

YOUTH MINISTRY *Spotlight*

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden." Mt. 5:14



Why I Serve in Youth Ministry

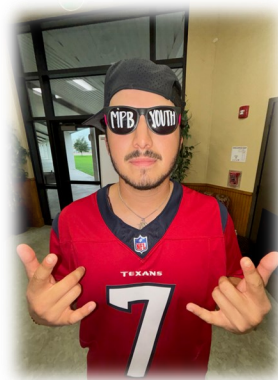
By: Justin De Los Santos

Growing up, as a cradle Catholic, I never fully understood what it meant to follow Christ. To me God was someone that we pray to when things are bad or when we have a need. That was how I perceived Him until I went to St. John Paul II High School. Two of my theology teachers saw past my fears, pride, and ministered to me. Those two teachers were John McFarland and Benjamin Nye. They poured into me during my time at St. JP II and helped me develop a personal relationship with Christ.

During college I slowly slipped away from the Catholic faith. At one point I stopped considering myself a Catholic. I had this incredible encounter with God the Father, and that led me to a reversion back to the Catholic faith. After that encounter I truly began to pray. I prayed for my vocation and what God was asking of me to do. One day during Mass I heard Him calling me to youth ministry. I had such a deep desire to help the youth find the Love of Jesus, and experience the beauty of the Church. I often hear people say is that youth are "doomed," but rarely are people willing to fight for and with them. These teens are all searching for the right thing (Jesus), but perhaps at times they search for Him in the wrong places.

I can relate to their search for the "right thing." I was just like that in high school, and if it were not for John and Ben, I do not think I would be where I am now. We need God's love, mercy, and grace and I truly believe that our Lord has something incredible to do in and through this next generation. My goal is to not just teach these teens but to walk with them. In walking with them, I hope that they can come to know that they are seen, heard, and that I am here for them.

"I hope that they can come to know that they are seen, heard, and that I am here for them." Justin





“GLOBAL CELEBRATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE”

With God, All Things are Possible

By: Susanne Janssen, South Texas Catholic Editor

Sunday, October 13th at 1 pm: A long line of cars approached Most Precious Blood Church, and teens stood in line to participate in the Global Celebration of Young People, Corpus Christi edition. Prepared by the Office of Youth Ministry and the Office of Young Adult Ministry, more than 225 teens attended the gathering, with 30 young adults as role models and 50 youth ministers and volunteers.

After pizza and an introduction by the co-emcees Sister Gemma, SOLT and John McFarland, the Vicar General for the Diocese, Fr. Paul Hesse, celebrated Mass, bringing the greetings from Bishop Mulvey, who was still recovering from his knee surgery.

In his homily, Fr. Paul referred to the Gospel of the day – the episode of the rich young man who was invited by Jesus to sell everything he had and follow Him but walked away sad because he had many possessions - about how he loved backpacking and camping but would end up with a heavy backpack. “Our possessions can weigh us down,” he said. After letting go of some seemingly necessary items, he enjoyed the hikes more.

“The rich young man was attracted by Jesus,” Fr. Paul continued. But his vision was clouded; he could not see what was essential. “God has an invitation for each of us – and with God, all things are possible.”

After Mass, the teens enjoyed games and worship with local band “Movement 5.” Jake and Angie Windnagle shared their faith journeys with the participants. Jake went to Catholic School but left the faith when he went to college. While partying and trying to fit in, he was feeling exhausted. When his grandfather passed away, his friends would take him out for free drinks, but that didn’t help. After visiting a friend from high school who went to a Catholic College, he felt attracted to the atmosphere there. “I transferred to that college and found friends who really cared.” When his grandmother passed away, one friend, whom he only knew a month, offered to drive him home and help with everything necessary.

His wife shared how she had a conversion in high school and realized that no one could love her like Jesus does. “Even if I love my husband and we have children together, he will fail me. And I will fail him – no one can love like Jesus. He is always our first love.”

The teens journaled and ended the day with adoration, giving everything to God. There were long lines for confession throughout the day, and the teens left with a renewed relationship with Jesus.



“The rich young man was attracted by Jesus.” Fr. Paul Hesse