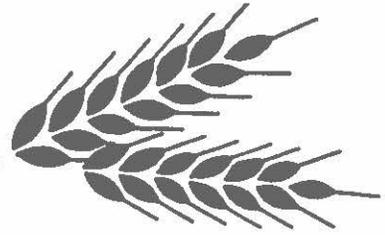


ST. PATRICK'S PARISH

In Focus



SPECIAL EDITION

St. Patrick's CREW On Mission, 2004

*We go out with God's message.
We go out with Christ's love.
We go out with the Spirit's power.
We go out to change the world
as we go out in Christian service.*

In July 2000, twenty teens and ten adults spent a week in the Washington, D.C., area. It was the *first* mission trip of St. Patrick's Youth Group, CREW (Christ Renews Everyone's World). On Saturday, July 24, 2004, after Mass and a blessing and dinner with all their families, 38 teens and 12 adults set out on their overnight journey—all but two of them by bus—to Wilmington, North Carolina, to begin CREW's *fifth* mission trip.

Remm's farewell dinner. All shared responsibility for fundraising for the trip.

CREW members and parish staff also put in several hours of "behind the scenes" work, selecting the mission's theme, preparing the program, developing the Bible study for each evening, seeking Secret Servants to support the mission group, selecting music and songs, and developing the prayer journal that guided



The 2004 CREW participants ready to leave on the 2004 mission

Preparation was no small matter

Mike Andrejasich, work site coordinator, had made arrangements for CREW to work with WARM (Wilmington Area Rebuilding Ministries) to repaint, repair, remodel, and even re-landscape for some elderly folks and people who could not provide for these needs themselves. At the same time, the workers reported that they felt renewed by the experience.

In truth, the mission trip was really the culmination of a year-long project. In preparation, all CREW members attended religious education classes and gave a minimum of twenty hours of community service. Some gave their time to St. Jude's Catholic Worker House or to Empty Tomb or Crisis Nursery. Others worked within the parish bussing tables and serving at social functions like the Lenten Fish Fries and Father

the group throughout the week.

Finding God

The theme of this year's mission trip was "Finding God." Anna Mayer found God "in the person on the bus who offered me a seat, and God was there in Destiny, the granddaughter of Ms. Fennell, who started helping us in little ways by handing us nails, and I found God in all the adults who

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helped plan the trip and contributed to the fundraisers. I discovered you can find God in just about any place if you look hard enough." Another wrote, "On the job site, I felt like God was working through each one of us." Megan Raab noted that on the work site it was very easy to see God: everyone was willing to help others and to be open around others. This in turn motivated her to be more open with others.

The song "One of Us" (one of many in their prayer journal) includes the lines "If God had a face, what would it look like / And would you want to see..." While she did not identify her remarks as seeing the face of God, April Jessee certainly implied it when she wrote that her attitude at the beginning—that the trip was going to be work and she dreaded it—changed when "I saw the faces of the people walking by the house, when I saw the faces of the adults watching us actually put effort into our work, but mostly when I saw the face of the homeowner." The beauty and power of the ocean and the beautiful sunset was another experience for April of finding God. "By the end, I found God and realized God was never hiding, I just was too blind to see Him."

Time for work but time for prayer and play too

Prayer and play were an integral



I now know how to paint, scrape, caulk, saw, hammer, and a countless other skills. However, I think that the most important things I have learned are about myself. ... Through my peers and the adults on the trip I have figured out what kind of person I hope to become.

Katie Thompson



Mass before departure

part of the week. Each evening was a time for discussion of Scripture, prayer, song, and playfulness. Carol Retz, Youth Activities Coordinator, made arrangements for the group to go to St. Mark's Catholic Church for Mass and the sacrament of reconciliation.

On many of the evaluation forms, the sacrament of reconciliation—
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In that week I found God in every single person I worked with, and everyone I came into contact with. Everyone was so nice and happy and helpful!

Ashley Vasnaik

At the end of the workday the teens were always smiling and joyful. I would like to remark on what fine youngsters we have here at St. Patrick's. ... I truly enjoyed working alongside your children and getting to know them better. I am confident they will all turn out to be fine adults. What a blessing to be a part of St. Patrick's parish!

Blanche Vasnaik

A 20-hour bus ride, followed by days of hard labor in stifling heat is not what most people would consider fun. What you have to realize is that the meaning of fun now is "being close to God." And I truly believe that these students really get it.

Randy Pankau



All in all, this experience brought me a newfound appreciation for all that I have. It also brought me a greater thankfulness to God for blessing me with so much and for giving me the ability to help someone who was in great need.

Allison Jarrett

I was happy that when we left [Cecil] would be able to let her grandchildren play on the porch and in the backyard without having to worry about the fire ants. I know that God was helping us out as we worked to finish her house.

Maria Dorsey

tion was cited as the most meaningful spiritual activity. For Merla Hubler, the reconciliation service was “a time for some quiet prayer because the week was so full of activity, which also was good.” Another participant commented that the Bible study with teens and adults presented an opportunity to learn as well as a challenge to think deeper about the meaning of the “Our Father.” Lucas Raab appreciated the Secret Servant gifts each evening: “It was good to know that someone was thinking about us.” And then there was the frolicking on the beach and in the Atlantic Ocean—the pictures speak a thousand laughs!



I now know that everyone should experience the good news of God.

Jackie Althaus

A time of learning and change

For many, the trip changed them and/or the way they view others. Joe Vitosky, one of the chaperones, wrote: “It has revitalized my interest in helping those less fortunate.” Robie Kimmey found that “it has taught me how helping people, even a little bit, actually helps them a lot in the end.” Ashley Gentner agreed: “I have seen how important it is to help the less fortunate.” Carlos Boueres, a chaperone, discovered that it “makes me appreciate more the St. Patrick’s community.” For Jim Mayer, another chaperone, the experience brought a “renewed hope in the youth of today.”



Responses to the evaluation question asking participants what was the best part of the trip truly demonstrate the words of another song in their prayer journal, “We are many parts, we are all one Body.” From nine individuals came as many or more different responses: camaraderie, sharing the faith, the work projects, eagerness to learn and to give of themselves in service, doing fun things (“like singing to really loud music on the bus, and the talent

show!”), working on the house and experiencing a sense of accomplishment, the ocean, building new relationships and renewing old ones, the other teens, having more friends. Yet all were one in their work and prayer and play.

The future is now!

On Saturday, July 31, all arrived home safe and sound, rejuvenated and tired, glad to have gone and glad

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to be back home. It was a week of finding God through prayer, work, play, friendships, nature, the giving of self, the receiving from others, and discovering God within themselves and others. Now that they are home, they hope to continue in their service to family, to the less fortunate, and to one another, to apply what they have learned and experienced, and to invite others to "come and see."

They are very grateful, too. To St. Patrick's parishioners they say, "Thank you for your prayers and your support, for encouraging us to grow in our faith of Jesus Christ. Thank you! Thank you all!"

A retrospective

During the course of the week, the teens and adults sang many songs from their prayer journal. Maybe the most fitting for the theme and experience of Mission 2004 is the "Song of St. Patrick":

Christ be ever before us, Christ be ever behind us, Christ be ever within.

Christ upon our left hand watching, at our right hand guiding, Christ above, beneath us guarding, near to us abiding.

Christ be in each holy silence, Christ be in our speaking, Christ in every work we offer, ever in our seeking.

Let us be God's light in the darkness, let us be God's kindness; let us be God's justice and mercy, hands and feet of Christ.

God Creator, bless and keep us;



Christ, be ever near us; Spirit, be the light before us; gentle be our pathway.

Refrain

May the Spirit of Christ be our hope through the day, be our guard through the night, our companion on the way.

St. Patrick's is truly blest to have the fine youth and youth leadership that gives us all renewed hope: hope in the youth, the Gospel, and the parish's call to witness God's love to others.

Thank you, CREW members and chaperones!



CREW 2004 Mission Participants

Teens

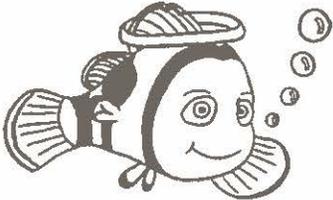
Jackie Althausen
Liz Bazar
Emmanuel Bronson
Sarah Burch
Kelli Busey
Carrie Conner
Maria Dorsey
Carly Eifert
Haley Eifert
Ashley Gentner
Jessica Grove
Merla Hubler
Allison Jarrett
Adam Jessee
April Jessee
Elizabeth Keane
Jared Kimball
Steven Kimball
Robie Kimmey
Sean Landsman
Anna Mayer
Jonathon Nelson
Brianna Oliver
Lisa Portis
Lucas Raab
Megan Raab
Sarah Roberts
Maciek Swiech
Katie Thompson
Ashley Vasnaik
Alec Vitosky
Caitlin Vitosky
Jon Paul Youakim

Adults

Mike Andrejasich
Carlos Boueres
Neilzen Damaso
John Danner
David Eifert
Renee Eifert
Patrick Hatch
Bonnie Kimball
Bob Kimmey
Jim Mayer
Randy Pankau
Dwight Rabb
Carol Retz
Blanche Vasnaik
Joe Vitosky



FINDING GOD



Seek and you will find
Luke 11:9

