



NEWS ARCHIVE:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

Editor: Kiply Lukan Yaworski, Communications
Phone: 306-242-1500; Toll Free: 1-877-661-5005
communications@saskatoonrcdiocese.com



Young adults from Newfoundland to British Columbia participated in the Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO) summer mission, Impact 2009, in Saskatoon from May to August. The 54 Impact missionaries gathered at the front of Holy Spirit parish during a final Cornerstone outreach event Aug. 11.

Final “Cornerstone” evening held for Impact 2009 summer mission, as Catholic Christian Outreach announces plans to continue event

BY ROBIN ANDERSON

The final Cornerstone of Impact 2009 was held Aug. 11 at Holy Spirit parish in Saskatoon. Some 500 attended to say goodbye to the 54 young missionaries who came from across Canada with Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO) to “Impact” the diocese this summer.

It began as all of the weekly Cornerstones did, with the worship team leading songs praising God, followed by a silly skit to get some laughs. It ended with a challenge to continue the mission of evangelization in the diocese of Saskatoon.

The skit included many favorite characters of Cornerstones past, but behind the laughter there was an important message: what happens if Catholic Christians do not take the call of evangelization seriously? The answer in the drama was clear: the call to evangelize is paramount, with all Catholics having the responsibility to preach the gospel in word and deed.

CONTINUED



Cornerstone MCs Josh Hrynchysn and Whitney Murphy summarized and celebrated the work done in Saskatoon by the young people involved in Impact 2009. Living and working in the community, the young missionaries served on Impact teams assigned to 11 Catholic parishes, leading faith studies, retreats, and special events from May to mid-August, as well as connecting with people one-on-one in their workplaces. A full-time five-member Apostle Team provided outreach and evangelization in schools and in rural communities, as well as providing Vacation Bible School programs and helping with prison ministry in the diocese.



Hrynchysn quoted words of encouragement from John Paul II: “God will always answer: ‘Say not “I am too young.” To whomever I send you, you shall go.’ So do not be discouraged because you are never alone. The Lord will not fail to accompany you, as he promised.” The mission team tried to live according to these words, Hrynchysn said. “We knew that God was always with us. We are young people, and we have no fear, we wish to be courageous in our faith.”

The evening included testimonies about how God worked through the Impact mission this summer, helping missionaries and parishioners alike to encounter Jesus Christ in a real way. Matt Vaughn of Halifax, N.S., said he entertained doubts as to whether or not God could use him on mission, until he met a young man named Jesse. “Over the weeks, being in faith studies with him, seeing him at Cornerstone and after mass, I could see that something was changing inside of him,” Vaughn said



Impact 2009 missionaries present a skit Aug. 11 at Holy Spirit Parish during the final CCO Cornerstone evening

Jesse was introduced to CCO and Impact soon after leaving the hospital: he had attempted suicide after a painful struggle involving drugs. “I was feeling very empty inside, and very insecure with myself,” Jesse said, relating how he prayed the rosary every day while in the hospital, and upon being discharged was invited to Cornerstone by his mom. “I left that first Cornerstone filled with Holy Spirit,” said the young Holy Spirit parishioner. “And this summer I have been trying to attend as many church activities as possible, like adoration and faith studies. I can say now that God is in the center of my life.”

CONTINUED



Vaughn said that his experience walking with Jesse taught him that God can use anyone: “I can now leave Saskatoon certain of the great work He has done.”

Matthew Ramsay, a seminarian for the diocese of Saskatoon, also related how he saw God work through the Impact mission.

Ramsay described how in his Clinical Pastoral Education course he met Kassie, a young woman who “was struggling with the Church’s place in her life, but was very open to God.” Ramsay and others invited Kassie to Cornerstone.

Kassie described how the first night she attended, the Cornerstone topic was the Church’s teaching on sex and marriage, and expressed the fears she had of being judged as a single mother. “But I have never felt so welcomed,” she said. “Numerous people greeted me; I couldn’t believe the community spirit found at Cornerstone.” Kassie added that she learned she was worthy of a new start, and began attending as many Cornerstones as possible. “Please continue to impact others as you have impacted me,” she said. “Because of what you have shown me, I can’t help but want the same impact on others.”

Impacters also shared how they intend to keep the “fire” going when they return to their hometowns and universities. Several described how they have committed themselves to daily prayer with the scriptures, to monthly accountability emails to other team members, and to reflecting on the Church’s teaching on evangelization.

Participants also spoke about their commitment to bring people to Christ, one person at a time. Speakers described plans to start faith studies on their campuses, and to try to bring one new person with them to Rise Up, CCO’s annual Christmas conference.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon is also called to continue the work of the Impact mission, said MC Whitney Murphy. Murphy quoted Benedict XVI, from his homily at World Youth Day last summer in Sydney. “Are you living your lives in a way that opens up space for the Spirit in the midst of a world that forgets God, or even rejects him in the name of falsely conceived freedom? How are you using the gifts you have been given, the power which the Holy Spirit is even now prepared to release within you? What legacy will you leave for the young people to come? What difference will you make?”



Christy Gaudet, Saskatoon District Director for CCO, came up to give her thanks, to close off the mission, and to commission the diocese in its call to evangelize.

“Most importantly,” said Gaudet, “I want to stress that this is not the end of the mission.” The people of the diocese of Saskatoon are ready to pick up the torch, she said. “With God, all things are possible.”

Plans to continue Cornerstone in Saskatoon were also announced, with CCO working in conjunction with Face-II-Face Ministries to offer the outreach on a monthly basis. The first Cornerstone of the fall will be held 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 24, 2009 at Holy Spirit Parish, 114 Kingsmere Place, Saskatoon.

CCO is an evangelizing movement operating on university campuses across the country. It began on the University of Saskatchewan campus in Saskatoon 20 years ago, with a faith study initiated by founders Angèle and André Regnier with the approval of the local bishop. CCO is one of the ministries supported by the Bishop’s Annual Appeal in the diocese of Saskatoon.