

# Wednesday Summary

## Grades 9-11

**Welcome and Prayer:** Students were welcomed and introduced to the prayer we will be starting most classes with. We prayed a modified version of the Ignatian Examen. The Examen is a way of reflecting on one's past day and looking for where God was present in those moments. We ended prayer by taking our day into prayer with scripture as we reflected on the coming Sunday's Gospel.

**What is Youth Ministry?:** We then discussed that youth ministry is all the different ways the students connect with the church; its religious education, and its opportunities for prayer, service and fellowship. We explored how the goal of the youth ministry program is to get students to bring their life to their faith and their faith to their lives. This means that rather than seeing faith as one aspect of their lives they access on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights, their faith should flow through out every aspect of their lives. What they learn in church, prayer and scripture should inform how they live their day to day lives (faith to life) and how their day to day experiences of the world God created should influence how they understand their faith (life to faith).

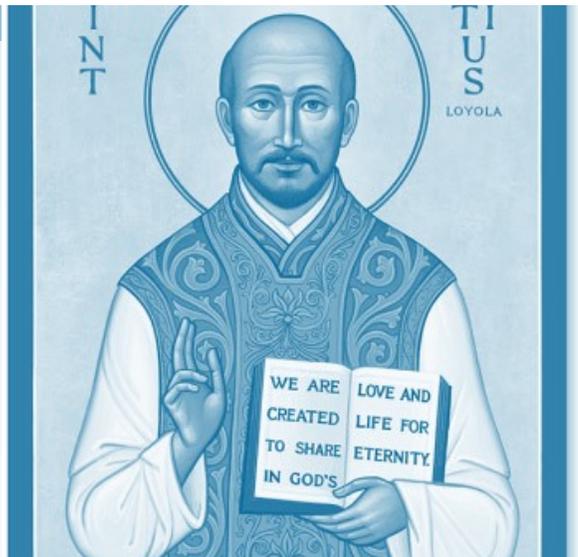
**People, Places and Rules:** Then we touched on the practical elements of the program, who the staff members involved with youth ministry are, what rooms and buildings are important for them to know (i.e. the offices at both parishes, the lodge at Blessed Trinity, the lounge at St. John Evangelist, etc...). Finally, we went over expectations for how students should behave in class, treat each other and get the most out of their experience on Wednesday nights.

**Holiness:** The focus for the ninth grade curriculum this year is that of holiness and holy people. As the students prepare to begin to explore their own call to holiness when they enter Confirmation prep next year, we first expose them to the call to holiness in the lives of the saints as we explore what it truly means to live a holy life.

As we begin exploring the lives of the saints we must first understand what it means to be saintly, what it means to be holy. To illustrate this, the students were presented with a variety of glassware, all different shapes, sizes and colors. Each glass was filled to the brim with water. The students were then asked the question: "Which cup is the fullest?" The truth is that as all the cups were filled to the brim, they were all equally full. While some cups may have held more water than others, they were all filled to capacity. The cups were different shapes, different sizes, different colors, but they were all full.

We can look at holiness in a similar matter. While we all have the same call to holiness, how we live out that call can look very different from each other. Rather than compare our lives to others, we should focus on finding how we can fill our own cup, whatever its shape or size. This is where the plethora of saints in the Catholic tradition can help us. No two found holiness the exact same way, and many lived lives parallel to our own. By studying the saints we can find examples of holiness that speak to us in a way we can understand. It is our hope that the ninth grade will start students on the path of finding saints that can serve as role models on their faith journey.

**Small Groups:** The rest of class was dedicated to students getting to know who their small groups were and participating in some activities designed to help them build a sense of community with their small groups that will help make small group time more productive as the year goes on.



### Mass Connections

As we explore the lives of saints, we see human beings who lived human lives. Some saints lived sinful lives prior to their conversions, but despite these less than holy beginnings we look to their example of how we to can have conversions of heart and live holy lives.

This coming Sunday's Gospel (Matt 21:28-3) reminds us not to judge the sinful. Jesus pointedly says, those who you deem as sinful are entering the kingdom of God before you. For while some may turn away from God initially, a change of heart can bring them in line with God's will, but many who claim to be followers of God but do not follow through with their actions in the end. As you listen to the Gospel this Sunday, reflect on where in your life you are being called to conversion and how you can look not at the sins of others, but at your own struggles with belief.

### Upcoming Classes

#### **Grades 9, 10 and 11**

Wed. October 4th 7:15-8:30pm  
at St. John Evangelist

Parents requested to join us for the class as we discuss what to expect this year and spend some time in prayer together.

As this is a 1st Wednesday, we will be offering a free dinner to anyone who wants to come early, 6:45pm. RSVP to jen@btsje.org