

REACHING OUR YOUTH – Aug. 27, 2007 Blog of Bishop Lori

We know that reaching our high schools students with Christ's message is one of our Diocese's top priorities and greatest challenges. All over the diocese, I'm asked "How are we getting the attention of our youth? They are the future of the Church!" Last Saturday, the Diocese sponsored the second annual youth rally, "Fan the Fire", organized and hosted by St. Rose of Lima parish in the bucolic town of Newtown in the northern part of the diocese. What a success it was! Imagine my joy, on a beautiful summer day, to see a field of over 500 teen-agers happily experiencing and growing in their life of faith. The organization of the day was amazing. Fr. Bob Weiss, pastor of St. Rose of Lima and Rodd Blessey, the Youth Minister there, did an outstanding job maintaining a fun, upbeat, yet reverent and prayerful—and safe environment on their beautiful grounds.

Don't just take it from me. Some of these pictures may help tell the story about the day. There were big tents where talks and events were held. There was music throughout the day. At lunch, a diverse group of kids were playing fun water-balloon games, frisbee and soccer with new friends from all over the County. Later in the afternoon, the Eucharist was exposed for Adoration. The tent was filled with kids listening to their hearts and praying. Dinner to hundreds of hungry teen-agers was served by volunteers of the parish and from the Knights of Columbus. I was proud to preside at a very spirited Mass at 7:30 pm. If I sound energized by the event, I am! Here were over 500 high school kids happy in the environment of our Faith. Don't see that enough? Amen! These kids, like all of us, are seeking what they want in their young lives—they are thinking about college, friendships and how they are being called to love and serve in their lives. After all, we all have a vocation. Hopefully, some of these youth will be called to the priesthood or religious life, because we need them! Others will be called to marriage and to build a loving and happy family. Independent of their vocation, all are called to actively participate in the life of the Church. We want our youth to know this and to help them develop deep relationships with the Church. It is important for them to know how much Christ loves them, that He has a plan for them and that our faith is the greatest gift they have received to guide them in their lives. Plans for next year's rally are already underway, along with other programs and events for Youth throughout the year. This year's attendees were urged to bring a friend and to show others that it is "cool" to experience and enjoy the faith! To those that say "The Church is missing the Youth", I say "Come to the Youth Rally next year, bring some kids and see the electricity and joy for yourself!"

Blessings to you all,  
Bishop Lori

From the Diocese of Bridgeport CT official web site  
<http://www.bridgeportdiocese.com/>

