

CWG V: The Challenge to Bring Spiritual Depth to Family Life
St. Thomas More Parish, September 4, 2016 + 11 Participants
Report by: Sheila McKinley, Synod Delegate

1. How can our parish bring prayer more into the center of family life, with specific attention to multi-cultural dimensions of this challenge.

- Celebrate the saints with more piety and fanfare. This will include saints of whose cultures are represented at our parish as well as any that may get overlooked. Currently we have a novena leading up to our patron saint, St. Thomas More as well as family dinner gatherings at various parishioner's homes to celebrate this event.
- 25 day family prayer challenge at home
- Advent wreath activity (also the butter lambs) done at the parish but something the family takes home
- Parish family gatherings/picnics/events that will lead to building community which will create a place of desire for family spirituality and prayer at home (once a quarter?)
- More family service project opportunities
- Moms and Kids Group has a Facebook page where we post prayer intentions and offer feast day celebrations with the kids in hopes of bringing that prayer back into the home

2. What steps can our local church take to increase the participation of families at Mass, particularly as their identities as families?

- Designated family mass either every Sunday or once a month.
- Certain families will come together to serve; greeters, altar servers, lectures, EMs, bringing up the gifts, etc...
- During this mass have a kid's choir
- Nursery provided
- Children's bulletins
- Liturgy of the word for kids
- Priest speaks to kids throughout mass and homily
- Reserve end isle for families with small children
- Column in bulletin for family witness
- 1 family will come up during the mass and receive a cross that the priest will bless and send home with the family to prayer for a specific intention (vocations or whatever is needed that week)
- More opportunity for communication/socialization before and after mass
- Sat night mass with a dinner afterward for our confirmation students/families/sponsors (once a quarter)
- Masses have music that is enjoyed by all ages

3. What specific steps can the dioceses take to build a spirituality of care, consolation, love and realism in our families?

- Possible advocate to connect us to the diocese and all that is available (diocesan chapters located throughout the county for those that are far away and don't feel connected)
- Webinar classes
- Put more money into developing family camp at Whispering Winds and/or other all diocesan family day events with mass, food, carnival, animals...or have this in various parts of the county
- More available support groups for various struggles or transitions in life: unemployed, college age and post college, elderly, migrant, LGBT as well as for family members, widower group is very good in North County, separated/divorced

- Stewardship programs: building parishioners strengths/interests to get involved

4. How can we promote a substantial spiritual life shared between husbands and wives?

- Offer childcare at all events
- Home study to do with spouse for those that can't make it on the evening class
- Couples night out
- Couples prayer challenge and witness talk in bulletin
- Couples retreat weekend or day (diocesan event or each local parish)
- Various support groups available for those who've been married for a certain number of years (newly married, 10 years married, 20+ years, etc...) OR have mentor couples through different stages (Baptism and all sacraments)
- Anniversary blessings at mass
- Relationship skills study
- Christian or Catholic Resources/books available for married couples (*Love and Respect* by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs and *The Love Dare* by Alex Kendrick and Stephen Kendrick were just 2 suggestions)
- 1st communion parent meetings which are focused more on the parents as faith providers

5. What can lead to a spirituality of evangelization and solidarity in family life rather than a spirituality of insularity?

- Evangelization doesn't always mean to convert but to simply have an encounter be loving, don't judge
- Building community as much as possible (family picnics, find ways to keep people around after mass- possible event for them to stay after for, also reach out to the neighboring community. There are apartment complexes all around and passing out fliers to them for either open gym or another sport to play and hang out)
- Invite parents to attend events for kids and teens (parents are welcome to attend Confirmation class or access videos online)
- XLT adoration nights
- Opportunities for teens to rise up and be good witnesses to younger kids
- Ecumenical events (Muslim dialogue and other interreligious events)
- Service projects; Solutions for Change, Brother Benos, Mercy door at our parish
- Parents and kids have small group discussion time about mass, the faith...