

ENGAGING THE SPIRIT

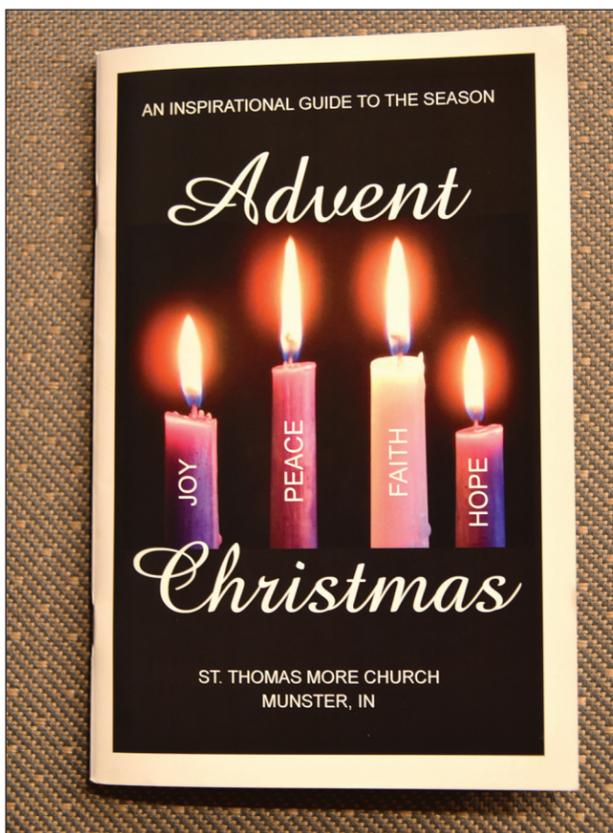
Project at Munster parish highlights evangelization, stewardship

BY VANESSA NEGRETE
Northwest Indiana Catholic

As we start Holy Week, more people probably have Lent than Advent on the mind. But an Advent project at St. Thomas More could succeed at parishes any time during the liturgical year.

Bishop Donald J. Hying is visiting every parish for a day this year. At the end of March, his travels took him to the Munster parish, and one of the takeaways was an Advent reflection booklet.

Father Mike Yadron, pastor of St. Thomas More, said he has written daily reflections for several years. They are posted on the parish website and on Facebook, and they are



Father Michael Yadron, pastor of St. Thomas More in Munster, wrote daily reflections that were compiled in Advent booklets available at the church. The booklets served as evangelization tools that other parishes in the diocese can model. (Anthony D. Alonzo photo)

emailed to people who sign up to receive them.

He said Paul Liszewski, chair of the parish stewardship commission, recom-

mended creating a booklet of daily reflections specifically for Advent.

The end product was a 50-page color booklet

filled with Father Yadron's reflections.

"I went from the first day of Advent all the way through the first day of Ordinary Time," Father Yadron said.

The bottom of each page highlights a ministry connected to stewardship. The inside cover lists the schedule of Advent and Christmas events, including Mass times, prayer services and musical performances. The back few pages list the parish ministries and contact information for each. The hope was that including information about the parish ministries would encourage people to practice their faith through those programs, according to Father Yadron.

"If this sounds like something you want to do, give it a try," he said.

The booklets were made available in church. People were encouraged to take one per family and to take more if they wanted to send one to a loved one who is not as engaged in their faith and would benefit from this type of

resource.

He said the booklet was so well received that he was asked to put one together for Lent, but he did not have enough time this year. Each reflection takes at least a half hour to write. He plans to write another booklet of Advent reflections later this year and also prepare enough reflections for the next Lenten season.

Writing in advance is not his usual routine. Father Yadron posts a reflection at 6 a.m. every day. He writes it either that morning or the night before so the material is fresh, he said.

"I first started them on Ash Wednesday a long time ago," he explained.

The first few years, his reflections were based on readings or psalms. But instead of being repetitive after cycling through, he now finds inspiration everywhere, including movies, pop music and more.

"Whenever I see a quote that grabs me, I use that as the basis for the reflection," Father Yadron said.



Although the Advent booklet was an idea that came from the stewardship commission, it is also a tool for evangelization to get people reengaged and focused more on the faith, Father Yadron said.

Stewardship and evangelization are two of the eight ecclesial areas of focus for the synod implementation.

Father Yadron said that if other parishes want to produce a similar resource, they don't have to wait for Advent.

"In terms of actually getting started, trust the Spirit and do it," he said. "You can talk about themes, seasons, sacraments."

To tell us how your parish is following the Holy Spirit's lead in this synod process, contact Vanessa Negrete at vnegrete@dcgary.org or 769-9292, ext. 246.

Easter is on its way!

Wishing you a blessed Holy Week

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