

Reflections



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

A Newsletter from the Vocation Office

December 2003

Vocations and Youth: "The Saints of Today and the Next Generation"

It was a profound moment at last year's Continental Congress on Vocations to Ordained Ministry and Consecrated Life in North America, when the young adult delegates spontaneously gathered and produced their own statement about their role in the Church.

We thirst for support in living our Catholic faith and desire to share that faith with a world that hungers for God.

Young Adult Statement, Vocation Congress

Their action reflects the desire of many Catholic youth to live their faith as fully as possible and to receive the support they need from the Church community. The Pastoral Plan resulting from that Congress called for our community to put particular attention on nurturing the faith and commitment of young people.

In this edition, and in the February 2004 edition of *Reflections*, we'll look at how this is being embraced within our Diocese. Five new young candidates entered the seminary for our Diocese this year, saying 'yes' to exploring the call of Jesus in their hearts to follow Him in the priesthood. Many other young Catholics are striving to grow in their faith and to serve in different ways. It's inspiring

to see the enthusiasm, commitment and hope of these young people.

Pope John Paul II recently celebrated his 25th anniversary as Pope. His faith in young Catholics, encouragement to them and the challenge he offers them is a witness for the whole Church. In his homily at the 2002 World Youth Day in Toronto he stated, "Listen to the

voice of Jesus in the depths of your hearts!" His words capture the core of every vocation.

As the young delegates at the Vocation Congress stated: **"With the proper tools, together we can build a fire, a fire that is ignited by Jesus Christ, which can bring warmth and light to a world that is sometimes cold and dark... We strive to be saints of today and come to cultivate saints of the next generation. Please give us the resources we need to be what God has called us to be!"**

Fr. Mark Gatto, vocation director, Diocese of Hamilton

About CYO

Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) is a Hamilton-based organization focused on youth ministry, camping and athletics as well as leadership development programs for young people. CYO operates two Catholic camps in the Guelph area – Marydale, a day camp, and Brebeuf, a residential camp – which are also used for retreats and student outdoor education programs. CYO was founded in the 1950s and the first full-time director was Father Kyran Kennedy.

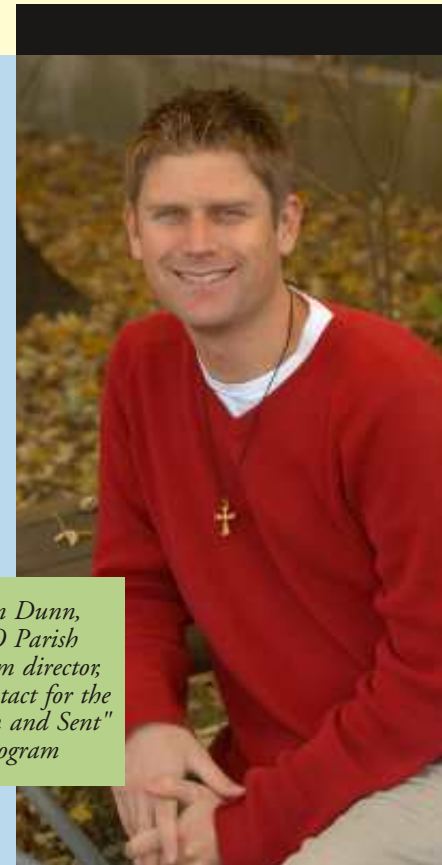
Catholic Leadership: "Chosen and Sent" Program Now Underway

Thirty young people from across the Diocese of Hamilton are participating in a new training program aimed at creating the next generation of Catholic leadership.

"Chosen and Sent" is an eight-month program for people ages 18-35. Organized by the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) of Hamilton and the Diocesan Offices of Religious Education and Vocation, the program is an opportunity for leadership training and also faith formation, community building and guided discernment. It began in September 2003 and is held one Saturday each month in either Hamilton or Waterloo, with additional small-group meetings. The final session will be a two-day retreat at Camp Brebeuf in May 2004.

*Brian Dunn,
CYO Parish
Program director,
and contact for the
"Chosen and Sent"
Program*

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Young Seminarians Keen to Serve the Church

Five teenagers from the Diocese of Hamilton are providing an intriguing counterpoint to the overall trend of men entering seminary at an older age.

Whether they're a throwback to an earlier era when it was common for candidates to enter seminary right out of high school, or whether it's the beginning of a whole new trend is hard to say. But there's no denying their enthusiasm and commitment to serving the Church.

Paul Hrynczyszyn, John Paul Markides, Guillermo Lara, Eric Arruda and Jeff Oehring, all 19, have already spent considerable time in faith formation in their home parishes, primarily in Kitchener-Waterloo. Three were involved in Youth Teams of Our Lady, (an international youth-led faith group), one was part of The Squires (the youth arm of Knights of Columbus) and one was part of a youth group at his parish. They also participated in reading and prayer groups.

Here's what these new seminarians have to say about discernment and youth ministry.

About Discernment and Influencing Factors:

"Groups are good but it can't be all group work. You need to know how to develop a one-on-one relationship with God or you'll fall apart. You need quiet time. It's like those posters at the parish said, 'you have to be quiet if you're going to hear the call.'"

"I changed my life around after a retreat for Youth Teams of Our Lady. It showed me that I can't just live for myself and that God has a plan for my life."

"What turned me on was World Youth Day. I went for the vigil and it was an amazing experience. Then the next day I was at the Mass that the Pope celebrated. The whole experience was amazing."

"I was about 12 or 13 when I first thought about it. I remember seeing my dad's Knights of Columbus newsletter and there was an ad there for recruiting priests."

"I met a priest and he turned everything around for me. He said he'd pray for me. My aunt is a nun and I had long talks with her. She said if I feel the calling, not to let it go."

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A youth leader helps connect children with their Catholic faith.

Youth Minister Sees 'Big Need' for Involvement of Young People

For those who say young people are the future of the Church, Andrea Taylor begs to differ.

The 24-year-old youth ministry coordinator at St. Mary Parish in Cambridge is grounded in the here and now. "Ministering to youth isn't just about the future, it's part of the present church. I don't believe youth are being given the opportunity to participate fully in church life. One of the biggest goals of youth ministry is to help young people realize they do have a place – they are members of our community and they are missed when they are absent."

With a background in recreation and leisure studies and a youth ministry certificate from the Canadian Ministry Support Services Program, Andrea has worked in her present job for more than two years. She's involved in everything from youth groups, retreats, summer camps and vacation bible school to sacramental preparation for elementary school students.

Andrea is happy to call herself a coordinator because she believes "everyone is called to minister to young people. I don't want people to think I'm doing it all and no one else has to worry." But it's a role she relishes, despite the hours that are anything but 9 to 5.

"I can't imagine a better job. It's not about giving something to the kids, it's what the church community can receive from them. Sometimes you have to dig deep to find it, but God has placed a potential in every young person and it's our job to help them discover that potential."

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Andrea Taylor



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Ed Krupica

Program Uses Montessori Principles in Faith Formation

Four parishes in the Diocese of Hamilton are providing Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, a faith formation program for children rooted in the Bible, church liturgy, and the educational principles of Maria Montessori, the Italian educator and physician best known for developing the 'Montessori method' of teaching young children.

The Montessori method stresses the development of initiative and self-reliance by permitting children to do by themselves the things that interest them, within strictly disciplined limits.

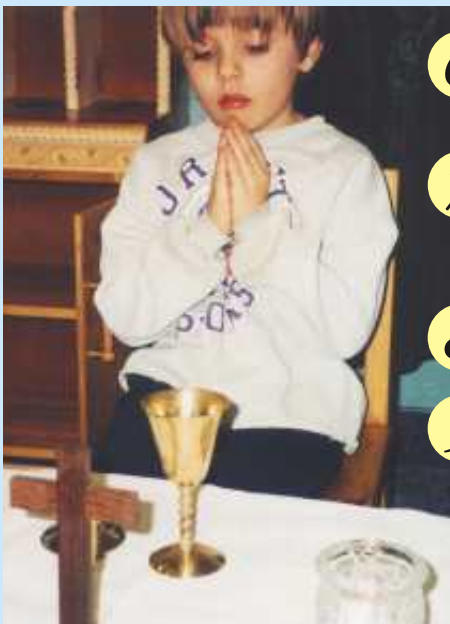
Similarly, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is "an innovative way of educating the growing child in the faith," says Ed Krupica, director of the Office of Religious Education for the Diocese of Hamilton. "The underlying assumption is that children, even those as young as three years old, have the capacity and ability to know God, to pray and to understand the truths of our faith."

Children gather in an atrium, or special room set aside for them, that contains materials they can play with and meditate on. The materials are grouped into major themes in the life of Jesus, parables from scripture and the sacraments. A child too young to read may ponder a Biblical message or a prayer from the liturgy by taking the material for that text and working with it – placing wood figures of sheep in a sheepfold of the Good Shepherd, preparing a small altar or setting apostle figures around a Last Supper table. Older children can incorporate reading into their program. Parents who are specifically trained in catechesis supervise the children.

"By nurturing the faith formation of children at an early age, we're cultivating the soil for the seeds of God's word to grow and bear rich fruit," Ed says. "There's a significant relationship between the nurturing of vocations and the catechesis provided for the formation of faith in children."

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is offered at Holy Cross Parish in Georgetown, St. Agnes Parish in Waterloo, St. Ambrose Parish in Cambridge and Holy Rosary Parish in Guelph.

For more information, please contact Ed Krupica at 905-528-7988, ext. 241.



Creating a Vocation Culture

A key message coming out of the 2002 Continental Congress on Vocations was that specific action is needed to 'create a vocation culture' in schools, parishes and at home.

Following are questions for youth directors that are in the Pastoral Plan published after the congress:

Questions for Youth Directors

- 1 As I plan my programs for the youth that I serve, how do I seek opportunities to vitalize and nurture the "intensive faith and profound spiritual renewal" that the Holy Father asks for?
- 2 How does my response to my own vocation proclaim the Gospel "with conviction and passion," leading young people in my care to a desire to discern their own vocations?
- 3 How am I planning to make explicit in my youth ministry program the preferential option for the young called for by the Vocations Congress? How does this change the way my ideas and programs will develop and be implemented?
- 4 Do the youth that I serve in my ministry recognize me as one who is committed to the call God has given me in fulfilling my baptismal graces?
- 5 What are some ways religious and priests could be present in my youth ministry programs?
- 6 Are there ways I could involve religious and priests in the planning and celebration of liturgies for the youth?
- 7 How is my promotion of ordained ministry and consecrated life influenced and enhanced by my own prayer life and that of those with whom I collaborate?
- 8 How does my youth program proclaim the Gospel with conviction and passion?
- 9 What more can I do to help create a "vocation culture" in my youth group? In my parish, school or youth ministry setting? In my local church?

Catholic Leadership: "Chosen and Sent" Program Now Underway

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"It really sprang from World Youth Day," says Brian Dunn, CYO's Parish Program director. "Young people came to the forefront at that time who wanted to be involved or lead a group, but there was no forum for them to build or enhance their leadership skills. After World Youth Day I asked some of the people who had been involved in it to help us form a program. That's how 'Chosen and Sent' was created.

"People my age who are trying to follow their faith need help in knowing how to do that and how to work with others," says Brian, 29. "They may sit on boards or committees but aren't necessarily confident enough to assume a leadership role. We needed a space where we could come together and learn."

Each of the eight sessions includes discussions about the Catholic faith – including the creed, scriptures, tradition, etc. – and a leadership training component, with topics such as communication skills, team building, event planning and conflict resolution. Program leaders are both clergy and lay people within the Catholic community.

"The outcomes will be different for each person, but what we'd like to see is that the participants will take what they've learned, apply it to their lives and become more effective Catholic leaders in their parishes, schools or in the community," Brian says.

Twenty-one women and nine men are enrolled in "Chosen and Sent," including eight students, 13 teachers and people working in other fields.

For more information about "Chosen and Sent" please contact Brian Dunn at 905-528-0011.

On the Calendar

St. Peter's Seminary is hosting a **"Come and See" weekend** for men who may be interested in applying. The weekend will be held February 6 to 8, 2004. For information, please contact Fr. Mark Gatto, 905-528-7988, or frmark@vocationinfo.ca

The second annual **Vocation Mass** was celebrated at the Church of Our Lady in Guelph on Sunday, September 21, with Bishop Matthew Ustrzycki, auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Hamilton, presiding. A heartfelt thanks goes out to Bishop Ustrzycki, the Catholic Women's League, Knights of Columbus and Serra Club members who sponsored this event, and to chaplains and students of three local high schools who participated in the Mass. The **2004 Vocation Mass** is scheduled for September 26 at the Immaculate Conception Parish in Formosa.

Coming up in Winter 2004

The next issue of *Reflections* will continue to focus on vocations and youth. It will be published in February 2004.

Young Seminarians Keen to Serve the Church

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About Entering Seminary at a Young Age:

"You've got to give young people a chance to have a vocation."

"One priest said to me, don't be afraid to give your youthfulness to God. That got me thinking."

"Why can't I give my energy and talents at this age?"

"I think it's best to try seminary. I don't think university is a place to nurture your vocation."

"It's certainly not a scandal if you enter seminary and it's not for you. I feel worse for the people who will never know if they had a vocation to the priesthood because they didn't go to seminary."

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We welcome your comments and suggestions.

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www.vocationinfo.ca



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*But the Lord said to me,
Do not say,
'I am only a youth';
for to all to whom I send you,
you shall go,
and whatever I command you,
you shall speak.
Be not afraid of them,
for I am with you
to deliver you,
says the Lord.*

(Jeremiah 1:7-8)