

GUADALUPE MINISTRY REPORT

2015

The Guadalupe Project addressed the following areas of ministry:

1.- Liturgy

- On Sunday, the Hispanic people gather as the Body of Christ to celebrate the Lord's Day. Bilingual Priests, from three different dioceses: Crookston, Fargo and St. Cloud come to celebrate mass and the sacrament of reconciliation.

Ministers find the Church the place to serve the Lord and make a difference in the lives of others. The welcome team greets people as they arrive at church and helps them to find a seat and takes care of the needs of our guests. The worship team includes two choirs: one made up of local people and one by migrants. They greatly enhance the celebration. The coffee fellowship ministry provides the coffee and refreshments that people enjoy every Sunday after our service.

- The weekly bulletin is used to deepen insight into the Holy Scripture and give to the faithful people a Christian message to improve their lives.
- Some English/Spanish liturgies are celebrated throughout the year, for the purpose of building community, creating good relationships and fellowship.
- Liturgy is the center of the life of the Church. Liturgy and popular piety are two forms of worship. Once a week people spend an hour in Eucharistic adoration in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. They center their prayer in Jesus Christ praying for peace, life, vocations, the sick and other issues that are at the heart of the life of the Church and the world.
- To reach more effectively kids who do not understand Spanish, before the liturgy of the Word, they leave the church for reading the Gospel in English and a bilingual parishioner with images or tales explains it in some understandable way.

2.- Religious Education

The Sunday Religious Education program is held at St. Francis de Sales. All teachers have met the requirements for volunteers working with children according to the Diocese of Crookston safe environment standards.

- Our First Communion program recognizes that children are particularly capable of receiving and enjoying the most essential elements of our faith - the

announcement of God's love, in the person of the Good Shepherd, who died and rose. Children become familiar with Jesus, selected parables about the Kingdom of God, and parts of the Mass. The role of the teacher, or catechist, is to make presentations in the classroom, and listen with the child to discover more deeply how much God loves them.

- Our summer Sunday Confirmation Program enrolls Middle School students in grades 6-8. The program is designed to meet the catechetical, educational, spiritual, emotional and social needs of young adolescents. The Confirmation format, brings the students out of the classroom and into a larger group setting for group activities, presentations of the material and prayer, and then gives them the opportunity to break into smaller groups to process the teaching and build relationships with the others in their class. It helps them make the faith relevant to their everyday lives and helps form their Catholic identity. The emphasis during the time of preparation for Confirmation is placed on helping the students to develop a relationship with God and a living faith as they prepare to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- Our formation program includes topics like: Sacred Scripture, Person of Christ, Church, Sacraments, Morality, Values, Social Justice and Christian Vocation.
- Discipleship is linked to stewardship. Students from our religious education program are involved in the Sunday liturgy. They are the ones that do the ministry of welcoming, ushers and those carrying the gifts to the altar, and serving coffee and snacks after mass, supervised by an adult.
- In August 2015, a group of 22 celebrated the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist with our Bishop, Michael Hoepfner, who presided at the Ceremony. A family of 7 children were baptized this day. Throughout the year several kids are baptized.

3.- Baptism Preparation

- Because parents are working most of the time, classes for the reception of the sacraments are scheduled according to their free time. Preparation includes encouragement to be present on Sunday Mass.

4.- Adult Faith Formation

- **Bible Study**

Sundays, a steady group gathers after mass to study the Holy Scriptures and share their faith. There is more interest among the participants in reading the Bible. This pilot team receives training that covers Scripture, liturgy, Church

history, Catechism of the Catholic Church and all topics related to our Christian faith. Participants not only receive instruction but also prepare some issues during the year.

- **Koinonia**

Koinonia is a Catholic retreat program sponsored in Spanish by the St. Cloud Diocese in which adults have a weekend community experience in Christian living.

Our Latino community has taken advantage of this wonderful “renewal” program. Every year some people from our community participate in the retreat, and the fruits are evident: their learning about Christian life, fellowship and faith-sharing support that allows and challenges their inner renewal. People participate more in church, in Bible Study, in the Holy Hour and in the activities promoted by the ministry and what is even better, they are improving their lives.

5.- Spiritual Retreats

Adults

- The community enjoys a temporary withdrawal from ordinary daily living to nourish their inner spiritual longings. For this reason, we provide them retreats during the year:

We provide some retreats during the year: One for lent held over St. Francis and led by Fr. Stan Wieser; One more held by St. Cloud Diocese, in which 11 people participated in this Regional retreat; On August 5th, St. Leonard Parish in Pelican Rapids, invited an international preacher, this time we contributed to the event at least with 40 participants.

Last year the Hispanic community in Moorhead greatly benefited by the project funded by the Diocese of Crookston’s “Faith for tomorrow fund”. We brought a Mexican priest for “Two weeks of parish mission”, starting October 3rd and ending October 17th, 2015. The two weeks of Mission ended with a day of retreat.

During the mission, some households were visited, some people asked for a blessing for their house and they took time to talk about their problems. Communion was taken to the sick, who received it after making a good confession. Every night we had a conference with the participation of 30-40 people daily.

To conclude the two weeks of mission, the sick were invited to confess their sins and receive Communion and the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick during the Mass. More than 40 people received the sacraments this day.

Many people had the opportunity to confess their sins and receive spiritual direction during this time.

The themes of the conference were related to:

- Mass and introduction
- From Bethlehem to Nazareth
- From Bethlehem to the Jordan River – Renewal of our Baptismal promises
- The desert
- The Synagogue of Nazareth
- Galilee, the mission

All these reflections ended with a day of silence and prayer.

Couple Retreat

- The Hispanic community always takes advantage of the opportunities that other parishes offer, this time it was the community of Pelican Rapids, MN who organized a couples retreat on Saturday February 14, on this occasion, 6 couples in our parish were benefited.

Youth

- Young people have the same opportunities as the adults. Youth meetings are offered to them in which they play, learn and grow together. Youth have a variety of spiritual needs. In order to meet those needs, our meetings involve faith sharing, complex group dynamics, group and individual prayer, simulation activities.

A young couple whose life is lived according to the Gospel standards, is taking care of the sessions. Teenagers really enjoy being part of this group, especially after they performed a Christmas play.

6.- Outreach program

As Catholic Christians, we are engaged in outreach, whenever we answer our baptismal call and accepting the invitation of Pope Francis: “I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security”

- Although the community commitments provide many opportunities to meet the needs of others in their daily lives, two ministers visit the Hispanic community and bring to them a word of hope, Christian literature and information of the activities hold at the parish. Visiting homes not only gives us the opportunity to know better the people who we are working with, but also, it is the best way to hear their problems and spend some time with them.
- Parishes, public institutions and groceries stores support our outreach ministry in many different ways, posting in their bulletins our announcements to promote our events, especially the Spanish Sunday Mass.

7.- Clay County Jail Ministry

- Once a week a visit is made to the local jail to share with the inmates, men and women, the Sunday's Mass readings. Conversation with jailed inmates on a variety of topics, including spirituality, help stimulate their thought processes. We can see the impact prison ministry can have on inmates serving long-term sentences. This past year a Deacon joined our team, and he is having personal visit with the inmates.

8.- Pastoral care

- Sick are visited once a week at the Hospital, at the nursing homes or in their house. After hearing the Gospel and a little reflection, they receive Holy Communion. Their names appear in Sunday bulletins; special petitions are made every Sunday for them and the community is committed to pray for them.

9.- Lent

- Lent is observed by meditating on the Way of the Cross every Friday. On Good Friday the community walks the streets carrying the cross and showing their faith, devotion and repentance. Children and youth are the most interested in this pious practice.

10.- Honoring Mary, our Mother

a) Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe,

- Novena: nine days before the celebration, the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe visits different homes, the rosary is recited and a little meditation of our Lady is given each day.
- Very early in the morning of December 12th, people sing the Mañanitas, recite the rosary and hear a reflection of the "Mystery of our Lady of Guadalupe"
- In the evening, Mass is celebrated by our pastor and other priests who attend the Celebration.

- A band of Mariachis from Sioux City, IA animated this Festivity.
- Our children were part of this beautiful celebration. They prepared some folkloric dances for the reception at the Parish Center. Hundreds of people attended the event.

b) Marian Vigil

- For a third year a Marian Vigil was planned for the end of May, to honor our Lady. There were about 70 people -children and adults- who praised and honored the Mother of Jesus. The community meditated this evening on “**The Virgin of contemplative silence**”. This year, our Mariam Vigil was enriched with the Our Lady of Guadalupe Silver Rose Program, brought to it by our Knights of Columbus brothers, which include Rosary, a reading from the gospel. The Vigil finished with the coronation of our Lady.

11.- Christmas and other Activities

- Posadas, three Kings, mother’s and father’s day and other celebrations are held in order to keep the community and Latino traditions alive. For Christmas children have “piñatas” donated by a generous family. Children perform Joseph and Mary for the “posadas”, and the community sings the songs. All these festivities ended with a potluck. Families and their children enjoy all these popular celebrations.
- For the third year we had a **Cultural Day** event in which people taught each other about their own cultures. Latinos from Peru, Santo Domingo, Nicaragua, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, Texas and Mexico show to the community the main traditions and customs from each country. Talking and working with new people allowed us to develop team spirit. Everyone contributed to make this an unforgettable day. We worked for a common goal and this lifted our spirits.

For entertainment we had a DJ, who played nice Latin music and kept the community busy. Everything ended with potluck: food from every country.

- Winter in the Red River area is pretty tough, for this reason, once a month, we have a **Family Sunday** in which parents and kids enjoy snacks, music, games and competitions. They play and have fun together.
- **Fundraising**, is another activity which reinforce our working team. When our members know their responsibility and understand the roles played by others, using everyone’s skills and abilities, it helps to enhance communication among them and to operate in a productive manner.

12.- Tonantzin

This is an open group for children and adults who want to preserve their cultural traditions or just for having fun. This year, they had some performances around the city such as: NDSU; VA Medical Center and Horizon Middle School. They always participate in the feast of our Lady of Guadalupe.

13.- Partnership with other Organizations

For the second time, on August 29th, The Mexican Consulate from St. Paul came to St. Francis de Sales to offer its services to the Mexican Population. Information letters were mailed to all Parishes around us. About 200 people updated their passports, consular Ids, birth certificates and another important documents.

Personal Evaluation

Achievements

The successes are evident

Challenges

However the achievements, the challenges ahead are many, the community is increasing

Christians who are still asking questions about the Catholic faith, recognize from Scripture that there is a certain splendor about the Church that calls for deep love and strong commitment