



NAFSCC
North American
Forum For
SMALL
CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITIES

FNPCC
Foro Norteamericano
Para
LAS PEQUEÑAS
COMUNIDADES
CRISTIANAS

FNAPCF
Le Forum nord-américain
pour
LES PETITES
COMMUNAUTÉS
DE FOI

www.nafsc.org

E-Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 4
March 15, 2006

These things I warmly wish to you-
Someone to love
Some work to do
A bit o' sun
A bit o' cheer
And a guardian angel always near.

Irish Blessing

The NAFSCC E-Newsletters sent bi-monthly to members

Contents:

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1. News and Ideas

NAFSCC Membership Meeting at NAICE Convention

NAFSCC Board will be hosting the annual membership meeting during the NAICE Convention. Mark your calendars to attend. **NAICE (North American Institute for Catholic Evangelization) Conference is July 12-16, 2006, Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio. Register through the USCCB web site Please register ASAP through your diocese or organization and indicate that you belong to NAFSCC in the appropriate spot.**

NAFSCC membership meeting is scheduled for July 16 beginning with 8:00 a.m. breakfast. Meeting will be from 8:30 a.m.–12:00 noon at Xavier University in Cincinnati. See attachments in pdf format. One attachment is the working agenda and the other is the brochure with registration form. Send registration to Sr. Patricia Froning, Diocese of Owensboro: pat.froning@pastoral.org.

Guide d'animation Parole et vie

pour un petit groupe de partage de foi

parcours carême 2006

L'équipe de rédaction vous informe que le *Guide d'animation Parole et vie* est maintenant en vente pour les personnes qui désirent vivre le parcours du carême 2006 dans un petit groupe de partage de foi. Ce guide est préparé à la Paroisse Sainte-Trinité, diocèse de Rouyn-Noranda, Québec. Il présente un parcours de sept rencontres. Chaque membre d'un groupe se procure le guide afin de mieux participer aux échanges.

Un petit groupe de partage de foi, formé de trois à dix personnes, permet de se réunir à la maison pour approfondir ses expériences de vie à la lumière de l'évangile du dimanche. L'accueil des autres, la prière commune, le partage de foi, la préparation à la fête de Pâques et les actions dans le quotidien sont autant d'activités proposées dans le *Guide d'animation Parole et vie*. **La première rencontre s'organise durant la semaine du 27 février 2006, soit avant le 1er dimanche du carême**, au jour et à l'heure qui conviennent aux participants et participantes.

On peut se procurer le *Guide d'animation Parole et vie* au coût de 3\$/unité auprès de :

Madame Hélène Girard

Librairie diocésaine de Rouyn-Noranda

515, avenue Cuddihy

Rouyn-Noranda (Québec) J9X 4C5

Téléphone : (819) 764-4660

Télécopieur : (819) 764-3972 h

Bon parcours pour le carême!

Pierre Goudreault, prêtre

Directeur du *Guide d'animation Parole et vie*

Paroisse Sainte-Trinité, diocèse de Rouyn-Noranda, Québec

Animation Guide Word and Life

for a Small Faith-Sharing Group

Lenten Journey 2006

The editorial staff informs you that the *Animation Guide Word and Life* is now available in English. It is on sale for the people who wish to take part of the Lenten journey 2006 in a *Small faith-sharing group*. This guide is prepared at the Paroisse Sainte-Trinité, Rouyn-Noranda diocese, Québec. It presents a course of seven meetings for the english speaking *Small faith-sharing groups*. Each member of a group gets his guide which supports the animation and the personal reflection.

A *Small faith-sharing group*, formed from three to ten people, allows to meet at home to look further into its experiments of life in the light of the Sunday Gospel. The greeting of others, the common prayer, the faith-sharing, the preparation for Christmas and the actions in the daily life are activities suggested by the *Animation Guide Word and Life*. This year, the first meeting will take place during the week of February 27, 2006, that is before the first Sunday of Lent, on the day and the time chosen by the participants.

One can get the *Animation Guide Word and Life* at the Ordering office for the cost of 3\$/unit :

Miss Hélène Girard
Librairie diocésaine de Rouyn-Noranda
515, avenue Cuddihy
Rouyn-Noranda (Québec) J9X 4C5
Téléphone : (819) 764-4660
Télécopieur : (819) 764-3972
helene.libr@cablevision.qc.ca

Have a good Lenten Journey!
Pierre Goudreault, prêtre
Director of the *Animation Guide Word and Life*
Paroisse Sainte-Trinité, Rouyn-Noranda diocese, Québec

New from Ave Maria Press **Exploring Deus Caritas Est**

The first encyclical by Pope Benedict XVI in small group format. This new online resource from Ave Maria Press offers an exciting process for exploring Pope Benedict XVI's first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*. (God is Love). Written by Anthony Garascia, pastoral leader, marriage and family therapist, and author of the popular marriage preparation programs, *Before "I Do"* and *Catholic Remarriage*, the four sessions cover the major themes of *Deus Caritas Est*:

Introduction

1. [http://avemariapress.com/assets/Assets/Downloads/Deus Caritas Session One.pdf](http://avemariapress.com/assets/Assets/Downloads/Deus_Caritas_Session_One.pdf)
Love and Eros NOW AVAILABLE!

2. Eros and Agape: Love Through the Lens of Biblical Faith Available March 3rd

3. Caritas an Essential Element of the Christian Life Available March 10

4. Caritas and the Requirements of Justice Available March 17

Church leaders have described Deus Caritas Est to be a "powerful text on the core of Christian faith," but the text itself may be overwhelming to the lay Catholic or Christian. That led Anthony Garascia to prepare this discussion guide for individuals and small groups wishing to explore the pope's teachings and what it means for their lives.

Each session outline includes:

- +An opening scripture reading and prayer
- +Commentary on the encyclical, highlighting specific themes
- +Questions for reflection/discussion
- +A snapshot from the Tradition of the Church that exemplifies mature biblical love
- +A suggestion for continuing reflection/action between sessions

Exploring Deus Caritas Est is written for small discussion groups, but it is well-suited for individuals who wish to understand the Holy Father's message about the essential aspects of love and the demands it places on the Catholic Christian in today's world.

Each session is available to download for FREE and arranged in booklet format. Click on the available sessions above to download the PDF files. Adobe Acrobat Reader is needed to view these files.

Go to <http://avemariapress.com/>]<http://avemariapress.com/>

Disciples on the Journey

Diocese of Victoria has published a faith sharing booklet entitled "Disciples on the Journey." Click on the attachment in pdf format and you will find further information.

2. Upcoming Events

NCCL Convention April 30-May 4, 2006 at the O'Hare Hyatt Regency, Chicago, Illinois

NAICE (North American Institute for Catholic Evangelization) Conference
July 12-16, 2006, Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio

NAFSCC Membership Meeting July 16, 2006, 8 a.m.–12:00 noon, Xavier
University, Cincinnati, Ohio.

3. Share Your Views

The Power of the Small Christian Community Experience in Chaparral

Dr. David Garcia
Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Las Cruces
Parishioner of St. Thomas More Parish in Chaparral, New Mexico

As a parishioner from St. Thomas More Parish in Chaparral, New Mexico, I would like to share an experience that happened twice since forming our Small Christian Communities. Our pastor, Fr. Miguel Echeverría, had been encouraging his parishioners to form Small Christian Communities for many years. He constantly reminded us that the purpose of “parish” is to help us experience God and live out our relationship with our neighbors. He urged us to think beyond the church building and to discover God in nature, people, and the events of life all around us. He felt that the best way to do this and to help foster our identity as Catholic Christians was to do this by forming Small Christian Communities.

At first my reaction was one of reluctance, fearing the resistance of others to form such groups, and secondly, realizing that it would be difficult for people to give up precious time for this endeavor. We have become a very busy society, where our time is planned by every minute of our existence causing us to become prisoners of time. But how much time do we allocate to what should be the most important thing in our lives? That is, sharing time with God. *Primero Dios!* So we decided to take up his challenge.

Two years ago at one of our church prayer group meetings, we, the ministry leaders, decided to create a Small Christian Community. This group began to meet weekly on Monday nights for an hour of prayer and dialogue. We soon realized that change begins with an experience, not with will power. For change to happen

it must begin with a positive experience and this group was a very positive experience and so, we began to change.

Our Small Christian Community developed a deep sense of affiliation in the Faith as well as true spiritual relationships. Our members looked forward to meeting and sharing with each other, in praying, singing, and reflecting on scripture. Through the grace of God a spiritual bonding and acceptance among the members started to flourish. I can only express this emotional feeling as the result of extending oneself for the sake of nurturing others, which, at the same time, develop our own spiritual growth.

Because we were the ministry leaders in the parish, Father Miguel suggested that we break up our initial group in order to develop new groups. You can imagine the dread and resistance we felt at the thought of breaking up our group.

But, we did it for the sake of mission, and each of us is as happy and content with the new group as we were with our original group. The same special spiritual kinship has developed among all of the new members. The members from our first group still meet once a month. As a result of all of this, St. Thomas More Parish in Chaparral, New Mexico now has 34 Small Christian Communities! It can be done!

I also belong to a third small community at the Diocesan Pastoral Center where I serve as the Superintendent of Schools. We have developed that same compassion of love and trust among our staff members. It also helps our collaboration as diocesan staff.

I love being part of a Small Christian Community. Small Christian Community not only promotes the faith of individuals, it becomes the living breath that builds up the body of Christ and leads people to live their love for Christ through positive action in the community. I really believe that the Small Christian Communities have become a basic unit of the parish in places that take them seriously and follow through with them. They serve to increase the communal life and mission of the parish by sharing in its life generously with the many talents and support of others.

We need to make time for God and with our busy lives, it is most important that parishes offer a process that offers a time for sharing what is happening in our lives, a time for Scripture and faith sharing and reflection, a time for shared prayer, a time for socializing and thanking each other for their faithfulness.

I know that the Small Christian Communities bring healing as each member shares

their fears, anxieties, and hurts with one another and then experience God's healing touch in their own hearts. The two greatest commandments are: Love God with all your heart and with all your soul, and love your neighbor as your self. I encourage people to participate in a Small Christian Community and see the rewards it will bring.

What's Going On with SCCs?

If you have any news about you are doing with Small Christian Communities, contact NAFSCC "web person," Carlette Chordas, Diocese of Youngstown: cchordas@youngstowndiocese.org. She will put your ideas and activities on the NAFSCC website: www.nafsc.org.

4. Good News Column

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.

NAFSCC Board Members and E-Mail Addresses:

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Visit NAFSCC website: 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