

T.O.R.C.H. support group keeps home school fire lit

Anita DiGregory hasn't an inkling on how to pronounce any of the Latin words in her son's lessons, but that doesn't prevent the mother of four from continuing her call to home school.

"I absolutely love home-schooling and I wouldn't do it any other way," said Mrs. DiGregory. "It is so rewarding. I get to be the one who sees the light on their faces when they start reading. I get to be the one to grade their papers. I get to be with them all the time."

The St. Peter the Apostle, Libertytown, parishioner has enriched and strengthened her relationship with her children, she said, by teaching them for the past six years. Although she admits the process can be incredibly difficult as she juggles various curriculum balls for three of her children, reprieve for Mrs. DiGregory arrives in the form of a support group called T.O.R.C.H. (Traditions of Roman Catholic Homes) designed for Catholic home-schooling parents.

Under the umbrella of the national T.O.R.C.H., the chapter home-based at St. Peter's has existed for 13 years. "We were simply looking for a support system for the moms," said one of its founders, Stephanie Rubeling, "and a group of kids that our home-schooled kids could interact with."

Both mothers claim T.O.R.C.H. is responsible for forming solid friendships within the circle of parents and among the kids.

"The friendships that evolve from this are so great and so moving," said Mrs. DiGregory who attends the monthly meetings. "I can't describe what a blessing this

group is. We are a wonderful support to each other and bounce things off of each other.”

Centered around the Catholic faith, many of the extracurricular activities planned for the 50 or so families include a May procession, holiday parties, boys’ and girls’ clubs, community outreach, art and music classes, sports, and a current theatre production of *The Wizard of Oz*.

“As the group has developed and grown,” said Mrs. Rubeling, 43, “we have seen the beauty of it help to encourage our young people (and the entire family) in their faith.” Mrs. Rubeling and her husband Gary are about to graduate the first of their nine home-schooled children in June. “We have solid friendships that are pure and call on each other in holiness, instead of dragging us down into so many of the things that are typical in today’s young people. For this we are grateful!”