

## *St. Joseph- St. John Ministry Encounter* *Report to the CPC*

Use extra sheets if necessary

**Ministry Name(s):** Knitting Angels (St. John Neumann) and the St. Joseph's Shawl Ministry

Encounter Date: April 1, 2008

Length of Meeting: ½ Hour (I stayed until the end of their evening get-together)

**Opportunities Noted:** It was really a pleasure to meet with the ladies from St. Joe's. Their knitting shawl ministry began two years ago as part of their homebound ministry. Denise Weaver was a nurse and became aware of the ministry and started the knitting/crocheting group at St. Joe's. They meet every Tuesday evening. Their shawls are distributed to anyone who asks for one and requests usually come through the church secretary. Basically their evening begins with a starting prayer and ends with a closing prayer. Denise indicated it's much easier to keep interest in the group when they meet each week and at present they probably have 10-12 members who come regularly.

The group at St. Joe's doesn't seem to fall under any one prayer ministry of the church – they create a shawl and it's distributed to whoever has requested one. Rarely does the group get feedback on the recipient, although when they are told who a shawl went to, they have a running list and keep those people in prayer. Kind of like an intercessory list.

We really didn't discuss how we could merge the groups; mainly because there are differences in distribution and the type of ministry itself. See "Challenges".

**Specific Challenges to Collaboration:** The group at St. John's is fairly new. We started the group last April or May and then broke for the summer. Our first project was items for the Christmas Mitten Tree and we made hats, scarves and mittens. In addition, some of the ladies worked on prayer shawls and lab robes and baby items. So that's one area where we differ

from the group at St. Joe's. We haven't just made prayer shawls or lap robes. Basically, the group at St. John's is still getting off the ground.

When the idea for this ministry came about I was looking up patterns for something to knit or crochet for some friends for Christmas. I came across a pattern for a prayer shawl and thought it was something to knit that would be worn in times of prayer or scripture reading.

Shortly after downloading a few patterns I was at the library and there was a display of books on a table as I entered and there was one entitled "Prayer Shawl Ministry". I picked the book up out of curiosity and checked it out and learned that the prayer shawl was a garment *created in an attitude of prayer* for a recipient. Each time you begin knitting or crocheting on that garment, you pray specifically for the person who is to receive the shawl and whatever needs they have. When the shawl or lap robe is finished the idea is for the group to lay hands in blessing on the garment and then present it.

Some churches have a monthly mass where a priest actually blesses the shawls before they are distributed. One church in Connecticut has actually made stoles for newly ordained priests. Another church makes a white shawl for those who are being received into the church over Easter. So there are many possibilities – but the main idea is the prayer attached to what is being made. Certainly the garments are worked on at home, but the idea is to work on it prayerfully. I may work on the garment while listening to Christian music or while saying a rosary along with Mother Angelica. I've sat in chapel and knit or crocheted.

Thus, the birth of the Knitting Angels and the ministry becoming part of an outreach of the prayer ministry at St. John's. Our group meets once a month – from September through May. I'd like to meet more often, but that hasn't developed yet. To date, in addition to the items for the mitten tree, we've distributed about six shawls and one lap robe.

**Suggestions to the CPC:** Basically St. Joe's has formed their ministry to only create prayer shawls and/or lap robes only. They meet weekly and have a dedicated room to do so. There really wasn't any discussion about merging the groups – the meeting was more or less getting acquainted with what each church is doing. Up until receiving this questionnaire, I didn't even know St. Joe's had a shawl ministry.

Certainly there is room for joining St. Joe's but I think in order to do so the group at St. John's really needs to be more clearly defined as to what its mission should be. Do we want to limit the group only to shawls or lap robes? Or can we make Afghans for the homeless and baby items for Providence House? How do we want items distributed – by the church office or through a prayer / Eucharistic minister or specific church group on behalf of the community of St. John's?

**RETURN TO: Your Contact person:**

*THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!*