

“Ministry fair moves to two sites; diocesan offices go on display”

By Steve Euvino

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MERRILLVILLE — The Diocesan Ministry Fair, which has been a shopper’s fair for parish councils, this year became a showplace for offices of the diocese. Also, the fair, which has taken place at Our Lady of Consolation, moved to an additional second site, St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Student Center in Valparaiso.

Anne Verbeke, director of the Office of Parish Pastoral Councils, explained that the parish council format of the ministry fair was successful for the first several years. Following meetings with program coordinators, Verbeke said, the idea came to go another route: hold a ministry fair for all diocesan offices for people to come and see the resources available.

“People don’t always have the time to look at resources,” Verbeke said, adding that the fair runs during the Catholic Services Appeal campaign, providing an “opportunity to see where the money goes and how it’s spent.”

Starting with the fair site at St. Teresa of Avila, 15 diocesan offices and other groups had tables in the student center’s new hall.

Alta Slagle, serving at the Office of Stewardship table, commented that her group had spoken to people from several parishes. “We told them that the important thing is that stewardship is not about money,” Slagle said.

Frank Zolvinski, director of the Office of Religious Education, said fair-goers were interested in “resources, ideas, and programs.” These included books or DVD series on the catechism and adult faith formation, as well as materials in Spanish.

“It was a pretty eclectic group,” Zolvinski said.

From the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal, Father Brian Chadwick said he spoke with several people and was able to “help them seeking information about annulments.”

The fair at St. Teresa of Avila took place April 23; at Our Lady of Consolation, April 30.

Father Mick Kopil, vocations director for the diocese, spoke to a parish group seeking to begin a vocations commission. He estimated that 10 parishes currently have such a commission.

**Sandy Furman**, camp director at Sharing Meadows, a facility in Rolling Prairie for the other-abled, said she conducted some “serious” business during the fair. That included people interested in serving as a camp counselor or possibly living at Sharing Meadows. “This opened up a whole new world for them,” Furman said. “They’d never heard of us.”

The ministry fair, Verbeke said, “is an opportunity for people from all the parishes to come together and interact. It’s not limited to councils or commissions.”

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- Young Adult Ministry
- Catholic Charities
- CSA
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The Diocesan Program Coordinators will be holding two Ministry Fairs in April to feature their programs and resources. These evenings not only will provide information for Councils, Commissions, and Committees, but more importantly will help your parishioners make the *connection* to the programs supported by their contributions to the CSA. **Time & Place:**

**Monday, April 23rd—St. Teresa of Avila Hall, Valparaiso**

**Monday, April 30th—Our Lady of Consolation Hall**

**Time: 7:00—8:30 p.m. (for both evenings)**

**Plan on attending the one closest to you!**

**For information: Call 219-769-9292, ext. 280**