



InFormation

News for Pastoral Planners and Those Making the Plan a Reality

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St. Francis de Sales Church serving the people of Lenni Pa. for over a hundred years

HOW CAN WE BETTER SERVE THE NEEDS OF OUR PARISHIONERS?

The first Question should be who are our Parishioners? Secondly what are their needs? We went out into the archdiocese and found some rather interesting answers. For example at Saint Francis de Sales in Lenni a large number of their parishioners are shut-ins. Within the parish boundaries are quite a few institutions: a hospital, a 900 bed geriatric center (one of the largest in the US) and 4 assisted living facilities plus a variable amount of home bound parishioners, creating a need for Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist.



Charles "Bud" Houpt Coordinates the Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist program at St. Francis

According to Bud Houpt who coordinates this ministry, They had about a dozen home bound parishioners 22 years ago and they installed about 12 ministers to drive to homes and distribute Holy Communion. Eventually one of the shut-ins was admitted to the county nursing home. The family asked if it would be possible to take the Eucharist there. When they did, other Catholics at the home asked to receive. Today 9 Ministers see about 350 Catholics at that home by way of 2 Eucharistic services and bedside visits every Sunday.

When other institutions in the parish heard of the Eucharistic Ministry they asked to be included in the Sunday visits. Houpt says "Today we have 52 Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist and on Sunday after the 8:30

Mass 15 ministers go out to our shut-ins and distribute Holy Communion by way of 5 Eucharistic services and 300 bedside visits.

An individual minister may serve anywhere from four to sixty communicants. This ministry is the largest in the parish and requires a major commitment. We still have



Bldg. 8 at Fair Acres, one of the many buildings on the 210 acre campus in Delaware County, Pa.

a few who were there from the very beginning and most agree that it is one of the most difficult things they do but it is the most rewarding thing they do! We are always looking for new people to answer the call and God always provides." Bud Houpt tells us, that at least once a month the pastor visits all of the facilities in our Parish to celebrate Mass, hear confessions and anoint the sick.

We spoke to the Pastor at St. Francis Fr. Michael Colagreco to get his perspective of this large ministry. **Cont. Page 4-**

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The InFormation Newsletter is published by:
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for the use of Parish Pastoral Planners and those who implement those plans.

Suggestions for future articles should be directed to
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These suggestions are encouraged and welcomed



OLD FOLKS

A glance at the spring issue of The American Scholar: What society owes the older generations

Some interest groups accuse older Americans of taking too large a share of public resources and thereby impoverishing young people, but such a view is inaccurate and the proposals that often proceed from it, like rationing health care, are unethical, says Amitai Etzioni, a professor of international affairs at George Washington University.

The poverty rate for senior citizens in the United States is higher than that in any other developed nation, and all such nations provide more-extensive benefits to their older populations, he says. "Our old people are clearly not living large at the expense of the rest of the society," he writes.

Collectively older people also transfer huge sums of private money to younger generations, he says, through direct support and by leaving their accumulated wealth to

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OLD FOLKS *continued*

heirs or foundations rather than spending it, And older people contribute much of value that cannot be measured in currency, he says. "Many older people can give love, solace, and comfort as well as or better than younger folks," he writes. "Other societies place great value on the wisdom and authority that elders provide. These qualities are, as the commercial says, priceless."

But regardless of what older people can contribute to society, they are owed at least the modest standard of living and health care that they have been promised throughout their lives, he says. To provide anything less would be to break the societal covenant and undermine all generations' faith in society, according to Etzione.

Additionally, arguments that pit the old against the young often ignore that the two groups have much in common, in contrast with those in middle-age groups. A fair analysis that takes into account the vulnerability of both the old and the young might call for allotting more public resources to both groups.

Besides, Etzione says, "American society is already overburdened with conflicts between those who do not think or look alike and hardly needs another one."

The article, "End Game," is not online. Information about the journal is available at <http://www.pbk.org/pubs/amscholar.htm>
--Kellie Bartlet Copyright 2005 by The Chronicle of Higher Education

Catholics Stay Catholic: 81% of Catholics Who Were 16 in 1975 Say They Are Catholic Today.

According to: Dean Hoge and Thomas O'Connor. in *Denominational Identity From Age Sixteen to Age Thirty-eight*, Sociology of Religion Vol 65 no. 1 Spring 2004, 77. A sample of suburban Baptist, Catholic, and Methodist youth in Maryland first studied in 1975 at an average age of 16 were re-interviewed by researchers when they were 38 years old. At age 38, the persons raised Catholic were significantly stronger in denominational loyalty than the others. Fewer of the original Catholics sampled had switched to another denomination as apposed to the Baptists and Methodists that were sampled.

In addition to being Catholic when they were 16, the other significant predictors of denominational loyalty were the father's educational level. The researchers hypothesized that the weaker identity with Catholicism by persons whose fathers' were well educated probably was the result of the family culture when the person was a child. Another predictor was whether they liked participating in Church youth programs. It is important that *liking* the youth program had a greater effect than the amount of participation. The number of years of Sunday school or Catholic school did not predict denominational loyalty 16 years later. Neither did special religious instruction prior to confirmation.

The only significant predictor of denominational switching (e.g. Catholic to Unitarian) was interfaith marriage. Of those who switched, 33% reported being influenced by their spouse; 19% gave spiritual reasons ("the Lord led me"); 19% gave theological or belief oriented responses ("looking for a church that shared my beliefs"); 12 percent wanted to belong to a recognizable community ("The Catholic faith offered a sense of belonging"); 7% described family reasons ("better children's program") and 11% gave other reasons.

The 6.9 hours of sleep Americans averaged in 2002 pales in comparison with the 9.0 hours we averaged in 1910.



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Trivia Box

Are there a lot of senior citizens in the Archdiocese?
For the answer go to Page 4 lower right corner.
How many are my age?
For that answer go to the web page shown on page 4

Has your parish or Cluster entered into a Planning Process?

Do you need a professional Facilitator?
The office of Research and Planning maintains a list of trained and experienced Resource people.

Contact us at: *The Archdiocese of Philadelphia*
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Phila, Pa 19103

tn#215-587-3545 E-mail orp@adphila.org

A Prayer for the Holy Spirit to Inspire a Meeting

Leader: Spirit of the living God, come and breathe your life anew. Ignite the talents and gifts of all assembled here.

All: Come. Stir up our hearts!

Leader: Open our eyes to see the creative possibilities of every situation.

All: Come. Stir up our hearts!

Leader: Let us pray together.

All: Come, Holy Spirit of the living God, Be with us here today as we seek the renewal of your gifts to us. Refresh and renew us from your springs of living water. Pray in us that we may be one with you and each other. Speak to us, as each heart needs to hear. Act in us for the life of our Church and our world. Holy Spirit, dwell in us that your light may shine through us, And that in our hearts you may find your home

Reading: The Spirit generates unity among us. No act of faith can be made, no good work accomplished without the sustaining power of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of unity. No one is less or better. All the lines of separation and status have been erased. One day at a meeting in an upper room a group of ordinary people were touched by the flame of the Spirit and a transformation took place as they began out of courage, grace, jubilation, tenacity and all sorts of wonderful virtues that had lain dormant inside them. What occurred that day could very well occur today. The Spirit may be looking to us to be the flame to make it happen. Through our words, our kindness our love could effect a Pentecost in someone else.

Based on "That we May Have Life" (IHM Sisters, Scranton)

Leader: Jesus, giver of all good things, we stand with confidence, bearing your promise in our lives, and so we ask for the vision to see things we miss because our earthly eyes are so limited

All: Gracious God, give us vision

Leader: For the gifts of conviction to live radically the Gospel you have preached to us.

All: Gracious God, give us your conviction.

Leader: For the gift of servant hood, to empty ourselves as you did, to be willing to bend low, to wash feet, to heal wounds.

All: Gracious God, give us your spirit of being a servant.

Leader: For the gift of hope to stand tall with all of creation, to wait in faith for rebirth, for growth, for completion.

All: Gracious God, give us your hope.

Leader: For the gift of reverence to be gentle with the mystery of each person's uniqueness, to stand on holy ground and acknowledge the value of all you have created

All: Gracious God, give us your reverence.

Leader: Finally, we pray for the grace to recognize your gifts, when they are given, to own them, to claim them, to acknowledge them as ours to give away.

All: Gracious God, give us your own power of recognition.

Leader: Gathering these prayers together and presenting them to God who is in our midst, let us pray together:

All: Holy Spirit of the living God, rest as a tongue of fire on each of us. Give us new understanding as we hear each other speak, and fill us with new energy Give us courage to speak of hope, of challenge, of grace and blessing. Be the power in our words, the spark of life that we share, Give us the strength and grace to live lives worthy of the bond of friendship to which you have called us. May your fire set our hearts aflame! Amen



**HOW CAN WE
BETTER SERVE THE
NEEDS OF OUR
PARISHIONERS?**

....Continued from page 1

He is of course on call to these institutions



*Father Michael
Colagreco
Pastor St. Francis
de sales parish
Lenni Pa*

24/7 and is considered their Catholic Chaplain. Fr. Colagreco when unavailable does get help from Fr. Malle a cluster assigned priest . Father went on to say, that when he arrived at St. Francis and celebrated his first 8:30 Mass, He was overwhelmed at all the pyxes on the alter. So many people

and Hosts going out into the parish. A Ministry this large must require a lot of supervision. All these facilities, 52 Extraordinary Eucharistic ministers and a huge ever changing number of communicants must be an administrative nightmare. However , this ministry has run smoothly under the care of Bud Houpt for many years, it is easy to see that God has blessed him with the ability to run the scheduling and training of these fifty some parishioners, who by the way are very dedicated and compassionate themselves. This is a great example of Clergy and Laity working hand-in-hand to meet the needs of the parish.

Father also said ,that a lot of the people we see at these facilities only ever interact with professional staff but our folks are there to serve them voluntarily and to bring the Lord to them. I know they are touched. I'm impressed that these Eucharistic Ministers are not just older folks but are of all age groups. They give up their Sunday mornings to serve the needs of others.

As I visit these places it's wonderful to see our calendars , Church bulletins, our services and Mass schedules posted in these facilities We have a real presence in these homes. The staff are very helpful and friendly plus they recognize us and are very cordial. I know our people are having a positive affect everywhere they go.

We would like to thank Father Colagreco and Bud Houpt for sharing their story with us. We wish them Gods continued blessing on such an important mission.

Ron Lill Editor

**GARBAGE IN
GARBAGE OUT!
WHO'S RESPONSIBLE
FOR GOOD
INFORMATION?**



Garbage In Garbage Out: Whose Responsible for Good Information?

When information processing first moved from index cards in file boxes and numbers penned in a large green book to computers, a new term was christened in the English language, GIGO, or garbage in garbage out. The idea behind GIGO was that information you get out of a database is only as good as the data you put into it.

Since computers are very organized and very fast but very dumb it is possible to fool computer based data processing systems into believing things are happening that really aren't. Some times this is done accidentally as when someone types in 1000 when they really mean to type 100. Sometimes it is done thoughtlessly as when someone reports they have 500 parishioners; 350 married, 200 single and 50 widowed. Sometimes it is done intentionally as when someone reports that they counted the number of people attending Sunday Mass and it was 1,000 when they had not counted and really had no idea of how many people were really there. If, in fact, the number was 950, it may seem insignificant and not worth the trouble. The problem in this last case is that a difference of just 50 between what is actual and what is reported for every parish in the Archdiocese (275 parishes) is over 13,000; a number that can be significant.

In order to minimize GIGO, data that is reported and entered into a database is cleaned and verified. Systems are set up to compare the reported data against the same answers from previous years. Data is also compared to other related answers. For example, if there are 200 participants in an adult religious education program, it's probably not possible that zero adult

religious education programs were offered.

The system of checking begins with the data entry, then people familiar with the data and the history of the parish review the data to estimate if the answer provided could be accurate. If we can't come up with a reasonable explanation for what appears to be inaccurate data, we contact the parish using a fax. The Pastor or someone he designates can quickly check and verify the questionable data when it is convenient and fax it right back. We have eliminated interrupting other important work to verify data or leaving multiple telephone messages when people are unavailable.

As a result of the conscientious reporting of every parish and our system of cleaning and verifying data, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia has one of the best diocesan information systems in the country. Thanks to the hundreds of women and men in parish and archdiocesan offices who conscientiously maintain the files, count the data, carefully enter the numbers on the survey instruments, enter the data into the computer, clean and verify the final numbers, and design, prepare and deliver the reports, our parishes and archdiocesan offices have very accurate and timely information to place in the service of accomplishing the mission of the Church. If you're one of them, congratulations on your excellent work each and every year.

Submitted by the office of Research and Planning

Trivia answer

Go To:

<http://archphila.org/pastplan/Census3/Archreport3.pdf>