



**NAFSCC**  
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Forum For  
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**CHRISTIAN**  
**COMMUNITIES**

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Foro Norteamericano  
Para  
**LAS PEQUEÑAS**  
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# E-Newsletter

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*The NAFSCC E-Newsletters sent bi-monthly to members*

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**Happy Thanksgiving!**

**News and Ideas**

Associate Director

The Diocese of San Bernardino is seeking motivated candidates for the position of Associate Director, for the office of Small Faith Communities. Qualified candidates must be a Practicing Roman Catholic with prior experience with Small Faith Communities. A Bachelor's Degree (Master's Degree preferred) in Theology, Pastoral Ministry or Religious Education or a related field. Bi-lingual/Bi-literate English/Spanish skills required. Must have strong public speaking, teaching and facilitating skills, along with effective program and event planning skills, effective written and oral communication skills, and ability to build and maintain effective professional relationships. Excellent computer skills to include Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Publisher, Outlook and Internet search engines are required. We offer an excellent work environment, and a good benefits package.

The Diocese of San Bernardino is currently accepting resumes for the position of Associate Director, for the office of Small Faith Communities. The Associate Director has responsibility for meeting the goals of the Office through collaboration with the Director in - Development and planning of events and publications; Networking and collaborating with other diocesan ministries and national organizations; Providing resources for parish staffs, coordinators and small faith community leaders and Representing the Office and the Office Director as requested in her/his absence.

The Office of Small Faith Communities is committed to the development, support and networking of parishes in the Diocese of San Bernardino as a community of communities. It is the goal of the Office of Small Faith communities (OSFC) to: Provide on-going education and formation through workshops, publications, retreats, personal consultations and a specialization course; Animate the initiation and expansion of Small Faith Communities through the development of original faith sharing materials; Facilitate networking of small faith communities through special events and gatherings.

For consideration send resume with cover letter and salary requirements to:

Diocese of San Bernardino  
Attn.: Virginia. Turner  
1201 E. Highland Avenue  
San Bernardino, CA 92404  
Email: [employment@sbdioocese.org](mailto:employment@sbdioocese.org)  
Fax: 909-475-5189

## **Upcoming Events**

### **Small Christian Community Convocation**

August 9-12, 2007, University of St. Paul, MN

Sponsored by the National SCC Organizations:

North American Forum for Small Christian Communities,  
National Alliance of Parishes Restructuring into Communities,  
Mexican American Cultural Center, Buena Vista  
Secretariat for Hispanic Affairs

Featured Plenary Presenters:

Fr. Ronald Rolheiser, O.M.I., Mr. Brian Rusche,  
Sr. Katarina Schuth, O.S.F., Fr. Arthur Baranowski,  
Fr. Jose Marins

*Practical workshops offered in afternoons.*

**Publicity for SCC Convocation:**

**--Diocesan Personnel--**

**Indicate the number of brochures needed  
for your diocese to distribute.**

**Please email Sr. Marci Blum  
DBQCFL/AF@arch.pvt.k12.ia.us  
by December 1, 2006.**

**Please put the pdf (adobe)  
brochure on your website and e-mails  
for your diocese. See attachment.**

**Share Your Views**

**Reflections on Small Groups**

Deacon Thomas W. Gornick  
Director of Evangelization  
Archdiocese of Portland

During Lent 2001, 2002, and 2003, the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon had over 20,000 parishioners from 95 parishes actively participate in the small group

component of *Disciples in Mission*, developed by the Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association (PNCEA). When the formal process was completed, many parishes continued the small groups. The numbers were much smaller. However, the dream and desire of many parishioners was the continue level of participation during the first years of this decade. They yearn for the life and energy those small groups gave too many.

Every fall, advent and lent, the Department of Evangelization receives calls for assistance - training, materials or more. Still the numbers are small. The question always is “Why can't we get more people in our small group process?” Perhaps we are focused too narrowly. Douglas Sosnik, Matthew Dowd and Ron Fournier in their new book **Applebee's America** about how successful organization - including religious - connect with the larger community, remind us that “megachurches have small groups for almost every imaginable topic, idea or need. “A successful megachurch is not an impersonal congregation of 10,000 people; it is 1000 congregations of 10 like-minded friends, knit together by common beliefs, values and lifestyles.” They go to excess beyond scripture study, catechesis or “churchy” topics.

Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, has always grown his congregation through small groups. He wrote in his 1995 book, **The Purpose Driven Church**, “Affinity groups can provide the personal care and attention every member deserves, no matter how big the church becomes. Develop a network of small groups built around different purposes, interests, age groups, geography or anything else.” Do our Catholic parishes limit membership and participation by being too narrow? Are we inviting parishioners to share their entire lives with the community? Are we listening to the needs of the heart and body?

Sosnik and his co authors made a strong case that in areas of business, politics and church there is a “hunger for community.” People want to be connected. Can the small group be that resource to connect our parish communities? Can the small group be the gathering point that leads to Eucharist?

Cardinal Walter Kasper, the president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, spoke in October at Pittsburgh's Duquesne University. He said, “Rather than criticize Pentecostals, [we should learn from them]. We should ask ourselves, “Why do some of our Catholics leave?” Are Catholics truly connected - in relationship with our God, His Son Jesus and their neighbors in the parish and larger community?

The Catholic parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Portland have had and continue to have good small group experiences. However, if the dream and desire for all parishioners to be involved is to happen; we must seriously consider looking to new topics and interests not just religious topics. We need to seek to form small groups for singles, single parents, single moms, new moms, widowed, unemployed, employed, physicians, lawyers, and factory workers, young adults, engaged, adults caring for parents. The list could go on and on but we must bring people together and form bonds of community within our parish that led to “communio” at Sunday in the Eucharist.

Processes like *Disciples and Mission* and *Renew* have been gifts to our parishes and dioceses. The most significant gift beyond the immediate experience may be the methods and skills that were taught. The same small group structures and leadership guides work for all groups. Some of those former group members may not feel comfortable leading a scripture study, but would be willing to lead a small group that shares their passion or concerns in some other area.

The Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Instruction on the means of Social Communication wrote, “Through [Jesus'] incarnation. He utterly identified himself with those who were to receive his communication, and he gave his message not only in words but in the whole manner of his life. He spoke from within, that is to say, as one fully involved in the life of his community.” (#11) Our small groups need to follow the example of Jesus and reflect our full involvement in the life of our community.

Can an affinity of small groups truly be the key to participating in Jesus' mission to make disciples of all people?

## **Small Christian Community Visitor from Hungary** **By Robert K. Moriarty, S.M.**

The Pastoral Department for Small Christian Communities (Archdiocese of Hartford) recently had the pleasure of hosting Andras Koncz, the director of HALO, a national networking office for small Christian communities in Hungary. He was here in the states for about two and a half weeks to learn about small church communities in the U.S.

I first learned of HALO in 1999 during the International Consultation on Small Christian Communities in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Jan Kofron (Czech Republic), a

member of the European delegation, reported on the presence of small Christian communities in Eastern Europe. He spoke of HALO and its work to network Hungarian small communities both within and beyond the borders of Hungary. This past year, Fr. Jim O'Halloran (Dublin, Ireland), another member of the European delegation at Cochabamba visited HALO in Budapest. He subsequently sent a report of his visit to Cochabamba participants with whom he was still in touch. I wrote to HALO at that point to greet them and share something of our work here in Hartford. That started a conversation that continued over the course of a year.

This past spring, Andras wrote to say that HALO would like to send one or two folks to connect with small Christian communities here in the states. We planned the visit together over the course of several months and he arrived here on September 29. He accompanied me to the NAPRC board meeting that first weekend. When we returned from Indianapolis, Andras was hosted for a couple of days by an SCC couple, who arranged for him to meet with various small community folk from several parishes. He then accompanied me to a parish where I was scheduled to do an intensive workshop over a two-day period with a newly developing core team. A weekend trip to the Big Apple followed. At the beginning of the second week, a couple from another area parish hosted Andras for a couple of days, providing yet another chance to gather with small community folks. A regularly scheduled meeting of the department's Advisory Board then offered both Andras and us here in Hartford the chance for an extended conversation about our mutual experiences. Finally, the two of us traveled to Phoenix to participate in the Buena Vista convocation. Andras was invited to participate in the closing panel at the convocation. Following the convocation, he returned, probably exhausted, to Budapest.

At 38, Andras is a dynamic man of faith and man of the church. He is married and has five children ranging from 13 to 4. His English is superb, so the conversation flowed easily throughout his visit. There are hundreds and hundreds of small Christian communities in Hungary, many of which trace their roots to being underground churches during the Soviet era. As the influence of the Soviet Union waned, a couple of laymen took it on themselves to begin to bring these communities, previously totally isolated from one another, into communication. This was the birth of HALO. Andras has been connected with HALO now for six years and four years ago took over the office operation. The two founders of HALO continue to provide a leadership role on HALO's board. HALO does a large number of workshops through out the country and beyond every year, including a weeklong summer camp for hundreds of small community members and their

families. HALO has a close working relationship with the Hungarian Bishops' Conference and even receives financial support from the conference.

Andras sees this as a critical time for HALO, a time to take the small church community experience to a whole new level. The biggest need, he says, is for their small communities to be challenged to be more than “friendship circles within the church”. He came to the U.S. to explore approaches to deepening already existing communities and to promoting the development of new ones. Hungarian small church communities do not have a lot by way of printed resources and Andras took a special interest in the kinds of materials produced here in the U.S. With all the material he collected over the two weeks, he could barely close his suitcase for the trip home.

The broad issue of thinking of small communities in terms of vision for parish was especially engaging for him. A new pastor has been in place in his parish now for four years. Immediately, the new pastor opened his home once a month to parishioners at large to gather with him for conversation. Since then five small Christian communities have developed. The community of which Andras and his wife are members is comprised now of ten young couples. The other couples are all younger than Andras and his wife. They meet weekly on Saturday morning at the church where another small community takes care of the community's 25-30 children while they meet.

It is difficult to capture the whole of Andras' visit in a few words, but in a nutshell, it was a marvelous experience of solidarity in our shared effort to build church in a new way. There are differences, of course, in our respective socio-cultural and ecclesiastical contexts, but also such a recognizable commonality of challenges and opportunities. This mutually enriching exchange reminds me of Ian Fraser's reflection about the worldwide development of small Christian communities at the Cochabamba consultation. Small Christian communities, says Fraser, are “the result of the spontaneous combustion of the Holy Spirit all over the globe.”

If you would like to make contact with Andras Koncz yourself, you may reach him by e-mail at [koncza@enternet.hu](mailto:koncza@enternet.hu)

## **What's Going On with SCCs?**

Share you good news what you are doing with Small Christian Communities.

Contact NAFSCC “web person,” Carlette Chordas, Diocese of Youngstown: [cchordas@youngstowndiocese.org](mailto:cchordas@youngstowndiocese.org). She will put your ideas and activities on the NAFSCC website: [www.nafsc.org](http://www.nafsc.org).

## Good News Column

### Some Good News from the Diocese of San Bernardino, California

Steve Valenzuela  
Director, Office of Small Faith Communities  
Diocese of San Bernardino

*Steve writes that his office publishes an office newsletter (six times a year) and if it is useful, you can request to have it sent to you or you could read excerpts from their website: <http://sfc.sbdiocese.cc>.*

This Fall, coordinators, facilitators and members of the over 500+ Small Faith Communities in the Diocese of San Bernardino have had several opportunities for on-going formation.

Beginning in August and ending in October, the Office of Small Faith Communities sponsored a bilingual track of workshops for leaders and members of small communities as part of the Office of Religious Education and Formation's annual “Catechist Days.” Two workshops were offered in both English and Spanish: “The Values and Vision of Jesus for Modern Day Disciples” and “Spirituality of Ministry” at each of the four regional events.

In September, the Office offered its semi-annual course “Ministry with Small Faith Communities.” The two-day workshop is part of the diocese' Ministry Formation Institute or MFI. Completion of this course and another 60 hours of theology classes means an individual may be *certified* as pastoral minister with a specialization in Ministry with Small Faith Communities.

In addition to ongoing formation opportunities, the Office continues to publish original resources for use by small communities throughout the diocese. The publications were collaborative projects with various departments and offices within the diocesan structure. Two new publications this year include: ***Giving Welcome to the Lord: A Disciple's Response*** is a 4 session reproducible set of Advent Faith sharing materials with original reflections, questions and prayer



resources for use in both small community and family settings during the season. The materials invite participants to reflect and share on themes of Justice and Stewardship in light of the Sunday readings. Each parish received a complete bilingual packet of the materials. The Office offered training workshops for parish leaders on using the material as part the overall plan for the parish's Advent observance during the month of October and in early November. The collaborators for this project were the diocese' Office of Social Concerns and Office of Development.

*Living the Promise* is a five session faith sharing process developed for parishes that have experienced being merged. On July 1 2006, 9 parishes in the diocese were merged into 4 “mega parishes” due to the region's phenomenal growth (in 1978 - 230,000 Catholics, by 2006 - 1.4 Million) and continuing clergy shortage. According to the Bishop, plans are in the works for more mergers. The process was designed for use by pastoral leaders to assist parishioners with the process of grieving the loss of their previous parish and begin the process of embracing the new one. Materials were sent to each site of the merged parishes. Several began to use the material immediately with existing Small Communities. Collaborators for this project were Caritas Counseling Services (a department of Catholic Charities) and Holy Name of Jesus Parish Small Faith Communities.

The Office again will offer an Easter Season faith sharing booklet in 2007. This year's theme, *Gifts from the Earth* focuses its reflections and sharing on the Sunday Readings and on the various parts the Sunday liturgy. Original reflections are being written by local church leaders in both English and Spanish with original prayers and faith sharing questions. The mission section this year focuses on Eco-justice as reflected by the UN's millennium goals. The booklet will cost 6.00 each. Last Easter, 49 parishes purchased nearly 1700 copies of the Easter process “Hearts on Fire.”

## **Good News from Archdiocese of Cincinnati**

Tanya Monsour Stager, Assistant Director  
Office of Evangelization and Catechesis  
Archdiocese of Cincinnati  
100 East Eighth Street  
Cincinnati OH 45202  
tstager@catholiccincinnati.org  
513-421-3131

Over ninety people gathered for a SCC Formation Day. Brother Robert Moriarty, S.M. Ph.D., the keynote speaker addressed the topic, “Nourishing the Small

Church Community to be An Anchor in An Evolving Church.” Bro. Moriarty opened the day speaking of his experience of traveling around the world. SCC is an international experience of building Church; each group is a link in a chain. Each parish needs to take stock of the life of its community: Mass attendance, participation of the young, how values of the community are influenced, and what difference does being a catholic make. Although the American experience is one of strong individualism there is a need for community. Statistics show that between 40% and 60% of persons are in or would like to be in a group that provides care and support. Persons are in small groups because of the experience of belonging. The challenge of the church today is the recovery of the community. The parish has an opportunity to provide a relational experience for its members by beginning each and every gathering with an opportunity for reflection. This could be a five minute part of any gathering in the parish that ask a simple question about a life experience, life activity or a reading and reflection on Scripture, sharing the reflection and gather the thoughts in prayer. Over a period of time this can become part of the parish style and would have a cumulative impact on the life of the parish.

An opportunity to take part in smaller workshops was also provided. Such topics as life stages of SCC, how catechesis takes place in SCC, and empowering others to lead SCC gave participants an opportunity to strength their own and their parishes’ SCC. These groups discussed the value of listening and praying, as well as the importance of good facilitating. The day concluded with a critical look at SCC: how well groups integrate new members, acknowledge and deal with conflict, deliberately engage in evaluation, the centrality of Scripture, the challenge of long term communities and the importance facilitators gathering to share concerns.

Bro. Moriarty concluded with the importance of pastoral and parishioner leadership providing a vision for the parish in which faith can make a difference in people’s life’s and in the life of the parish.

## Resources

## News from Fr. Pierre

Rev. Pierre Goudreault, Diocese of Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec  
p.goudreault@cablevision.qc.ca

I have a great news to share with you all. My third book has been published last September. The title is *Faire Église autrement*, which means something like *New Ways of Making Church*. It is on small groups in the Church. On the cover you see grapes. The origin of the word "groupe" or "group" is coming from an Italian word "grappa". With years "grappa" which means a gathering of things or persons was associated to "group".

Aurevoir!

Pierre

N.B. Attached in pdf format is the overview of his new book in both English and French.

## Word And Life

### Advent Book for Small Faith Sharing Groups

Rev. Pierre Goudreault, Diocese of Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec  
p.goudreault@cablevision.qc.ca

N.B. Attached in pdf format is the promotional material for Fr. Pierre's Advent booklet.

## *Small Christian Communities Today*

(2005)

### **Joseph G. Healey and Jeanne Hinton, editors**

Bishop William Skylstad, Diocese of Spokane, and President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, reviews this book: "*Small Christian Communities* is an excellent summary of the work of Small Christian Communities worldwide. In this moment of salvation history, the challenge of strengthening communities of faith is a vital mission of the Church. This book will provide inspiration and encouragement for the continuing need of evangelization." Great bibliography and index. You may order copies from Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York 10545.

## Invitation Extended

We want to hear what you are doing with Small Christian Communities in your dioceses to share with our members. Send in your events and activities to Sr. Marci

Blum to be put in the e-newsletter. E-mail: [DBQCFL/AF@arch.pvt.k12.ia.us](mailto:DBQCFL/AF@arch.pvt.k12.ia.us).

**NAFSCC Board Members and E-Mail Addresses:**

**Sr. Marci Blum, Archdiocese of Dubuque: [DBQCFL/AF@arch.pvt.k12.ia.us](mailto:DBQCFL/AF@arch.pvt.k12.ia.us)**  
(*E-Newsletter*)

**Carlette Chordas, Diocese of Youngstown: [cchordas@youngstowndiocese.org](mailto:cchordas@youngstowndiocese.org)**  
(*Website*)

**Sr. Donna Ciangio, National Pastoral Life Center: [dciangio@nplc.org](mailto:dciangio@nplc.org)** (*Chair*)

**Sr. Patricia Froning, Diocese of Owensboro: [pat.froning@pastoral.org](mailto:pat.froning@pastoral.org)**  
(*Treasurer*)

**Rev. Pierre Goudreault, Diocese of Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec:**

**[p.goudreault@cablevision.qc.ca](mailto:p.goudreault@cablevision.qc.ca)** (*Consultant*)

**Ms. Margarita Hayes, Diocese of Las Cruces: [mhayes@dioceseoflascruces.org](mailto:mhayes@dioceseoflascruces.org)**  
(*Consultant*)

**Ms. Diane Kledzik, Diocese of St. Petersburg: [dmk@dosp.org](mailto:dmk@dosp.org)** (*Membership*)

**Visit NAFSCC website: [www.nafsc.org](http://www.nafsc.org)**

**NAFSCC Policy**

**We do not give out the NAFSCC membership list to any individual or organization. We would gladly receive ads or information to be posted in the e-newsletter.**

We hope you enjoyed reading this.

For additions, comments and address changes to the

NAFSCC E-Newsletter

e-mail Marci Blum OSF at [DBQCFL/AF@arch.pvt.k12.ia.us](mailto:DBQCFL/AF@arch.pvt.k12.ia.us)