



DIOCESE OF DES MOINES

PRESSRELEASE

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Catholics encouraged to come “On a Journey Together”

Evangelization, renewal process kicks off preparations for diocese’s 100th anniversary

The Diocese of Des Moines is kicking off preparations for its 100th anniversary in 2011 by inviting all Catholics in its 23 counties to be a part of “On a Journey Together,” a four-part process of evangelization and renewal being introduced at all 82 parishes in the diocese this fall.

Thousands of people across central and southwest Iowa will be involved in the small group, faith-sharing opportunity at a grassroots level. Already, more than 700 people have participated in pilot parishes with positive results.

The purpose of “On a Journey Together” has its foundation in evangelization, which is the theme of events leading up to and including the diocesan centennial celebration. At its core, evangelization calls for ongoing personal conversion, or a deeper understanding of Jesus’ message which results in witnessing to one’s faith.

“‘On a Journey Together’ seeks to awaken the faith within us and inject new energy in our efforts to witness our faith every day of the week,” said Bishop Richard Pates. “As we celebrate the first 100 years of our diocese, let us look forward to where the Holy Spirit leads us in the next 100 years as witnesses to the Gospel of Christ.”

Parishioner gatherings will constitute the beginning and end of each session with five small faith-sharing group gatherings in between. The sessions begin this fall, followed by

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sessions in the Spring and Fall of 2010 and Spring 2011. During the small group gatherings, people examine the Gospels, Church teachings and share experiences as they seek to intensify their faith.

Relationships among parishioners involved in the small group gatherings are expected to grow stronger as people explore their faith together, said Cheryl Fournier, diocesan Director of Adult Faith Formation and coordinator of this evangelization process. The result should not only be growth in faith for individuals, but stronger faith communities, she said.

The first session, beginning after Labor Day in most parishes, focuses on awakening one's relationship with Jesus and finding words to describe it. The second session, in Spring 2010, is a call to discipleship, or a better understanding of what following Jesus means. The outcome anticipated is a conversion among people as they realize what the Good News is about. The third session, in Fall 2010, calls on people to live in Christ through the Church and her sacraments. The fourth session, in Spring 2011, calls on participants to become witnesses as the Body of Christ. It will encourage people to act not as lone agents, but come to realize their role in the Church as members of the one body as we seek to witness to values that represent the core of our beliefs.

"As the Body of Christ, we as Church are called to work for the common good of all," said Bishop Pates.

The centennial celebration will culminate with a large gathering in Fall 2011. The evangelization process is expected to continue in parishes beyond the centennial celebration through ongoing small-group gatherings and through outreach in the greater community as we continue to grow in the ways of Jesus.

Multiple resources will be available. Look for stories in The Catholic Mirror, the diocesan newspaper, and for additional references on the diocesan website at www.dmdiocese.org. A closed Facebook page has been established for core leaders in each parish to share ideas, and a blog will be created for open dialog among people across the diocese.

For more information, contact Cheryl Fournier at 515-237-5006.

The Diocese of Des Moines includes 82 parishes in 23 counties in central and southwest Iowa.