



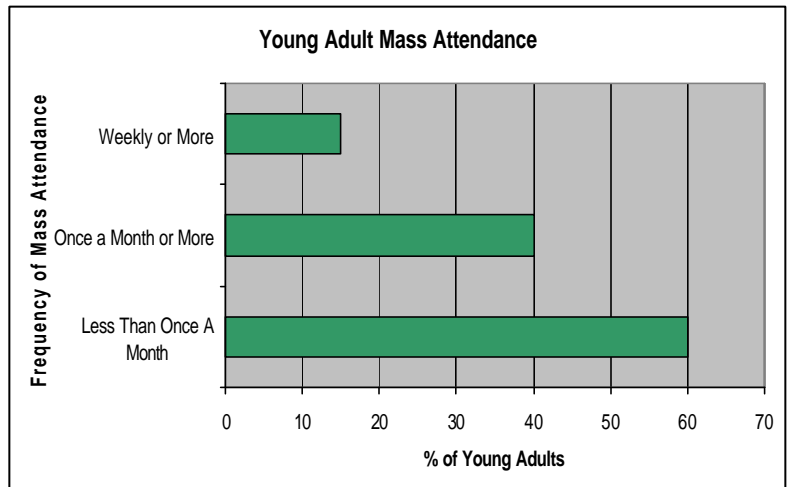
Diocesan Assembly – October 13, 2008:

Stir Into Flame The Gift of God

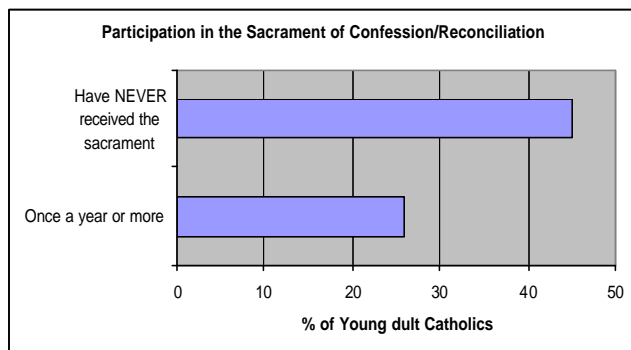
Thank you for agreeing to attend the Diocesan Assembly on Monday, October 13th. The day will be a historic one as it is the first of its kind in Diocesan history. The first time so many young adults will gather to have their voices heard by diocesan and parish leadership. This assembly will reflect the reality of the diverse cultures, beliefs and practices of young

Catholics. Whether you speak Spanish, English, or Filipino, whether you attend daily Mass or haven't been to Mass lately, whether you are married or not even thinking about it; there will be a place at the table waiting for you and representatives of our Church leadership waiting to hear your story. Thank you for being willing to share with us.

In their 1996 document, "Sons and Daughters of the Light," the US Bishops recognized that the Catholic Church needs to be "interested in the lives of young men and women and is willing to invite them to be part of our community." We have not always succeeded in properly inviting, welcoming or serving young adult Catholics well. That is why this day is so important. We need your help in setting the direction of our outreach to young adults.



The present and the future of the Church in Sacramento ultimately depends on your participation and your willingness to share your gifts and talents with the Catholic community. We cannot succeed without your help.



As leaders of the Catholic Church in Sacramento, we are concerned that young adults are not involved in their parish communities. The statistics are discouraging. According to a recent study, only 15% of young Catholics attend Mass once a week or more, and 60% attend less than once a month, only 69% of young adult Catholics

have received the sacrament of Confirmation, and 45% have never participated in the sacrament of Confession/Reconciliation. Very few have ever considered becoming a priest, brother, deacon or sister, and many have not chosen to be married in the Church.

As St. Paul expressed in his letter to the Corinthians, the Church is one body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:12-27) If parts of the body are missing or indifferent, we cannot function well. The mission of Jesus requires that the entire Church be working in collaboration together, building His kingdom. When young adults are missing from our community life and work, when young adults do not participate in the sacraments, the entire "body" suffers.

Without you, the Church cannot carry out the mission of Jesus. We need your passion and enthusiasm, your commitment and energy. St. Paul challenges us to "stir into flame the gift of God" and reminds us that "God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather of power and love and self-control." And, that "He saved us and called us to a holy life" (2 Timothy 1:6-11).

We are also anxious to hear your perspective on the Pastoral Initiatives (the current diocesan needs as identified at the Diocesan Synod in 2004) and discuss with you how we might convince and empower young Catholics to work with us to renew the Catholic church in the Diocese of Sacramento. If you would like to read them ahead of time, they are available online at:

http://www.diocese-sacramento.org/diocese/synod/synod_home.html.

Please pray with us that the Holy Spirit will guide this one-day assembly and that young Catholics of all ages, experiences and backgrounds will be empowered to share their thoughts. Pray also that the leaders will open their ears to hear what they have to say and open their minds to the changes that will be required to build and nurture vibrant young adult ministry in our diocese, within our parishes. Ultimately, pray that this gathering will bring our entire diocesan family closer to Jesus Christ and his will for us.

We are excited about this gathering, excited to hear your stories of faith and ready to hear your suggestions and feedback. We are also hoping to challenge you to work with us in order to create opportunities that better serve young adults. Ultimately, we wish to engage you in the Gospel mission of evangelization, faith formation, vocations and service. Together in Christ we can become the community God is calling us to be.

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You also might be interested in these websites: www.bustedhalo.com, www.catholicscomehome.org, www.sqpn.com, and www.phatmass.com.