

A Convocation Reflection

[On this past November 30th and December 1st almost 800 parishioners from the dioceses of Fargo and Crookston attended a Convocation of Lay Leaders centered on the theme of re-igniting the fires of faith in the lives of our parishes and culture. St. Leo's and St. Thomas parishes had 9 parishioners attend this event. This week Marian Kasowski offers this reflection about the Convocation:]

When Fr. Ermer asked me to serve as parish leader at the Convocation on Evangelization, I thought "Why me?" I had suggested others to him so why me? There are plenty of parishioners who were distinctly more qualified. Finally I came to the conclusion: why not me? I am one of the oldest women in our congregation. I have been through years of changes in our Catholic Church. I can still learn and maybe I can contribute because I have seen so many different changes. I was lucky to have shared this responsibility with a very young Catholic, who was the perfect choice.

The opening Mass was attended by hundred of individuals. Before us were lay leaders, priests, sisters and two bishops: our own Bishop Folda and Bishop Hoepfner from the Diocese of Crookston. It was these two men who first organized the convocation. We experienced those who received Communion on the tongue; those who knelt at Communion; those who received with a bow and extended palm. It was amazing and interesting to know that all of us were Catholic.

Monsignor Thomas Richter from Dickinson was a keynote speaker of the convocation. He shared with us some alarming facts. At the present time, only 25% of Catholics attend Mass regularly with only 10% of Millennials (those born from 1985 on) doing so. In 1972 there were 415,000 Catholic couples getting married in the church and in 2010 that number dropped to 168,000. This really shed a light on the fact that we are in need of a way to reach our young individuals and couples.

I attended the break out session for Evangelization in rural parishes, for it would be most beneficial for our church, which is located in Buffalo, ND. Here I heard several different sides and ideas for bringing evangelization to rural parishes. One group stressed the importance of ecumenism while another felt that parishes should never be closed, even when numbers are low and it is economically impossible. So much heartache ensues at the loss of their home parish and we actually lose worshippers. Still another suggested we return to our roots with Latin. Our table felt young people would not accept this idea. Young churchgoers could be bored and/or confused by the Latin language.

It was indeed an honor to be chosen to experience faith in action. It was so special to realize worship is a much a part of other's lives as it is of mine. With my new knowledge, I will look for new opportunities to evangelize as the Holy Spirit presents them.

In Christ's Love
Marian Kasowski