

G.S. Youth united

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A NEW YEAR, NEW TEAM, AND NEW BEGINNINGS

BY ADRIAN BACONG, EDITOR

Welcome to the new year! As the editor of the G.S. Youth United Newsletter, I would like to personally welcome you to the happenings of your parish Core Team as well as inform you to many of the summer highlights of many of the youth from around the diocese. The Good Shepherd Parish High School Core Team is comprised of fifty-five youth, all led under Mr. Pat Clasby, our Coordinator of Youth Ministry, as well as a handful of adults who have volunteered their time to watch the growth and success of our local youth in their faith. All members of the Core Team were required to go through a rigorous application process that included an extensive interview by our past members, the seniors of the Class of 2008. In accepting a position as a member of the Core Team, members were also required to attend leadership camp at Whispering Winds Catholic Camp, located in Julian. Members have also committed to extensive volunteer work in seeking the growth of the youth in the Catholic faith. Many of the youth-run events that you see here at Good Shepherd

are run by your Core Team. As you will read throughout the rest of this newsletter, the youth of Good Shepherd are very much involved in seeing the growth and improvement of our community. In essence, that is our mission. Our mission is to see



not only the growth of the youth in their faith, but to also see the growth and improvement of our community, and ultimately, the improvement of the world. The Good Shepherd Parish High School Core Team believes that we can truly be the light that God wanted all of us to be in the world. Despite the society's

negative portrayal of the world, it is our persistence, our idealism, and ultimately our love for others that will win. We can improve this world and we *will* improve this world. And the funny thing is that you just need one thing: love. I know that this sounds cliché, but "Love conquers all." Love is the deciding factor in the incessant battle between good and evil, but love is always going to win. As you will read in the upcoming articles by our talented staff on the G.S. Youth United Newsletter Team, we are making a difference in the world. We are all growing in our faith, in our hearts, and in our love, and having a lot of fun in the process. And that growth is not a onetime event. It is an incessant experience. As God is infinite, so too is the good in the world, even if others suggest otherwise.

For many of us, we are at the end of our summers and have already started school again. And with this new school year, we embark on a new adventure, a new beginning on an amazing road that holds so many possibilities. Many of us would love to return to our



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A NEW YEAR, NEW TEAM, AND NEW BEGINNINGS (cont.)

lazy days of summer, going to the beach, having days of fun and relaxation, but as we return to work, school, and our commitments, let us all remember that "whatever you [we] bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." Remember, we cannot relive the past. We can only look forward to the future. Do not allow any of your past mistakes, memories, or experiences bound you from having the time of your life.

As a senior in high school, there are times where I wish I could go back and relive my high school experience all over again, but that same person is looking toward the future, toward new friends, new experiences, new roads, new dreams, and ultimately a new beginning. So do not bind yourself to anything, because we cannot hold anything to ourselves on our new adventures. We are all embarking on new

adventures, whether it is school, Pre-Confirmation, returning Confirmation students, or just life itself. Enjoy the ride, because you can never relive these moments. Enjoy life. Live it with love. And finally, make a difference in this world. Be Christ's light in our world and always remember that everything will always work out in the end because "Love conquers all."



CAMP EMMAUS: A JOURNEY OF FAITH

BY MARIANNE ENCARNACION, TEAM WRITER



On August 3-7, 2008, the Good Shepherd Core Team along with core teams from other parishes in the diocese of San Diego embarked on a journey of faith at Camp Emmaus, a leadership camp

held every summer at Whispering Winds Camp in Julian. The youth were joined by their youth ministers as well as other adults who also gave up their whole week to join the youth and make the experience a success. Leadership camp was designed to strengthen the young leaders' faiths and their relationship with God, as well as teach them skills and life-long lessons that they could take back to their own communities and share with other people, especially with the rest of the youth. This year's theme focused on "Our God the Great I Am".

For five days, the youth dived head-on into their faith as they participated in fun and memorable activities. On the first day, the youth were separated into small groups consisting of core team members from different parishes and young adult leaders. This allowed them to create new friends and have an intimate group where they

could share thoughts and reflections on the themes and topics for each day. Besides this, each person was also assigned a prayer pal that they could pray for and do nice things for during the five days of camp.

Leadership camp was a huge learning and growing experience for the youth. The youth participated in workshops that taught them many useful skills in the areas of leadership, communication, and faith. There was also the musician's track, a workshop designed specifically for those who are interested in singing or playing instruments. They learned how to apply their talents into prayer and worship, a crucial part of youth ministry, and they also served as the choir for the daily masses, helping create a lively and fun atmosphere for the rest of the youth.

Besides workshops, the youth also participated in daily talks where they were able to grow deeper in faith as they listened to words of wisdom from the adults about faith, leadership, and God's presence in their lives. The youth were also given a chance to lis-

ten to talks from young adults who related their experiences from their younger years and shared how they grew in faith despite the trials and tribulations they had faced. Some of the youth, including the core team's very own Kimmy Oberle, Adrian Bacong, and Melissa Farin, also shared their experiences and words of wisdom with the rest of the group. Melissa's talk touched many hearts as she shared about the challenges she faced and how she overcame them, letting the other youth know that they were not alone and leaving them with words of inspiration and hope.

One of the many highlights of camp was reconciliation. "I think being cleansed of your sins is a powerful experience. It made me feel happy and light for the rest of the day," said Jazel Manalansan, a veteran at Camp Emmaus. Reconciliation was followed by



mass and an ice cream social, where the youth feasted on ice cream sundaes and got the chance to meet even more people. Another memorable experience at camp was the evening ac-

CAMP EMMAUS: A JOURNEY OF FAITH (cont.)

tivity where the boys were separated from the girls. It was a truly moving experience, because the girls were able to pay homage to the Blessed Virgin Mary at her grotto, and the reciting of the rosary during the hike back gave them strength and inspiration. The talent show was definitely one of the most unforgettable moments during camp. The youth shared their talents through different acts ranging from dancing, singing, acting, instrument playing, and even an act involving 2



minutes of complete silence. No one can forget the comic bandana folding act by Jacob and Pat

Clasby a.k.a. "Biff", which had all the youth and adults cheering and laughing out loud.

Camp Emmaus was definitely

an amazing life-changing experience for the core team members. Not only were they able to learn important leadership skills and to grow in their faith,



they were also able to build new friendships, and to strengthen the old ones they had. "Camp Emmaus was a great experience. I

made so many friends with youth from other parishes, and this whole week helped open my eyes to the real world and how my faith would help me stay on the right path," said John Carlos Cruz, a new member of the core team. It was a great chance for them to bond as a team and to get to know each other better.

The theme for the last day of camp was "En Fuego", meaning "on fire". The unexpected heavy rain could not stop the camp participants from celebrating mass one last time all to-

gether. Everyone at camp shared the same vision. After this amazing experience of learning



and diving deeper into a life of faith, the youth and adults all hoped to keep that fire of faith burning in their hearts, so that they could spread the word about "Our God, The Great I Am", and that they could take all that they've learned and apply it into their roles as leaders in youth ministry.

Asked on her thoughts about camp, Janzel Manalansan said, "It felt good to be surrounded by adults who wanted to guide us in the right direction, and people our age who I knew were going through the exact same things." After all the goodbyes were said, and all the hugs were shared, each person left camp, with hope and the fire of faith burning in their hearts.

LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA

BY CHEYENNE PAIVA, TEAM WRITER



On June 21, 2008, 28 youth and adults set out on a week long justice and service trip to Lake Charles, Louisiana in hopes of moving along relief efforts from the number of hurricanes that have

previously passed through the area. Most of the volunteers from our parish had to say goodbye to their families to embark on the road trip to Louisiana, but this was not the case for the Murray family. Greg Murray had the privilege of traveling with his wife and son, and for him, it was nice to have his family around despite spending most of their time with the other members of the group.

It started off as a suggestion to bond with his son before he heads off to college next year, but it ended with an experience worth taking. The scenery in Louisiana was not what you might expect. Upon arrival in the Pelican State, there were no signs of severe hurricane damage to leave a deep first impression. Greg recalls that "it was hot." Lake Charles could have even passed off as a regular American

town, but this did not mean that the relief efforts were over.

Greg had little expectations going on the trip and tried to go into it with an open mind. With his experience in construction work, he was afraid that the youth could not keep up with the pace of the work. Little did he know that he was in for a surprise. Of course, being involved in a charitable act is always a grand experience, but as Greg says, "We can get involved with it here, too." The real story of this trip was the youth, and to this, Greg can definitely agree.

What stood out in his mind and impressed him the most was the work ethic of the youth. He described

the way they handled themselves away from their families as young adults who were heartwarming, mature, and filled with goodwill and love. He even went as far to say that they gave him "a real moment of pride." The teenagers were able to adjust to a new group, difficult

work, different lifestyles, and the separation from their parents for that week trip across America. "The whole community would be extremely proud of the kids," Greg says.

As an involved member of Good Shepherd Parish, Greg Murray can say that his experience during the justice and service trip to Louisiana was highlighted by the actions of the youth. Together as a group, the youth and the adults on the trip were able to build two houses and a habitat for a humanity house. And as a community, we can do our part by showing our appreciation for them. As representatives of our youth and adult communities, they put on their best and only



their best to help the lives of those still affected by the natural disasters of the past. To honor those who went on the trip, we invite all of you to attend our Louisiana Trip Thank You Reunion Dinner will be held on October 24. Hopefully we will see you there.

THE PRE-CONFIRMATION EXPERIENCE

BY ANDREW BACONG, TEAM WRITER

Pre-Confirmation is a crucial step many of us make in order to become members of the Catholic Church. When some people think of Pre-Con, they mostly think of dull, boring classes filled with lectures about God, reading about God, and just about God in general. But here at Good Shepherd, Pat Clasby, our Coordinator of Youth Ministry, has found ways to make Pre-Confirmation not only tolerable, but very fun and exciting, and at the same time, very rewarding and enriching.

Tuesday classes, which occur every week at the main hall, start at 6:30 pm to around 8:30 pm. Students begin class with a prayer, followed by an activity such as an icebreaker like "fruit salad mix up." After that, Pat

touches on the main subject of the night, and allows the large group to split into assigned "small groups" to discuss the subject more in-depth. On some nights, groups are presented with a task to complete and share with the large group, based on the main subject of the night. These tasks could be anything ranging from coming up with and performing a skit to answering questions on poster paper to share. After small groups,

Pat assembles the students into the main hall to discuss what they've learned and to allow groups to share their presentations. Afterward, there is night prayer, followed by announcements, and then the students are dismissed.

Another big thing about the Pre-Con experience is the retreat: a 2-day trip up to the mountains to bond with fellow students and to find God. Pre-Con retreat usually falls on the last weekend of November or the first weekend of December. It is a truly life

changing experience, so don't miss it!

When asked to describe the experience in one word, Sophomore Diane Simon-ton called it "inspiring." She said it "was probably one of the best things that has ever happened to me because it helped me open my eyes to new things. It helped me become a better person...I seriously learned so much about myself and my faith, which made me want to be a better person from then on." So parents, be assured that what you are putting your child through is truly a life changing experience. And students, you can be assured that these classes, whether you were forced to come to them or came just because you wanted to, will be fun. Approach this experience with an open heart, and you will have the time of your life.



"...one of the best things that has ever happened to me...it helped me open my eyes to new things..."



A WORD FROM KIMMY OBERLE

BY DJOANNAH MIGUEL, TEAM WRITER



For the 2008-2009 school year, Kimmy Oberle was discerned as the Core Team President. Not only is Kimmy involved with Core Team, but she is also an ASB member at

her high school. She is in Varsity Soccer, Varsity Field Hockey, and is in Club Soccer (PQ Premier). When asked how she felt about being the Core Team president she said, "I am just really happy that the returning members thought that I, out of every-

"I am just really happy that the returning members thought that I, out of everyone, should be the president."

one, should be the president. It really is such a blessing and I am just excited to work with everyone for my last year." Kimmy expects that the Core Team of 2008-2009 will put on a lot of fun faith filled events for the youth in the community. She also wants the team to have fun and grow in our faith. Kimmy has been on Core Team for three years! The junior facilitators of

her Pre-Con class inspired her to be more active with the church and to join Core Team. They showed how fun and rewarding it was to live their faith out loud. Kimmy is a very approach-

able person. She is nice, friendly, and has a lot to talk about. We know that Kimmy will do an awesome job as our President this year. We hope that a lot of the youth will come to the events that we have planned and to make it a memorable year for our graduating senior!



KEEPING THAT FIRE BURNING BY THE BEACH

BY ADRIAN BACONG, EDITOR

August 17th 2008 was a special day in the summer for many of the youth on Good Shepherd Parish's High School Core Team. Not only did it mark exactly ten days after our amazing summer experience on the mountain-top, but this fun trip to Crown Point in Mission Bay signified that we were all still "en fuego," on fire with our faith and our relationships with the youth and community.

This trip was not only a simple, fun afternoon at the beach, but moreover a day to reconnect with all the participants of Camp Emmaus. Our adventure began at the parish with a short drive to Crown Point. As we arrived at the beach, we were greeted by many of the youth and adults we met that summer on the mountain top. Hugs were exchanged as we all reac-



quainted ourselves with our fellow camp-mates. Music filled the air as we all celebrated and enjoyed our last days of summer. Many of the youth intermingled with others from around the diocese as stories were exchanged about the past week. Others enjoyed their time relaxing on the beach or



talking walks with their friends in the waves.

There was even a competitive volleyball game played as the youth



fought it out as though they were Misty May and Kerri Walsh themselves. Various parishes also brought grills, enjoying burgers and hotdogs cooked in the beautiful San Diego sun.

The one thing that struck most of us as we enjoyed that afternoon with our friends was the fact that despite the distances that separated all of us, we had all maintained that fire of



faith. Though many of us had not seen each other since Camp Emmaus, the amazing friendships we made there



still held strong despite not being around one another physically. Everyone felt that love and passion we had at Emmaus. No one felt unwelcome.

The afternoon ended with an amazing sunset over the ocean as we all watched, together, not as separate parishes, but united as God's universal people, as his light, and his hope for a better future. As night approached, the bonfire built that day burnt bright. As the moon rose, we could feel that fire in our hearts; inside us burned the passion we discovered this summer, radiating the love and light that we all have to share to the world.

And as we all said our good-byes, we knew that this would not be the end to our friendships, but rather, the beginning of a bright new future for all of us.



SENIOR AFFIRMATION BONFIRE

BY GREG GARCIA, TEAM WRITER

On August 21st, the Good Shepherd Core Team of 2007-2008 finally had their Senior Affirmations bonfire, which had been re-scheduled several times due to the busy schedules of members on the team. Although attendance was low, everyone still had a great time. Kite flying, card playing, and story telling were only some of the many fun activities that went on. However, as

"...Catholics are all connected as brothers, sisters, mothers, daughters, and family of one other and God."

afternoon fell into the darkness of dusk, and the fire's embers were slowly dying, the best part of the bonfire began: affirmations. For those who do not know how affirmations work, the person being affirmed (in this case, the seniors) sit in the middle of the circle of those present, while the members of the circle take turns affirming the person. Usually the affirmer shares memories and stories they have had with the person being affirmed, and in this setting, is used as a kind of final farewell to the seniors. It was a very touching and heartfelt evening, as seniors and underclassmen

alike shared some of their fondest memories that they have had together. The most common sentiment shared that night was the feeling of how we as Catholics are all connected as brothers, sisters, mothers, daughters, and family of one other and God. I hope that in the future, the Core Team will see what a special night this can be for all and more members will show up to be a part of this amazing experience.



ARE YOU READY FOR CONFIRMATION?

BY DJOANNAH MIGUEL, TEAM WRITER



After an amazing year of Pre-Confirmation classes and a heartfelt retreat, the time for Confirmation has finally arrived. As a former student of the Confirmation classes, I knew being a confirmed Catholic was a big deal, not only because of my religion, but for myself. I learned that I have been preparing for this moment my whole life. Confirmation provides you with the chance to become a step closer to God and a step closer to living your faith out loud.

Classes are on Sunday nights from 6:30 - 8:30 pm in the Parish Hall with everyone's favorite Coordinator of Youth Ministry, Mr. Pat Clasby! Following the Pre-Confirmation style, classes begin and end with a prayer. Classes also consist of large group as well as small group gatherings to converse about the main idea for the night.

Small groups are challenged to answer questions, make skits, create songs, or write on posters. After small groups, everyone is reunited with the large group. After all the ideas are presented, Pat usually shares something that has happened in his past or plays a song with extraordinary meaning behind them. Soon, everyone is able to go home and anticipate the next class.

Besides our regular classes, there is the unforgettable retreat. Three days and two nights with God, friends, and junior and adult facilitators will make an everlasting affect on you as it did on me. At first I expected it to be just like Pre-Con retreat, but it is different. You will find out more about yourself, your peers, and about God. It is up to all of you to allow God to work through you.

Throughout the school year, you will be learning a lot about Confirmation and what it is truly like to be a Catholic. Similar to your regular ex-

periences in school, you will be tested. If you pay close attention, you will hear the answers over and over again. There is also an interview with other Catholic

"It's easy to wear a cross around your neck, but it's harder to live your faith out loud after being confirmed..."

figures from the church like Kim Barber, Father Michael, Father Joseph, and Pat- just to name a few.

Confirmation is not easy, but it is not hard. It is what you make of it. "It's easy to wear a cross around your neck, but it's harder to live your faith out loud after being confirmed", says Rachele Miguel. Your faith does not end at Confirmation. It's just beginning. Enjoy the 2008-2009 school year and have fun!

LIVING A PRAYER: WISDOM AND REFLECTION FROM THE TEENAGE MIND

A REFLECTION ON MATTHEW 18:20

BY CHEYENNE PAIVA, TEAM WRITER

“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

Every night as I say my prayers, I try to use that special time to deeply connect with God. When it is just Him and me, I feel so strong and confident that He is really listening. It had never occurred to me before now that maybe, just maybe, praying with family or praying with friends could strengthen that connection I felt with God tenfold. It makes sense, doesn't it, that if we truly pray as a united group, Jesus will hear us even clearer and will truly be there. In this Gospel, that is exactly what He is saying.

There are so many opportunities given to us to pray with other people. God gave us our families and friends for a reason. Imagine if you prayed with them, the feeling of His presence tying you all together as one body in His name. To me, there is no greater feeling than being in a God-based relationship with another person. It is a huge reason why I took two years of Confirmation classes, joined Core Team, and will facilitate the next two years of Confirmation classes.

Many of these opportunities are without a doubt forgotten and underappreciated. The Rosary, for example, was *made* to be prayed by a group. What bigger sign is there to show us that gathering with other people to offer up our prayers is what God wants us to do? I know many of my

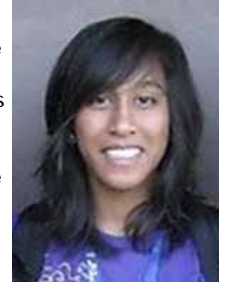


friends think Mass can be boring, but it is the longest prayer of the Catholic faith, and it provides us a whole hour with our Catholic community to offer up our prayers together. Imagine if you said your nightly prayers at Mass; the power of sharing your prayers with your fellow Catholics, and enabling them to pray with you is the greatest!

Jesus said that where “two or three are gathered together,” He is present, but think of the other times when you are not gathered in His name. It could be at school, at work, at a party, or anywhere where you do not have your faith on your mind. The fact of the matter is that Jesus always wants to be with us, and if we do not show that we want Him there through our actions and words, He will not reveal Himself to us. Some people complain that God does not answer their prayers, but how are they praying? Praying takes many forms, and in my opinion, life itself is a never-ending prayer. How we spend our time, where we go, what we listen to, who we hang out with; it is all a prayer. It is the most meaningful prayer, because how we respect our brothers, sisters, and ourselves is how we choose to respect God. When we talk to God we pray, and when we talk to our friends we pray. God is always there, but we will only truly feel his presence once we learn that prayer does not end after the sign of the cross. When you kiss your mom goodbye you pray, but when you yell at your sibling you pray, too.

Would you rather be with your friends protected by the presence of

God or lost without His presence? There is no question, right? God's grace is in our brothers and sisters, so when we disrespect them, we disrespect Him. On the other hand, God's grace is in us, so our actions should reflect our respect and gratefulness towards Him. He put His love into



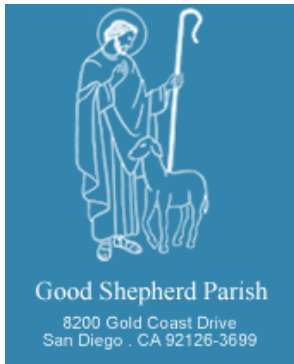
making us and within us, so all we really need to do in life is show our thanks. God wants us to have fun, and more importantly, He wants to be with us

and join in on the fun. The decision of whether or not He joins is up to us; what we decide to do, where we decide to be, and who we decide to be with is how God sees us. He is always there, and we will only be able to feel His presence if we live for Him alone.

Right now, even though I am writing this by myself, I feel like I am praying with a group because whoever reads this will know my prayers and my thoughts, forever linking us in the name of God. I can only hope that you share this with many others, and along with it, share your own prayers and your own thoughts, too. God made the earth with many creatures on it, so there is no excuse for not living up to Jesus's message. When you are gathered in a holy presence, He is there with you, praying with you, and praying for you.

“...there is no greater feeling than being in a God-based relationship with another person.”

“Peace begins with a smile.” - Mother Teresa



WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.GOODSHEPHERDYOUTH.NET

Calendar

Following is a list of our upcoming activities.
 Please note that all off-site activities need a signed permission slip.

DATE	EVENT
SEPTEMBER 7, 2008	PRE-CON ORIENTATION (PARENTS & STUDENTS)
SEPTEMBER 14, 2008	CONFIRMATION ORIENTATION (PARENTS & STUDENTS)
SEPTEMBER 21, 2008	FIRST CONFIRMATION CLASS (STUDENTS ONLY)
SEPTEMBER 23, 2008	FIRST PRE-CON CLASS (STUDENTS ONLY)
OCTOBER 10-12, 2008	HARVESTFEST
OCTOBER 24, 2008	THANK YOU REUNION DINNER FOR LOUISIANA TRIP
OCTOBER 26, 2008	WORLD YOUTH DAY MASS—5 pm
OCTOBER 28, 2008	PARENT NIGHT: "MYSPACE, THE INTERNET, AND YOUR CHILD" A PRESENTATION BY SDPD
NOVEMBER 1, 2008	BOWLING FOR CANS
NOVEMBER 8, 2008	PARISH YOUTH PICNIC @ MADDOX PARK
NOVEMBER 21-23, 2008	PRE-CON RETREAT
DECEMBER 12, 2008	HIGH SCHOOL ALL NIGHT CHRISTMAS PARTY



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"CLOSING"

BY MARIANNE ENCARNACION, TEAM WRITER



As we soak up the last rays of the summer, we should take a moment to reflect on the new year that is about to unfold. We can all look forward to new faces, new places, and new beginnings. Many of the youth are probably dreading the whole "back to school" episode because they of the difficult transition from the lazy carefree days of summer to the jam-packed busy days of school. And to top it all off, there is also the transition of following all the school rules again. If we think about it, we have so many rules and laws to follow

in our lives, that sometimes it becomes difficult to keep track. However, there is one commandment that should always stay sacred in our hearts, and that is the commandment to love one another. As God says, "love does no evil to the neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law."

As we all embark on a new journey of faith, we can all start living out the call to love one another by being more active members in the church. The Core Team would like to invite everyone, especially the youth and their families, to join us on October 10-12, 2008 for the parish's yearly Harvestfest. Come join us as we celebrate the coming of the fall season with food, games, and lots of other fun activities perfect for the family. We also have a 5 pm mass service on Oc-

tober 26, 2008 in commemoration of World Youth Day. This is a very special mass in celebration of the youth of the world, the future of the church. The Core Team has been working hard to plan and facilitate this mass, and we look forward to sharing this special day with the youth and their families. October 24th is another day to mark on your calendars as the Core Team will be hosting its Thank You dinner for the Louisiana trip. This free dinner is in commemoration of the success and the work of the youth and adults who participated in the trip. We highly encourage everyone to keep track of further bulleting announcements for more details. On behalf of the core team, we wish everyone a blessed and fruitful year.