

“Make Room in Your Heart” at the 2018 Eastern Diocese Winter Youth Gathering and Lock-In

A rainy windy day did not keep folks away from the 2018 Winter Youth Gathering and Lock-In on Friday December 28 and Saturday December 29, 2018. 35 youth, adults and clergy from across our Eastern Diocese gathered at Blessed Trinity Parish in Fall River, Massachusetts for this special time of prayer, learning, fellowship and fun with their brothers and sisters in the faith.



Our Youth Chaplain Fr. Sr. Rob Nemkovich welcomed everyone and this Youth Gathering began with a prayer for the time together and remembered our National Youth Chaplain + Bishop Stanley Bilinski (a picture of Bishop Stan was in the hall for this retreat). Joanne Oliveira led a reflection/examination on how the youth have incorporated the Year of Family in their individual and parish families since our Diocesan Youth Retreat this past August. It was wonderful to see some of the great things our diocesan youth have been doing to live and share their Catholic faith by concrete actions done in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.





We received a visit from the angel Gabriel (Kathy Nemkovich) who spoke to us about her conversation with the Blessed Virgin Mary. She spoke about how our Blessed Mother "Let It Be" done unto her as God had asked. Gabriel told us that we as well needed to let God's will be done in our lives and introduced the kids to the Beatles classic song "Let It Be" as a tool to help easily remember what we are to do when we have faith and hope.

An activity was then led by Kathy Nemkovich and Joanne Oliveira on making special Eastern Diocese Winter Youth Gathering Ornaments with the verse of Luke 2:11 "For unto us is born this day...a Saviour which is Christ the Lord and a picture of Jesus, Mary and Joseph at the stable in Bethlehem.



We received a special visit from “Shep” (Dylan), a shepherd who was there the night Christ was born, to help Fr. Sr. Rob talk about the Holy Masses of the Christmas Season. The youth learned about “Lex Orandi – Lex Credendi” – what we pray is what we believe and what God, our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church is teaching us during these Masses and what we are praying for. We discussed the three Masses of Christmas, the Feast of St. Stephen and John, the Memorial of Holy Innocence and the Solemnities of the Holy Family, Humble Shepherds, Circumcision of our Lord, Holy Name of Jesus and Epiphany. The presentation ended with an introduction to the theme of our PNCC for next year: Discipleship:2019.



Prayer Blankets was the next activity that we made with love and care for children in need in Fall River. These blankets would be blessed during the closing Mass of the Winter Gathering. Thanks to our wonderful chaperones who helped out in this important effort to help some children in need and let them know that they are loved and prayed for.



PNU District 3 sponsored a pizza party and everyone enjoyed some great local pizza. Remember the support that the sister organization of our Church the Polish National Union (PNU) gives to our Church and consider becoming a member if you are not one already. After everyone had more than enough pizza we gathered in Church for a group picture and some reflections from Bishop Paul.



The Magi was our next presentation given by Fr. Pawel Lukaszewicz. Fr. Paul spoke about the Wisemen, the Solemnity of Epiphany and how our homes can be blessed during the Epiphany season. (20 C+M+B 19 or 20 K+M+B 19). He concluded his presentation by bringing out his guitar and leading everyone in singing “We Three Kings of Orient Are”.



Game Time featured Team Jesus and Team Christ as the youth on each team had five seconds to answer questions about the presentations they had heard and participated in during the Winter Youth Gathering. It was very nice to see how much they learned during this time together.

Fr. Paul and his guitar came back as we enjoyed singing several Christmas Carols, many religious and a couple of secular ones as well. We had quite the diocesan youth choir – it was great to hear and see their enthusiasm in singing their hearts out!





Saturday morning came quickly and after deflating the mattresses, folding up the sleeping bags and straightening up the parish hall all gathered for the Holy Sacrifice of Mass. Fr. Sr. Rob celebrated Mass on this the Solemnity of the Holy Family. In his brief homily he spoke about the importance of the Holy Family, how they are the example for all families to follow by saying "Yes to God" and that we need to make sure that we "Make Room in our Hearts" for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph. Fr. Paul concelebrated



Mass with Fr. Sr. Rob and Cleric Justin Daviault assisted. The readings were proclaimed by Deacon Candidate Bob Bradbury and Cleric Justin. After Mass the prayer blankets were blessed and will be given to children in need.







After singing the traditional camp/youth retreat grace, a fantastic breakfast was served. Thanks to Bev, Laurie, Jim and Jessica for cooking us delicious pancakes, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage and of course – Donuts. Fr. Sr. Rob thanked all the youth for making the time for Jesus. He thanked the adults for chaperoning and especially Fr. Paul who made the effort to be there for our youth!

Our diocesan parishes represented were: Blessed Trinity – Fall River; Holy Cross – Central Falls; Holy Mother of Rosary - Chicopee; Holy Trinity – Plantsville; Our Saviour's - Woonsocket and St. Joseph's – Stratford and Holy Trinity Cathedral. Clergy participating: Bishop Paul Sobiechowski, Fr. Paul Lukaszewicz and Fr. Sr. Rob Nemkovich.

We look forward to seeing everyone at our diocesan Acolyte Retreat in June and at Youth Retreat 2019 at Camp Howe in Goshen, Massachusetts from August 18-22. This year our youth can again bring a friend with them to Church Camp! Save the date and plan to join us. Have a blessed New Year 2019 as we begin Discipleship:2019 in our Holy Church. Let us always make room in our hearts for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Fr. Sr. Rob Nemkovich - Diocesan Youth Chaplain

