



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

Volume 4, Issue 3

April 11/12, 2009

DIVINE INTERVENTION: A HEAVENLY REMINDER

BY ADRIAN BACONG, EDITOR



John 3:16; the most famous of biblical quotes, always finds a way to appear in our lives. John 3:16; "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but have eternal life." Reading this powerful quote during my initial overview of March's liturgy, I smiled a smile a thousand times brighter than the sun. I was unaware at first for my sudden bliss. However, for some strange reason I felt that this quote was what my eccentric math teacher usually considers "coincidence" or "divine intervention." Well today, John 3:16 is divine intervention. Many people are aware of this powerful quote, this proclamation of what the true mission of Christ was: to save us. However, this quote appears in so many places (I would always see a big "John 3:16" sign when the Chargers would kick an extra point of field goal during football season.) that it may have potentially lost its worth to our world. Even in my reference to this powerful quote, I classify it as "John 3:16." But the question is: Do we

really take these words to heart? Do we even understand the gravity of this quote, the maturity needed to say, "Yes Amen. I believe." John 3:16; what I consider the most underappreciated quote of the entire Bible. John 3:16; a reminder of our faith. John 3:16; a reminder of our Lenten promises and what really matters in our life: God.

Lent has always been considered a time of waiting for the Resurrection. Yet many view Lent as a time where we all need to "give up" something for forty or so days until Easter. While many of us sacrifice simple things such as MySpace, cursing, video games, shopping, junk food, and whatnot, we all forget that in the big scheme of things, these materialistic whims of ours really do not add up to the suffering endured by Christ. We forget what matters: Christ. Lent is not a time for shallow promises, but rather a time to find yourself. It is a time for self-denial of materialism. It is a time for us to transcend the earthly chains that bind us. In all honestly, the objects and

habits we rescind during Lent are childish compared to the sacrifice Christ made for us on the cross. We can live without MySpace, cursing, video games, junk food, and whatnot. But the one thing we cannot live without is our lives. If our hearts stop beating, then what is the point in enjoying the simple conveniences in life? They won't matter when a life ends. We won't be able to take our earthly pleasures when we die. But what we can take is our faith and our hearts. We all take Lent for granted, me included. We do not see Lent for its denial of self-gratification, but rather as a waiting game for Easter, where we can enjoy our earthly pleasures once again. Thus we are flawed in our thinking and understanding of such an important time.

But that is the beauty of the human spirit: our flaws. None of us are perfect and we all at times need to be reminded of what really matters. That is the reason I smiled when reading John 3:16, because it was a reminder to me of what truly matters: Christ. We have all heard during mass that Christ made the

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DIVINE INTERVENTION: A HEAVENLY REMINDER (cont.)

ultimate sacrifice to save us by dying, but it is shallowly retained in our memories. We do not truly grasp the idea. We do not take it to heart. Rather, we simply agree with no conflict or cognition whatsoever.

It is difficult for many of us to believe in such a thing: one man sacrificing himself to save the world. But it is real and it has happened. We all go through the difficulty of believing in this, myself included. However, faith was never meant to be easy. We all struggle to believe because no one is perfect. It takes time to fathom faith. And it takes time to grow in faith. People half-heartedly believe that Christ is our savior because they have not taken

the time to actually understand it; to think on it and grasp it as their own. Thus we have a need for reflection and self-discovery (or rediscovery) in one's faith. Again, Lent is not a time to wait. Lent is a time to find yourself, to rid yourself of what is really hindering you from becoming the best person you can be, and a time to find God and say, "Amen, I believe." And now that Lent has ended with the resurrection of our Lord, do not make a shallow promise for this Lent or future Lents. Lent is a time of action, not a time of waiting. Thus as we continue our lives today, in celebration of the resurrection, we need to remember our promises and continue to live strong.

Make a promise from the heart to improve yourself, to find who you truly are, and to find God. Strength comes not from speech, but rather from action, from persistence, but most importantly from faith. Your faith is what you make it. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16. God loved the world so much that he gave us his son, his only son, his own flesh and blood, so that we who believe, we who say, "Amen, I believe" shall not die to the darkness, shall not die to the world, but rather triumph against the darkness, and live in the light of His glory, forever and ever.



Helping out at St. Vincent de Paul Soup Kitchen



Helping out at St. Vincent de Paul Soup Kitchen



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Summer Events Calendar Released

BY DJOANNAH MIGUEL, TEAM WRITER



It's hard to believe that summer is right around the corner. Pretty soon we'll be heading out of the classrooms and to the beach. Of course, you know what happens. You can't wait for school to

be done and for the first few days it's alright . . . But then, what to do with your time? With that in mind, the Good Shepherd Core Team didn't want the youth of the parish to be bored just sitting around, so, they came up with a few events to help all of us really enjoy summer. For instance, on July 2nd the youth will be hosting a picnic party at the field behind Good Shepherd Catho-

lic School. On the evening of July 9th we will be joining other parishes from the Escondido Deanery to go back to the 70's and roller skate. On July 17th we will be going to a drive in movie. On July 29th we will be going down to Ultra Zone and playing Laser Tag. If you've never done this, you've got to try it. From August 2nd through August 6th the new Core Team for the 2009—2010 school year will be heading up to Whispering Winds for the Annual Summer Leadership Camp hosted by the Diocese of San Diego. The Leadership Camp is entitled Camp Emmaus. On August 26th there will be a bonfire @ Crown Point Shores with not only the youth from our parish, but youth from around the diocese of San Diego.

As you can see, we have a number of events scheduled. Some of the events are free, such as the July 2nd and August 26th events. Some cost money such as the July 9, 17, & 29th events. Camp Emmaus also costs money and is only open to those youth that make the core leadership team. Interviews for the core team will be held in May. We want young people to participate in any of the events they want so watch the bulletin and our website for announcement of the times of these events and their fees. We look forward to seeing you this summer and having a great time skating, picnicking, laser tagging, and hanging out at the beach.

ON YOUR MARK, GET SET, GO!: CONFIRMATION RETREAT 2009

BY ANDREW BACONG, TEAM WRITER

From February 6-8, Good Shepherd youth from our Confirmation Class attended our annual Confirmation Retreat at Whispering Winds. The theme of this year's retreat was, "Ready, Set, Go!" representing the journey that the youth have been on since Baptism and are continuing now through Confirmation. Youth participated in ice-breaker activities, listened to talks, and met in small groups to discuss important topics.

The first day began with youth meeting in the main tent for ice-breaker activities like games and songs. After, they met with their small groups for the first time to come up with a group name and skit. Groups came up with creative names, ranging from "Alvin and the Chipmunks" to "Breakfast Club" to "The Catholetes." After these activities, the youth grabbed their luggage and settled into their cabins. They then came back to the main tent for night prayer. The task group for night prayer then performed the very powerful "Lifehouse" skit, and the retreatants were left to contemplate the meaning behind it.

The second day started with a surprise: snow. Everyone came outside to have fun and enjoy it for as long as they could. Snowball fights, snow angels, snow men. The youth

tried everything they could to enjoy the snow while it lasted. After breakfast, they listened to the "Who Am I?" talks given by Devin Saragosa-Harris and Daniel Speer, and the Friendship talks given by best friends Kamilah Santos and Albert Paras. Following the talks was small group time in which the retreatants were given time to share and reflect on the meaning behind the talks. After lunch, the "Relationship With God" talks were given by Adrian Bacong and Annie Le,

followed by the Family talks by Melissa Farin and Alvin Mendoza. The youth were then given more time in small groups to reflect and discuss the topics. Due to the inclement weather, the priests were unable to travel up for reconciliation. A reconciliation prayer service was held in its place and on March 18th the candidates were able to go to reconciliation with the priests back at the parish. Following the prayer service, the retreatants were treated to ice cream and cookies at the dining tent, and were then sent off to bed.

The third day was filled with mixed emotions; happiness at the prospect of going home, but sadness at the idea that we would be returning in a few short hours. After breakfast and cleaning cabins and the campsite, the youth returned to the main tent to listen to the "Back to Reality" talks given by me and Jessica Nguyen. They then went into groups for one final time for a final reflection and affirmations. The youth then gathered up their things and boarded the buses for home. Upon arrival, they then attended mass and were finally reunited with their families. Many of the youth were truly inspired by the retreat, and



were truly saddened by leaving. They have taken another big step towards becoming full-fledged members of the Catholic Church. Try to make it on May 8th to watch as these youth finish their journey of initiation into the Church!



Jr. Facilitators performing a skit at Confirmation retreat.



Jr. Facilitators performing a skit at Confirmation retreat.

ASH WEDNESDAY

BY MARIANNE ENCARNACION, TEAM WRITER



On February 25, 2009, Good Shepherd Parish commemorated Ash Wednesday, a holy day of observance that signifies the beginning of the

Lenten season. Many parishioners and visitors attended various prayer services and masses offered throughout the day and received the ashen crosses on their foreheads. The 5:00 pm mass was especially packed as parishioners who just came from work, school, and their other activities went to church to participate in this holy day.

The cross of ash marked upon parishioners' foreheads

signifies more than just the beginning of Lent. It represents a call for Catholics all over the world to remember who they are, to remember that from dust they came and to dust they shall return. In this renewal of their identity as mortal beings on earth who are members of the body of Christ, all Catholics are reminded of the core message of the Lenten season. In our busy lives, it is easy to forget who we are, and we submit ourselves to sinful ways of thinking and living that defy God's will. As we are called to "turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel" upon the distribution of ashes, we renew our baptismal promises to reject sin and be faithful to God.

The Lenten season is more than just a 40 day period of fasting, prayers and sacrifices. A good way to think of Lent is to see it as a journey of conversion. We are called to reflect upon our lives, and to reject our sinful ways and embrace a life with Jesus Christ, a life of purity and faith. As we await for Easter and the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us truly remember not only our mortality, but that immortality at the end of our lives is possible only through God. Remember that it is through Him that everything is possible. As Matthew 19:26 states, "With man this is impossible, but God all things are possible."

GOOD SHEPHERD SKI AND SNOWBOARD TRIP

BY ANDREW BACONG, TEAM WRITER



On January 19th, 2009, youth and adults from our parish went to Snow Summit at Big Bear for the annual Ski and Snowboard

trip sponsored by the youth ministry program. The group woke up bright and early the day of the trip and met at the church to load the buses and begin the trip up to Big Bear. After arriving, the group split up and enjoyed the day. Many spent the day skiing and snowboarding, from the most seasoned veterans to the newest

of beginners. Some, however, spent the day just enjoying the snow. At the end of the day, the group packed up their things onto the bus and headed home after a day of fun and relaxation.

When asked if he enjoyed the trip, Core Team member Ben Murray responded with a resounding "Yes!" Because the trip was sponsored by our parish and the youth ministry program, the participants who went had time to talk and bond with the other parishioners that also went. "It was awesome because everyone there had a positive attitude..." When asked if he'd

ever want to go again, Ben told us, "Yes, I always love going, and maybe this next time I'll try and learn how to snowboard. It's always good to go, you're going to have fun, the people there are nice, and we get a coach bus ride up and you get to see the sun rise."

This year's annual ski and snowboard trip was another success for the youth ministry program, as well as for the parish. If you're interested in other events similar to this, keep your eyes open for more events in youth ministry!

STEP UP TO LIFE: LA YOUTH DAY 2009

BY CHEYENNE PAIVA, TEAM WRITER



The happiest place on earth was not Disneyland on February 26. Instead, it was right across the street at the Anaheim Convention Center,

where 15,000 of California Catholic youth gathered for L.A. Youth Day. A dozen youth from our own parish, including me, made the two hour trip. Throughout the day we willingly opened our eyes, ears, and hearts to many speakers and musicians and as the theme called for, we "stepped up to life."

Our journey began early in the morning as we arrived at the parish, exhausted from our days of school work from the previous Wednesday, but excited to attend a trip that would for sure, strengthen us and energize us in our faith. The bus ride was long, but the anticipation for the day's events had us on the edge of our seats.

The theme of this year's Youth Day was "Step Up to Life," allowing many of us to see that importance of God in our lives. The emcees of the day posed questions to us asking: "Can we step up?" and "Are we ready to step up?" As we learned from our fun filled

day, we experience many situations where we are faced with either the choice of evil or the choice of good. However, though many situations seem appealing and easy, it is best for us to "step up" and choose good, to "step up" and choose life, but most importantly, "step up" and choose God above all else. The choice is ours however, as we control the outcome of our lives, but we must always remember that we can go back and choose God.

Upon our entrance in to Anaheim Convention Center Arena, filled nearly to capacity with 7,500 youth, we rocked out with the Christian rock band Jacob and Matthew, creators of this year's theme song *Step Up and Live!* It felt like a concert, but even better. Jacob and Matthew worked through the hands and voice of God, the real star. The entire convention center was electric as music, voices, and faith filled the room. After a heartfelt witness talk, it was time for mass. An amazing youth choir led the gathering song as dozens of priests and bishops entered the arena. It is impossible to describe how creative the mass was. I have never seen anything like it. Over 7,500 youth connected under one banner of faith. During the homily, two

youth were invited to share their personal stories. Their openness and honesty in their experiences touched each and every heart in the arena.

Following mass and lunch, where many of us re-connected with our friends from other San Diegan parishes, we were lucky enough to attend a workshop led by the one and only Mike Patin. This was easily the highlight of our day. Mike's message was simple and clear; he showed us how easily and how hard it is to get closer to God, and he gave us astounding confidence to look to the future with. Each person in the room listened, learned, and laughed hard. Mike Patin's workshop was a perfect way to end our day.

It has almost been exactly one month since our trip to that fateful day in Los Angeles, but yet we still hold the lessons, experiences, and happiness we all hold dear. Never will we forget that amazing day, but hold it dear to our hearts, simply because it is our faith. So will you "Step Up to Life?" We hope that you too will be able to join us again for next year's L.A. Youth Day on March 18, 2010! Stay tuned for more information in the upcoming months!



Adult Facilitators and youth on Confirmation Retreat at Whispering Winds

ROMANCE WITHOUT REGRET

BY MARIANNE ENCARNACION, TEAM WRITER



On Wednesday night, March 11, 2009, Good Shepherd Parish played host to a wonderful guest speaker, Jason Evert. Hundreds of Pre-Confirmation

and Confirmation students from the Youth Ministry program, along with their parents, attended the event to listen to his talk. Mr. Evert is the founder of the Pure Love Club, a chastity outreach program based on the Catholic Church which started in San Diego, California. The program reaches out to over 100,000 teens each year in Catholic, Christian, and public junior and senior high schools as well as colleges all over the nation and across the globe.

Mr. Evert delivered an inspirational talk on chastity, purity, modesty, sexuality, and relationships with the theme "Romance without Regret". He tackled plenty of issues on health and behavior geared towards guiding high school and college level students, touching on the misconceptions about manhood, virginity and love, and clarifying the differences between love and lust, one being that "love can wait to give, but lust can't wait to get". Mr. Evert also provided the youth with many reminders for them to reflect on and apply to their lives. He talked about the im-

portance of being able to value yourself to prove your own value to others, as well as the importance of keeping rigid boundaries and limits in order to maintain self-control. He also stressed that chastity teaches sacrifice, and modesty teaches dignity and respect, which explains why it is important to embrace the virtue of chastity and purity.

The talk turned out to be lively, youthful and deeply meaningful. One of the key points Mr. Evert addressed is that love should not be viewed as an emotion but a responsibility. This involves being responsible for guarding your



Jason Evert with Good Shepherd Youth

loved one's innocence and respecting their limits and boundaries. He stressed that true love involves sacrifice, just as Jesus' sacrificed his life for his bride, the Church, in order to save us from our sins. As for those who are doubtful as to whether they can still embrace a life of chastity, Mr. Evert stressed the fact that it is never too late to turn around as he shared inspirational stories about the life-changing

experiences of certain individuals. The two best ways to keep a pure and chaste lifestyle, according to him, are to surround yourself with good friends who can positively influence and support you, and for us Catholics, to stay close to the sacraments of reconciliation and communion.

The night was concluded by a beautiful song of prayer by the Good Shepherd Core Team's Prayer and Worship Group, upon which the youth were able to reflect on what they had learned that night. As part of their outreach program, Mr. Evert gave away free booklets on purity for both the young ladies and young men who attended that night. His generosity and dedication to the Pure Love Club chastity outreach program is truly a blessing to the Catholic community and to the youth whose lives he has touched. For more information about Jason Evert and the Pure Love Club outreach program, visit www.chastity.com. Here you can find answers to frequently asked questions, videos and recordings of chastity talks, and more information on how you can participate in the outreach program. Filled with much more wisdom about love and relationships than many of the youth and adults expected, Mr. Evert left us with one more word of advice that "God has a plan for your love life." Enlightened by this idea, the youth and adults departed, knowing well that there was more to love that what meets the eye.

LENTEN MEDITATION: WISDOM AND REFLECTION FROM THE TEENAGE MIND

BY CHEYENNE PAIVA, TEAM WRITER

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.”

– John 3:16

The next time you order a drink at In N Out, take a look at the bottom of your soda cup. You will see the marking “John 3:16” in red print, small enough to remain a secret but big enough to attract attention. I’m sure thousands, probably millions of people see it on their cups everyday, but I wonder how many of them realize that it’s a bible verse. If they do, will they look up the page in the bible when they get home? I pray that they do, because the actual text of the passage is the most famous bible verse in existence. It explains the mystery of our faith in powerful words that resonate through each generation, each passage of time, and each person who hears it.

I was in fourth or fifth grade when I first heard this passage. The only thing that stood out to me was how nice the sentence sounded, how nicely the words flowed together. It just made sense. It stated what I already knew about my faith: God sent us Jesus, who died on the cross and saved us from death. The second, third, fourth, fifth,

sixth, and how many other times I heard this famous verse were just the same. I knew it by heart now. I could quote John when I needed to, and I could tell people what the bottom of the In N Out cup meant.

It’s not until now I realize how terrifyingly significant this verse is to our faith and our relationship with God and our family and friends. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.” We all know that we are all God’s children and that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ, but Jesus is God’s only son, his only child. God gave life to his only son, knowing full well the physical and mental pain awaiting Jesus in the future, all to save the lives of sinners who turn against him. God did not beget Jesus for himself. He sent Jesus to us, even though we take God’s creation for granted, even though we seek pleasure in the form of sin, and even though we deny him. This is why God is awesome! No body of strength in the history of the universe can match the strength it must have taken for God to sacrifice Jesus for us. We should live our lives for Him to prove that we do deserve a second chance and that we understand the magnitude of the Pascal mystery.

Whenever you think for a second that no one loves you, just remember: John 3:16; God most certainly does love you.

Whenever you feel useless, just remember: John 3:16; God values you so much that he sacrificed his only Son to give you eternal life. If you are feeling down, just remember: John 3:16; God has plans for you to reach eternal happiness one day, if you stay with Him. If you just want to give up, remember: John 3:16; God is waiting for you in heaven. All you need to do is follow Him! When you get angry at your parents, just remember: John 3:16; God sacrificed his Son so your parents wouldn’t have to go through the same pain. When your parents get angry at you, just remember: John 3:16; they love you with the same love God gave the world. When your world feels like it’s falling apart, just remember: John 3:16; God offers you a seat in paradise. John 3:16, the most famous of all Biblical quotes and the belief that truly matters when all the world is against us.



CORRECTION ON VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2:

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

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





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Calendar

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

DATE	EVENT
April 18, 2009	SYNERGY YOUTH DAY @ CATHEDRAL HIGH SCHOL
April 19, 2009	ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOUP KITCHEN



Hanging out at retreat.

CLOSING



Lent is the season of fasting and penitence in preparation for Easter. The Lenten season begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts 40 days (excluding Sundays) to Easter. The purpose of Lent is to prepare believers spiritually for the annual commemoration during Holy Week of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. During the Lenten season, we learn to sacrifice something for Jesus, just like how Jesus sacrifices his own life for us. My friends and I discussed what we were giving up for Lent about 3 days before it started. My closest friends are Filipino which means we love to eat

rice with everything! One of my close friends is willing enough to give up rice for Lenten season while my other friend gave up spending money on take-out food and on useless things she didn't really need. My guy friends gave up playing any type of game console and that meant the infamous XBOX 360. Some didn't give up anything; however, they started doing something that would benefit them in the future. For example, my friend wanted to start playing basketball at least 4 times a week so he'd get better at it. Also, Pat Clasby wanted to run a few miles a week so he can be stronger physically and mentally. He also dedicated each run to praying for something dear to his heart. As for me, I gave up MySpace.

BY DJOANNAH MIGUEL, TEAM WRITER

You're probably thinking, "Wow, how easy". MySpace helped me keep in touch with family in the Philippines, friends out of state, and even simply asking for help on homework over bulletins. I enjoy fixing up my MySpace page, reading blogs and bulletins, and finding old friends from elementary school. It is hard for me to know what's been going on lately with my family and friends, but I know that God is taking care of them and will bring them through anything. As the Lenten season comes to a close, we start to realize that we should start making more sacrifices in our lives just like how Jesus sacrificed much for us.