**Parish Library Roundtable**

**February 13, 2016**

**1. Welcome & Introductions** – Opened with a prayer inspired by Year of Mercy. Participants introduced selves and each described their parish library. Examples:

* Library is just off gathering space outside church; honor system.
* Library room in the building; a cart is placed in gathering space; check-out system.
* A cart, very old cart, moves to various locations – outside church, church hall during intergenerational program, etc.
* 1000 donated books; not catalogued, shelved by topic; people take and may return.
* Parish lobby is library; shelves around lobby area, a counter and 2 spinner displays; DVDs and books; check-out.
* Library is new room near church entrance.

**2. Sharing** was facilitated by Jean Elvekrog, member of the Wisconsin Chapter of Catholic Library Association. Following is a sampling of the comments.

**Publicity/Promotion**

* Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter displays in back of church; cookies and coffee
* Open house
* Bulletin column – encouraging reading, one-sentence descriptions
* Bulletin announcements
* Changing display of featured books to attract attention; make it fresh
* Personal contact – librarian with cart at intergenerational events
* Publicity at annual Ministry Fair
* Highlight new books or seasonal (lent/easter); stand up with cover facing out
* Tag on books – “pastor recommendation” or “Regina Award book”
* Article in parish newsletter mailed to parishioners
* Post on parish website

**Sources and selection of materials**

* Book reviews in magazines
* Catholic Library World magazine
* Publisher catalogues
* Focus on more contemporary books
* Catholic books with imprimatur
* Wish list is advertised so parishioners can donate to buy books
* Held a book fair with local bookstore; promoted reading and a modest fundraiser
* Parishioners buy a book and a bookplate/sticker is placed in book

**How to handle donated books**

* Most do not encourage people to drop off books – too many, too old, not appropriate
* Have a policy that says anything not used will be donated to charity
* Library committee reviews any donated books
* Donate unused to St Vincent de Paul store
* Old books are judged on value; Are they classics? good condition? attractive?
* Do not keep duplicates; not enough space
* Pass on second copies to neighboring parish
* Put our freebie box of books not retained by library

**What are people reading?**

* Varies from parish to parish; based on age of parishioners, location, etc
* Short meditation books, biographies, popular books like Chicken Soup books
* Mary and the Rosary
* By or about Pope Francis
* Authors like Chittester, James Martin
* DVDs
* Little bit of everything

**What do you have for children?**

* Our parish did not have anything, so began purchasing for young people
* Picture books, but little for middle school
* Want to encourage family reading; perhaps a family reading night during lent, so provide something for all ages
* Some parishes provide a basket or shelf of books – separate from library – for use by small children during Mass

**3. Resources**

Jean Elvekrog presented information about the Catholic Library Association, and about the **Wisconsin Chapter of the Catholic Library Association**. She distributed copies of *Kaleidoscope*, the newsletter of the Wisconsin chapter.

Jean shared articles, “Best Practices for Enlivening Parish Libraries” (Greater St. Louis Catholic Library Association) and “Weeding Library Collections.”

Librarian Katie Utschig, Ss. Peter and Paul Parish, uses **LibraryThing** to catalog and to place widgets on webpage to highlight books. Check it out at: <http://ssppmilw.org/library/>

Gary distributed brochures and fliers for **Salzmann Library**, library of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee located at Saint Francis Seminary.

The **Marian Center**, where this roundtable was held, is a bookstore largely staffed by volunteers, that carries over 15,000 books, videos, devotional items, and can special order.

**4. Book Swap**

Some participants brought books no longer needed in their libraries. Everyone was able to take what they wanted.

*Submitted by Gary Pokorny*