



DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS

CATHOLIC TIMES

A journal of Catholic life in Ohio

MARCH 13, 2011
THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT
VOLUME 60:23
WWW.CTONLINE.ORG



BISHOP READY HIGH SCHOOL CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

Today's Youth Communicate Through Social Media

Whether you love it, hate it, or have never experienced it, chances are you've at least heard the word Facebook. More than 500 million people are active users of this social networking website. That works out to about one of every 13 people.

A few mind-boggling statistics:

- 48 percent of young Americans say they get their news on Facebook.
- 48 percent of American 18- to 34-year-olds check Facebook as soon as they wake up.
- 720 million photos were uploaded to Facebook over New Year's weekend.

Facebook is all about who you know. Facebook suggests friends and connections based on where you went to school, who you worked for, what your interests are, and what pages (brands) you may want to interact with.

Facebook even uses these connections to extend your network to similarly connected people. It's a vast community of personalities.

Facebook will generate exposure for you among friends and family. It's a superb referral network. It is where people will be able to see what you are doing, based on what you post to your personal profile. They can then comment on your post. You can follow along as a cousin in another state posts her dinner menu each night as she makes changes to her family's eating habits. Or watch as an uncle posts photos of his trip to Italy ... while he's cruising along in a gondola in Venice. Your college roommate's baby just dumped a bowl of creamed spinach in his head ... bingo! The photo's on Mom's profile. The possibilities are endless.

Pope Benedict XVI has acknowledged the influence of social media, and last fall, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Communications Committee recognized the power of these tools and the need for the Catholic Church to propagate them.

The Vocations Office of the Diocese of Columbus maintains its Face Forward page on Facebook, providing daily news and information to the 2,600 people who have "liked" the page. To check it out, go to www.facebook.com/faceforwardcolumbus or check out its related blog at www.faceforwardcolumbusblog.com.



About 90 young people from all over Ohio attended the annual Fan into Flame retreat sponsored by St. Paul's Outreach at the Sts. Peter and Paul Retreat Center in Newark. Photo courtesy St. Paul's Outreach

ST. PAUL OUTREACH PROGRAM

By Jacob Doran

"My name is Amber, I go to Ohio Dominican. When I came on this retreat, I wasn't really deep in my faith, and yesterday seriously changed my life."

Amber was one of a group of Columbus college students who joined St. Paul's Outreach (SPO) at its annual Fan into Flame retreat in early February. About 90 university students and SPO members came together at the Sts. Peter and Paul Retreat Center in Newark to deepen and mature their faith through an encounter with Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Fan into Flame is a weekend set apart from busy and often draining college life so students can focus on their relationship with Jesus Christ, allow the Holy Spirit to be more a part of their lives, and claim Jesus Christ as Lord.

The three-day retreat consisted of talks about moving from having information about Jesus Christ to encountering Him; living a life filled with the Holy Spirit; repentance; accepting the Father's gifts and love in our lives; and continuing to live a truly Christian life after the retreat.

Emily Schafer, a freshman at Ohio Dominican University, said of her experience that, "I found out that when you truly surrender to the Holy Spirit and to the Lord, He works."

"Today, I feel the Holy Spirit alive in me and moving through me," she added. "Now I just feel so convicted to share this with as many people as I can. I am really excited for that, and just for finding different ways to be a light to the nations and to share God's love with everybody."

Darius Perkins, a sophomore at The Ohio

State University, was attending Fan into Flame for his second time. Speaking about his first retreat, he said, "God truly cleansed my soul. He just changed my entire perspective on life. He changed me from this negative person to this optimistic one."

He said that on this year's retreat, God pushed through areas of his life that he had struggled with and called him to worship the Lord more. "If there is something that you are struggling with, just ask for Jesus, just ask for God," he said. "He will take your struggles away and instill a greater joy and greater blessing than you've ever had before."

St. Paul's Outreach is a lay evangelistic outreach and community on Ohio State's and Ohio Dominican's campuses. It helps keep area college students involved with a strong Catholic community by hosting events on Ohio State's campus every week on Thursday nights. It also runs a household program in which students can live together and support each other's efforts toward greater holiness through communal meals, prayer, and small faith-sharing groups.

This was Ohio's largest Fan into Flame retreat, involving students from Ohio State, Ohio Dominican, Columbus State Community College, and Bowling Green State University.

St. Paul's Outreach began in 1985 in St. Paul, Minn., and came to Columbus through a Fan into Flame retreat in the area in 2004. Since then, it has been building environments that bring the Catholic faith alive on campus. For more information, go to www.spoweb.org or e-mail ohio@spoweb.org.

Jacob Doran is Ohio State University mission leader for St. Paul's Outreach.