



G. S. Youth United

Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12

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Christ's Mass by Cheyenne Paiva



When I first learned that my dad's birthday was on Christmas, I found it strange for several reasons. I really didn't think it was possible to have your birthday on a holiday. I'd always figured these certain days were set aside because they were special, so special that people's birthdays had to be moved to less awesome days. No birthdays allowed on Halloween, Valentine's Day, and certainly not Christmas. I even felt lucky to have my birthday on a boring day since my dad had to celebrate his in the Santa's shadow. As you can tell, I really didn't understand the meaning behind Christmas and the holidays in general. Back then, I felt that birthdays on Christmas lessened the spirit of the holiday, but now I completely understand that Christmas is in fact a universal birthday celebration. December 25th marks Jesus' birthday, the day that our Savior was born.

Now that I've given a lot of thought to my faith, celebrating Christmas feels like looking at the pyramids or standing in the U.S. Capitol. When we look at the pyramids, we don't see a structure, and when we stand in the meeting place of Congress we don't just notice the building. We see history. We ponder how the slaves moved tons of rock that high up the pyramid

and how many people worked for how many years. When I think of Washington D.C., I try to imagine all of the presidents passing through, and all the members of Congress throughout history taking seats in the Capitol. These



unimaginable pasts never go forgotten. This is how I feel about Christmas.

Two thousand and nine years ago, the angel Gabriel appeared to a teen-aged Mary, telling her how God wants her to be the mother of his Son. Two thousand and nine years ago, Mary and Joseph could barely find shelter, settling for a stable. Imagine this occurring today. A pregnant Virgin Mary is traveling with Joseph and can't find a place to stay, even though she is ready to burst with Jesus. The only place available is a barn, and accompanied by animals and visitors, she gives birth to the Savior of the world, placing him in a manger that the animals eat out of. It's unheard of, but so humble and pure. *This* is what Christmas is all about. This unimaginable adventure and

awe inspiring journey that really happened two thousand and nine years ago is what we celebrate.

My brief retelling of the nativity story reminds me of the nativity sets that so many people have. We place the figures as we want them to appear, but does it really hit us that the scene we've set changed the course of humanity? When you place the three wise men by the manger, do you think about how they chose not to tell Herod of Jesus' location, thereby saving Him from death? When you sing Away in a Manger or Silent Night, do you think about the truth in the lyrics? Christmas, or Christ's Mass, is a day to remember the birth of the Lord.

Right now, just typing this article, I already know that my best attempts to describe the magnitude of Christmas are insufficient. Just remember that Jesus' birthday has been celebrated by countless generations, in millions of cities, in thousands of years. The meaning behind Christmas brings joy to world. Happy birthday Jesus, and Merry Christmas!!



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Pre-Confirmation by Evan Menta

The new feeling of being in a prayerful and spiritual environment creates the uncontrollable interest of something faithfully understanding. The sense of being in a world of confusion and disinterest can be changed into a new loving praiseworthy instrument of God just by learning and putting the words and challenges that our parish's coordinator of youth ministry, Pat Clasby, teaches us. At Pre-Confirmation,

the students embarked a new path that would shape their future faith or vice versa, but on these faces, these kids won't leave this class with tiresome emotion, most would be finding a new life through God and gaining respect to their faith. On some faces there were blank expressions, passionate expressions, and faithful expressions that were all in an unknown room filled with people they knew or

did not know. Although parents were involved, it created a team between both themselves and their child. Through their bond together, God will always be there when they need help, guidance and security. God will make all things possible, loved, and secure.



Pre-Confirmation Retreat 09-10

Confirmation Orientation by Djoannah Miguel

On September 20, 2009 students from Pre-Confirmation 2008-2009 returned to the Parish Hall to continue their journey of Confirmation. The night started off with a prayer skit done by junior facilitators. Pat then went over the guidelines of class and what he expects from the "candidates". PAW shared the song "Making Melodies" with the candidates and their parents and added a little twist to it by making them sing with their

tongues out, knees bent, feet apart, and more. Three junior facilitators, Angel Nepomuceno, Angellyne De Perio, and Bill Reed shared their journey of Confirmation. The witness talks given by these three showed how they all changed for the better.

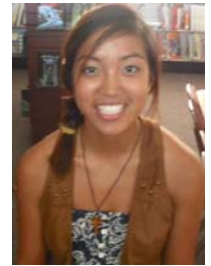
There are many students who enjoy going to classes but for the ones who don't here's a little something: Confirmation is not easy, but it is not hard. It is what you make of it. Of course

we always consider what others say about us, but that shouldn't be important. Always do what is best for you. I promise there will be something good that will benefit you at the end. As for Confirmation, you won't regret being confirmed. You're one step closer to God, and He will help you through anything.



Catechetical Sunday: "Catechesis and the Proclamation of the Word" by Ally Celones

"I assure you, if you had faith as small as a mustard seed you could say to this mountain, 'move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible." -Matthew 17:20



September 20, 2009 may have been just another Sunday for some of you, but according to the Catholic Church, it was, in fact, a day to be noted. Many of you may have noticed that at the 8:30 am mass that morning, it had been announced that it was Catechetical Sunday, a day dedicated to honoring the catechists of our community. According to The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, the definition of a catechist is as follows:

Catechist: (n) A person who catechizes, especially one who instructs catechumens in preparation for admission into a Christian church.



This definition provides a

fairly vague concept of what a catechist does or is. Realistically, a catechist is one who spreads faith, bears witness to the Gospel and is noted for their ministry and leadership. We honored the catechists—or "mountain-movers", if I may so call them—of our community at mass and with a breakfast in the hall following our Sunday celebration. I'm sure that many of the "mountain-movers" had substantial amounts of faith, bigger than mustard seeds, and therefore being the reason for the pleasantly overwhelming abundance of warmth and grace in the hall. The tables were set and adorned with decorations as well as complimentary, eco-friendly parish water bottles. Every age group was presented in the gathering and surprisingly; many of the attendants were youth members. After a prayer and blessing from Father Michael, Pat Clasby, the Youth Ministry Coordina-

tor, shared a creative anecdote that shed light on God's creation of children. At the conclusion, breakfast was served and the remainder of the time was spent among fellow cate-



chists who shared in striving to keep their faith alive and spread it.

Catechetical Sunday was a wonderful opportunity to reflect upon the role that each person plays in handing on the faith and being a witness to the Gospel. It was also an occasion for all to rededicate themselves to this mission as a community of faith. Together and through Him, we can move more than just mountains.



<http://www.usccb.org/catecheticalsunday/>

Ultimate Frisbee, Prayer and Ice Cream Social by Evan Menta

October 11th, 2009 our Good Shepherd Parish youth held an event that was located behind the Good Shepherd Elementary School. Not knowingly that it was a blast; the event was an Ultimate Frisbee game, mixed with other sports like football, baseball, and soccer, which topped our teens in interests and fun!

The Community Life team in the parish's Core Team took a lot of effort to put this event together to make it even happen and fun filled. Corresponding to the games and socializing, there was also an Ice Cream Social as we had called it. The Ice Cream Social was a delightful way to mingle with other youth and adults.

Overall, the outcome of this youth event was a get together from previous hangouts and our powerful prayerful hangouts. It gave us a background of who we truly choose to be with and who we keep in touch with for as long as we can to love.



As the Fog Cleared by Nicole Larsen

People huddled around the front of the hall, waiting for the doors to open. Fog covered the glass, obscuring the scene within. The doors opened. The Core Team members in purple shirts collected the tickets as the crowd pushed in to the hall. The seats filled up, the crowd settled, and then, the spotlight came on. The show had started.

This is the scene that greeted the people who came to the first Annual Talent Show on October 23, 2009. Although this event was sponsored by the Core Team of Good Shepherd Parish, many performers invited friends to be in the acts with them, so we were privileged to see the talent of our own youth as well as the talent of many others. Some of the alumni of the Good Shepherd Core Team also performed. And the show was fantastic! The talent of the youth was awe-inspiring; the singing, the dancing, and the band performances left the crowd breath-

less. If you think "American Idol" and "So You Think You Can Dance" contestants are good, you have not seen anything yet!

If you could not come to the show, you missed a very special and enjoyable night. The DJs, Stephanie Espinoza and Zach Hight, entertained the crowd between the acts with funny jokes and hilarious antics. They kept the show running, even with all the "paranormal activity" that kept occurring. The acts ranged from Polynesian dancers to full-scale band acts. A cappella singers raised their voices to the heavens with spine-tingling beauty. With a vivacious effort, dancers moved their feet in time to the music. The bands that performed had the crowd jumping on their feet in front of the stage.

And for the finale, we were treated to the talent of our very own coordinator of youth ministry, Mr. Pat Clasby, and fellow youth ministers from various

other parishes around the city. With percussion, strings, and vocals, the youth ministers showed everyone how fun it is to use your talent to praise God. "It felt like being back at Camp Emmaus," one of the youth commented. Young people gathered at the front of the stage, jumping up and down during the fast songs, and swaying to the beat during the slower songs. The spirit of God was definitely in the crowd that night. He was in the gifts of all the wonderful young people who showed our parish the tremendous amount of talent they possess. The pure love of what they were doing was evident in the broad smiles on every performer's face. And when performers are enjoying what they are doing, you know the crowd is enjoying the show too!



Hairnets? by Paula Hoang

The holidays, a time for resting and laziness, right? Well, wrong for the most part when it comes to Good Shepherd's Pre-Confirmation and Confirmation classes. Instead of relaxing at home and watching television all day, Pre-Confirmation and Confirmation students of 2010 chose to spend a day helping those less fortunate than they.

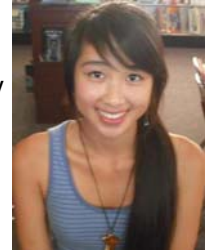
In order for the students to sign up for St. Vincent De Paul trips, they had to go through a three informational forms regarding the trip. The first two, of course, consisted of permission slips and the last was of a certificate quiz, all of which were due two weeks before the trip itself. Such regulations helped keep the food in good conditions for all the people. The quiz included questions on "The 11 Kitchen Rules of

When You Should Wash Your Hands" such as when hand washing was needed and bacteria facts in the kitchen.

On November 24th, the group of students showed up at the parish around 3:00 pm in long pants and all closed toe shoes. The students arrived at their destination and continued to adorn themselves with more garments, including hairnets and plastic gloves. After they were ready and set to go, the students took up different jobs around the kitchen such as getting the food and handing it out to the homeless who were very thankful for all the kids' help and their dedication to taking time out their lives to do such a thing.

This wasn't the only St. Vincent De Paul trip. There had been one on October 19th and

there will be plenty more for Pre-Confirmation and Confirmation students to complete their requirements of a Justice and Service Project. Five more St. Vincent de Paul trips remain, along with Bowling 4 Cans. All these events will help the students become more involved with their community and let them continue giving back to the community that they love. Thank you to all the youths that take their time to volunteer and give back to the community not just for the requirement, but out of the kindness in their heart. Their faith continues to grow as the students share their compassion with others. "For just as a body without a spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead."
-James 2:26



Thanksgiving Fun Run by Djoannah Miguel

The youth of Good Shepherd decided to put a team together for this year's Father Joe's Thanksgiving Day 5K Run/Walk to supply meals for those who need it. The event took place on Thanksgiving Day, November 26th, 2009 at 8:00 am. The route of the run/walk started and ended at Balboa Park. Medals

were presented to the top three finishers and all participants received a long sleeve event shirt. Kimmy Melechinsky, a Confirmation student, placed 2nd place in the 15-17 age group! There was entertainment provided and breakfast was available in the morning. Pets were allowed to join in on the fun and received a

bandana. For more information, go to

www.thanksgivingrun.org. Start thinking about helping out and don't forget to register for next year's run/walk!



Thanksgiving Fun Run 09

Party 'Til the Break of Dawn by Angela Bolanos

And that is definitely what Good Shepherd Youth did! Everyone anticipated December 4th, when the much



Cards

loved All Night Party was going to happen. And who wouldn't look forward to it? One whole night: just to have fun with friends, go bowling, and eat *loads* of food.

The party kicked off at seven sharp, with a quick greeting and prayer from Pat Clasby. Immediately, the games started and everyone had something to do. There were tons of video games, karaoke, card games, and poker! In addition, there were mountains of sub sandwiches, candy, taquitos, and pizzas galore; no one went hungry. As time went on, one of the

best games of the night, Sit Down Beach Volleyball, went down. In the end, the guys stole the game from the ladies, but it was a close one! Afterwards, the movie *Up* was put on, and everyone either watched it or was free to play other games.

Bowling



Once the movie was over, Core Team's Prayer and Worship put on an awesome concert that involved the whole group to sing with them. The mood shifted as the concert ended, and Yssabel gave an inspiring faith talk to the crowd. By then, it was almost 1 AM, and everyone

got excited for bowling. The walk was absolutely freezing, and everyone huddled to make the long trek to the bowling alley. It was definitely worth it! Everyone had pizza and bowling was extremely fun. At 3 AM, everyone walked back to the hall and settled down with their pillows and blankets to watch *Star Trek*. A lot of people fell asleep, and at 6 AM sharp, Pat woke everyone up to head on home. Hope-



Sit Down Volleyball

fully, everyone went home and slept for a *long* time. There's no doubt about it, All Night Party was definitely a success!

Reflections of the Teenage Mind by Andrew Bacong

There's a lot to be said about waiting. We've all had to wait for something at some point in our lives. We have waited for the school day or work day to be over so we can just go home and relax. We have waited for our friends or family so we can go out and have fun. We have waited anxiously for something, such as a birthday or for vacation to start. Sometimes in our lives, we do a bit too much waiting. I'm just as anxious as anyone here. I can admit that I can be very impatient. However, this liturgical season is defined as a season of waiting. The word itself means "the coming of something extremely important or significant." And with this being the fourth and final week of Advent, we can finally see an end to our waiting and look forward to the coming of the baby Jesus.



As difficult as waiting is, it is important to understand why we do so as Catholics. I do admit, it would be very easy to skip the entire season of Advent and simply just celebrate Christmas. However, Advent plays a bigger role in our spiritual lives that many do not realize. Advent isn't just another season



in the liturgical calendar. It shows us how to be patient and how important it is to display this patience. During Advent, we can reflect on our characters and see how much we need to change in order to please our Lord and Savior,

Jesus Christ. It's like having a guest come to your house and entering to find a complete mess: no one wants to see a messy house when they come over to visit. So Advent is a time for us to essentially "clean up" the mess we've

made over the past year and start anew with the coming of Jesus.



There's a lot of tense anxiety when waiting for something. However, we also experience the joy associated with the waiting. The anticipation of long-awaited events makes the waiting all worth it once it actually happens. The Gospel reading shows the amount of anxiety and nervousness associated with waiting for something. When Mary enters the house of Elizabeth, Elizabeth's baby moves around in joy, showing that we all experience joy in Christ, whether you're young or old.

The most important part about this season is readying yourself for Baby Jesus. We all want to be at our best when he comes around. Take time to reflect on your shortcomings and think about ways to improve yourself. Truly put all of your effort into bettering yourself. There is always more we can do. And as I close this reflection, ask yourself, "Am I truly ready for Jesus?" Merry Christmas to all, and have a safe holiday.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.GOODSHEPHERDYOUTH.NET

Events

For information regarding upcoming events, you can go to <http://www.goodshepherd youth.net/events.htm>

Please note that all off-site activities need a signed permission slip.



Pat Clasby

Coordinator of Youth Ministry

8200 Gold Coast Drive
San Diego, CA 92126
Phone: (858) 271-4128
Email: pclasby@san.rr.com



Oh, the Jolly Season! by Paula Hoang

Farewells to the fall season and greetings to winter wonderland! As a season whizzes by we muse over the events that took place in our lives during that period. For one, school started again and with that, so did homework. Hopefully as all of our parish's youth entered the new school year, God is still reflected upon, on top of all the work as-

signed.

Thanksgiving is yet another eventful day that passed by. Let us remember to give thanks to all loved ones, not just on this day, but on a daily basis. Whether it is a simple thank you or a big bear hug to the people who consistently love you, expressing gratitude can liven up any person's day. This grateful holiday brings me to the next festive celebration approaching soon, which we all know is Christmas!

When the thought of Christmas season comes to mind, everyone's interpretation of it is different from each others. It could range from setting up the Christmas tree, going shopping for presents, or merely sipping hot chocolate near the fire place. Whatever it might be, we must remember why the Christmas day exists: to celebrate the birth of our savior, Jesus Christ. While enjoying the holidays, welcome Jesus and his love that he brought for us when he entered this world. Be humble as he was. Be kind and helpful as he was. Let us make our hearts ready for Jesus' coming into our world.

After Christmas is New Years! How many of us pulled through with our 2008 resolutions? The New Year gives another opportunity to make new resolutions to abide by and hopefully keep throughout the year. As the New Year starts, more and more opportunities for Good Shepherd youth are available for them to enjoy and take part in. Some of which include of the annual Snow Summit Ski/Snowboard Trip on January 18th, Youth Mass on January 31st, and Confirmation Retreat for all Confirmation students from February 12-14th. Check out the Good Shepherd's youth ministry website for more information on these events later on.

As we enter the Christmas season let's remember to welcome our newborn savior and as the New Year rolls around, to continue loving him and keeping him in our hearts. Have a jolly Christmas and a happy New Years!

