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Extension

YOUNG CATHOLICS

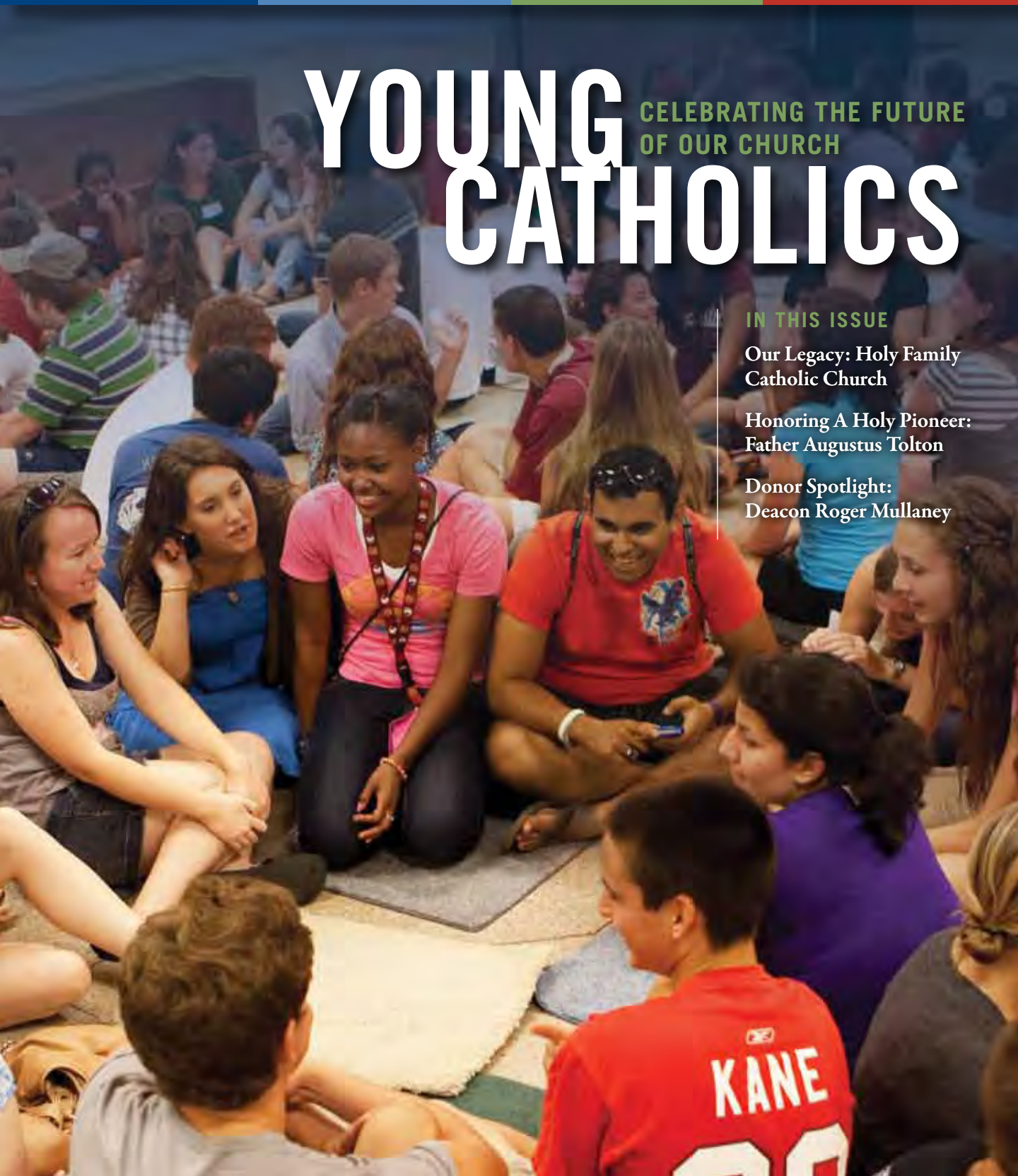
CELEBRATING THE FUTURE OF OUR CHURCH

IN THIS ISSUE

Our Legacy: Holy Family Catholic Church

Honoring A Holy Pioneer: Father Augustus Tolton

Donor Spotlight: Deacon Roger Mullaney



KANE



PLANTED IN CHRIST, FIRM IN THE FAITH

Catholic Extension shares stories of the next generation of Catholic leaders, and the Catholic faithful who soon will be the heart and soul of our Church

In August, hundreds of thousands of young Catholics from all over the world will gather in Madrid, Spain, for World Youth Day to celebrate their Catholic faith and its central role in their lives. The theme for this year’s event is “Planted and built up on Jesus Christ, firm in the faith,” (Colossians 2:7) a reflection on the critical need to establish a foundation of faith at an early age.



TEENS FROM THE youth group of Cristo Rey Parish in Salinas, California, find spiritual camaraderie in the gang-ridden area.

As we at Catholic Extension travel the country visiting the communities where resources may be scarce but faith is changing lives, we have been astounded time and again by the young people we have met whose faith has not only taken root, but blossomed across the nation. They are proud to be Catholic, full of contagious energy and bent on changing their communities — and our world — for the better.

In the pages that follow, we will tell you the stories of optimistic young Catholics from Florida’s Gulf Coast to the shores of California who are on fire with faith. We will also share a fascinating conversation between Catholic Extension President, Father Jack Wall, and four youth and campus ministry leaders in the mission dioceses.

We hope to show you what we have witnessed: extraordinary young Catholics who make us believe that tomorrow will be better, and that the Catholic Church in America is on the verge of exciting times led by a strong and visionary generation committed to Christ’s call to “love one another as I have loved you.”

Please enjoy these stories, in pictures and in words, and rejoice with us for our future! ▶



STUDENTS SING AT the Florida State University
Catholic Student Union's Spirit Night.



YOUNG CATHOLICS COAST-TO-COAST

Father Jack Wall, President of Catholic Extension, recently convened a roundtable with four youth ministers to gain insight into the faith lives of young Catholics across America's most far-flung regions. The participants were from dioceses as diverse in landscape and experience as they were similar in spiritual richness. Join us for this fascinating discussion about the future of our faith.

FATHER JACK WALL: Tell us a little about yourself and how you came to work with young Catholics.

BROTHER CLINTON REED: I wasn't raised Catholic. I chose to go to a Catholic high school, and several people I befriended had a good faith life. The priest at the school reached out to me, and I decided to become baptized and enter into the Catholic faith.

I went to Boston University and met a wonderful Catholic community of students that was run by the religious community I am now a member of, The Brotherhood of Hope. It lit my heart on fire with love for Christ and this Church.

I know the incredible struggle it can be for youth these days when they are confronted with a culture that is entirely contrary to a Christian lifestyle. I believe the Lord wants us to change the world and if that's going to happen, a good place to begin is with the youth.

DAVID BALCH: I had some difficulties in my teenage years. My parents divorced, and then when I was 14, my stepdad died. I think not having that male influence in my life affected me.

I became a lawyer and thought that maybe if I made a lot of money, I would find happiness. That didn't work. I met a woman, and peace radiated out of her soul. I said to her, 'How do I get what you've got?' She invited me to church with her, and I finally found the peace I had been looking for.

I started doing prison ministry and then began working in juvenile facilities. We don't have good kids and bad kids. We have kids who we've reached and kids who we haven't. I love working with these kids. ►

OUR PARTICIPANTS



JESUS ABREGO, Director of the Office of Hispanic Ministry, Diocese of Beaumont, Texas



DAVID BALCH, Director of Youth Ministry, Sacred Heart Parish, Salinas, California, Diocese of Monterey, California



BROTHER CLINTON REED, Florida State University Catholic Student Union, Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, Florida



DOUG TOOKE, Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, Diocese of Helena, Montana



DOUG TOOKE: I found myself at Carroll College in Helena, Montana. I fell in love with the academic pursuit of theology. I thought it was amazing. You could ask questions and actually find answers. I got a glimpse into youth ministry, and I fell in love with it.

I think the reality of 21st century Catholicism is the need to evangelize, and I don't think anyone does that better than the young Church. I don't think anyone is as fearless and courageous to really preach Christ crucified as a 16-year-old heart. I want to be part of that.

JESUS ABREGO: I was born and raised in Mexico, and I grew up Catholic. As Mexicans, we don't differentiate between Church and culture — it goes together. When I moved to the States fresh out of college, I went to the only Spanish-speaking Catholic Church in town. They didn't have a youth group, so with the advice of the pastor I started one.

Currently, I am the Director of Hispanic Ministry — Hispanic youth ministry is under my office. I have a passion for ministry to these kids. They are brilliant. I've been doing this for 19 years now.

FR. WALL: Tell me about the young people with whom you work. What are their strengths and challenges?

BR. REED: I work in a college environment. Their zeal is phenomenal. They want to change the world. On top of that they have a grand vision, the capacity to think big.

Our communities have a lot of struggles, but these teens are determined to rise above it.

DAVID BALCH

Two challenges jump to mind. The first is, as much as young people "relate," they don't understand how to enter into authentic, deep relationships. Facebook and texting promotes superficial relationships.

The second is young people being raised without fathers. It is striking. Because they don't have a good relationship with their earthly father, who has either been very distant or was never in the picture, they have difficulty encountering a God who they can trust in their difficult times.

BALCH: My core ministry is high school, ages 14 to 18. We just started a middle school ministry, and I also oversee the young adults — people 18, 19, in their 20s.

The main challenge we have is heavy gang violence. Salinas is a city of 150,000. Last year we had 18 or 19 murders. There is a hopelessness that pervades the city and affects the way teens see life.

But against that backdrop, our teens have hope and are hungering for something real. When you show them church is encountering Christ — boom! Their hearts blaze up. Our communities have a lot of struggles, but these teens are determined to rise above it.

TOOKE: I generally work with young Catholics ranging from 6th grade through young adults.

We do a middle school program about helping the kids understand what it means to be a follower of Christ. There is a wisdom about the rural kid. These kids are driving trucks when they are 10. They are wise behind their years and can grasp the concept. ▶



NOTES FROM COAST-TO-COAST

Helena, Montana ~ DIOCESE OF HELENA



TOP: Alex Neu shares a laugh with Kelly Ruby, a youth minister. Neu, who was involved in the Diocese of Helena's Catholic Youth Rural Outreach (C.Y.R.O.) program in high school, has taken his spiritual commitment to Montana State University. He teaches weekly religious education classes and helps wherever he's needed. He says his volunteer work "helps me stay involved in my faith and give something back to a community that's invited me in wholeheartedly." **LEFT:** A member of the youth group at Holy Rosary Catholic Church listens to Neu discuss his experiences.

Although home to some of the most expansive and beautiful landscapes in our nation, the vast wilderness of western Montana and its mountainous

terrain create natural barriers that tend to isolate communities across the region – including the small youth groups scattered throughout the diocese. But innovative ministries like the Catholic Youth Coalition (CYC) are shortening distances and energizing young people across the state by creating opportunities for them to come together for leadership trainings, joint programs and meetings, and even a diocesan-wide annual youth convention.

The funds for these programs have come from Catholic Extension donors and define a youth ministry movement that is on fire with energy, enthusiasm and commitment to the Catholic faith. These programs are igniting change among a generation of young Catholics who are learning not to let anything stand in their way of coming together in communion with God and each other.

A challenge is competition for time and attention. Kids sometimes are consumed by their social life, their sports. They grab the one thing that brings them direction. We are in competition to make sure that people know that salvation is a priority.

ABREGO: When I first got to Beaumont, probably 5 percent of the population was Hispanic, and today we are close to 20 percent. We are dealing with a new reality of racial tension. People are very prejudiced against others they would call different. That's one of the challenges for us.

A few years ago, we realized that we were losing our kids to drugs when they were 12. Not only drugs, but sex. We have a big problem in the Hispanic community with pregnancy among adolescents. So, we started a program and are working with kids 12 and up, trying to avoid the gang activity, sex and drugs.

The spirituality of these kids is so rich. They have so much to offer. They really want to know God and share that with the rest of the community. That's the greatest gift we have.

FR. WALL: What are young Catholics teaching us? What can they teach the rest of the Church about living our faith? How are they shaping the future of the Church?



NOTES FROM COAST-TO-COAST

Beaumont, Texas ~ DIOCESE OF BEAUMONT

ABREGO: Whenever they get to know Christ, they want to share that with everybody. They come to Mass. They participate in the youth groups. At the largest Hispanic parish in the diocese, we have a weekly meeting with the young people involving more than 100 kids.

TOOKE: When young people have a powerful experience, they can articulate that in a way that's not alienating. It's 'Hey, this is what the Lord did to my heart, and I want you to know that because I want your heart to be changed, too.' That's the language of transformation.

BALCH: Fearlessness is something that teens can teach the Church. They are used to challenging boundaries. They are not going to be told who they should be. If something seems unauthentic to them, they will pipe up. They don't like the status quo, and they are looking for something deeper. And they are not afraid to keep searching until they find it.

BR. REED: We need a generation of martyrs who are willing and ready to witness to their faith in the midst of culture that is very antithetical to the Christian lifestyle — young Catholics who are willing to say, 'There is an objective truth that's worth offering my life to, and this truth is Christ who loves me beyond what I can conceive or perceive. That's worth fighting for.' ►



TOP: Like many of his peers, Jonathan Camargo has emerged as a Catholic leader through the diocese's Hispanic youth program. Here, he encourages other young people at Cristo Rey Parish to ask themselves, "Que tipo de Catolico eres?" Or, "What kind of Catholic are you?"

ABOVE: A former participant in the program, Fatima Burgueno is now the coordinator for Hispanic Youth & Young Adults with the diocese. She says the success of the ministry is evident by the growing numbers of participants and their involvement in ministry activities.

Traveling through East Texas, we were invited to go to a Hispanic youth ministry meeting in the Diocese of Beaumont. One of the young people attending, Jonathan Camargo, stood up and challenged his peers by asking, "What kind of Catholic are you?"

The responses were wide-ranging and compelling, but what was most important was that he forced the question. He wanted to encourage his peers to think about their faith.

This kind of bold leadership has become common among the Hispanic youth in the diocese. It's a result of the unique "Pastoral Juvenil Hispana" ministry, supported by Catholic Extension donors, who have committed more than \$250,000 to the diocese's youth and campus ministries since 1973.

Kids enter the first of the program's three phases at the age of 12. By the time they graduate from high school, they have begun to take the initiative to lead their own meetings and create or run their own ministries. Like Jonathan, they are coming to understand their important role in the Church — and to embrace it.



NOTES FROM COAST-TO-COAST

Florida State University ~ DIOCESE OF PENSACOLA-TALLAHASSEE



STUDENTS LINE UP outside FSU's Catholic Student Center (CSU) for the 2010 CSU Spirit Night that kicks off the school year.

On a weekday evening, a line stretches out the doors of Florida State University's Catholic Student Union (CSU) as students patiently wait for the first Spirit Night of the school year to begin.

It is one of many extremely popular CSU events, and it's a youth ministry program to which Catholic Extension's donors have given more than \$370,000 in operational support since 1978. The result? Today, CSU is the second-largest student group on the university's 40,000-student campus, a testimony to the power of campus ministry. An average of 70 students attends daily Mass.



The remarkable impact extends beyond the college, located in the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee. Thanks to support from Catholic Extension, the five Brothers of Hope who lead Florida State's CSU have helped numerous students pursue leadership roles within the Church. CSU has produced 36 graduates who are now lay leaders in the Church. Additionally, 27 students have gone on to pursue vocations in priesthood and religious life. Of the three men ordained to the priesthood this past year in the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, two are former CSU participants.

BROTHER JASON ZINK of The Brotherhood of Hope leads Spirit Night.



FR. WALL: Are there things in the Gospel that you find yourself trying to express to young people?

BR. REED: The Lord wants a personal relationship with each of us, and this relationship is the only thing that will ultimately satisfy the deepest desires of one's heart. The Gospel is infused with this. That's followed by the inseparable reality that, once we encounter Christ, we can come to understand the beauty of his Church through the sacraments, her traditions and the Scriptures.

BALCH: We talk a lot about Romans chapter eight, 'You are adopted as sons and daughters of the living God and nothing can separate that from you.' The teens right now still have this feeling of, 'Well, okay, God loves me, but if I screw up, is he going to stop loving me?' No! God's love is unconditional!

Also, Thessalonians 4:13, 'We do not grieve as those who have no hope.' In our town, there is a lot of darkness. A girl came to me whose friend had just been killed from gang violence. While she was in the church, another one of her friends was killed. Yet she has hope that there is light in the darkness. That theme that light is calling you resonates with these teens.

ABREGO: The message of Our Lady of Guadalupe is alive among these kids. When Guadalupe appeared to an Indian, the conquerors had taken everything away from him — his land, his language, his food, his God. It really resonates. They identify themselves with Juan Diego, and they start searching. Mary can unite the rich and the poor, educating them. She is also the mother figure that speaks to our heart.

Young people are finding their own paths. Our job is to walk with them on the road and meet them where they are.

DOUG TOOKE

TOOKE: Luke 24:13-35, the Road to Emmaus. Young people are finding their own paths. Our job is to walk with them on the road and meet them where they are.

The other is John 10:10, 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.' Just to teach young people that they are not complete until they are complete in Christ — that the longings of your heart will not be satisfied until these pieces are in place. I love that.

FR. WALL: What would you like to say to our donors that would encourage them to be supportive of youth and youth ministry? What part can they play?

BR. REED: Their generosity is allowing the Gospel to be preached to the ends of the earth and in places where there are no resources. Their support is raising up leaders who are changing the world through their Catholic faith. Their prayerful support is very welcomed and appreciated.

BALCH: With evangelization today, these kids are so tech savvy. If we aren't meeting them in a tech savvy way, they are going to tune it out. But, unfortunately, that's expensive. Another huge thing for us is World Youth Day. I'm taking 30 kids. They can't afford it, but I know when they

get exposed to the World Church, they are going to come back on fire. They are going to see a new definition of peace and love, and bring it back to the community.

ABREGO: Any culture that invests in young people is really investing in the future. Our kids are the future — not only of the Church, but of this great country. So I thank these great people for their vision for the future.

TOOKE: It's impossible not to say thank you to donors for so many unbelievable blessings. ■

“ Young people, the Church depends on you!
She needs your lively faith, your creative charity
and the energy of your hope. Your presence renews,
rejuvenates and gives new energy to the Church.

— POPE BENEDICT XVI FOR WORLD YOUTH DAY 2011

\$2 million

in Catholic Extension funding supported
ministries and programs for children,
teens and young adults last year

84%

of young Catholics report their faith
is important in their lives

76%

of young Catholics plan to remain
Catholic into adulthood

A group of young women are shown in a crowd, many of whom are clapping and smiling. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the individuals in the foreground. The overall atmosphere is one of excitement and celebration.

50

mission dioceses receive Catholic Extension funding for youth ministry

BY THE
NUMBERS

74%

of young Catholics are interested in learning more about their faith

58

college campus ministries are supported by Catholic Extension

83

grants for youth ministry were provided by Catholic Extension in the last year

SOURCES:

Catholic Extension

*National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry's
National Study of Youth and Religion*



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