



YOUTH PILGRIMAGE TO ST. CLEMENT'S ISLAND



"The Roots pilgrimage is something I will never forget. Because of the pilgrimage, I feel like I was able to grow as a person. After my time spent on the island, I felt like a new me. I liked how we had an hour for reflection and confession in the middle of the day. It gave me time to reflect on my life and my faith."

**FRESHMAN
RYKEN HIGH SCHOOL**



"I really enjoyed the Joe Melendrez concert. He does a great job hyping us up for Jesus."

**SOPHMORE
RYKEN HIGH SCHOOL**



Testimonials

THE JOURNEY



SENATOR JACK BAILEY

"It is a program that offers the best combination of family, culture, faith, and community unlike any other for all who participate. The youth who attend this event are given a unique opportunity to experience a wonderful day of spiritual reflection and community events hosted by the best of the best."

MR. ANDREW J. PUDYSZ, HEADMASTER CHESTERTON ACADEMY OF ST. MARY'S

"I've heard it said once that our youth are not the future of the Church, but the Church now. We must take this to heart and recognize that fidelity to Jesus is the most important mark of an evangelized Christian and intentional disciple. As such, the Church should seek to foster, develop, and generously support these types of events so that we can "cast wide our nets" and continue to invite our young Church to have profound encounters with God."



CATHERINE BOWES, PHD, PRINCIPAL, RYKEN HIGH SCHOOL

"The vision makes sense to me as our children in general become less connected with their history and even Faith and especially with Southern Maryland's importance in the history of Catholicism. The event connects our young people with their Faith in a new way. We are hopeful that this event can transition to an annual, sustainable opportunity for the Archdiocese's children."

OUR MISSION: TO SHARE IN A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY TOGETHER TO HISTORIC ST. CLEMENT'S ISLAND, THE FOUNDATION OF CATHOLICISM IN THE BRITISH AMERICAN COLONIES, FOR MARYLAND AND DC HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH PROVIDING AN UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY TO ENCOUNTER CHRIST WHILE BECOMING DEEPLY ROOTED IN FAITH, HERITAGE, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY!



Testimonial

SISTER MARIA THEOTOKOS ADAMS, SSVM, PHD
KEYNOTE SPEAKER, INAUGURAL EVENT OF "SOUTHERN
MARYLAND ROOTS: THE JOURNEY" 2022

On September 24, 2022, I joined Joe Melendrez and Fr. Larry Swink as a keynote speaker for the youth rally "The Journey: Why Did They Come?" organized by the Southern Maryland Roots youth group under the direction of Fr. Charles Luckett, Fr. Stephen Wyble, Fr. Ryan Pineda and Theresa Friess. This day of Catholic history and culture on St. Clement's Island far exceeded my expectations in several respects and I believe that it is an event that should be repeated so that more youth from Catholic high schools and parish youth groups can participate. I will mention two of the most important aspects.

First, this youth event was centered on the celebration of the Holy Mass at the very place where the first Catholic Mass was celebrated in the British colonies in 1634. Not only was the liturgy first and foremost, but the organizers had a very deep ecclesial vision in mind and a magnanimous spirit. They invited Cardinal Wilton Gregory himself to celebrate the Mass, and His Eminence most graciously accepted. The youth were very impressed to see their own archbishop make the journey from the city down to St. Clement's Island – by car, by boat, and nally by golf cart across the island to the site of the Mass.



Later in the afternoon there was also time of Eucharistic Adoration, prayer of the Rosary and opportunity for confessions.

Second, the event brought youth from different corners of Southern Maryland together for talks, prayer, sports and fellowship. In a time of fractured social relationships, the fact of so many teenagers being together from diverse backgrounds on an island spoke eloquently of our unity as Catholics. This event should be repeated and is worthy of being supported by the Archdiocese of Washington as a badge of honor.

Throughout the day we remembered the early refugee Catholics who came to this land seeking religious freedom, and the dangers they faced back in England. My own talk addressed the historical conditions of Fr. Andrew White, SJ and those on the Ark and the Dove, as well as his Jesuit confrere who took replaced him in England and later died there: St. Henry Morse, martyr (1595-1645).

I believe that as many local Catholic teenagers as possible should have the powerful experience of visiting the island where the first Maryland Mass was celebrated by those whose faith was the faith of martyrs. The legacy of immigrant Catholics from persecuted countries begins on St. Clement's Island and continues to our own day in the rich diversity of the Archdiocese of Washington. This event belongs to all Catholic teenagers as a unique opportunity to grow in their Catholic identity, their love for the faith, and their strength for the future. I am grateful to have been a part of this event, and I heartily endorse it being offered again.

Sr. Maria Theotokos Adams, SSVM PhD
March 1, 2023



Testimonials

THE JOURNEY

"The men and women of the Maryland State Police, Leonardtown Barrack, have been involved with several events of the Southern Maryland Roots Organization, bringing the faith and law enforcement communities together. We partner with the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office to organize an obstacle course and compete against the students while wearing goggles that recreate the visual impairment of driving while impaired, or have them text messages while trying to navigate the obstacle course against a trooper, and see who wins. This is always a fun day for us and allows us to hopefully draw more youth to want to serve our community and great state as a law enforcement officer.

LIEUTENANT KRYSTLE M. ROSSIGNOL, COMMANDER, LEONARDTOWN BARRACK,
DEPARTMENT OF MARYLAND STATE POLICE



"My name is Chaplain Peter Pomposello and I am a Roman Catholic priest serving in the Army. It was an immense privilege to address the attendees of this event. I was thoroughly impressed by the spirit and commitment displayed by the youth who participated. Their engagement and enthusiasm reflect a promising future for our Catholic community and our nation.

'The Journey' brought together youth from diverse backgrounds, fostering a sense of unity and solidarity among Catholic teenagers in Southern Maryland. In a time marked by division, this event served as a beacon of hope and unity for our community. These events are of deep importance as they offer our youth a unique opportunity to deepen their Catholic identity and cultivate values of love and respect for God and Country.

As a military officer deeply committed to the values of God and country, I believe initiatives like 'SOUTHERN MARYLAND ROOTS: THE JOURNEY' are crucial in ensuring that our youth grow up with a strong moral compass and a profound understanding of their faith."

CH (MAJ). PETER POMPOSELLO



