



InFormation

News for Pastoral Planners and Those Making the Plan a Reality

Breaking News

The InFormation goes Electronic

CongratulationsGive yourself a round of applause! You found us or received us via email! Thank you for persevering. This issue is a bit large but we feel as though we've been let out of our cost and space constraints. So We got a little carried away. Please be patient we'll settle down eventually. If you received printed copy please consider the electronic alternative *Thank you*



WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN?



Where Are Our Children?

Have you been seeing fewer pre-school and school age children in

your neighborhood than you used to? How about in your parish school? Before you start running around looking into every nook and cranny for kids, you need to know some facts. Last year, the number of babies born in the state of Pennsylvania was the smallest number ever recorded since the state began keeping the record back in 1915. Between 2000 and 2003, the size of the total elementary school age population in our area declined by 26,652 children or 5%. This decline is largely the result of a continuing trend of low numbers of births that began in the mid 90's following an increase in births to baby boom parents throughout the late 1970's and 1980's. By projecting today's Catholic elementary school age population based on infant Baptisms about five year ago, we can estimate that this year there are 162,880 Catholic school age children in the Archdiocese. This is down 13,216 from the 2000-01 school year. With births and baptisms continuing to decline through last year, we expect fewer children in the coming years as well.

So where are the 162,880 children getting educated about their faith? Hopefully from their parents and other family members in their homes but we don't know that for sure. What we do know is that 61,373 (38%) of them are enrolled in their parish schools. Another 52,452 children (32%) are enrolled in CCD the parish religious education program and 3,850 children (2%) are enrolled in

other private Catholic elementary schools. This accounts for 72% of Catholic children. That still leaves 42,205 Catholic children (28% of all catholic children) without religious education beyond what they are getting at home.

Even though your head may be swimming with numbers, stay with us. We're going to see that it's no fault that some parish school enrollments may be down. Except in areas where new houses are being built, there are simply fewer babies being born right now. There is not much we can do about that, but as the numbers of parish children rise or fall, we may need to change how we plan to provide these children with education about their faith.

First, as committed parishioners we need to gather and pray for guidance and consider how to ensure that all of the elementary school age Catholic children (including the 28% who are not enrolled in any religious education) in our parishes are educated in their faith. The Lord has given us a responsibility to be good stewards of our giftedness and resources. Some of us have children who are grown and are raising their children in other parishes. However, that doesn't relieve us of some responsibility to help locate and educate the children of our parishes. The Holy Spirit may be leading us to continue to contribute our time talent and treasure to the propagation of our faith right where we are. This being said we need to plan for now and the future of our schools and our parish religious education program. Both need to be the best they can be to attract and retain all of the children in the parish.

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

Suggestions for future articles should be directed to Ron Lill *editor* e-mail to: orp@adphila.org or Phone: 1-215-587-3545 These suggestions are encouraged and most welcome

How Do We Begin a Dialogue About the Religious Education Programs of the Parish?

The pastor should review appropriate data with the interested and involved in the parish: the Parish Pastoral Council, Parish Finance Council, school principal, parishioners and Home and School Association.

Some of the information contained in the cluster pages of the Pastoral Planning area of the Archdiocesan web site found at <http://archphila.org/pastplan/INDEX/AreaPPIIndex.htm> will help. You also need to study the parish reports. Check out the enrollment of the school, parish religious education (CCD) and the changes in the population of the parish. *Continued on Page 2...*

PENTECOST AT A MEETING

By Rev. Ron Rolheiser, OMI



When someone says see you at the meeting I cringe inside. However we should keep something in mind: Pentecost happened at a meeting ! One of the central events that shaped Christian history, and history in general, happened not to an individual off praying alone or to a monk on a mountaintop or to a solitary Buddha under a tree. None of these. Pentecost happened at a meeting and it happened to a community, to a church congregation assembled for prayer, to a family of faith gathered to wait for God's guidance.

Moreover it happened in a common room, a meeting room, in one of those humble, church basement type rooms. It can be helpful to remember that. Our search for God should take us not just into private places of quiet and contemplation but equally, into meeting rooms.

Where Christianity is different from most other world re-

ligions is partly on this very point. In Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Taoism, spirit and revelation break into the world very much through an individual, particularly an individual, who is deeply immersed in private prayer God speaks deeply to those who pray deeply.

Meetings are the "upper room", the place we are waiting for Pentecost And what are we waiting for? Why are we in the upper room at a meeting? Because we are waiting there, with others, for God to do something in us and through us that we can't do all by ourselves, namely, create community with each other and bring justice, love, peace, and joy to our world.

And so we continue to go to meetings. We need to spend time together waiting for God, waiting for a new outflow of heavenly fire that will give us the courage, language, and power we need to make happen in the world what our faith and love envision.

See you at the meeting!

Continued from page 1... Are we registering all the Catholic school age parishioners in the school or CCD?

Do we have a plan to approach them? Do we know where they are? Have we asked them to enroll? Are we offering the highest quality Catholic education possible? How can we afford to continue to provide attractive Catholic education for all children? Does our research tell us we need to have an expansion plan in place because of the new construction in the parish? Do we need to consider a future reduction in enrollment based on our research?

If we're not reading the signs of times and aggressively searching for our young people we can't expect them to magically appear in the life of the parish when they come of age. We will have missed the opportunity to share God's love and our faith with them. Wouldn't that be sad.

The decrees of the Tenth Synod of the Archdiocese said the

ideal situation "is for every parish to have its own elementary school" but it also recognizes that when that is not possible we need to be creative. The Office for Catholic Education gives us procedures to follow to formally study the structure of our parish education programs when our research and planning shows us that there is a need. This dialogue may begin as a result of the ongoing cluster pastoral planning, an annual review of the parish plan, or the regular review of the Standards for Quality Catholic Elementary Schools within the Archdiocese of Philadelphia After all this is considered, it may be necessary to request the Regional Vicar initiate a formal study.

Article by Ron Lill and Dr. Robert Miller of Research and Planning



What I did

helped

save time and money!

Thank you to everyone!

**Who sent me an email and said
"Hey Ron I'd like to save a tree!"**

**I will email all future InFormation newsletters to
you!
Or**

**You can click on to the news letter web site
<http://www.archphila.org/pastplan/INDEX/InFormationindex.html>**

Note:

You can print as many copies as you need



Trivia Box

**In the Archdiocese of Philadelphia
What language is spoken in the homes of our
parish?**

To find out go to

http://www.archphila.org/pastplan/INDEX/MandR_index.html

**Click on the parish of interest then scroll down to census
report 7 (2010 data TBA)**

**Has your parish or Cluster revised its
Mission statement or Pastoral Plan?**

**If your parish or Cluster has revised its Mission Statement
or Pastoral Plan, please forward a copy to the office for
Research and Planning so that we can update our files**

Now that I'm on Parish Pastoral Council

One of the most common questions from new Parish Pastoral Council members is What do I do? or better yet How can I help? Before trying to answer that question, it is first important to recognize the openness and willingness of Parish Pastoral Council members who have freely given their time and their talents for the building up of the parish community. Parish Pastoral Council membership can be a tricky business. Many people do not feel comfortable in the role of advisor or visionary. The most common concern is that the PPC is not active enough. No one is quite sure what they do.

To say that the Parish Pastoral Council are not the doers, but the planners can give the misconception that PPC members do nothing. There is this idea that they are simply present to give their opinions when asked, but they are not involved in the activity of the parish. This is a great misconception that deserves to be clarified.

It is true, the Parish Pastoral Council is a visionary body. They are the consultative group called upon to chart the course of the future by looking at the sign of the times and articulating the way in which we are called to live out the Gospel in our own communities. That is the visionary work, but the way in which this lofty goal is undertaken can be very active indeed.

Charting the course of the future means that we



must first inquire about the present by asking what needs and gifts exist in our communities and our parishes. This inquiry can be done in many different ways, but ultimately, the methods used must be pastoral and consultative in nature. The processes we use must help to build the community and to build relationships within

the community while at the same time gathering important knowledge that will assist in the planning process. The Parish Pastoral Council, then, must find methods to tap into the knowledge of the community by asking parishioners what matters to them and where they see need as well as assessing demographic information which provides an even broader view.

Secondly, the Parish Pastoral Council must be grounded in the mission of the parish and the Gospel call to deeper discipleship. The course of the future lies in the dialogue between our faith and our lives. By seeking to understand our common faith more deeply, we recognize more deeply our call to be servants of the coming Kingdom in our own neighborhood.

As a consultative body, the Parish Pastoral Council is called to consult with the parish and community at large, with the pastor and the parish staff who are charged with guiding the community and reading the Scriptures which provide us with a map for the journey.

Membership on the Parish Pastoral Council has a proactive and prophetic role which seeks to name the challenges and strengths of the community while building relationships among parish members. We are all called to have the important conversations that lead us to a deeper understanding into the call of discipleship in the midst of our lives.

Article submitted by Bob Choiniere

THE COUNCIL IS ROOTED IN PRAYER

The Parish Pastoral Council is the pastoral planning body of the parish. It carries out this task in collaboration and cooperation with the pastor, the parish pastoral staff, committees, groups and parishioners. The members of the Parish Pastoral Council need to be rooted in prayer, open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, committed to patient listening and study, and working to recommend to the pastor the plans and directions which will enhance the quality of parish life and promote parish vitality. Serving effectively on the pastoral council can be quite demanding after a long day. By the end of a nighttime council meeting it is sometimes easy to forget to acknowledge God's presence and thank God for the opportunity to serve. But sometimes, the prayer at the end of a meeting is much more important to help council members keep things in perspective.

Here is a suggestion for a closing prayer after a council meeting:

Lord of Day and Night of beginnings and endings, as we prepare to conclude this meeting, we once again lift up our hearts to You, the Divine Source of All Life.

We thank You for the gifts that have been present within this act of service to the community.

For the gifts of fellowship and understanding, of mutual respect and shared vision, we are grateful. For the gifts of perseverance and of insight into the common concerns we share, for these and all other graces, we are thankful.

As you have blessed our coming together, now bless our departure and journeys homeward.

May Your Ever-Youthful Blessing be upon us, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen



The Millennial Generation Cares!

Understanding Millennial's View of work, family and community

In the United States, millions of young adults are attending their classes of the present semester. Millions more are realizing that this is the first Fall in memory that they haven't had to go back-to-school. Both are members of the Millennial Generation, (aka Generation Y) a group made up of those born between 1977 and 1994. They are a generation expected to have a huge impact on the U.S., coming of working age while the Baby Boomers are retiring. What makes this generation of some 73 million unique? That will be a big question for the Church in this country.

"They're a very family and friend-oriented generation. They don't want to sacrifice their personal relationships in order to advance their career. Their values are more aligned with more traditional values," explains Harlan Wahrman, director of corporate and market research for Northwestern Mutual. Wahrman and Northwestern Mutual designed a study to examine the attitudes and perceptions of members of both the class of 2001 and 2004. "They're very driven by selfless goals. They want a career that has some core meaning to it. They're not driven by getting the highest pay. Rather, they're driven by positions that give them some overall sense of wellbeing."

In fact, when surveyed, less than 30 percent of Millennials were willing to sacrifice family time to "get ahead." What's more, 67 percent of 2004 graduating seniors and 70 percent of post grads said that what they do with their time is more important than their income. Fifty percent of 2004 seniors are looking to continue their education and 21 percent expect to marry, start a family in the near future.

The importance of family and community may be a direct reflection of the sense that this generation was forced to grow up very suddenly. Forty-eight percent of respondents pointed to "less innocence, growing up faster" as among the biggest concerns for

Millennials. September 11th became the defining event for the generation, dramatically changing the world, as they knew it, in a matter of hours. "I watched all these people mourning the loss of their friends, family, and co-workers -- not the loss of the buildings that stood for the world's financial headquarters. I realized that their business meant nothing to them in the face of this horrible personal tragedy," explains Brittany Richmond, a member of the class of 2004.

When asked what the biggest advantage of being part of this generation, computer technology won handily, with 66 percent of 2004 seniors and 71 percent of post grads citing its importance. Not surprisingly, 33 percent of 2004 seniors use instant messaging daily to stay in touch with friends and family. But half also said they thought taking on the financial responsibility for taking care of their elderly parents would be a priority, which suggests a level of seriousness not typically ascribed to young adults.

All of these factors appear to have promoted a widespread desire for control of their own destinies. That might be the most valuable insight for the faith community moving forward. They are committed to maintaining control of their lives and technology is helping them to achieve that. Pastors interested in serving these folks will need to understand how to communicate with a generation that is entering the community in an unpredictable economy. Generation Millennial's family first attitude may be more in line with the values of their grandparents than their older brothers and sisters in Generation X.

Note:

If we could learn how to communicate with this generation in its own language (e-mail, Instant Message, Web Sites, etc.) and help them to see the love and presence of Jesus in our faith community, they would add much to the richness of our Church!

A Change in Staff at Research & Planning



A Fond Farewell To Bob Parfet!

Robert Parfet Assistant Director
Office of Research & Planning
January 1997-August 25, 2004

Bob Parfet, Assistant Director, Office for Research and Planning, has left the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in August. Bob recently married and has moved to Minnesota to start a new life with his wife, Debbie. We will miss Bob and all that he added to our office. A job well done! Thank you Bob. We wish him great success in his marriage and all his endeavors. Best wishes and God bless!



A Hearty Hello and Welcome to Frank Donnelly!

Frank Donnelly Assistant Director
Office of Research and Planning
August 26, 2004

Frank is originally from Wilmington, De. where he graduated from Archmere Academy. He then received his BA in History and Geography from the University of Delaware, and went on to receive his Masters degree in Geography from the University of Toronto.

Frank has worked for the NJ Pinelands Commission, a regional land use planning agency, from May 2002 to August 2004 as the coordinator of a socio-economic research program. He is quite skilled in research, database management, and Geographic Information Systems. We're excited about Frank's arrival and look forward to his contribution to the office!

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Publishing Announcement

Philadelphia Catholic Parishes in 2000: Beacons of Hope Entering the 21st Century

This report looks at the lives of parishes, considering the kinds and frequencies of various activities that characterize parishes in contemporary Philadelphia in the year 2000. It is one response to the exhortation of the Holy Father “to look for ways in which the parish and its structures can be more effective in urban areas.” (Ecclesia in America, 41)

- Over 100 pages filled with charts and graphs that paint a comprehensive picture of the wide ranging work of Catholic parishes.
- Covers the full range and depth of parish activities reported.
- Demonstrates the significant impact of the parishes on the lives of many people in the Philadelphia region.
- Summarizes the challenges facing parishes as they enter the 21st century and makes concrete suggestions on how to address them.
- Valuable reference for anyone interested in the Catholic Church in Philadelphia.

ORDER FORM: Please complete and mail this form with your check made payable to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Send to The Office for Research and Planning, 222 N. 17th Street, Rm 216, Philadelphia., PA 19103-1299. For further information, please call 215-587-3545.

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