

Local News

FOCUS ministry coming to local parish, thanks to grant



Archbishop Nelson Perez chats with missionaries of FOCUS, which typically ministers on college campuses, July 19 after Mass in the Cathedral Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul. Thanks to a grant by the Catholic Foundation of Greater Philadelphia, a missionary of FOCUS will expand into parish ministry in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia this fall. (Photo by Sarah Webb)

CatholicPhilly.com staff report • Posted August 20, 2020

The Catholic Foundation of Greater Philadelphia (CFGP) has granted \$74,000 to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's Office for the New Evangelization to fund a partnership with the Fellowship for Catholic University Students (FOCUS).

The evangelization ministry of FOCUS counts numerous conversions of young people on college campuses, many vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life, and strong marriages. Currently the ministry is present on 171 campuses in the United States and Europe and has nearly 800 missionaries.

While FOCUS began at universities, recently its work to make missionary disciples of Jesus Christ has expanded to parish communities, having served six parishes across the country so far.

FOCUS began its parish work within the Philadelphia Archdiocese last year with an initial grant from CFGP. That enabled the start of the ministry, while this year's grant will help FOCUS continue to expand here over the next two years.

To date, CFGP has granted nearly \$100,000 to FOCUS in the archdiocese.

During this second year of the partnership, a FOCUS missionary will begin service at St. Agnes Parish in Sellersville.

In addition, FOCUS will host events and workshops for parish leaders to impart their model of discipleship to clergy, lay people and religious so that more parishes can implement the FOCUS model of missionary disciple-making.

The bulk of CFGP's grant will fund the work of the parish missionary at St. Agnes Parish under the leadership of the pastor, Father Jeff Stecz.

FOCUS missionaries utilize a three-part process consisting of encounters, education and integration of the church into daily life. The model is rooted in personal, one-on-one accompaniment of the individual into a personal encounter with Christ.

The male missionary and his wife will begin their work at St. Agnes this fall. Their work will consist of planning and participation in retreats, Bible studies, baptismal and marriage preparation programs and one-to-one mentoring.

“This is a particularly exciting endeavor because we are partnering with FOCUS at the beginning of their outreach to parishes. I sense that we are trailblazing alongside FOCUS in this new dimension of their ministry,” said Meghan Cokeley, director of the Office for the New Evangelization. “I am thrilled that the Church of Philadelphia can be a part of this new movement of the Lord. CFGP has made that possible, and I am so very grateful!”

“We are grateful to devoted missionaries who are dedicating their lives to evangelization and growing our faith communities,” said CFGP President and Chief Executive Officer Sarah O. Hanley. “We are blessed to have the opportunity to share their important work with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.”

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