

## ENGAGING THE SPIRIT

# Synod discussions bring newsletter idea to the forefront

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A newsletter about Michigan City parishes could find a place among tourism brochures touting Lake Michigan, the dunes and other amenities Northwest Indiana has to offer.

Father Walter Ciesla, pastor of St. Stanislaus Kostka Church in Michigan City, said parishioners from the Catholic churches in the city often attend activities at each other's parishes. His idea is to merge information from each parish



into one document that would be distributed at the parishes and stocked on racks typically located at

rest stops, hotels, chambers of commerce and other locations where visitors might see them.

Father Ciesla came up with the idea, and synod implementation talks among the parishes have given it life.

"I think every area is beginning to pull together," he said.

Father Ciesla cautioned that the idea is experimental and is still in its early stages, but said several parishioners are eager to get started on the project.

Rosemary Bunton, a parishioner at St. Stanislaus, is among them.

Bunton handles marketing and creates brochures for the Michigan City Port Authority and volunteered

to help bring Ciesla's idea to fruition.

"When we were meeting through the synod process, he mentioned it," she said. "I said I'd be happy to do it. We thought it would be something to unite the Michigan City parishes."

"The details are not finalized, but the plan is to produce a quarterly newsletter that would include Mass times, reconciliation times, upcoming events, contact information and more from the Michigan City parishes."

Bunton is getting the word out to Michigan City parishes and hopes all will

participate.

"We thought it would be nice to do it with all of the parishes," she said.

Bunton said that when she goes on vacation, she attends Mass wherever she happens to be. In the same vein, placing informational newsletters in strategic areas would serve as a resource for Catholics visiting Michigan City.

*To tell us how your parish is following the Holy Spirit's lead in this synod process, contact Vanessa Negrete at [vnegrete@dgary.org](mailto:vnegrete@dgary.org) or (219) 769-9292, ext. 246.*

## DACA

From page 1

the appeals court, or until Congress finally deals with it. The high court's action only keeps DACA intact for those currently with DACA status. Two federal judges have blocked Trump, saying the administration must continue to accept renewal applications for the program. The rulings do not make DACA available to those who had not already applied for it.

"I think a lot of people feel a little insecure, they don't feel safe and they're unsure what's going to happen because things are up in the air," said Michelle Sardone, director of strategic initiatives for the

Catholic Legal Immigration Network.

"They're feeling fear about whether or not to apply: Will the government use information they have on me against me? If you submit your application with the application fee, will it be adjudicated or will it be a waste of your money?" Sardone said. "Each person should go to an accredited legal services provider to find out the best situation for them and for their family."

"We just buried a man in his 60s who came from Ireland in a house with no electricity, no plumbing. He came over to the U.S. without a trade, became a pipe fitter and a coach," said Mary Harkenrider, a member of the Southside

Catholic Peace and Justice Committee in Chicago, which sponsored a forum on March 1 to show support for the city's DACA holders.

"As a coach and a family man, he affected people throughout the city and across the country and at his funeral there were thousands of people who paid respect to this immigrant, who came to this country without a STEM education or highly advanced skills," Harkenrider added.

STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Some arguing for the reform of U.S. immigration laws say preference should be given to highly educated immigrants.

Chicago, Harkenrider said, is "a city of immi-

grants."

Nor is Chicago the only town that can claim that mantle.

Camden, New Jersey, is such a town. Mexican-born Monica Perez Reyes, 20, has lived there since her parents brought her to the United States at age 2. They entered the country without legal documents. She has sisters born in the United States who are U.S. citizens. As for Perez, "I'm good for two years" with DACA.

She admits to frustration with Congress, though. "I'm kind of offended. They're sort of playing around with my future," she said. "And the manner they're handling it, one day they say they'll do something to make it better like have a path to

citizenship, but the next day they say they're going to terminate it altogether."

Perez added, "I know some people are scared, but I'm not necessarily scared unless something is set in stone. If worse comes to worst, I have a plan; I'll have to go to Mexico and make my new life there."

Patricia Zapor, a CLINIC spokeswoman, said a January check of DACA applications showed the government was still processing applications from 2016. Renewals ordinarily take two to three months; Zapor said without DACA, immigrants in the country without legal permission cannot legally work in the U.S.

With the days winding down until Trump's original

March 5 deadline, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Kentucky, said the upper chamber would debate a banking bill in early March, making no mention of DACA - deferred action.

How to deal with this interim period is "tricky, right?" said Ian Pajer-Rogers, communications and political director for Interfaith Worker Justice.

"We have taken the position that only a clean DREAM Act will do, with no riders or add-ons from the right - no wall, no border security measures. We'll continue that. Where that leaves us with the party in power and the party that is trying to negotiate for our people is less clear."

## ANDREAN

From page 1

showing you how to have critical thoughts," Wallace said.

"Andrean seeks to foster in students self-reliance and self-confidence to reach your potential. You should be overjoyed by that - not a lot of high schools offer that philosophy," he added.

Wallace said students should take advantage of the opportunity to explore their feelings, share their opinions and learn from their peers during the diversity discussions.

"The hardest thing in the world to do is to see the situation from another

person's perspective, but (when you do that you'll learn) we have a lot more in common than we have differences."

Dean of Students Jaycob Knazur said diversity became the focus of last month's Formation Day because "Andrean has always been a diverse population, and it's appropriate to celebrate that. All Formation Days are rooted in our mission - faith, learning, leadership and service - and a key component of our faith is the notion of inclusion and solidarity."

Toward that end, students were assigned one of two options - one group explored diversity on field trips to DuSable Museum of African American History,

the Mexican Museum of Art, The Art Institute of Chicago and the Civil Rights Heritage Center - while others participated in a retreat that included Wallace's address, a screening of several short films on diversity, and small group discussions facilitated by a faculty member and a member of the school's student Diversity Committee formed two years ago by Dr. Tony Bonta, principal.

"We meet weekly, and have spent this past month planning for today and Black History Month activities," said junior Rashad Woods. Junior Sydney McLurin added that Black History Month gave the committee an opportunity to "get facts about

Historically Black Colleges and Universities and present them on the morning announcements" as a learning tool.

"We talk about how to be more diverse (in our activities) and have an open mind to different cultures," added junior Taylor Parker of committee meetings. "We've all gotten a feel for other cultures and respect them a little more; Andrean is so diverse," added junior Jada Knight.

In preparing to guide the small discussion groups, said junior Jordan Williams, committee members "Wrote out questions to ask everyone, like 'What is diversity?', 'What does it mean to you?' and 'Is diversity a good or bad

thing?'"

After Wallace's speech, sophomore Adam Warren said he "learned how to participate in (Andrean's) diversity discussions and how to develop that (ability later) in life. I enjoyed his stories, which showed real examples of people (dealing with diversity), and I think accepting that we are diverse is good and helps students have more understanding of each other."

Dr. Laura Blaser, who joined the Andrean staff this year as a physics/physical science teacher, called the diversity programming "wonderful, because we all want to become the best we can be, what God wants us to be. We are all in this together, and he loves

us all." The parishioner of St. Patrick in Chesterton praised the guidelines Wallace shared with the students to promote advocacy and a successful discussion.

"No. 1 is that you have to stay engaged, and No. 2 is that you have to be willing to be uncomfortable. You have to open yourself up; that's the only way you will grow," Wallace said. "No. 3 is to speak your own individual truth - say what you mean and mean what you say. No. 4 is to accept non-closure - we've been facing these challenges for 400 years, so realize that and you won't be disappointed that you have to keep learning and growing."

