

# HIV/AIDS on the rise in Minnesota

## *2010 sees largest increase in past 17 years*

by Fr. Paul A. Schumacher

The jump in HIV cases in Minnesota deserves our attention. We call to mind what the U.S. bishops said in 1989 with regard to persons with HIV/AIDS: – "We must keep them present to our consciousness, as individuals and a community, and embrace them with unconditional love. The Gospel demands reverence for life in all circumstances. Compassion – love – toward persons infected with HIV is the only authentic gospel response." Yes, HIV/AIDS is still with us in greater force than ever in the State of Minnesota. Alarming statistics have come out that this last year in Minnesota the number rose to 368, the largest increase in 17 years.

We must remember that this is a 'preventable disease.' Each one must do what we can to inform, urge, and encourage people that this is preventable.

### **What can we do?**

1. Urge everyone to respect their bodies and their sexuality as a precious gift from God.

2. Ask for education for our young people.
3. Talk to your children, your friends, your neighbors.
4. Write to your representative in local, state, and national government asking them to support HIV/AIDS prevention, education, and research.
5. Have compassion for those living with the disease.
6. Pray, pray, pray.

### **One Heartland**

Since 1993 in Minnesota, One Heartland, a national non-profit organization committed to children, youth, and their families impacted by HIV/AIDS and other significant life challenges worldwide, has provided summer camp programs, and year-round support for children and families facing HIV/AIDS, foster care, homelessness, and other troubling circumstances. Camp Heartland has provided over 7,000 week-long camping experiences to children and youth living with HIV/AIDS. It also strives to provide meaningful programming to youth living with HIV/AIDS in their

transition to adulthood.

There is yet no cure, but we seemingly are getting close. Your compassion, support, and prayers make a difference for children, youth, adults, and families touched by this disease.

For more information contact: One Heartland, 4425, North Port Washington Road, Suite 107, Milwaukee, WI 53212; or Fr. Paul A. Schumacher, 460 Lake Street SW, Hutchinson, MN 55350, (320) 510-2286.

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