

Report for the Committee on Young People's Work

To the One Hundred and Thirty-Second Council
Of the Diocese of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Committee on Young People's Work has been busy in the last year executing many of its normal events as well as doing some serious planning for the future. There are two important pieces of information which we want to share with the diocese regarding the upcoming year. The first relates to the finances of the committee. While the COYPW has been the recipient of several large gifts in the past year or two, our resources are limited. It is our policy never to turn anyone away from an event for lack of financial means since we want as many children as possible to be exposed to the Gospel. But we also want to make sure families and local parishes are investing in the work of our youth also. To this end, we have adopted the following policy regarding financial aid for summer and winter camp:

The COYPW will make every effort to provide up to 50% of camp cost for an individual, upon receiving a letter of request from the vestry endorsed by the pastor. Special situations may be taken directly to the COYPW chairman by the pastor.

This is not to make it harder to obtain funds needed by a parish but to ensure a fair process for all requesting funds.

By now, each parish ought also to have received a letter in the mail with a census-style form attached. At one meeting this year, it was determined that further ministry to the youth of the diocese requires that we know to whom we are trying to minister. I would ask, if you have not already, that you have each individual in your parish who meets the criteria outlined in the letter fill out the form and return it to the committee. We look forward to using this information to better serve the needs of the young people in the diocese.

As always, the COYPW sponsored summer and winter camps in the last year as well as one other retreat. Octoberfest was not so much a lock-in as it was a first in its kind event. We had a lock-in at Grace Church in Collingdale where we made tacos together, played games, toilet paper football, and engaged in other fun activities. Following Saturday Morning Prayer, we departed for Brooklyn, NY. After leaving our belongings at Jesus the Good Shepherd, the approximately thirty youth and ten adults spent the afternoon and evening in Manhattan, touring the city. We returned to the church for dinner and a wonderful talk by the Rev. Mike Carr on the Father's love, demonstrated in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. At Winter Camp we were blessed to have Fr. Jason Patterson present to us a wonderful set of videos/lectures on the topic of "surrender". As we had just begun our Lenten observations, this was a timely topic. Discussing the surrender of stuff, status, sin and self, led to profitable small group discussions by the nearly 85 youth in attendance. Summer campers were divided by age as usual, with our older youth led by the Rev. Cedric Benner and our younger ones by the Very Rev. William A. Jenkins Sr. The week was spent learning why our bodies are valuable and how we ought to rightly use them to glorify God.

I would be remiss if I did not share with you some of the fruit borne out by our work this year. Two stories immediately come to mind. First, we were privileged to have a young man of the Islamic faith with us at summer camp. As a Muslim, he noticed immediately that our worship was different than that to which he was accustomed. He approached me and asked directly whether he was allowed to be at camp. The question afforded me, and other leaders, throughout the week the opportunity to demonstrate that Christianity is a welcoming religion and that Christ's arms are indeed open to all who will come to him. While this young man did not make a profession of faith in Christ, he told me that he planned to return this coming year. Seeds were planted by our speakers and leaders this year and it is our prayer we or someone else will be able to water these seeds in the near future.

Another student admitted to his counselor that he had been engaging in pre-marital sex. It is not a secret that this is a wide-spread problem and likely one shared by more campers than the one who spoke with his counselor. This young man, as a result of the lessons on glorifying God with our bodies, resolved to give up this sin. Thank God both for his mercy to forgive and to incline our hearts toward keeping his law.

The Lord has blessed and increased this ministry in recent years. We had over 115 participants at this summer camp. The leader of the camp we rent told me that if we could afford to rent their camp for eight weeks per summer they wouldn't even bother opening up to any other groups. That's quite a compliment! However, this past year exposed one of our biggest problems. We simply do not have enough help to be 100% effective in our ministry. Please commit to your prayers an increase of willing adults to work in the camping ministry. As you can see, the camping program is growing and fostering growth in our young people. If you are energetic, passionate for Christ and children, and able to take a week off of work in the summer, consider using your gifts to work with us.

Let me finish by thanking all those who have volunteered countless hours to support this ministry. Speakers, counselors, planners, pastors, and committee members have all done more than I have asked to make these programs a success. May the Lord smile upon your efforts.

Yours in the Divine Mercy,

Billy Jenkins