

# ALPHA – what is it?

**ALPHA**..WHAT IS IT??? NOT an alien creature like ALF, and NOT a word with missing parts! The first letter of the Greek alphabet is ALPHA, the beginning, like our "A", and it is also the name of an experience that gives parish members and also interested non-members an opportunity to re-discover (or discover for the first time, a beginning) who Jesus is and what Jesus means in our lives. Have you ever sat in the pew on a Sunday morning/ Saturday afternoon and said to yourself? "Is my faith in Jesus as alive as it could be? What am I missing? Why am I not more engaged in my Catholic faith? Have I drifted away from my living out a Christian commitment authentically?" Many of us go through times when these or other questions are a reality. There are many journeys we can take to find answers, and ALPHA may be one of them for you.

During the past year, staff members and some parish volunteers experienced ALPHA together here at St. Thomas, and were invited to a recommitment to our faith. **We shared a simple meal together, viewed a video, and then held a discussion on the theme of the day** (total 1 1/2 hrs.). We did not always have all the answers to participant's questions, but we accepted questions to look for some answers later. Sometimes we had lively interchanges about personal faith experiences, and also challenges along life's way. Frequently, we were reaffirmed in our faith by simply listening to one another. Engaging with others (ALL ARE WELCOME!) is fun, and good to do. We can learn much from one another.

It is good to revisit "the beginning", the Alpha, when we first encountered Jesus because we then can remember how and why our faith is important to us. Sometimes the key to growing our faith is a return to the basics. Or, if we are presently struggling with faith, to re-connect and hear how others with whom we worship share their faith, to be encouraged even in our doubts.

Soon we will be hearing more information about ALPHA from persons who have experienced it, and we can learn other facts about how we might be involved ourselves. Watch for future leaflets and scheduled times for joining an Alpha group in September (Sept-Nov.) at varied times...daytime, evenings, Sundays, etc. And you can invite friends of other faiths to join us, too. Don't miss out on this chance to deepen your faith and become a livelier disciple of Jesus. And if the times are not right for you now, we will invite you again in January. (Jan-Mar.) .And if not THIS year, then next. Find out about what ALPHA might do for you.