



NEWS ARCHIVE:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

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Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO) returns to city of its birth for summer Impact 2009 mission: diocese welcomes 60 young missionaries



Christy Gaudet (left) Impact mission director holds the Word of God out to the Impact members serving at St. Francis Xavier parish in Saskatoon during a commissioning held May 7 at St. Patrick Parish.

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

A summer of evangelization and faith formation began in Saskatoon for some 60 young adults from across Canada, as a CCO Impact 2009 summer mission got underway in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO), which began 20 years ago on the campus of the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, is a student movement of evangelization and outreach that now operates on a number of campuses from Vancouver to Halifax.

CCO summer mission projects are undertaken each year as a way for university students to deepen their faith and have an impact on a particular community, said Saskatoon CCO team leader Christy Gaudet.

"To see the students and the parishes coming together has just been the greatest thing," she said of the early days of the summer mission project in Saskatoon, the culmination of months of planning by Impact summer mission organizers.

Living and working at summer jobs in the community from May 4 to Aug. 12, Impact participants spend time outside work leading and participating in faith formation and training, faith studies, retreats and special events in the diocese. They also share community life together, with daily prayer, celebrations of the Eucharist, support and training all part of the summer experience for the young missionaries.

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CCO Chaplain Fr. Marc Mireau at the diocesan welcoming Mass May 7.

Impact teams of four or five students have been assigned to 10 city parishes, as well as to the “Trinite” parishes of St. Denis, Vonda and Prud’homme in the rural Saskatoon deanery. In addition, a five-member “Apostle Team” of more experienced CCO missionaries will be visiting different rural parishes throughout the summer to speak about their faith and to spend time in fellowship. The “Apostle Team” will also provide school retreats, will meet with Grade 11 and 12 students, and will offer summer day camps.

“It has been just so wonderful to finally meet the students, to have them here, and to see all of their gifts and talents, and the potential that they have. It’s so great to realize all that they are going to offer to our diocese, and to people individually this summer,” said Gaudet.

The Impact missionaries were welcomed by the diocese at a celebration of the Eucharist May 7 at St. Patrick’s parish, followed by a commissioning led by Rev. Marc Mireau, CCO chaplain.

“We see the fruit of this ministry here in the very city where it began, and it didn’t happen just overnight. There were struggles; there were challenges. There were tears, there was laughter, and there was joy. You are following in the footsteps of what has already brought much life to this diocese and to other dioceses,” said Mireau. “That same

mission continues today: to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.”

Leah Perrault, director of pastoral services for the diocese of Saskatoon, brought greetings from Bishop Albert LeGatt and welcomed the CCO Impact mission on behalf of the diocese. The summer mission will be a time of grace both for the Impact missionaries and for the people of the diocese, predicted Perrault. “We wish to welcome you, to share in your joy, to be blessed with you and by you. May your time with us here be marked by the guidance of the Father, the calling of the Son and the surprises of the Spirit,” she said. “It is my prayer that the people you encounter here will be the presence of Christ for you.”

St. Patrick pastor Rev. Kevin McGee noted that the Impact participants have already been noticed in and around the city, and in local parishes, wearing their distinctive red or blue t-shirts.

In an interview after the commissioning celebration, CCO founders André and Angèle Regnier expressed pride at seeing the Impact mission come to Saskatoon, which Angèle described as the “sentimental choice” 20 years after the movement began with a faith study offered on the University of Saskatchewan campus.

“To see Christy taking on such great leadership... to see these students doing things we dreamed of and prayed for, to see it all unfolding – it is an exciting

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day,” said Andre. “I am so encouraged by all that I see in Saskatoon. There are such beautiful things happening: in the parishes, with the priests and the people. There’s such life in this diocese. Everywhere we turn there’s good news.”

Angele stressed the importance of connecting with parishes. “We really believe in parish life... The summer missions really must be parish based and have a heart for the local church.”

Andre added that he hoped the CCO mission would have a lasting impact in the community, helping to “stir up missionary zeal.”

Between now and mid-August, the CCO Impact mission will offer a number of special outreach and formation events, including a Courageous Catholic program about sharing one’s faith; ongoing Tuesday evening faith studies in a number of host parishes; and a weekly “Cornerstone” gathering for young adults every Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at Holy Spirit Parish, which includes music, prayer, talks, activities, and socializing.

Once a month, the CCO Impact team will also hold a “Summit” evening of Eucharistic adoration and reconciliation. The next Summit will be held 7:30 p.m. Friday, June 19 at St. Anne parish in Saskatoon.

The CCO Impact team was part of a Diocesan Youth Event May 14 in Saskatoon, at which both diocesan youth ministers and CCO missionaries shared their faith testimonies. Diocesan leaders presented skits and games, while the CCO team led praise and worship. Another Diocesan Youth Event with the Impact team will be held Friday, June 12 at St. Augustine parish in Humboldt.



CCO founders André and Angèle Regnier (seated) listen as Impact 2009 participants are commissioned during a diocesan welcoming celebration May 7 at St. Patrick Parish in Saskatoon.