio

**There were three or four more people who attended, but they did not leave their names.

**No one from St. Christopher or St. Louis was there.

- "Our reflection day was both encouraging and enriching; as was the whole experience of *Disciples in Mission!*"

We shared some thoughts concerning the work of Evangelization and also offered some reflections based on the U.S. Bishops' document, *Go and Make Disciples*, c. 2002

Goal I: To bring about in all Catholics such an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus, they freely share it with others

From the *Go and Make Disciples'* document:

- This goal calls Catholics to continue to hear the Good News at ever-deeper levels.
- The call to holiness, given to every Catholic through baptism, consecrates each one to God and to the service of the kingdom.
- This deepening of faith, in holiness, fosters a desire to involve others in that faith, until God will be "all in all" in a transformed world.
- The strategy of this goal is to so deepen the sense of Scripture and sacrament that Catholics will pray more fully and, with a greater understanding of Christ's call, live as disciples at home, at work, and in today's many cultural settings. This goal also seeks a greater openness to physical, mental, and cultural diversity among Catholics.

This goal entails the following 13 objectives, suggested strategies:

**** *Small Group Feedback from Cluster 21 groups is listed after possible strategies***

91. To foster an experience of conversion and renewal in the heart of every believer, leading to a more active living of Catholic life

Possible Strategies:

- Retreats; parish renewals; RENEW; Cursillo; involvement in the Charismatic movement; youth encounter weekends; marriage encounter; and other programs of renewal and conversion.

92. To foster an experience of conversion and renewal in every parish

Possible Strategies:

- Expanded implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA);

- Wider invitation for Catholics to serve as RCIA sponsors; and parish involvement in ministries of reconciliation.

GROUP 1 FEEDBACK: Group One (Lucy, Sr. Juliette, Debra, Molly, Peter, Thom).

- The group felt that the thoughts and recommendations would be the same for both topics # 91 and #92. Below are bullet comments:

Topics and content of material that will assist the experience (conversion and renewal):

- Catechism - Examples
 - Reconciliation/Confession (forms of, importance of use, grace, gift)
 - Eucharist (forms of, grace, Communion, requirements or gift)
- Bible study
 - Historical, cultural, Catholic interpretations vs. others, covenant
- RCIA
- Picnics and other social gatherings where themes are Catholic fellowship (provides informal opportunities for conversion and renewal). The picnic was discussed at some length as a "nice idea" but it became very clear at the end that it was not good since there is a significant amount of work by a few individuals, where the event can be totally cancelled due to weather.

Better ways to promote the DM sessions:

- Stimulate interest by providing:
 - Sample materials and syllabus so people can "see" what will be covered
 - Within Homilies – thought the catechism could be stated more directly at times (e.g., Confession is a gift and an obligation).
 - Before Mass, provide overviews and opinions by those who will present/facilitate or those who have participated (what their experience was)
 - Could include materials in the bulletins (e.g., *Disciples in Mission* material was good!)
 - Use fellowship within various Parish events – e.g., coffee and cookies, parents waiting for their kids release from Faith Formation

Make it easier for people to attend

- The flexible, multiple offering of time and location for Disciples in Mission was provided as a good example.
- I felt that it could be a reasonable compromise to offer these programs at one location (e.g., Guild Hall) but on several day/times (e.g, Tue PM, Thu PM, and Sat AM).
- Use of Guild Hall more came up a few times in that by using it more, people feel comfortable meeting at a common "parish" location and form bonds and develop fellowship

Leadership and Helping Hands

- We did not get to talk about this critical element. I do feel there is enthusiasm "to do" something – but how to focus the energy to action and leadership and support roles?

93. To foster an appreciation of God's Word in the lives of all Catholics

GROUP 2 FEEDBACK: (Lori, Mary, Bernadette, Frank, Ralph, Carol)

- More frequent individual study of the Bible
- Further study as a group sharing
- More thorough spiritual studies

Points that were made:

- Age demographics - how we focus toward the kids is important. They are our future. In conversations, kids bring up the subject and talk about it. They come with different concepts of

God... God "out there." Feeling the need to instill in our kids that God is with us, and try to get them back to a strong faith.

- Becoming a cluster is partly to get our act together to be more cohesive, by staying close to God.
- Discussing these concepts as a group to explore what it means.
- We are more intelligent as a group.
- People came into Disciples in Mission group not having read the Bible. We were never taught to do that, maybe so that we wouldn't misinterpret it.
- Why really weren't we taught to be Bible readers?
- The Bible is easier to read than it used to be, because of modern translations.
- Starting with the individual, we need to become more natural with it.
- Catholics have an organic desire for the Word. Maybe because we weren't taught, we choose to learn and share.
- Sharing how one uses a piece of Scripture has an impact on others.
- Sharing – the creative part of a larger group bring new things to the table.
- Coming back to the source
- Different versions of the Bible.
- The best way to read the Bible is as a group – John Bernier
- Different translations are good

How can we sponsor some of these opportunities?

- More small group study. Good for getting to know others by mixing around.
- Continuation of what we did in Disciples in Mission
- Just do it!
- Encourage spin-offs from the group as people become better group leaders.
- "Catholics can always come home"
- CCD habits – need direction from parents
- "Adopt" a friend's child who is asking questions.

94. To make the evangelizing dimension of Sunday Eucharist more explicit

Possible Strategies:

- Greeting and welcoming of people; creation of a greater sense of prayer during Mass; more clear calling to worshipers to conversion and renewal; fostering of a sense of community among parish members; outreach to visitors and newcomers at Sunday Mass; accessibility to worship for everyone; and development of ways to incorporate new and mobile parishioners through ritual and public acknowledgment.

GROUP 2 FEEDBACK:

1. Greeting
2. Greater sense of the Eucharist
3. Conversion
4. Community
5. Outreach to visitors

Points that were made:

- Greeters make a huge difference.
- The priest asking for people who are from away, and inviting them to stand
- Make personal contact with those who seem new or not involved
- Outreach to strangers
- Fostering a sense of community
- Reasons and reminders, that's what Mass is all about.

- Being involved with the Church
- Strength of community during hard times, and in times of need, especially for care givers.
- Emotional and spiritual support
- Speaking to others in church
- The "hat" story
- "God's frozen people" syndrome – need to warm up.
- The way the Eucharist is served by the minister is important
- Listen to what we are saying as a community as one voice
- Mass is a prayer from beginning to end

95. To foster an appreciation of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist and of all the sacraments, the sacred signs of our Catholic life

Possible Strategies:

- Spirit-filled celebrations of the liturgy; sacramental preparation programs; encouragement of Eucharistic devotions and adoration; careful liturgical planning and ceremonial practice; and centering of renewal themes and activities on the sacraments.

GROUP 3 FEEDBACK: (Dorothy, Kathleen, MaryAnn Bonetti, Sal Bonetti, Maria)

- Favorable comments concerning religious ceremonies at Cathedral – Baptisms, Easter Triduum, Christmas liturgies – have been moving and wonderful experiences for many

96. To foster a greater appreciation of the power of God's Word in our worship

Possible Strategies:

- Ongoing homiletic training for clergy and those called to preach; prayerful preparation of the homily; shared preparation of the Sunday homily; enhanced preparation of lectors; and cultivation of reverence toward the liturgical books that contain the Sacred Scriptures.

GROUP 3 FEEDBACK:

- Studying and reading the Sunday readings for upcoming Masses very helpful to appreciate and understand the readings better
- Importance of time for prayer and meditation
- Some people feel strong consolation from God at Eucharist – peace, presence and support

97. To foster an even deeper sense of prayer among our Catholic people

Possible Strategies:

- Daily schedule of prayer for every Catholic; wider utilization of the Liturgy of the Hours and other common prayer among Catholics; prayer groups; retreat experiences; training in methods of meditation and contemplation; and publication of more accessible devotional reading.

GROUP 4 FEEDBACK: (Elaine, Anne, Vicky, Betty, Sr. Theresa)

- Instead of having prayer occasions once or twice a year as a group, try implementing on a monthly basis
- Make time for the Liturgy of the Hours weekly to start with, perhaps at St. Peter's before or after the morning Mass
- Have more retreats
- Publicize prayer events (i.e. Rosary) already in place via the bulletin or Cluster 21 newsletter

98. To foster a renewed understanding of the faith among Catholics

Possible Strategies:

- New methods of adult education that utilize various modern media and relate to Catholics' involvement in parish worship and service; formulation of catechetical materials in clear, easy-to-grasp language; revision of existing catechetical materials to facilitate evangelization and to adapt the Catechism of the Catholic Church to the circumstances of the United States; development of home and family-based catechetical techniques; and involvement of directors of religious education in the evangelization planning of the parish and of evangelization teams in catechetical planning.

GROUP 4 FEEDBACK:

- Continue Disciples in Mission events
- Develop our own catechetical materials
- Focus on those committed Catholics and trust that they will go forth and evangelize
- Publish articles related to our faith in the Cluster 21 newsletter
- Revamp the parish bulletin and encourage readership
- Continue with homilies related to the Scripture readings and our faith
- Develop home or family-based methods of passing along the faith and Church teachings
- Publicize events of the Cluster and Parishes more effectively
- More focused Bible studies

99. To foster a sense of discipleship among Catholic adults and children

Possible Strategies:

- Development of parochial and religious education curricula on the themes of discipleship with concentration on evangelization; training for discipleship; prayer events in parishes and larger Catholic organizations; and wider involvement in ministry and service as part of the stewardship of gifts that God gives the Church.

GROUP 5 FEEDBACK: (Msgr. Paul, Laurie, Donna, Victor)

The group started out by sharing what discipleship really means.

- Responses were: How we live our lives to be an example to others.
- That our lives are witness enough that others would want to become disciples and follow our lead.
- Leaders of the church need to be educated, not only in our mind but in our heart and become disciples and evangelists to children and adults.
- Study what it really means to be Catholic. Make sure all our curricula uphold the magisterial teaching of the Catholic Church.
- As leaders of the church we need to be educated enough to be able to evangelize to children and adults.

100. To foster active and personal religious experience through participation in small-group and other communal experiences in which the Good News is shared, experienced, and applied to daily life

Possible Strategies:

- Development of prayer groups; parish cultivation of smaller groupings for prayer, spiritual growth, and apostolic efforts; prayer associations within parishes and large Catholic organizations; and retreat experiences.

GROUP 5 FEEDBACK:

- Continue Disciples in Mission and offer other opportunities for people to come together
- Seek opportunities to being together some groups such as RCIA for adults and children.
- Adult programs such as Echoes of Faith or any other good one. Echoes of Faith teaches the four pillars of the Catholic Church and what makes us different from other faiths.
- The sacraments and what we believe about the seven sacraments.
- Bible study, Prayer groups, Good liturgies, Catholic Can Always Come Home, Retreats, etc.
- Unless we give opportunities for learning and experiencing that can help lead children and adults to real conversion, anything that is done or said in any of our programs will make very little difference.
 - Ways to do this:
 - Plant seeds with the way you present and share faith within the classes and groups that meet.
 - Be an example of God's unconditional love.
 - Retreats and adult education.
 - Prayer, bible study.
 - Good liturgies.

101. To foster a sense of the domestic church within households in which families, individuals, and groups reside**Possible Strategies:**

- Cultivation of daily prayer and times of prayer in the home; establishment of times of family sharing; home-based rituals shaped by the liturgical year; formation of groups of parents, families, and households to develop spirituality in the home; and adaptation of new and meaningful faith practices within the family in view of the decline of family prayer.

GROUP 6 FEEDBACK: (Ann, Brad, Dianne, Gary, Sal Raia, Fr. Kevin)

- Our group discussed the importance of prayer together --first of all as a couple, then as a family, as well as maintaining a rich prayer time as a single person.
- COUPLES/FAMILY Participants shared their commitment to praying as a couple.
 - One member prays with his wife daily (having had family prayer when the kids were home). He says Diving Mercy prayer wherever he is in the afternoon.
 - At home, whatever company happens to be there is expected to sit with them during Divine Mercy, as well as to respect grace being said before meals.
 - Another member shared the pleasure of having arrived at praying together as husband and wife first thing in the morning.
 - Father Kevin recalled a couple he counseled who are together to this day after having gone through a rough time, through which they were encouraged to hold daily prayer together.
 - Children imitate actions more than words, so the parents are key to modeling prayer life.
- SINGLE people in our group expressed the challenge of finding prayer time with others if they're not in a religious life.
 - One single person enjoys doing the Divine readings: Liturgy of the Hours.
 - The Hour of Power at St Piux is one opportunity for singles to join with others in prayer.
 - Father Kevin said that Leon, Cathedral's new music director, has expressed interest in starting Vespers.
- DAILY MASS It was agreed that daily Mass enriches our prayer life.

102. To promote and develop a spirituality for the workplace**Possible Strategies:**

- Encouragement of reflection on the transforming presence of God in the workplace; acknowledgment of workers as agents of God's presence in the workplace; and encouragement of the formation of Catholic and other Christian groups and organizations that foster values in the workplace.

GROUP 6 FEEDBACK:

- We admit that it is difficult and challenging to share our faith in the workplace
- Perhaps offer reflections about the spirituality of workers and the dignity of work – Social Teaching of the Church – Pope John Paul II was a major force in promoting the dignity of work, of workers, and encourage lay people to be a leaven in society
- How we react to challenge and conflict in the workplace reflects our Christianity by example even when it's not appropriate to "preach with words".
- St. Francis of Assisi said to "preach often, and to use words when necessary."
- St. Anthony of Padua also advocated action over words.
- One member mentioned deliberately seeking out a work environment where Judao/Christian belief is respected; she found that being in a hostile workplace can be stressful when you walk on eggs to avoid mention of faith in casual conversation.
- Two members were fortunate enough to be in a religious order without such conflict.

103. To foster greater appreciation of cultural and ethnic spirituality

Possible Strategies:

- Celebration of the spiritual diversity of the different cultures that make up the Church in the United States; acknowledgment of and respect for various forms of personal piety; celebration of cultural traditions; and encouragement of a variety of musical and cultural expressions.

GROUP 6 FEEDBACK:

- We are blessed in our cluster to have diverse cultures represented – over 35 nationalities collectively, perhaps more in our Portland Cluster parishes – the 10am Mass at Cathedral is a "microcosm of the world" – strong Hispanic presence at SH/SD; cultural experiences of the Italians at SP, of the Polish folks at St. Louis; St. Christopher's has a blend of folks as well
- We agreed that we're fortunate to have a rich diversity of culture and race in our parishes. St Louis liturgy in Polish, St. Peter's has an Italian tradition, Sacred Heart liturgy in Spanish and Cathedral with the African and Middle Eastern –all enrich our cluster and our Diocese.
- We have had (First Eucharist/Confirmation) as a cluster which incorporated elements from many cultures...improve upon that for the future – perhaps we could have other celebrations in the future
- PARISH VS CLUSTER
 - We supported promoting opportunities by the cluster while maintaining the uniqueness of each parish.
 - We support such activities as Confirmation and First Eucharist as a cluster.
 - The cluster will need to address energy costs as an issue for daily Mass in each parish. We hope to resolve this while satisfying the needs of those who attend daily Mass.
 - *A couple of people felt that people would sacrifice heat and add happily don extra layers in winter to maintain their neighborhood daily Mass. Since many are elderly and don't walk or drive far, the closing of even one parish's daily Mass would be quite devastating and a great loss.*
 - *We're fortunate in Portland to have many options: 7am, 8am, 12:15, 5:15pm and 6:30pm most days. Many friends and I take advantage of that flexibility to attend Mass as it fits into our work and family schedules during the week.*