

Building Prayerful Partnerships:

Through a common ground in the Eucharist, TEC & LifeTeen reach the youth of the Crookston, Minn. Diocese for Jesus

Nine years ago, Ray Hollcraft was named the director of youth and young adult ministry for the Crookston, Minn. Diocese. His bishop, the Most Rev. Victor Balke asked him to attend a TEC weekend.

“Going on TEC was basically part of the job description,” remembers Ray, a 40-year-old husband and father of six, with a smile. “It was my first experience with TEC and I wasn’t sure what to expect. Bishop Balke has always been a strong supporter of the Movement. He was the catalyst for bringing TEC to Crookston in 1977 and for setting it up under the auspices of the diocese,” Ray explained.

Since that first Agassiz

Valley weekend, Ray has returned at least once a year to serve on the TEC teams. The reason? He “quickly saw TEC’s potential for reaching the youth of this diocese. TEC’s focus on the Eucharist as unfolding through Christ’s Paschal Mystery is a powerful witness to young people, especially at this point in their lives,” he said.

In fact, this Eucharistic theme is what led both Bishop Balke and Ray to begin the partnership between TEC and LifeTeen (a parish-based youth ministry program also centered on the Eucharist). “Because of their common ground of the Eucharist, it makes sense that the two ministries collaborate together. Bishop Balke is a strong supporter of this partnership—having both TEC & LifeTeen as a vital part of the diocese’s total youth ministry program,” Ray explained.

This partnership is vividly lived out in his

own parish, the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Crookston. LifeTeen, which responds to the spiritual, social and emotional needs of high school students through a comprehensive approach to ministry, was first introduced there in 2001. Ray, who has a background in both movements, approached his pastor Fr. Robert Schreiner about a more active partnership between TEC and LifeTeen, to which he readily agreed.

“The goals and visions of TEC and Life-Teen are essentially the same. At the heart of both of these movements is the prayer to lead young people to Christ through the Eucharist,” said Fr. Schreiner, who was ordained in 1989.

Even though the ministries live out their missions differently, working together to bring God’s youth closer to Him is not only possible, but very beneficial, according to both Ray and Father.

“Both the LifeTeen retreats, geared towards 9-12th graders, and the TEC weekends, geared toward 17 to 24-year-olds, link together very well. In my experience, LifeTeen gives youth an open disposition to attending the TEC retreats in their later high school and young adult years,” Ray explained.

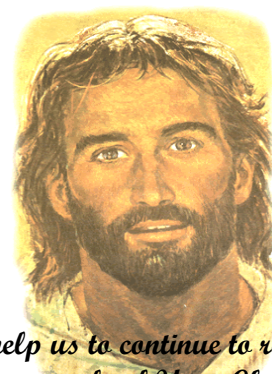
At the cathedral, for example, the youth minister and the older teenagers in the LifeTeen program have not only made TEC, but also returned to serve on other weekends. In turn, members of the Agassiz Valley TEC adult faith community are also active in the parish’s LifeTeen core group. Moreover, Fr. Schreiner hosts the Reunion Mass during the regular LifeTeen Liturgy whenever

TECs are taking place, and hears confessions for the team members and candidates.

This partnership in ministries also reflects what both the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the late Pope John Paul II had envisioned for evangelization of the Gospel, according to Ray and his pastor. For example, both TEC and LifeTeen have embraced the USCCB’s “Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry” document in their service to, with, for and among youth (ref. “Renewing the Vision” Part II, Goal II, pages 11-15).

Furthermore, “because both movements focus on the Eucharist, they reflect the late pope’s call for a ‘new evangelization’ within the Church—that is, a radical encounter with Christ,” explained Fr. Schreiner (ref. “Crossing the Threshold of Hope,” chapter entitled “New Evangelization.”) More specifically, LifeTeen lives out the Eucharist through Mass, catechesis and mission, and TEC through its focus on the Paschal Mystery—realized sacramentally through the Eucharist.

~ By Mary Lovee Varni



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