

Monday 2 February, 2009

Spirit & Truth is a young adult program, motivated by John 4: 23 – 24, which is centered upon Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

S&T was begun a number of years ago by two young adults from the Archdiocese of Atlanta, during the tenure of my predecessor and with his knowledge and approval. The first group met at the Catholic Center of Kennesaw State University, under the general supervision of the Catholic chaplain, with Exposition and Benediction celebrated by a deacon. Another Archdiocese priest and another deacon, who was then Director of the Archdiocesan Office of Religious Education, assisted the young adult leadership and participants with administration of *S&T*.

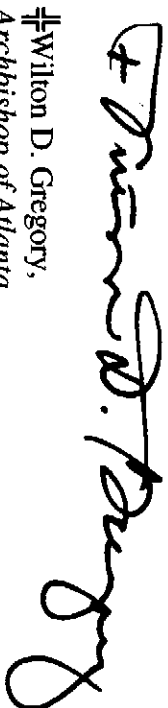
S&T groups involve from a dozen to as many as 30 participants, who meet on a weekly basis, usually in the evening, for about an hour and a half. As many as five different *S&T* groups, meeting in widely divergent parts of the Metropolitan Atlanta area, have existed in the Archdiocese at any particular time. As young adults relocated from Atlanta to other universities or began to work in other communities, requests began to be made to local lay leaders, priests, deacons for assistance to start such a program in their new home city or university. Such assistance was only provided with the assurance of approval of the diocesan bishop and assistance of a cleric with Exposition and Benediction.

The program begins with an icebreaker to welcome new participants and a peer teaching. The original *S&T* group at KSU based its teaching component in weekly rotation on the subject matter of the four pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament by a priest of deacon follows the teaching, with praise & worship music with a Eucharistic theme being sung. Benediction and the Divine Praises follow, closing with reposition of the Blessed Sacrament and a hymn, usually “Holy God, We praise thy Name.” A round – the – group discussion on what spiritual insights the evening provided for the participants concludes the formal program. Afterwards, most of the participants go to some nearby restaurant for an evening meal and fellowship.

One of the *S&T* young adult originators also developed a summer program, called *On the Deck*, for students back home in the Archdiocese from out – of – state universities. It did not involve Exposition and Benediction, but did involve peer teaching and praise & worship music singing, culminating with a dinner. *S&T* and *On the Deck* young adult originators were recognized by the *National Catholic Education Association* with an award that I presented at its annual 2006 meeting held in Atlanta.

Provided any S&T group has Episcopal approval and clerical oversight, I believe that it can lead young adults to a deeper relationship with Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, their Church, and each other.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wilton D. Gregory". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "W".

✠Wilton D. Gregory,
Archbishop of Atlanta

WDDG/pec