A Catalyst in My Faith

by Clara Duffy

Happening, or the Bishop’s Happening Movement, is a three-day weekend spiritual retreat for high school students in grades 10-12, typically held twice a year. Its aim is to concentrate closely on the person and teachings of Jesus Christ. Faith is seriously examined in a relaxed, fun, and informal atmosphere. The team, which spends months carefully planning each weekend, is led by a “rector” – a student – and includes other students and some adults. Each weekend ends with a closing service, which parents and supporters are invited to attend.

High school students who have attended a Happening, or have “happened,” can participate in the HJS Love Reunion which is held in conjunction with each Happening weekend.

Clara Duffy will be a high school senior in the fall. She is a member of St. Albin’s, Harlingen. Reach her at claraduffy@gmail.com.

People are partly defined by the communities to which they belong. Personally, I feel loved, accepted, and appreciated amongst the youth of the Diocese of West Texas.

“Happening” was only a familiar term for the first ten years of my life. Later on, it became a thing of mystery and wonder as my time to “happen” approached. I was forbidden to attend any more closings (which had been like sneak peaks, watching my friends and family experience the real deal). When conversations about Happening were held in my home, I had to put my hands over my ears and sometimes leave the room, which I did smiling after overhearing a new piece of information.

Through this time of waiting to “happen” I listened and watched and wondered as much as I could, because I sensed something great. Even before it became a part of my life, I could tell that Happening would be pivotal and a catalyst in my faith.

So I entered a wonderful community in August 2011 at The Church of the Good Shepherd, Corpus Christi. I arrived and threw myself into Happening, knowing all the while that this was what I had been waiting for. But, of course, it was completely unlike my expectations.

The secret of Happening is part of its charm, so I will not spill my entire experience. However, one notable thing about Happening is the way it comes back to you once you’ve left.

Feelings, memories, bits and pieces of the weekend came back to me months after I had pulled out of the parking lot at Good Shepherd. It’s the power of prayer, the sweet letters, the music and thought-provoking questions, the speeches, and small families. Overall, it is the tangible, obvious presence of God that is the driving force behind Happening.

I believe that I made some of my dearest friends at Happening, because there we were the very best versions of ourselves. I believe that I keep going back, that I eagerly sign up for every HJS Love reunion because it’s like a spiritual milkshake, and I leave feeling like the hands and feet of God. I leave full of the Holy Spirit, poised to pour it out on all I meet.

All in all, Happening has been an enormous blessing in my life. Through being on staff, I have watched it transform people and fill them with the same need it fills me with — a need to go back, to stretch out the feelings from Happenings all year, to continually grow and change and become the person I am at Happening.

Happening #125

Happening #125 will be held at TMI - The Episcopal School of Texas, August 2-4, 2013. Happening is a spiritual retreat weekend for high school students in grades 10-12. To learn more, visit www.dwtx.org/happening.