

Thank you in advance!

Next weekend, July 7 and 8, there will be a second collection for the English and Spanish youth ministry programs. As the youth minister for the English program I am very grateful for this opportunity. Having been a youth minister since 1979 I will tell you the most uncomfortable aspect of my job is fundraising. How many creative ways can we ask the same group of parishioners for money?

Because of your generosity in the past we have sent many youth to a variety of events. We went to World Youth Day in 1993 in Denver to see the pope. We also have attended L A Youth Day every other spring. On the years we don't attend the LA conference we attend the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC). We also attend diocesan events and of course there are the two retreats each year. All of these things take money.

Why should we spend all of this time fundraising? Why do we need to travel to big events anyway? I wish I could show you what happens when our youth get together with over 20,000 other young people for workshops, singing, playing and prayer.

The Young Church, as they are lovingly called at these events, is alive! Years later many can quote something they heard at a conference that made a difference in their lives. It is good to see there are thousands of young Catholics travelling this road of life together; questioning, praying, praising, loving, being challenged lovingly with social justice concepts, potential colleges to consider, leadership possibilities, and more.

The retreats we develop twice a year are another opportunity for growth in their spiritual life. Whether they are considering one of the sacraments or they have already received all of their sacraments they continue to come.

Yes, all of these things cost money. That is why it seems we are always standing behind a table selling something. But know, we pray in thanksgiving for you often. With this second collection we will have some seed money as we continue our planning. I am excited that our Spanish youth ministry program will be sharing in the resources and hopefully going with us on some of our adventures in the future.

(This does not mean you won't be seeing us behind tables any more... just less)

Gratefully,

Gayle Ballinger
Coordinator of Youth Ministry