

We had a wonderful **Parish Picnic** last Sunday. I want to thank all those who worked so hard to make it a success. Particular thanks to Grand Knight Austin Michell and our Knights of Columbus for the delicious hamburgers and hot dogs. Below is a picture of three of the Knights (Bill King, Tom Radford and James Yap) preparing the burgers. Many other parishioners brought salads, fruit, vegetables, lumpia and other foods. Damiano ("Miano") Besabe, who is pictured below, was one of many young who enjoyed picnic lunch. Our youth provided games for children, and in the process they raised some funds for our World Youth Day delegation. Below is a picture of Arielle Howard and Adam Schilling tickets for the games. Our Hispanic choir (also pictured) provided lively music for the picnic. I thank them and everyone who worked together for this enjoyable community building event.

This week I met with individual families who hope to participate in **World Youth Day 2011**. I emphasized that our participation in World Youth Day is an evangelization effort. In this coming year we will be taking part in spiritual preparation, which include taking part in Generations of Faith. In addition, we will have some sessions to study the Bible in light of the life of St. Francis of Assisi. One of the highlights of the pilgrimage will be our visit to the tombs of St. Francis and St. Clare in the town of Assisi, Italy. We will be inviting all the youth of our parish to take part in this study. We also hope to reach out to youth beyond our parish. We have already had young people from the larger community attend various WYD events.

I am deeply impressed with the commitment of our young people. I asked them what motivated them to attend World Youth Day. Here are some of the responses, in their own words:

*--to gain a greater appreciation of the universal faith of the Church.*

*--to visit the holy places of the Vatican and celebrate my religion with fellow young people.*

*--seeing the pope.*

*--meeting new people, new cultures and how the life of a saint was.*

*--traveling and meeting new people who share the same religion as me.*

*--get closer to God.*

*--mostly education because I wanna know what role these places took throughout history.*

*--to learn about the core of our religion.*

*--learning more about my Catholic faith.*

*--visiting Vatican and tombs of saints.*

*--use my Spanish; I read about WYD in my theology book and wanna be a part of it.*

*--I hope it will help our community to grow and become stronger; I hope it may help us develop a youth group.*

*--to know more about the history of our religion and its core and meet new people along the way.*

*--Mass with the pope.*

Personally, I have been overwhelmed by the wonderful response to World Youth Day. **As of Wednesday, we enrolled thirty-six youth, young adults and adult chaperones in our WYD delegation.** This was a major commitment because it required a \$600 deposit and the first payment of \$345 for each participant. This would not have been possible without your support. As I mentioned last weekend, we raised over ten thousand dollars in the past two months by fund raising events and direct donations. I appreciate your ongoing support. I know that this is a difficult time for our community and for many of our families. Still, I am convinced that World Youth Day is one of the best investments we can make. It will benefit not only the young people who participate, but also other youth of our parish, and ultimately our parish as a whole.

Like you, I receive many appeals for financial support. **It requires prayer to best determine where to dedicate one's Stewardship of Time, Talent and Treasure.** The parish, of course, has to take first place because it is here that we receive the sacraments, religious formation and many opportunities for service. Some groups in our parish such as our Knights of Columbus and St. Vincent de Paul merit special support. On the third Sunday of each month, our St. Vincent de Paul members are available after Mass to answer questions and to receive donations for the needy in our community. I invite you to also take part in the **Friends of the Poor Walk** on September 25. Jim Bloss has more information in the "Social Justice Corner."

On a personal note, I thank you for all your prayers and good wishes as I celebrated my **64<sup>th</sup> birthday** this week. I asked some parishioners the question in the Beatles song: "Will you still need me, will you still feed me, when I'm sixty-four?" They said, yes, which is reassuring for the future. May we have many good years together!

In conclusion, we have some "ecumenical" events: **Pastor Michael Hanford** and his wife, Yvonne, will be at our 9:30 a.m. Mass next Sunday. I will ask him to say a word after the marriage blessings. From Sept 15-18 at 7 p.m. Christ Church will present a fifty minute play titled "**Something's Missing.**" We have been talking about the play at our monthly pastors' prayer meeting and I am personally looking forward to seeing it. Please also put "**We Love Our Kids**" (September 19, 6 p.m.) on your calendar. On September 18, beginning at 8 a.m., we have our **Parish Fix-It**. At that same time, **Sr. Barbara** needs help for church cleaning, especially the windows. And keep in your prayers the vital work of our **Stewardship Commission** and **Parish Council**, which will meet on September 15 & 16. Finally a prayer for **Gabriel Project** – please talk to Kathy King for more information about this work to help young moms and dads facing crisis pregnancies.





