

# **GUADALUPE MINISTRY REPORT**

## **2016**

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.

- Extraordinary Holy Eucharistic Ministers, readers and altar servers receive twice a year a training to ensure their effectiveness in their service. We are always recruiting the best candidates for noble 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.
- 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 Summer First Communion 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, the 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.
- On September 11, a group of 26 celebrated the sacraments: 6 children received baptism, 3 confirmation and 17 more First Communion. Our Bishop, Michael J. Hoeppner, presided at the ceremony. Throughout the year several kids received the sacrament of baptism.

### **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 participate 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.

- **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 takes 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**

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:

##### **Holy Year**

The Hispanic community lived The HOLY YEAR of MERCY proclaimed by the Holy Father, Pope Francis, in a very special way. We were greatly benefited by the project funded by the Diocese of Crookston’s "Faith for tomorrow fund". We brought a Mexican priest for "a week of parish mission". The community meditated every night on the merciful love of God during the Octave of Easter and the mission ended up with many confessions and with a pilgrimage to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Crookston, MN on the Divine Mercy Sunday. Mass was concelebrated by the Pastor and the Mexican priest, both Moorhead-Crookston Hispanic Communities enjoy a lunch together. More than a hundred and fifty people gain the Indulgences of the Holy Year.

##### **Two weeks of Mission**

Also, with the "Faith for tomorrow fund" that we received from the Diocese of Crookston, we could bring another Mexican Priest for the summer two weeks of mission. 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.

The priest dedicated a Sunday to talk to the young people before mass and the following Sunday was dedicated to the sick who received Communion and the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick during the Mass. More than 40 people received the sacraments this day.

People take profit when a Hispanic priest is among the community to receive the sacrament of reconciliation and spiritual direction.

### **Night of reflection**

On July 9, the Diocese of Fargo brought Jesse Romero, a catholic preacher, from Los Angeles, CA and they shared him with our Hispanic Community one night. About 80 people participated on this night of reflection.

### **Christian concert**

After Sunday Mass, a Christian young couple from Monterrey, NL Mexico brought us hope when they shared their experience of God. They were in a great danger under one of the drug cartels in their city but they put all their faith and trust in God's hands and He saved them from these people. With Christian music, songs and food were shared with the community.

### **Couple Retreat**

The Hispanic community always takes advantage of the opportunities that other parishes offer. This time it was the community of Melrose, MN who organized a couples retreat on Saturday February 13, on this occasion, 2 couples in our parish benefited.

### **V Encuentro**

The "V ENCUENTRO" is a four year process of ecclesial reflection and action that invites Catholics in the US to intense missionary activity, consultation, leadership development, and identification of best ministerial practices in the spirit of the New Evangelization.

The National Hispanic Team and the USCCB are organizing the Latino Community in order to fully participate in the "V Encuentro" that will take place in Grapevine, TX, 2018.

Catholic Extension Society sponsored a trip to Wisconsin (April 5-6) for 10 participants: two from Crookston and eight more from Fargo-Moorhead area. There, our folks could interact with people from all over the Region VIII and

learned: The vision and objectives of the V Encuentro; The V Encuentro as a process of Evangelization; the V Encuentro as a process of Communion; the V Encuentro as a process of Consultation. All these helped to discern ways in which the church in the United States can better respond to the Hispanic presence, and to strengthen the ways in which Latinos respond to the call to the New Evangelization as missionary disciples serving the Church.

### **Pastoral plan**

One of the first fruits of the meeting above mentioned was to create a Pastoral plan where the people are involved and take a responsibility in the church's activities. We do not want more spectators but leaders in action. On August 27, people from Crookston and Fargo-Moorhead area gathered to elaborate a Pastoral Plan. They received the guidelines and the knowledge about what is a Pastoral Plan and then all together, the leader and the community created a plan which includes 5 areas: Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Service and Evangelization. These areas include goals, activities, times and people in charge.

### **Youth**

Young people have the same opportunities as the adults. Youth meetings are offered to them every Sunday before Mass, in which teenagers 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.

### **XV Años**

We have throughout the year some "Quinceañeras"; young ladies who prepare themselves for their adulthood by having, first of all, the Sacraments including reconciliation and Confirmation. In a previous interview they learn the Christian sense of the XV Años celebration.

### **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 12<sup>th</sup>, 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 “**Walking from Mary's hand**”. The Vigil finished with the coronation of our Lady and some snacks.

#### **c).- Pro-Life**

Last year, twice, the community organized by themselves to go and pray the Rosary in front of the Red River Women's Clinic of Fargo, ND to stop killing some 300,000 human babies every year. They received support from some people passing by and insults from another. At the end of the journey, they were greatly comforted.

### **11.- Christmas and other Activities**

- **Posadas, three Kings, Rosca de Reyes, The Presentation of the Lord, 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 Christmas songs. All these festivities ended with a potluck. Families and their children enjoy all these popular celebrations.
- For a second year, a **Christmas Play** was prepared by our children. They have fun and learn the real meaning of Christmas, on the other hand, their parents feel so proud seeing their kids acting like an actors.
- 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. Everything ended with potluck: food from every country.

- **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 a dance group open to children and adults who want to preserve their cultural traditions or just for having fun. This year, they performed in the feast of our Lady of Guadalupe.