

Construction group helps Hickory parishioners grow closer to Jesus

By Elizabeth Lowe

elowe@CatholicReview.org

Bob Spalding is on fire about his faith and is focused on helping fellow Catholics develop a personal relationship with Jesus.

"We need to get people to fall in love with Jesus," said Spalding, 62, a parishioner of St. Ignatius, Hickory. "The world needs Jesus. We need to get the word out."

Spalding, a member of the Harford County parish's newly formed evangelization committee, is spearheading an effort to help parishioners deepen their spiritual lives.

At Easter Masses April 19-20, the parish plans to distribute 3,000 copies of "Rediscover Catholicism: A Spiritual Guide to Living With Passion and Purpose" by Matthew Kelly. Bookmarks listing St. Ignatius' various ministries will also be distributed.

"The reason we want to do this is for people to come to know Jesus Christ," Spalding said. "It's a very beautiful means to help that happen."

A \$10,000 donation from the Baltimore-based COUNT Program Foundation, Inc., which supports local charities and educational organizations for the unionized mechanical construction industry, paid for the books and bookmarks, which cost about \$7,000, Spalding said.

Remaining funds will be used to support additional evangelization efforts at the parish, said Spalding, vice president of the Harford County-based Rock Spring Heating and Cooling, Inc.

Spalding said the Holy Spirit inspired him to distribute the materials.

"It's God working within me," said Spalding, a graduate of St. Francis of Assisi School and Archbishop Curley High School, both in Baltimore. "It's the little things I can do to help get the message out."

Hans Plate, a St. Ignatius parishioner who helps lead the evangelization committee, said the book and bookmark distribution helps people encounter Jesus.

"It's really about thinking what we are trying to accomplish here," Plate said. "It always is to come back to Jesus."

Monsignor James M. Barker, pastor of St. Ignatius, said the parish's evangelization efforts are paramount.

"Many people have placed other priorities over coming to Mass and we have to try to get them to realize that everything revolves around the Mass," he said. "Our faith

is centered around the Eucharist. If they understand that, they will come.”

Also see:

Loyola University chemistry/bio major donates \$1.5 million to the school

Loyola Blakefield hires Loyola University grad as principal

Meatless meal: Shrimp Scampi