



Escanaba Catholic Faith Formation

St. Joseph & St. Patrick, St. Thomas, St. Anthony

409 South 22nd Street
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"faith seeking understanding"

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Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist

- Founded in 1997 with four Sisters
- Community is now over 80 Sisters strong
- Average Age: 28
- Average Age of those who enter: 24
- Sisters come from across the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia
- To learn more about the Dominican Sisters visit their website, www.sistersofmary.org or e-mail them at sjab@sistersofmary.org

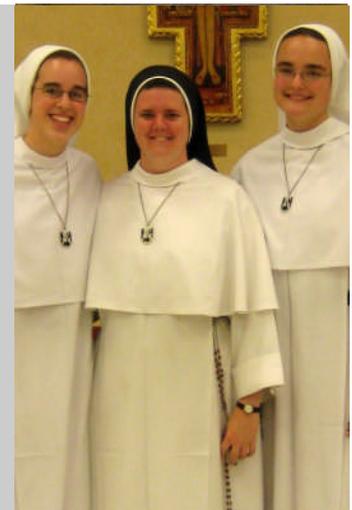
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Dominican Sisters Lead Summer Faith Formation Week

The Summer's Best Week started June 15th with four Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist gracing Escanaba elementary and middle school students with a week long summer faith formation camp held at Holy Name Catholic School. Each day the students were treated to Mass, singing, group games, outdoor recreation, and professional Catholic religious instruction. Doing the teaching were Sisters Maria Miguel, Joshua Mary, Melissa, and their fearless leader Victoria Marie. The former three sisters were all in their early twenties and taught the Catholic faith in word and deed with an infectious joy and serenity that kept our local young people riveted, despite the fact that the students had been asked to return to the classroom less than a week after

the school year had ended. Sr. Victoria Marie, perhaps in her early thirties, led with a dignity and resolve that kept both Sister and volunteer alike focused on the goal of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ to all in attendance. In addition, four local priests, including Father Olson from St. Joseph and St. Patrick Parish, Father Courier from St. Thomas and St. Anthony Parishes, Father DeGroot from St. Anne Parish and Father McQuesten from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish made daily Mass possible as well as Eucharistic Adoration and Confession on Thursday. Kate Swanson led the games and, along with her pregnant sister Amanda Chouinard, made lunch each day for the Sisters and the volunteers except on Friday when Michele Chenier did the honors. Hans



Sister Maria Miguel, Sister Victoria Marie, and Sister Joshua Mary (left to right)

Whitmer led the singing and the consensus favorite song of the week was "Pharaoh, Pharaoh" which (con't on pg. 2)

Parents Encouraged To Learn Along With Their Children

This Fall, a new dimension is being added to Wednesday Night Faith Formation. Along with weekly catechesis for children in grades 1 through 12, a class will be offered for all interested adults with a special invitation to the parents of children in the faith formation program. On the first night of faith formation classes (Wednesday, Sep-

tember 16th) parents will be required to join their children for orientation. As part of that orientation, parents will watch a one hour DVD presentation by Christopher West entitled, "The Gift". This presentation will serve as an introduction to the adult study that will span the proceeding eight weeks. After the DVD, parents will be given

an opportunity to sign-up for the adult class. ECFF director Hans Whitmer has hand picked this adult education opportunity because he believes that it contains a powerful message to parents on how to: find and sustain meaning in life, build loving and Godly families, grow love between parents for their children and for each other, make (con't on pg. 3)



ECFF Office Manager Mickey Trotter “smiles” for the camera.

Stories from Summer Faith Formation Camp

During the week with the Dominican Sisters, several of our dedicated moms volunteered to help out in the classrooms. One of the moms, who has been a serious Catholic her entire life said, “Thank you for letting me be in Sister Joshua Mary’s room! I am learning so much!” Later she said to me, “I have learned more about the gifts of the Holy Spirit than I ever have!” This week with the sisters has proved to be efficacious for more than just the children, even the volunteers and adults learned too!

They would say to me, “Ms. Swanson, can I serve for Mass?”

Another interesting phenomenon occurred during Faith Formation Summer Camp. Usually finding altar servers for Mass is difficult, but not during *The Summers Best Week*. Students were asking first thing in the morning if they could serve for Mass. They would say to me, “Ms. Swanson, can I serve for Mass?” A student passing by would say, “Ms. Swanson, I didn’t get to serve yet, can I too?” It was encouraging to see so many young people with a serious desire to serve for the Holy Mass.



Simon Trent used extreme measures to remember the names of his new friends.

An Unhappy Camper

First thing Monday morning, when *The Summers Best Week* began, it was clear we had a student who did not want to be here and he intended to make it known. This student was asked to join the group and to participate at which point he responded, “Do I have to be here?” I responded, “No. You are welcome to call your parents and be picked up.” He sulked in the back row as he made his decision. He decided

to stay, but later I was informed of some inappropriate comments he had been making in class. Throughout the week, the sisters and parent volunteers continued to encourage him. On Thursday, just before lunch, I saw him in the hall and asked, “How are things going?” He responded, “Better. Things are going better. I really like Sister (his teacher).” Despite all the trials of having him with us for the week, it proved to be

worth his time and ours. This student was able to have a positive experience with the Dominican Sisters and hopefully understood a little better Jesus’ love for him through the love and care of the Sisters and volunteers.



Sister Maria Miguel explains the Rosary to the next generation

Dominican Sisters week (continued from pg. 1)

included the culturally conditioned chorus line, “*Ya sure ya betcha!*” Mickey Trotter and Holly Marenger worked the welcome desk and a host of other volunteers enthusiastically helped out wherever they were needed including: Angela Judson, Mary Harrison, Melissa Swanson, Jill Barron, Sharon Mellinger, Sandy Vandeville, Gayle Hoenke, Julie Schmelzer and Sandy Trent. The Sisters

were housed by the Mike and Julie Nelson family. Also, several area senior high students helped with clean-up duty including: Ilsa and Gwen Hoenke, Elizabeth and Rachel Nelson, Megan Thomma, Christopher Dubord, Vicki Chaillier, and Ben Rivard. Overall, the students had a great week because of the dedication of the Sisters, the volunteers, and the parents who encouraged their children

to attend and made the necessary sacrifices to get them to camp. *The Summer’s Best Week* summer camp is held every year during the third week of June. If your family attended this year and enjoyed the camp please come again next year and invite a friend. If you did not attend, please consider planning on attending next summer. We would love to see ya, eh!

Positive Response to New Marriage Prep Weekend

Summary of Marriage Preparation Weekend (April 24th—26th)

Friday (7PM – 9PM)

Mark Hallfrisch spoke on conflict resolution within marriage. He used excerpts from the movie "Fire Proof" as a case study to spark discussion and make his point. We ended the night with the 20 minute "God's Plan for a Joy-Filled

Marriage" DVD introduction.

Saturday (8AM – 4:40PM)

We spent the day watching six "God's Plan" DVD segments, discussing them, and breaking

to do "Private Reflection" exercises. The Church provided a light breakfast (Donuts, Muffins, coffee, Orange Juice) and we broke for one hour so the couples could go and get lunch on their own.

Sunday (9AM – 12:30PM)

We started the day with Mass, followed by a warm breakfast provided by church volunteers, and then Bob Valentine gave the couples some financial advice. After that, we left time for questions & answers and ended the weekend by having

the couples fill out an evaluation form.

The overall evaluation of the program was very positive.

One representative response spoke with glowing praise for the curriculum while specifically mentioning a "renewed appreciation [for Catholicism] and a joyful outlook for the future as a married couple". The next marriage preparation weekend will be held on October 23rd – 25th, 2009.



Brittney Challier and Emma Zuidema work on their prayer beads at Summer Bible Camp

Preparations Almost Complete for Steubenville Trip

With only about a month left until our trip to St. Paul for the Steubenville North Conference, we are finalizing our preparations and fund-raising. There are ten ECFF students attending the conference with *Yahweh's Yoopers*, including: Laura Swanson, Emily Whitmer, Cain Curtis, Casey De-Shambo, Vicki Chaillier, Megan Thomma, Jackie Chaillier, Drew Griebel, Ben Rivard and Jacob Loveless. Jim Rivard will be joining us to serve as a

chaperone. The Steubenville conference encourages high-school aged Catholics to fall in love with Jesus, especially His presence in the Blessed Sacrament. The weekend is filled with inspiring talks, encouraging testimonies from young Catholics, dramas, games and live music. Looking forward to going at the end of July, these ten students have been fund-raising through car washes, bake sales and even a *Spring Fun Day* for children. On top of

fund-raising, several parishioners have supported these high-school youth by sending donations. Financial support of a high-school student's trip to the Steubenville Conference is a great way to support and encourage their Catholic faith. Thank you to those of you who have so generously supported the passing on of our Catholic faith by sponsoring a student's trip to Steubenville.

"The Steubenville conference encourages high school aged Catholics to fall in love with Jesus."

Faith Formation Class for Parents (continued from pg. 1)

Catholic doctrine come alive through applying it to real life, showing how Jesus Christ through the Catholic Church satisfies the deepest longings of the human heart, and it gives real and practical steps for recognizing and attaining happiness. Along with the young peoples' faith formation, the adult class will run from 6:00 – 7:30PM. Each week, the first thirty minutes of class will be used for announcements and a time of praise and worship

singing. Then, the last sixty minutes will be used for classroom time. The adult class will be held in the Holy Name multi-purpose room. ECFF strongly encourages all parents to carefully consider attending these class sessions; citing that the Catholic Church expressly teaches that parents are the primary teachers of the Faith to their children, and at the same time many parents have no idea where to start because they do not feel they possess a

very strong grasp of the Faith. This adult educational opportunity is designed not to merely convey dry facts about what Catholics are suppose to believe, but to put the Faith in the context of real life and lived experience. Thereby, the Faith is brought to life in the heart of the learner. As Hans Whitmer put it, "We want happy families, and we want to love and be loved, but how do we fulfill these longings? This study has the answers."



ECFF Director Hans Whitmer warms-up for Wednesday Night Faith Formation.



409 South 22nd Street
Escanaba, MI 49827

We're on the web:
www.escanabacatholic.com

Upcoming Events:

- July 31st, Steubenville Youth Conference
- August 19th, Wednesday Night Faith Formation early registration is due
- August 24th, RCIA Inquirers' Class Begins
- September 16th, Wednesday Night Faith Formation Begins
- October 23-25th, Marriage Preparation Weekend
- November 6-8th, P2K Diocesan Youth Rally in Marquette

The purpose of the Escanaba Catholic Faith Formation Office (ECFF) is to bring people to Jesus and membership in his family the Roman Catholic Church, develop them to Christian maturity, and equip them for their apostolate in the Church and vocation in the world, in order to bring glory to God's name. ECFF was founded in 2004 as a central hub of religious education for St. Joseph and St. Patrick Parish, St. Thomas Parish, and St. Anthony Parish, all of Escanaba, Michigan. ECFF provides religious education and sacramental preparation for all age groups.

For more information please contact Director Hans Whitmer.



Summer Faith Formation Camp, 2009

RCIA Class is Scheduled

RCIA stands for Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults. It is a several week study that prepares men and women for full union with the Catholic Church through the sacraments of initiation which are Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist. Candidates receive these sacraments for the first time at Easter Vigil Mass in the spring. RCIA is also for those who have received baptism but have not yet received one or both of the other two sacraments of initiation. For example, some Catholics were baptized shortly after birth and received First Eucharist in second or third grade, but then did not complete their preparation for Confirmation as a teenager.

Such Catholics are perfect candidates for the RCIA program. Also, if you are a baptized Christian and would like to enter into the Roman Catholic Church from some other faith tradition, then the RCIA program is for you. Finally, even Catholics who have received the three Sacraments of initiation but feel they need a



Emily Whitmer and Laura Swanson wash cars to earn money for their trip to the Steubenville North Retreat

touch up on the basics of the Catholic Faith are welcomed and encouraged to sign-up for RCIA classes. This year's class, which will be taught by Deacon Dave Talford and his wife Diane, will begin on Monday, August 24th from 7:00 – 8:30 PM at St. Thomas church. The first two weeks will be an inquiry period in which people that are interested, but not quite sure if the RCIA program is for them, have an opportunity to check things out with no strings attached. The class will then begin in full force the Monday after Labor Day, September 14th. If you are interested in signing-up or know someone who might be interested please call the Escanaba Catholic Faith Formation Office.