



NAFSCC
North American
Forum For
SMALL
CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITIES

FNPCC
Foro Norteamericano
Para
LAS PEQUEÑAS
COMUNIDADES
CRISTIANAS

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Le Forum nord-américain
pour
LES PETITES
COMMUNAUTÉS
DE FOI

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E-Newsletter

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The NAFSCC E-Newsletters sent bimonthly to members

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News and Ideas

Welcome to the FORUM for Small Christian Communities Discussion Board

North American Forum for Small Christian Communities

Welcomes you to our On-line Forum.

You can access the "Forum" by going to:
<http://blog.nafsc.com> (note-no 'www').

Please note that visitors must subscribe and can choose to have comments received by Email or RSS feed.

Our hope is that you will use this opportunity to share ideas, stories and resources, benefit from our accumulated experiences and wisdom, and promote Small Christian Communities throughout our Arch/dioceses. General questions for your reflection and discussion will be posted. However, to make this FORUM alive and relevant, please post your successes, questions, ask for ideas.

Please remember to subscribe and VISIT often!
Your comments and suggestions are always welcome!

Carlette Chordas
NAFSCC Board Member
Web design

Gathering of NAFSCC and SCC Members

We want to have a gathering of NAFSCC and SCC members at the National Ministry Summit: Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership to be held April 20-23, 2008 in Orlando, Florida.

Who is intending to attend the conference so we can meet over luncheon?
NAFSCC board members planning to attend are Donna Cianglio O.P. and Diane Kledziek. E-mail Sr. Donna at dciangio@comcast.net (*Chair*) if planning to attend.
Thanks!

Share Your Views

Year of St. Paul

I recently had the opportunity to participate in an International Consultation of Adult Faith Formation in Chile. One of the outcomes was an action plan for the USA. We decided to assist diocesan and parish leaders interested in celebrating the Year of Paul by making a list of resources.

So, I am writing to ask if you are aware of any materials or presenters focused on St. Paul's life or letters. Also, do you know of any plans Dioceses have made to note this celebration.

I appreciate any contribution you can make toward our effort and will be sure to share with you whatever we put together.

Thanks!
Maryanne

Maryanne Harrington
Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Director, Office for Formation of the Laity
222 N. Seventeenth Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
215-587-5630
215-587-3561 FAX
MHARRINGTON@adphila.org

Good News Column

38 SCCs and Counting!

On a recent working visit to New Mexico I happily discovered that St. Thomas Parish of Chaparral had 38 SCCs meeting in homes during Lent. These groups have actually been going for a number of years and more tend to be formed during the Lenten season. Most groups continue throughout the year and, because of them, the parish is experiencing a growing understanding of community as well as parish renewal and an opportunity for adult faith formation. The pastor, Fr. Miguel Echeverria, is an Augustinian priest who has been serving in the Las Cruces diocese for many years. I first met Fr. Miguel a million years ago (or so it seems!) when I was working with Renew in Guam. He was dedicated to forming SCCs then and they have been part of his pastoral work ever since.

Most of the groups at St. Thomas are focused on prayer and populated predominately by women. This frustrates Fr. Miguel. He would like to see more of an increase in participation by the men of the parish. His core team will do some strategizing to assess what is holding the men back, what might appeal to them, and what would encourage them to participate.

The diocesan initiative for the next few years is creative and is for “handing on the faith” to upcoming generations. Each parish is to take significant steps to implement better formation of youth and adults. A significant part of St. Thomas' planning is to add more adult formation and outreach in the small faith communities without losing the prayerful focus they now have.

Mary Carter, diocesan coordinator of small faith communities, says that Fr. Miguel deeply desires to see the parishioners reach out to their neighbors and start neighborhood groups. Currently, most people in groups drive a distance to meet with family and friends. Mary suggests that in this particular community the

current groups should be supported as they are because of their closeness. However, group members should be encouraged to begin additional groups which would meet once a week in their own homes and invite the neighbors to join. A benefit would be that current group members would have their own group to support them as they facilitate a new group. This would be similar to a cell system of developing small communities. Father Miguel feels that this would be a draw for the men of the parish - especially when the men learn that the neighbors are all coming over!

In this small impoverished community, drugs, alcohol, and gangs are a problem especially for the youth. Fr. Miguel is developing a dynamic program which he hopes will appeal to the youth of the parish and engage them in their own small groups. The purpose is developing deeper spirituality, Catholic formation, and small communities that will keep the kids off the streets and focused on higher goals of spirituality and service.

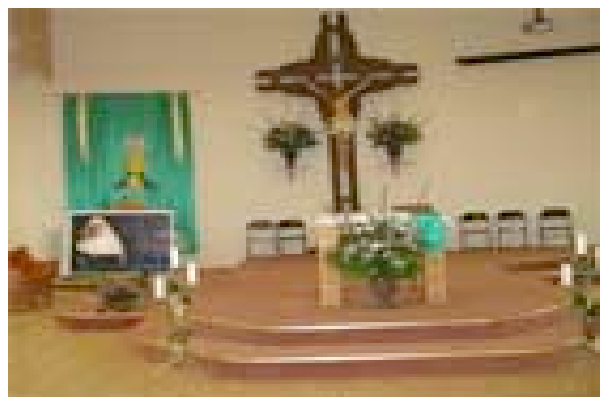
I plan to visit these groups with Father Miguel next month to see this “miracle” first hand.

Donna L. Ciangio, OP
NAFSCC Chairperson
Director, Church Leadership Consultation
27 Sanford Avenue
West Caldwell, New Jersey 07006-7141
Phone: 973-227-1906
Cell: 973-432-1173
Email: dciangio@comcast.net



GO AND TEACH
A Pastoral Letter on
Handing on the Faith

**VAYAN Y
ENSENEN**
Una Carta Pastoral
sobre la Transmisión



Small Christian Community in the Diocese of St. Petersburg

Fr. Art Baranowski spent two days with us in the Diocese of St. Petersburg, presenting his vision of restructuring parishes into Small Church Communities and “doing parish differently”. Friday's, April 4th audience at the new diocesan retreat, Bethany Center, consisted of pastors, parish staffs, clergy, core team members and diocesan personnel, from 15 parishes. On Saturday, April 5, core team members and Small Christian Communities leaders and members from 20+ parishes were in attendance. Both days consisted of people with very little knowledge and experience of small community and many more others who currently serve in leadership and/or are members of a small Christian community.

Because our diocese is celebrating 10 years of diocesan development, formation, and support for SCCs and because of the overwhelming “suggestion” to invite Fr. Art to the Diocese of St. Pete, (from diocesan attendees at the 2007 National Joint Convocation on Small Christian Communities), Fr. Art was invited to challenge us all to grow in our understanding and practice of what it means to be “church”. More and more parishes and diocesan offices are realizing that the faith sharing that takes place intentionally in SCCs and in the RCIA process, is good for everyone, but resistance still exists. Fr. Art's examples of everyday faith sharing, in the everyday experiences of parish life - sacramental preparation, money counting, visiting the sick, committee meetings - gave all of us affirmation and challenge to continue this process. However, with over half of our parishes (40+) having SCCs, that are continually being supported by our Diocesan Core Community which began with the RENEW 2000 process, many parishes still have much work to do in raising new leadership to support the formation of new SCCs and to nurture the growth of ongoing communities.

From the feedback we received from these two workshops, some parishes recommitted to being intentional in supporting the formation and development of SCCs. Some want to form SCCs for the first time. Many attendees felt affirmed and challenged to stick with the vision of SCCs and faith sharing within the various ministries they are affiliated with because they know this to be a most effective way to evangelize and make disciples. We often heard of the cry to have the entire parish staff, mainly the pastor, supporting the efforts of those who already know the benefits of SCCs. The Diocesan Core Community was elated to hear attendees saying that they benefitted greatly by the opportunity to attend a workshop on SCCs, that they gathered great insight from the sharing of the presenter (Fr. Art) and that the time allowed at tables and at lunch to share with people from other parishes was priceless.

As we continue as the Diocesan Core Community, from the Office for Evangelization and Lifelong Faith Formation, we are committed to supporting SCCs in parishes, as a way of being “church”. We will continue to help parishes catch the vision and get it going, we will continue to notify parishes of resources to fit their specific needs, we will train trainers and leaders as needed, we will create deanery and diocesan opportunities for ongoing formation and support and we will definitely “have more workshops like these” as most attendees suggested! :

Diane Kledzik
Associate Director for Evangelization and Adult Faith Formation
Office of Evangelization and Lifelong Faith Formation
Diocese of St. Petersburg in Florida
dmk@dosp.org

Upcoming Event

2008 NAPRC National Conference

National Alliance of Parishes Restructuring into Communities
July 17-19, 2008
“The Spirit of Christ: Engaging People in the Church”
Spirit of Christ Parish
Arvada, Colorado

What’s Going On with SCCs?

Share you good news what you are doing with Small Christian Communities. Contact NAFSCC “web person,” Carlette Chordas, Diocese of Youngstown: cchordas@youngstowndiocese.org. She will put your ideas and activities on the NAFSCC website: www.nafsc.org.

Good News Column

We want to hear what you are doing with Small Christian Communities in your dioceses to share with our members. Send in your events and activities to Sr. Marci Blum to be put in the e-newsletter. E-mail: DBQCLF@arch.pvt.k12.ia.us.

NAFSCC Board Members and E-Mail Addresses:

Sr. Marci Blum OSF, Archdiocese of Dubuque: DBQCLF@arch.pvt.k12.ia.us
(E-Newsletter)

Carlette Chordas, Diocese of Youngstown: cchordas@youngstowndiocese.org
(Website)

Sr. Donna Ciangio O.P., dciangio@comcast.net *(Chair)*

Rev. Pierre Goudreault, Diocese of Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec:
p.goudreault@cablevision.qc.ca *(Consultant)*

Ms. Margarita Hayes, Diocese of Las Cruces: mhayes@dioceseoflascruces.org
(Consultant)

Ms. Diane Kledzik, Diocese of St. Petersburg: dmk@dosp.org *(Membership)*

Visit NAFSCC website: www.nafsc.org

NAFSCC Policy

We do not give out the NAFSCC membership list to any individual or organization. We would gladly receive ads or information to be posted in the e-newsletter.

We hope you enjoyed reading this.

For additions, comments and address changes to the
NAFSCC E-Newsletter

e-mail Marci Blum OSF at DBQCLF@arch.pvt.k12.ia.us