

## A reflection on our RHYM and our liturgy-Fr. Jim

Look at our Masses; do you see any jr/sr high youth? Even at our 10:30 am Mass there are quite a few children, but only a few teens. Why aren't they in church? Maybe because our young people are raised in a different time than we were, including the expectations of their parents concerning the importance of gathering each week with our Faith Community. There are so many competing choices such as sports, or hobbies or the mall to name a few. How then do we at St. Joseph's engage our young people or draw them into the church and our liturgy, so they feel apart of the Mass, not just observers?

That is one of the reasons that we have not only had more teens trained to be lectors and Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, but had them scheduled together at the 10:30am Mass, so they will have a more noticeable impact with other parishioners, especially other teens. That is also what Gina Jennison, our youth minister for the Rush-Henrietta Youth Ministry (RHYM), tried to do at our "youth liturgy" last fall on World Youth Weekend. We couldn't have done this with the small number of kids at St. Joseph, and it wouldn't have had such an impact if the kids hadn't taken such a prominent role. We were hoping that other youth might not only see that young people are welcomed at Mass, but they can play an important role in our liturgy. What do you think other teens (even adults) might have felt just once hearing kids their own age speak about Christ in Church? I thought the kids that shared in the video about their faith were way beyond where I was at their age. Many people have stated to me that "they were extremely pleased that there are so many youth in the RHCC." What do you think the teen's reaction was to this liturgy? My guess is that they were delighted to be recognized and so involved at our Mass.

We were trying to convey to them what St. Paul writes: "Let no one disregard you because you are young, but be an example to all believers in the way you speak and behave, and in your love, your faith, and your purity." (I Timothy 4:12). As it states in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (#37): "The Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity...; rather does she respect and foster the genius and talents of various races and peoples" (including the "culture" of our young people).

We have approximately **160 kids registered in the RHYM** in addition to many parents that are involved. There are various programs of bible study, service, music, and just fun activities. The RHYM "ambassadors" for St. Joseph are Dr. Rich Kreipe, and Pat Karpinski. We encourage our jr/sr high to consider being apart of RHYM in some way.

**Next Sunday (June 6<sup>th</sup>)** our young people will be leading the music and be once again very visible at our 10:30am Mass. There will be an extra gift for them and all of us. Nathan Drahms is a young adult that grew up in St. Patrick's, in Savannah New York. He became very involved with the Newman Community where he went to college. After graduation he was hired as a campus minister at the U of R. **He will be speaking after communion about his journey of faith.** To me Nathan, and other young people of our parishes give a sense of hope not only for our future, but for the church right now. Finally, **at our 10:30am Mass on Sunday June 13**, we will be acknowledging those seniors that have received the "Hands of Christ" recognition, as well as bless all our graduates.