

Holy Spirit Catholic Church Jr. High Youth Group Newsletter

Meliora Omnia Reddamus



Join Our Mailing List!

The Candy Cane

Look at the Candy Cane
Tell us what you see.
Stripes that are red
Like the blood He shed for
me.

White is for my Savior
Who's sinless and pure!
"J" is for Jesus, my Lord,
God in flesh, be assured!

Turn that "J" around,
A shepherd's staff's in view.
Jesus, our Good Shepherd,
Was born for me and you!

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December 2007

Students, Parents, Volunteers and Friends:

Welcome to the first issue of the new Jr. High Youth Group e-Newsletter! The newsletter will be a vehicle to share recent and upcoming events as well as celebrate some of the wonderful things happening with the youth of Holy Spirit.

I hope you enjoy this first issue and encourage you to invite others to join our mailing list. If you have any ideas or interest in helping with the newsletter or youth group this year, please let me know!

Holiday Blessings,

Ray Nedohon
Youth Group Leader

Don't Miss This Year's Christmas Party!

Special Guest to Join Youth Group

This year's annual Christmas Party will be held on **Friday, December 21st from 7-9pm at Beef O'Brady's** located at 101 E. 107th Street in Crown Point. The cost will be **\$5/person** to cover food & beverage expenses.

So we can plan accordingly, please tell us if you plan to attend by e-mail at holy_spirit_youth@yahoo.com or by phone at (312) 479-5349.

In addition to an array of fabulous food, this year's party will feature a visit from a very special guest who has travelled a great distance to be with us.

Perspective

Here's The Beef!



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A special thanks to Beef O'Brady's for offering to host and support this year's Christmas Party. Beef

O'Brady's is a fast-growing national chain of family sports pubs that achieves its success by building relationships with the local schools, youth sports leagues, and other community organizations in each and every Beef O'Brady's neighborhood market.

Congratulations to parishoners Leo & Roseanne Firchau on the grand opening of their new restaurant. Stop by the next time you're in the neighborhood and tell them [The] Holy Spirit sent you!

Win a \$15 Gift Certificate to Beef's!

This first issue of the Jr. High Youth Group newsletter contains the first appearance of our new Latin motto, *Meliora Omnia Reddamus*. What does that mean?

The first student to submit the correct English translation of the motto will win a \$15 gift certificate to Beef O'Brady's.

Please e-mail your guess to holy_spirit_youth@yahoo.com.

Hint: there is a clue about the motto in this newsletter!

November Youth Group Meeting

On November 4th the Jr. High Youth Group met after the

25 year old Jessy Johnston graduated from Merrillville High School in June 2000. During a time when many of his friends were heading off to college, Jessy had very different plans and 2 months after his graduation was on his way to Ft. Benning, GA to begin a career with the United States Army.



In November 2003, just 3 years later when many his age were just graduating college, Jessy was on his way to serve his country in the first of two tours in Iraq.

Having recently returned from Iraq, Staff Sergeant Johnston is currently stationed at Ft. Lewis in Washington State. Jessy's mother, Charlotte Hess, is the founder of Caring About Military Personnel (CAMP) an organization that the youth group has supported for the past two years.

We've supported and prayed for the safe return of Jessy and others like him on a regular basis. Now join Jessy, Charlotte and Jessy's son Dylan at this year's Christmas party and see our prayers in action!

Braving the Cold to Help St. Joe's Carmelite Home for Girls



On Saturday, December 8th, a number of students from the youth group joined the local community to support a holiday drive for [St. Joseph's Carmelite Home for Girls](#) in East Chicago. Pictured left (from left to right) are Kelli Nikolich, Anita Mitreski and Emily Dorsey who were among the volunteers who showed up in Amelia's parking lot to help collect and sort contributions of toys, clothing and other needed

items.

Founded in 1913, the home provides a wide array of social, moral, educational, and physical services to girls between the ages of six and eighteen who have experienced abuse or neglect. With capacity for forty-eight residents, the home accepts girls with a variety of personal and family problems and provides the supportive environment they need for healthy development.

Letters to Iraq: Messages of Hope

10:00 mass. In addition to a few returning students it was great to see a number of new faces who are getting involved for the first time.

Following a little "get to know me" icebreaker, the group talked about some of its past social and service activities and some of the things it would like to do this year. Among some of the issues discussed were:

- Holding regular meetings
- Developing a greater sense of community
- Meeting on weeknights as opposed to after mass
- Student input into planning social and service activities

The next youth group meeting will be held in January or February. Stay tuned for more details!

Once again this holiday season, Charlotte Hess, founder of the organization **Caring About Military Personnel (CAMP)**, asked for the youth group's help with their annual holiday care packages for soldiers serving in Iraq. Specifically, they were looking for holiday letters written by students and their families to include with the care packages.

Thanks for your response! We were fortunate to receive more than 50 letters from students, parents and parishoners. The letters will mean a great deal to those who will be in harm's way and away from their families this holiday season.

For more information about CAMP please visit [CAMP Website](#). Also check out the recent [article](#) from the Northwest Indiana Times

highlighting the organization's work.

Youth Group Leader's Corner: Put the Holidays Into Perspective

During a time of year that's special to us for so many reasons, I wanted to share a few thoughts about this season that I feel speak to our values as a youth group and a faith community. In the coming weeks, I hope all of you find time to reflect and put the holidays into perspective.

What Christmas Means to Me

In 1990 I was a sophomore in college at Catholic University in Washington, DC and traveling home to New York for Christmas. My train from the city to Long Island was delayed and I found myself stuck a few hours longer than I planned in Penn Station. As I was feeling sorry for myself because of the inconvenience, a young girl sat down next to me and asked if I had any spare change. I could tell she was embarrassed and soon learned she was homeless. Giving her a quarter seemed insulting so I bought her dinner that consisted of a hot dog, an order of fries and a Coke.

It really bothered me that I had been so upset that I'd have to wait an extra two hours to get home to my family, a warm house, an abundance of holiday food and countless gifts...while this girl had no place to live, no warm clothes and nothing to eat, let alone thoughts of Christmas presents. Meeting her was probably the best Christmas gift I was ever given.

So Much to Be Thankful For

The holidays are a time of homecoming for family, friends and loved ones we may not see throughout the year. We remember those who won't have a place to call home this holiday season or anyone who will spend the holidays feeling alone or isolated. We especially pray for those serving our country in Iraq and other countries that they will know joy this holiday season and return home safely.

Our world is often consumed by materialism, especially at this time of year. Try not to lose sight of the real "gifts" each of us have been

given and our calling to share them with those who are less fortunate. Make a special effort this holiday season to reach out to someone and bless them with YOUR special gifts.

If nothing else this holiday season, remember that we as a faith community are preparing to celebrate the greatest gift the world has ever received - the birth of our Savior. In the coming weeks amidst the chaos of holiday shopping, tree decorating, and other traditions, stop for a moment to make sure you've prepared your heart to receive this gift and share it with the world around you.

Have a blessed holiday season and KEEP MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

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