

## **THOUGHTS FROM YOUR PASTOR: Pray For and Support Our High School Youth Groups**

It is the time of year for our parish High School Youth Groups to begin their activities and gatherings. We are fortunate to have such groups in our Hardin County parishes, because ministry to teens is such an important aspect of our pastoral work. From my several years of pastoral work working with and listening to and ministering to teens (in parish youth groups, at Catholic High Schools, in “Theology of the Body for Teens” chastity classes, at Catholic Youth Summer Camp, etc), it has become patently (and painfully) obvious to me just how many challenges our teens struggle with, and are hit across the face with, from the secular and permissive culture we live in. Most Catholic teens, I have found, truly want to be holy and are looking for “something more” than what MTV and Hollywood and peer pressure at school has to offer. They want authenticity and truth and holiness. But they struggle with enormous temptations, and it can often feel overwhelming.

Therein lies, I believe, a major purpose and goal of a parish High School Youth Group. And therein lies also the reason why our parishes need to fully support such groups. Our teens are on a spiritual battlefield for their souls, and they need support both from our Lord Jesus Christ and from us as their fellow disciples in the Christian life. Our teens need to know that they are not alone, that the Catholic faith of Jesus provides what their souls are truly seeking: true meaning to life beyond “it’s all about you”, and a true desire for personal holiness of body and soul, and not “just do whatever makes you feel good”. One of the great ways teens can experience this support – and to know that they are taken seriously by the Catholic Church – is through our parish High School Youth Groups. These groups allow Catholic teens to come together to hang out with each other, to learn and pray together, and to see that they are not alone – that other teens exist who are also bold and courageous enough to push back “against the grain” of the culture, and that it is indeed “cool” to be on fire for personal holiness, for purpose, and for God.

**Our parish High School Youth Groups are starting up**, and I ask all our parishioners to support and strongly encourage our teens to participate. At Kenton, the Youth Group (typically for those in Grades 9-12) begins next Sunday, October 7, after Mass and Pancake Breakfast (what teen can resist food?), in the Youth Group Lounge (quite an impressive place, I might add) on the second floor of the office building. See Stacey Stacklin for more information. At Ada, the Youth Group has already begun, and will continue to gather most Sundays at 9:45 (meeting next Sunday October 7) in the Social Hall, with various Sunday outings also scheduled throughout the year. See Rachel Klear or Shelleigh Alexander for more information. Last weekend, I had the chance to join the Ada Youth Group on its outing to do canoeing and kayaking in Findlay. We had an impressive turnout, and it was a great chance for the teens to support each other as holy Catholic teens. I could tell we have a holy group of teens, since none of them even attempted to capsize the others’ vessels! (I also gently warned them that capsizing a priest in a kayak amounts to a mortal sin!) A good time was had by all. Again, please support and pray for our young disciples – our teens – and get them involved with our High School Youth Group!

Fr. Ferguson is available to help you with any questions or concerns you may have; please contact him at [hamilton.college@outlook.com](mailto:hamilton.college@outlook.com) or at 419-634-2626.

## **THOUGHTS FOR OUR PARISH CHILDREN by “Jackie”, the Pastor’s Cat**



Hi boys and girls! My name is “Jackie”, and as you know, I am Father Ferguson’s cat! Did you know that this week contains a special day in honor of St. Francis of Assisi? That’s right! St. Francis was a holy saint who lived way back in the 1200’s. We cats like St. Francis because he always loved animals. In fact, our parish is having a “pet blessing” this week in honor of St. Francis. Ask dad or mom if you can bring your pets to church to let Father bless them! What is your favorite animal (besides the cat, which we all know is the best animal God ever created...)? This week, thank God for creating all the world’s amazing animals! Have a “purr”-fect week!