

Wednesday, October 6, 2010

Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord,

As you know, our FUTURE MISSION Parish Convocation took place this past Tuesday at Harrison High School. I was going to be happy if we had 200 people and extremely pleased if we had 250 people. We had over 390 people participate in the convocation, prioritizing challenges and offering solutions to the challenges. I was speechless at the response (and you know how rare that is). More than the numbers of heads, I was overwhelmed at the number of hearts dedicated to the parish.

I have not had a chance to sit down and review all the results, but in the coming weeks we will be filling you in on the results of the voting and more from the convocation.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our parish **Pastoral Council members**, the **Core Team** and **Parish Planning team members** who did the massive amount of prep work for the convocation. They met monthly from April until September to sift through the comments of those who met with David Kissell individually or in small groups and the comments that came in through the monthly questionnaire in the bulletin. They took this information and formed it into cohesive statements so that we could address issues in an expeditious manner. They also did the legwork for the convocation itself.

Thanks to the many people who did not serve on a committee or team, but who gave much time and energy to make the convocation a success. I have ministered in the church long enough to know that many things are done unseen that contribute greatly to the work of the church.

Thanks to David Kissell, our fearless facilitator from ISPD – the Institute of School and Parish Development – who patiently led us through the process. His energy, competency, and vision mobilized us to act. Thanks as well to Barbara Zeik, Lynda Noel, Carolyn Cifuentes, and Angie Land for so much work that was done behind the scenes.

Thanks so very much to all who participated in any way, through interviews, written comments and most of all in the convocation. None of the work that preceded the convocation would have borne the fruit it did if it were not for those of you who came together to determine what was most important and offer solutions. (By now I feel like I am giving a talk at the Academy Awards, thanking everyone, but all need to be acknowledged.)

Thanks most of all to God the Father, whose mercy and kindness has saved us, whose Son has called us, whose Holy Spirit enlightens and energizes us. In the words of St. Julie Billiart, foundress of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (not to be confused with St. Jackie Billiard, patroness of pool halls) – **HOW GOOD IS THE GOOD GOD!**

The 20th century Swedish statesman Dag Hammarskjöld had as his motto, **“For all that has been, Thanks! For all that will be, Yes!”** This needs to be our sentiment as well, since what we have accomplished at the parish convocation is only the beginning, the naming, of the tasks and mission that lie before us. This work cannot be accomplished only by the people who participated in the convocation, but needs the time, talent, treasure and prayers of everyone in the parish. Encouraged by the participation in the convocation, I know we as a parish can meet the challenges we have recognized. I invite and encourage everyone to be involved as much as he or she is able, to fan the flame of faith evermore alive in the parish. In the coming weeks and months there will be plenty of opportunities to serve. I look forward to serving the Lord with you and for you.

May God continue to bring to fulfillment the good work he has begun in us.

Sincerely yours in the Lord,

