

2010 Disciples in Mission Wrap-Up

MILLINOCKET - More than 70 persons turned out recently at St. Martin's Church in Millinocket for a critique of the recently concluded three-year Disciples in Mission Program held at three local worship sites, St. Benedict, St. Martin's and St. Peter's. Also discussed were the types of actions that should be taken as appropriate follow ups to the three-year program.

The Disciples in Mission Program is a pastoral process that integrates the Sunday liturgies with small faith sharing groups, plus follow up activities to produce a coordinated parish-wide experience of evangelization.



Participating in the critique and forward looking exercise for the recently concluded Disciples in Mission program were the following members of the program's parish leadership team, left to right: Brittany Duffy-Stanley, Marilyn Farmer, Sharon Darling, Esther Ouellette, Judy Pelletier, Mary Lou Corriveau, John McManus and Scarlett McAvoy.

A principle aim of the three-year program was to help Catholics get in touch with the depth of their faith and to help them feel comfortable enough to share their faith with others who are searching for a religious home or looking to reactivate their Catholic faith.

Since 1996 3,600 parishes in the U.S. have participated in the program. That translates into more than 4,500,000 persons having taken part in the Disciples in Mission program.

The three aims of the program were: a call to holiness, a call to welcome all people, and a call to transform the world in Christ, Mary Lou Corriveau of Millinocket, explained to the gathering. Corriveau served as member of the program's parish leadership team and was prayer coordinator.

The question she posed was "How do we keep going after Disciples in Mission, beyond the three years?" She noted, "We're all called to serve."

Among some of the ideas she and others proposed included a number of new ministries, such as: a support group for military personnel or relatives, a support group for displaced workers, an expansion of the greeters program, expanding the Eucharistic Ministers program, getting together with other churches in the area to discern needs and to work together, a food ministry, home visitations, an expanded outreach to the nursing home, a support group for widowed, divorced and separated individuals, plus expanding existing ministries.

Several attendees emphasized the need for all worship sites to make widely known what is taking place at their particular sites. Others said there is a need for those who took part in the three-year program to step up and use their treasures and talents at committee and commission levels. Others stressed that many parishioners are unaware of what the needs are within their own worship sites.

One of today's realities, cautioned Rev. Joel Cyr, is that Maine is the four most irreligious state in the U.S. Rev. Cyr is pastor of Christ the Divine Mercy Parish and St. Benedict's.

He reminded listeners that the mission of the church is to evangelize. Evangelization, he said, mean membership. "Our faith depends on bodies," he added. "We - all churches - need to build up the body of faith," Rev. Cyr emphasized.

Fr. Cyr had other strong words for listeners, cautioning that "If we lose our Mass, we lose our identity - our identity is our Mass." He warned "Our window of salvation is closing in on ourselves. He also observed, "We have watered down our faith - we're afraid to offend."

"Where will we be in five years?" he wanted to know and called upon parishioners to exercise stewardship at the parishioner level and called upon parishioners to use their "...time, talents and treasure". He also stressed that quantity and quality need to come together.

By Barbara Waters