



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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FORGING A NEW PATH

BY ADRIAN BACONG, EDITOR



As of today, January 11th, 2009, the Good Shepherd Core Team Seniors of 2009 are five months and 4 days away from our graduation and as I reflect upon this brand new year of 2009, practically the final year of my childhood, I've noticed and learned much about myself as well as my fellow brothers and sisters here at Good Shepherd. I was asked to write this article due to the growing awareness of how multifaceted our Core Team Seniors of 2009 are. Researching into every persons' background I discovered the diversity that was inherit throughout the Core Team, not through race or school, but by how much extra we do for our community outside of church. Take for instance our very own

Annie Le, winner of my "Overachiever List." Annie not only works on the Core Team as the chairperson for our Justice and Service Team, but also participates in the Model UN at Scripps Ranch High. She also is a periodic journalist for the Union Tribune, writing movie reviews in the Family Column. Not only that, Annie also writes for her school newspaper and volunteers in a myriad of activities outside of church. And let's look at Gregory Garcia, a member of the Prayer and Worship Group as well as our very own Newsletter. Greg not only works in church on our Core Team, but is also a Boy Scout on the verge of becoming an Eagle Scout, the principal trumpet player in the Mira Mesa High School Sapphire Sound, the student conductor of the Sapphire Sound, and finally a member of the Pacific Crest Drum and Bugle Corps. But the list does not stop with these two students; it transcends my entire ability to fathom how much extra we all do outside of our commitments. We have everything from the Mira Mesa ASB President to the Co-Captain of the Sapphire Sound Colorguard to a synchronized skater silver medallist to Varsity sports captains, Academic League Members, musicians, Presi-

dents, secretaries, practically everything. The list goes on forever. In essence, our Core Team is multifaceted. We all participate in many things outside of church and yet we still have time to be ourselves.

The advice from any senior to underclassmen is to simply enjoy your time in high school because in the end, you will most likely regret how quickly it passed. And as the senior stress of applying for college ended with the last minute race to turn in applications, I felt this regret. I wished I was a freshman again. I simply wanted to relive those three years all over again. Now this article is not self promotion of the Core Team or incentive for you to join as many extra curriculums as possible to make yourself look good for college, especially for you adults who read this (don't get any ideas and compare your kids to us :-)). But what truly matters is WHY we have all undertaken so many activities, rather than for what purpose we took in joining, whether intrinsic or extrinsic.

Believe me, life in high school is hard. I personally have so many responsibilities outside of church that I have to deal with that I wonder why in the world I have not turned insane yet. I mean, I live a life everyday

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Lighted candles around cross

FORGING A NEW PATH (cont.)

with so many labels (President of the Mira Mesa Sapphire Sound, Good Shepherd Newsletter/Webteam Chairperson, Principal Tuba, Mira Mesa Varsity Academic League member just to name a few), yet I live a very happy life. But simply because I say I live a happy life does not mean that it is easy. Taking on responsibly, especially in leadership is stressful and believe me, I have had my share of sleepless nights and daily catnaps just to keep myself going. But the beauty of the undertaking so much, is the REWARD rather than the incentive for power and extrinsic reward that motivates every single one of us seniors to undertake such gargantuan tasks. We seniors have taken so many leadership roles for one reason: because we care. We care about the outcome of each group

we join. We care about each and every single member of each group we control, even if we do have disagreements with them at times. In essence, we simply care not only for our futures, but everyone's future. It is an incessant cycle; the senior class becoming the precursors for the future. And this year, we are the precursors. We forge the path to success. We build the foundation on which future generations stand. We are creating a new and better world, even if people say otherwise. But I believe the number one reason that each senior has taken a leadership position in our community today is because we want to make our final year count. We want to make our senior year our best year ever.

A friend and I were talking just a couple days prior to the New

Year and being the childhood friends we were, we promised each other one thing, to make this year, our senior year, simply the best year ever. That's it. Make this year 2009, the best year ever. And I have personally had a crazy 2008, but have become so optimistic of 2009 that I truly believe that this year is our year. This year is not just the year of this year's seniors, but everyone's year. We live in such an exciting time, one of transition and change, but as we look toward the future, let us remember one thing: This is our time and let's truly make it count.

For a complete list of every seniors' leadership in our community be sure to check the center spread!

LOUISIANA THANK YOU PARTY

BY CHEYENNE PAIVA, TEAM WRITER

This summer, a number of youth and adults from our parish traveled to Lake Charles, Louisiana to aid in hurricane relief efforts. Their part in the journey is obvious, but in no way would have been possible if not for donations from parishioners and organizations. On October 24, 2008, the core team threw a free Louisiana-style dinner party to thank those who helped send the group to Louisiana. The event was open to the entire church, and those who went were treated with a hot Italian dinner, live jazz music, activities, and a special dessert.



Banana pudding

The environment was ecstatic as a sense of the party-like atmosphere was brought to life in Mira Mesa. As the attendees dined on salad and pasta they viewed the highlights of the trip in the center of the parish hall. As a special dessert, the group even made the banana pudding that they ate in Louisiana as a live jazz band made up of some of the musical youth of our community played. The rest of the night

served to share the Louisiana group's experience with their sponsors. The attendees were able to see the work that was done because of their donations through a video and a question and answer session with the group themselves. Set up on the stage of the parish hall, the youth shared their stories and experiences with the rest of the room. By the end of the thank you party, both the attendees and their sponsors felt a combined sense of accomplishment.

When the Core Team puts on community or justice and service activities, a heavy burden is lifted off our shoulders because of the donations from our generous parish community. Our yearly activities such as Bowling 4 Cans and our monthly St. Vincent de Paul trip are made possible through the generosity of our community. Even more so this past Louisiana Trip was made possible for all the participants through fundraising in the form of the Super Buckets, donations (Women's group especially), Bowling 4 Cans, and many other nonprofit work that our youth do around the community. The trust that we can have in the church is immense, and it rarely worries us that our events will not succeed. With huge events like the trip to Louisiana, parties are necessary to celebrate not the success of our participants, but the love and partici-

part of every parishioner. Simply put, you all inspire us to make a difference in the world. As for smaller events, all we can say is thank you. You serve the youth community through us, and there is not a big enough way to say thanks. It is this community that keeps youth ministry alive and well. All that we, the Good Shepherd Core Team, ask of every parishioner is that you pray for us as we strive to make a difference in this world. So as we conclude this year and start a new one, all we can say is, "Thank you, for everything."



Parishioners helping out with the Louisiana Thank You dinner

GOOD SHEPHERD HARVESTFEST 2008

BY ANDREW BACONG, TEAM WRITER



Every year, our parish hosts a 3-day festival called the "Harvestfest." At Harvestfest, we have all kinds of foods, entertainment and games. Usually, our parish does very well at Harvestfest, and

this year was no exception. Many people came out this year to check it out and support our parish.

When we think of Harvestfest, one of the things that comes to mind right away is all the great food we have. Again, this year had great food spanning many different ethnicities and culture. We had food from Mexico, Vietnam, the Philippines and Italy. The

food was very popular among Harvestfest attendees, and with good reason. The food was delicious and, for just a few tickets, you could eat your fill and then some.

Another thing that comes to mind when we think of Harvestfest are the games. Once again, we had a great game gallery. Parish youth as well as adults helped out at all the booths, helping to make this year run as smoothly as possible. For a couple tickets, kids got to try a range of activities, from throwing darts at a board of balloons to picking ducks out of a tray. It was great to see children running around and having fun, as well as seeing the outpouring of help from the youth at our parish.

And of course, Harvestfest cannot be complete with the entertain-

ment. This year, the entertainment was great, with performances from several groups and bands. The performing groups did a great job. Many people turned up in the hall to watch the performances, which were running almost all day. The best thing about the performances was that they were not only great, but they were also free!

Harvestfest 2008 was, as it is every year, a success for our parish community. Not only did we get an outpouring of help from the community, but also huge support from our parish in the number of people who came. Thank you to everyone who came out to support us, and to everyone who took an active role in helping out for those three days. Hope to see you again next year!



All Night Party—Bowling Alley



Hanging out at the All Night Party



Games at the All Night Party

WORLD YOUTH DAY

BY MARIANNE ENCARNACION, TEAM WRITER

On October 26, 2008, Good Shepherd Parish celebrated World Youth Day by dedicating the 5 p.m. mass to the youth. Our Coordinator of Youth Ministry, Pat Clasby, along with the Core Team and other dedicated adults facilitated various ministries for the Mass. Led by Joe Hight and Jed Banayat, a youth choir was formed from various members of the Core Team and the Hispanic community. Endless hours were spent practicing every weekend since August mastering the lively and beautiful songs that they sang that day. Other members of the team went to church early to help set up for the mass and to hand out worship aids and greet the parishioners. In essence, the youth of our community took lead on that fair night, as the squires of the Knights of Columbus acted as ushers, our Community Life Team acted as greeters, and the Prayer and Worship Team assisted in making this special night eventful for

all.

The mass was celebrated by Father Michael Robinson. The church was packed as the choir and musicians infused life into the celebration with their melodious voices. From reaffirming our faith in the beginning by singing "I Will Choose Christ", to lifting our voices to the "Prince of Peace" in the end, the sounds of the youth and the rest of the parishioners singing with gusto was definitely inspiring and uplifting. Loud applause rang throughout the church as the final song came to a close. Through the hard work and dedication of the youth ministry program, as well as the participation of the youth and the rest of the parish, the World Youth Day Mass was a wonderful success. It can't be stressed enough the importance of having our youth participate actively and live out their faith by sharing their talents, effort, and time to contribute to the community and transcend the regular expectations of

just going to church to attend mass and praying. This is crucial, especially these days when negative stereotypes in our society are discouraging our youth from achieving their full potential. Our youth here have broken down that stereotype and have proven that there truly is light and hope in our youth today.



After the success of the World Youth Day Mass, the Core Team hopes to establish and facilitate regular inter-generational masses at our parish at 5 p.m. every Sunday. It will take a lot of hard work and effort on their part, but the team is willing to give it their all in order to get more youth in the parish inspired and involved.

PUTTING CHRIST BACK INTO CHRISTMAS 2: ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS...

BY ADRIAN BACONG, TEAM WRITER



Now that Christmas is over, let us take time to see what Christmas is truly all about. Christmas in the Catholic Church simply does not last one day, but rather many days. But in essence, Christmas should not be limited to a single day or time span, but rather every day, especially given the dismal outlook of our world today.

Let's face it. Our economy is in its worst condition since the Great Depression of 1929 and it will only get worse. Millions are losing their jobs as not only America, but the entire world attempts to rejuvenate the economy and stimulate growth once again. Now, we could all go blaming the perpetrators (i.e. the housing industry, people who gave bad loans, Congress, etc.), but rather than pointing fingers, let us take a moment to see this event, this difficult future we face, not in a demeanor of darkness, but as an attempt to change. It is now time for a change.

Christmas has been associated with presents, candy canes, Santa Claus, and goodwill on earth, but the question is: Do we really know the TRUE meaning of Christmas, the reason why we give presents, celebrate, anticipate the arrival of Santa, or why Christmas is promoted as a time of goodwill on earth? Emilie Mendia suggested last year in her article "Putting Christ Back Into Christmas," that the true meaning of Christmas was the celebration of the birth of our savior, Jesus Christ, and she was exactly right. The true meaning of Christmas is the celebration of our savior, Christ. He was the change the world needed two thousand and eight years ago, and he is the change we need now, as we face the darkness in such unpredictable

times. But why am I, Adrian Bacong, reiterating a lesson that we all learned from last year? The answer is purely simple. As humans, we are forgetful and need constant reinforcement to recall memories and ideas. But, as we all know that Jesus is the reason for the season, do we believe it? Do we truly take the words to heart? Do we, when at mass say "Amen" truly believe those words? Does Jesus truly exist on earth? The answer is YES. Christ is in each and every one of us as we go out into the world and spread his light, inspiring and spreading love throughout a world that is stone cold to it.

If there was one thing I learned about Christ that I will always remember is that "Christ is love." And it is in that reason why we celebrate Christmas. It is with love that we exchange gifts, that we anticipate the arrival of Santa, and that we go out into the world trying to be the best people we can possibly be. And it is through love that we will get through these hard economic times, that we will triumph in the darkness, and that we will overcome. Jesus came to the world at Christmas for one reason: to save us. And it is our faith that will save us in these hard times. It is through faith that we overcome every obstacle we are faced with. It is through faith that Christ saved us from sin. And it is through faith that love is possible.

It is always said that "Love conquers all things," but in the turmoil of the world today, love is the most important thing we have. And this Christmas we need to truly place our faith in Christ because He IS love. If Christ is love and love conquers all things, then Christ conquers all things. In the end, we will never lose.

For the past few weeks, my parents have asked me what I wanted for Christmas. Looking into the past 18

years of my life, I realized that as I aged, my wants grew less and my love and satisfaction grew more. I learned, according to my brother, the difference between "wants" and "needs." And it is during this difficult Christmas, that we all need to learn what we truly want versus what we truly need. We "need" food. We "want" a feast. We "need" to entertain ourselves. We "want" video games or television. We "need" love. We "want" whatever our heart desires. But what is it that our heart desires? The answer is simple. We need Christ in our lives. Simply put, Christ exists in all of us and it is through love for each other that our need for love is fulfilled, not through extravagant gifts or frivolous wants. It is the love in the gift that counts, not the gift itself. And it is with this idea, that love is the ultimate gift of Christmas, that I realized what I truly wanted for Christmas; I wanted love. But amazingly, I had my wish before I had even thought of it, through the love of my family and friends. Though I am also suffering through the turmoil of our world, I am still satisfied because I have love and I know that Christ is with me each step of the way. In dark times, the light of Christ shines even brighter in the souls of your loved ones and it is in this faith and assurance in a brighter future that my one wish for Christmas for all of you is to never give up and always remember the Christ will always be at your side, especially in the darkness. For it is Christ that saved the world from darkness thousands of years ago, and it is for Christ again that the world will travel into an age of everlasting light. It is through love that all things are possible and it is through love that I wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Remember, everything always works out in the end.

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Pre-Con students at retreat



Music group teaching songs



Hanging out at retreat

List of the Good Shepherd Parish 2008-2009 Seniors and their Leadership Positions

Your Senior Officers:



- **Kimmy Oberle**-Core Team President, MMHS Field Hockey Varsity Captain, MMHS Varsity Soccer member, GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator



- **Melissa Farin**-Core Team Historian, Varsity Volleyball Captain, GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator, MMHS National Honor Society, MMHS Key Club, MMHS Ecology Club

- **Charity Quijano**-Core Team Vice President, GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator, National Honor Society, MMHS Key Club



Your Senior Task Group Chairs:



- **Devin Saragosa-Harris**-Community Life Chairperson, GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator, SRHS Model UN Member, Co-Founder of Junior Model UN at Wangenheim Middle School, SRHS Peer Educator, SRSH Drama Department, Intern at the American Center for Learning

- **Annie Le**-Justice and Service Team Chairperson, GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator, Co-President of Students Actively Volunteering for You (SAVY) Club, SRHS Model United Nations Club Amnesty International Chair, Co-Founder of Junior Model UN at Wangenheim Middle School, Falcon Flyer Executive Editor of Design (SRHS student paper), Good Shepherd Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Society, Periodic Writer for the Rated G Column in the Family section of the Union Tribune

- **Adrian Bacong**-MMHS Sapphire Sound Band President, Newsletter/ Webteam Chairperson, MMHS Principal Tuba, MMHS Tuba Section Leader, MMHS Academic League Varsity Team, MMHS National Honor Society, MMHS Current Event Club, GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator



The Core Team Seniors of 2009:

- **Tammy Nguyen**-MMHS Class of 2009 Secretary, GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator, MMHS Prom Committee Chairperson



- **Phillip Graham**-Community Life Member, MMHS ASB Commissioner of Environment, MMHS Psychology Club Vice President

- **Jovi Macanas**-Community Life Member, GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator

- **Kamilah Santos**-Member of MMHS Drama Department, GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator, Community Life Member



List of the Good Shepherd Parish 2008-2009 Seniors and their Leadership Positions (cont.)



- **Shelby Watson**- MMHS ASB Co-Commissioner of Publicity, GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator, Community Life Member, MMHS Varsity Volleyball, MMHS Varsity Basketball Captain



- **Janzel Manalansan**- GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator, Subchair for Prayer on GS Prayer and Worship Team, Co-Captain of the MMHS Sapphire Sound Colorguard, MMHS Sapphire Sound Varsity Colorguard



- **Christopher Mendoza**- MMHS ASB Commissioner of Athletics, GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator, Prayer and Worship Team Member, MMHS Varsity Volleyball, MMHS Varsity Basketball



- **Albert Paras**-Prayer and Worship Team Member, GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator, Mt. Carmel High School ASB and Senior Class Council.



- **Mara Cid**- GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator, Prayer and Worship Team Member, Mt. Carmel High School ASB, Senior Class Council



- **Mariah Santiago**-MMHS ASB President, GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator, Prayer and Worship Team Member, MMHS Cross Country, MMHS Track and Field, MMHS Update



- **Gregory Garcia**- MMHS Sapphire Sound Student Conductor, GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator, Prayer and Worship Team Member, Newsletter/ Webteam Member, Boy Scout, MMHS Principal Trumpet, MMHS Trumpet Section Leader, Pacific Crest Drum and Bugle Corps Trumpet Player



- **Ben Murray**- GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator, Prayer and Worship Team Member



- **Ann Marie Gelle**- GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator, Prayer and Worship Team Member



- **Darryl Obdianela**-Justice and Service Team Member, GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator



- **Alyssa Patterson**-Justice and Service Team Member, GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator, SRHS Model UN Member, Co-Founder of Junior Model UN at Wangenheim Middle School



- **Marianne Encarnacion**-MMHS Sapphire Sound Varsity Colorguard, GS Faith Formation Jr. Facilitator, Newsletter/Webteam Member

EVERYDAY HEROES: GOOD SHEPHERD PRE-CONFIRMATION RETREAT 2008

BY CHEYENNE PAIVA, TEAM WRITER

On November 21, 2008, nearly 200 youth from the English speaking community, Vietnamese community, and Hispanic community attended the Pre-Confirmation retreat at Palomar Christian Conference Center. Planned months in advanced, dozens of adult and junior facilitators worked hard to provide an ideal environment for the students. For three days, the facilitators and students bonded with each other and with God.

Three buses, each virtually full with students, arrived at the outdoor retreat site late at night on Friday the 21st. The night was spent for the most part on learning new songs, dances, and games as well as on meeting their small groups for the rest of the retreat. The next day, however, would be the day everyone remembered best.

The overall theme of this year's Pre-Confirmation Retreat was "Everyday Heroes" and the witness talks of Saturday truly accentuated the presence of "everyday heroes" in our world. A total of seven talks were given by both adult and junior facilitators. Each witness talk covered a cornucopia of topics, such as family, relationships with God, reconciliation, and who people truly were. Rarely was there a moment where the students were not deeply moved by the words they heard. Many tears were shed as reali-

zations came upon them as they listened to the experiences of people who were previous attendees of retreats and Confirmation. Their life experiences were not only touching, but exciting, comical, and interesting all at the same time. Later that night, Fr. Michael and many other priests arrived to do Reconciliation for the students, many of whom who have not been



Being escorted to dinner

reconciled since their childhood. Tears were shed and hugs were exchanged as each student went for their individual confession. The sacrament lasted nearly three prayerful hours, and even so, the students were moved by the power of God as He readily forgave their sins. Students for the first time fathomed the greatness of this sacrament, the ability for everyone to restart. Ending on a good note, the students and staff slept towards the next and last day.

Sunday was bittersweet. Awakened with the great feeling of

accomplishment and happiness, the realization soon came that it was the last day of retreat. Fr. George, the parish's visiting priest, said a wonderful mass, and three more talks were given about going back to reality, emphasizing the need for all of us to keep true to our faith and never forget the presence of God, even when times are hard. However, the most important idea was this: to never let the fire of our faith burn out, but rather keep it burning strong. Finally, the students loaded onto the buses and made their way back to Mira Mesa.

Like any emotion or idea, the full experience in no way can be understood by just an article, but rather is understood as simply amazing by the hearts of the participants. The students themselves shared a remarkable journey that cannot be described in words, and as they live back home in a different environment than the Palomar Christian Conference Center, their lives with God still continue to grow and develop into something greater.



GIVING BACK

BY MARIANNE ENCARNACION, TEAM WRITER



On Wednesday, December 10, 2008, a group of Confirmation students from Good Shepherd Parish and dedicated adults, Alvin Mendoza and Chad Closs, went to St. Vincent de Paul's Village in Downtown San Diego for a Justice and Service Project.

Eight youth of Good Shepherd's Confirmation Class worked in the soup kitchen from 3:30 PM to 6:30 PM making a difference in our community serving food to the homeless.

Robin San Gil, a participant, was enthusiastic on the impact he made in our community claiming that,

"I liked working side by side with other students from Confirmation class. I also liked the good feeling I got afterwards, knowing that I was giving back to the community and helping out those who are less fortunate." Like Robin, many of the students who attend Good Shepherd's sanctioned Justice and Service trips, they not only deliver a positive impact in our community, but they also make the lives of other people better, even if they are complete strangers. Knowing about this truth, Robin also stated that he "would definitely recommend this to other students. It's fun and fulfilling at the same time. It was definitely worth the time I put in."

For Pre-Confirmation and Confirmation students who are still looking into fulfilling their Justice and Service project requirements, there are still St.

Vincent de Paul trips coming ahead, as well as Bowling for Cans, and tree-planting at Whispering Winds. These projects are more than just requirements for the youth ministry classes. These projects also expose the youth to the different ways they can give back to the community and live out their faith as young Catholics by sharing God's love with others, especially those who are in need. Every good deed we do changes the life of another person for the better, especially in such difficult times as these where every deed matters, and where just shining a little light in the darkness can create a brighter future for all.

ADVENT RECONCILIATION SERVICE

BY ANDREW BACONG, TEAM WRITER



On December 10, 2008, Good Shepherd Parish hosted its annual Advent reconciliation service. The church was packed as priests from all around the diocese came to hear confessions. After a few readings and a

short reflection from Fr. Michael, people began lining up and down the aisles as they waited for their turn with one

of the many priests, who heard confessions in English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Tagalog.

The idea behind the reconciliation service is for us to become closer and closer to God before the coming of Jesus on Christmas day. Many people think this is important because we want to be at our best when Jesus arrives. So, while we wait for Jesus, we hold the service so that we are at our best when He does arrive. This is important, because we want to be at our best for God.

The service was very moving,

especially after the confessions.

Throughout the entire wait, religious music was playing in the background. Priests, after the absolution of sin and the Act of Contrition, gave each person a penance to do ranging from a few prayers to reading a passage in the Bible. Many people attended, spanning all ages. If you do not attend reconciliation on a regular basis, I suggest attending this service during the upcoming Lenten season.

ALL NIGHT PARTY

BY DJOANNAH MIGUEL, TEAM WRITER

It was the talk of the youth for weeks. "Are you going to the All Night Party?" or "Are you ready for All Night?" The All Night Party was filled with games, ice-breakers, karaoke, movies, bowling, and food! Pre-Confirmation and Confirmation students, junior and adult facilitators were all invited to join the fun starting Friday night, which lasted from December 12, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. until December 13, 2008 at 6:00 a.m. in the Parish Hall. The youth just had to fill out a permission slip and turn a \$25 fee to Pat before December 9th, 2008. The youth started with handshakes and introductions and went straight to the newspaper game. The newspaper game is played with a partner and a sheet of newspaper. Every time a new round begins, the newspa-

per is folded and the pair has to be on the newspaper. The objective is to be the last pair on the newspaper and to keep balance! The winners of the game were Kamilah Santos and Melissa Farin. After the fun and excitement of the newspaper game, youth were allowed to go into various stations throughout the hall in order to indulge in the all the fun the night had to offer. There were many stations offering a myriad of activities such as poker, Guitar Hero, Xbox 360 games, and even a station for SLEEPING!!!! Then there was a battle of the sexes game of volleyball. After many rallies, the girls defeated the boys. The Prayer and Worship group from the Core Team put together a small skit for the youth. After night prayer, the youth were

ready to go bowling at Mira Mesa Bowling Lanes for about 2 hours. Strikes and splits had passed and it was time for the youth to walk back to the Parish Hall for free time, sleep for many of our upperclassmen who attended the event, and a viewing of The Dark Night for many in the center of the hall. The event ended at 6:00 a.m. with the youth tired, but full of amazing memories. And as the youth left, many knew that the night had been simply amazing in anticipation of next year's All Night Party. We encourage you all to attend!



MYSFACE, THE INTERNET, AND YOUR CHILD

BY GREG GARCIA, TEAM WRITER



Child, which focused on the dangers of MySpace and other social networking

On Tuesday October 28th, instead of the regularly scheduled Pre-Confirmation class, there was a special presentation for parents entitled, *MySpace, the Internet, and your*

websites. The presentation was done by Ray Juanengo, who used to work with the District Attorney's office on the Internet Taskforce, but now works as a parole officer. He worked for the Computer and Technology Crime High-Tech Response Team, or *CATCH*, which is a multi-agency task force formed in June 2000 to apprehend and prosecute all criminals who use technology to prey on the citizens of San Diego, Imperial, and Riverside Counties. Mr.

Juanengo travels around San Diego and gives these presentations as a service to the community to educate the public about the dangers of online predators that most of the public have little to no knowledge about. MySpace, a popular social networking site, especially amongst teenagers and young adults, was originally created as a way for rising musical artists to share their music in a concentrated community, and to receive comments and critiques

MYSACE, THE INTERNET, AND YOUR CHILD (cont.)

about their work. It slowly evolved over time into a site for friends to chat, share music, videos, and much more. However, as with most things, there is always a darker side to this seemingly innocent web community. "Over half of the current users on MySpace are over the age of thirty-five," stated Juanengo, of which many are preda-

tors: older people who pose as being younger in order to take advantage of younger people. As of 2006, about fourteen percent of teenagers had met face to face with someone they met on the internet. When used safely, MySpace can be a fun, safe environment to spend time with friends and meet new people. However, as this

seminar revealed, parents should be more aware of the dangers of the internet, and how it can cause teenagers to make bad decisions regarding who they talk to, and what personal information they reveal to these strangers.

A NEW YEAR, A NEW COVENANT: WISDOM AND REFLECTION FROM THE TEENAGE MIND

A REFLECTION ON 1 JOHN 5: 1-9

BY ADRIAN BACONG, EDITOR

"Whoever is begotten by God conquers the world. And the victory that conquers the world is our faith."

And so it has begun. As our Liturgical year has already started last year with Advent, our new year has begun in every single person's life. As one of probably the last people to wish you this, let me as well as the other Core Team members wish you a Happy New Year! And as one family in Christ to you and your family I only pray that you too have an amazing and fruitful new year, full of adventure, fun, love, but most of all Christ.

Today's reading is probably one of my most favorite readings of all time, the realization of Jesus' arrival and the start of the new covenant. We are all living in such difficult times right now due to our dismal economy and our fears (as professed by the media) of our end. We live in a time where war and violence is apparent around the world, where one country vies for power as another falls, where poverty and famine are apparent everywhere, where simple conveniences are now expensive luxuries. In essence, life is harder now. It appears that the end is near and we nothing more to live for. But we do have something, or actually someone to live for and that is God. The parallelism that exists between our present day situation and Jesus' time is coincidental. Now I am not accentuating that Jesus is coming for the second time, not in the entirety of the world, no, but I am advocating the one thing that we can all depend on to bring us out of these dismal times, and that is

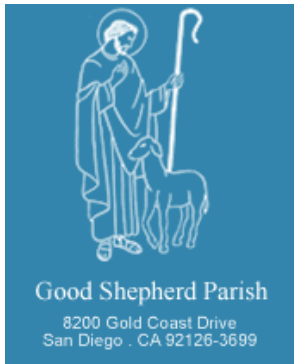
faith in God.

It is an amazing thing what faith can do for people and it is an amazing thing that faith can do for all of us now. Though we live in dreary and uncertain times, the one person that we can always depend on is God. God has never failed his people and he will not fail us now. Similar to the oppression people faced when believing in Jesus during his time, so too do we all face oppression in every facet of our lives, whether it be with our peers, our constant struggle to provide for our families, or with just the morale of society as it is. Believe me, we live in a very pessimistic and critical world. But we can change that. Optimism and faith are both contagious and it is by faith that everything is possible. God will never abandon his people and he will never abandon any of us. I learned from a very good friend of mine, my childhood friend in fact, that God would never give us anything we cannot handle and she is right. These struggles we face today are merely tests where we will all overcome. We will all transcend these oppressive chains that hold us to our worries and just live life with God, for God, and by God.

It's a new year and we are reminded today that God exists, that God chose Jesus to save us and though we cannot see him, we know he exists. We believe he exists. "Amen," we believe. In St. Paul's first letter to John, Paul tells John that "whoever is begot-

ten by God conquers the world. And the victory that conquers the world is our faith." Jesus had conquered the world once and continues to be our benign ruler. But it was only through the faith of our ancestors that his reign is possible, and it is through our faith, our strength to say "Amen" that we can conquer every fear, every worry, and every regret we have and be victorious. Just simply have faith. Be willing to believe, but be willing to work to make our world a better place. It's amazing what a little faith could do, but now we need it more than ever. We just have to believe, that is all. Believe that we can fix the mistakes of our ancestors and believe that we can become the best people we can be. But even when we fall in to despair, when we feel that we cannot handle the weight of the world anymore, remember that there is one person who will never let you fall, and that is God. We cannot do this alone. This is a universal effort. Remember, God is always with us, even if we cannot see him. He exists in every one of us, you just have to take time to notice, that's all. By faith we will overcome our fears and by faith we will conquer the darkness and spread the light for all to witness and behold. Remember, everything will always work out in the end.





Calendar

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

DATE	EVENT
January 11, 2009	CONFIRMATION CLASSES RESUME
January 13, 2009	PRE-CONFIRMATION CLASSES RESUME
January 15, 2009	ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOUP KITCHEN
January 19, 2009	SKI/SNOWBOARD TRIP
February 6—8, 2009	CONFIRMATION RETREAT
February 20, 2009	ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOUP KITCHEN
February 25, 2009	ASH WEDNESDAY CELEBRATIONS
February 26, 2009	LA YOUTH DAY
March 11, 2009	JASON EVERT PRESENTATION
March 18, 2009	CONFIRMATION FAMILY PRAYER SERVICE
March 21, 2009	ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOUP KITCHEN



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Adult facilitators at the Pre-Confirmation Retreat dinner

CLOSING



try to make things different

A new year, a chance to start over. For most of my life, I've always connected both together. I try to forget the past and start anew;

and better than they were last year. This is a lot like Baptism here in the church. Everyone is born into original sin. And through Baptism, we are given a chance to start over again. We see that in the Gospel today. Even though Jesus was born without original sin, he sets the example that in Bap-

BY ANDREW BACONG, TEAM WRITER

tism, or in any of the Sacraments, we can start over. We can fix what is broken in our lives. All we have to do is stop to pick up the pieces. We're only a couple weeks into the new year. It's not too late for anyone to start over.