



VOCATION CORNER

Take the next step toward Christ boldly

What a joy it is to be right in the middle of first Communion season! This time of the year always brings a smile to my face as the children manifest emotions of excitement at receiving our Lord in the Eucharist.

At the very same time however, many of them also have a sense of nervousness as they step out to try something new for the first time. In light of these experiences, I think that there are two things that we ought to consider.

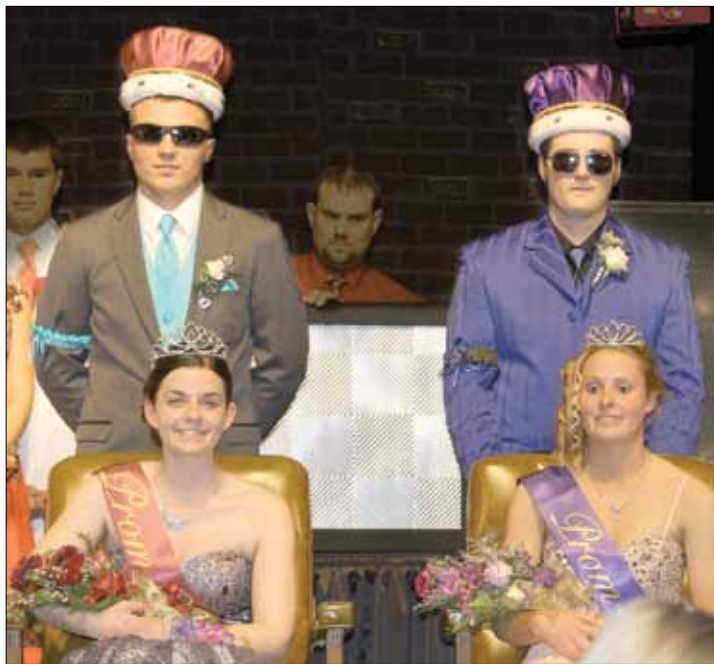
The first is that we ought to ask ourselves if we still have the same joy and excitement whenever we receive the Eucharist today, as we did when we received him for the first time. If not, we need to remember that it's not as if he's changed or as if he's any less present now than he was then. Let us ask Christ for a renewed wonder and excitement each time that we receive this gift.

The second consideration that I offer is this: These children experience excitement and nervousness in carrying out something that they clearly know God is calling them to. So too each of us may experience nervousness when we consider following God's voice on the level of a vocation. I say this because it is important to not shy away for God's plan simply because it makes us a little nervous. In the end, all of the kids agreed that there was nothing to really be nervous about. So today, even if you are a bit nervous, step forward and boldly take the next step towards wherever you feel that God is calling you.

— Father Keith Romke, Diocesan Director of Vocations
Write to him at kromke@rockforddiocese.org.



(Photos provided)



Prom courts

On the prom court at Marian Central Catholic High School in Woodstock are (front, from left) Abigail Waters, Mary Gende, Larissa Urban, Catherine Meyn, Kenzie Mocogni, Rachel Melchionna, (back) Steven Wember, Shane Kirwan, Oliver Rost, Patrick Majzner, Patrick McCabe, and Michael Lyons. They were elected April 29, by Marian's junior class voted for Prom court. Kenzie Mocogni and Michael Lyons were crowned queen and king at Prom 2014 "Glitz N Glam" Friday, May 2, at The Grand Geneva, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

LEFT: Prom Court 2014 at Aquin Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School in Freeport were (left) King Blake Fontana and Queen Jenny Dougherty and (right) Prince Kolton Kramer and Princess Dani Bald. Aquin's prom was held May 2 in the high school auditorium.



(Photo provided)

Young men of St. Mary Parish in Sterling help Father Adalberto Sanchez, parochial vicar, reenact the Last Supper in the church on Holy Thursday, April 17.

Marmion sophomores win in state radon video contest

Marmion Academy sophomores, Christian Surtz of Batavia and Harrison Kearby of Aurora, took third place in the 2014 Illinois Emergency Management Agency's (IEMA) Radon Networking Day Video Contest for their short PSA video "In Your Own Home."

The IEMA Radon Networking Day was a one-day radon workshop held in Springfield, April 16.

Surtz's and Kearby's video was selected from 139 one-minute YouTube videos that challenged students to use their creativity to increase awareness about the hazards of radon gas. The contest was sponsored by the IEMA and the American Lung Association in Illinois (ALA-IL).

Surtz and Kearby won a \$500 prize plus \$100 for Marmion Academy.

The prize money for all winners was provided by the ALA-IL.



(Photo provided)

RIGHT: "In Your Own Home," a video by Marmion Academy sophomores, took third place in a state contest. Watch the video at Marmion's website, marmion.org) or Marmion Academy's Facebook page.

Watch



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Batavia student named Newman Civic Fellow

DUBUQUE, Iowa—Ben Minnis of Batavia, a public relations major at Loras College, recently received the Newman Civic Fellows Award.

Newman Civic Fellows Awards are intended to honor the leadership legacy of Frank Newman by prioritizing recognition for student leaders who:

- Go beyond direct service to seek long-term solutions for social issues.
- Inspire and engage others.
- Demonstrate the motivation and potential for effective and long-term civic engagement.

Minnis founded a student organization at Loras College called Breaking the Silence, which seeks to encourage his peers to become self-advocates for their own mental and physical health by changing



Ben Minnis

their habits to include getting adequate amounts of sleep, exercising regularly, eating healthy meals, getting enough sunlight exposure, building their own social support networks, and talking to a counselor when needed.

He organized an annual fundraiser, Party in the Park, which is focused on raising awareness about mental health in his hometown of Batavia.

Through internship experiences at Loras with organizations in Dubuque, Iowa, such as Suicide Prevention Services, the Multicultural Family Center Teen Program

and Hills and Dales, he gained additional abilities to bring the message of hope and health through self-advocacy to his peers at Loras College who may also be struggling with their own mental health challenges.

“I am thrilled to be recognized for something I’m passionate about. I hope that being part of this national platform brings greater awareness to the importance of mental and physical health,” Minnis said.

The award is sponsored by KPMG, one of the largest professional services companies in assurance, tax and financial advisory, and consulting.

Colleges and universities that are members of Campus Compact around the country nominated outstanding students.



Q Why do we have a second reading before the Gospel at Mass on Sunday? And why is it only on Sunday?

A Great question! Did you know that 40-some years ago there wasn’t a second reading?

When the bishops gathered in Rome for the Second Vatican Council, which was convened to bring about a spiritual renewal of the church, one of the things that they desired was to give us an opportunity to hear more of the Word of God. They ended up declaring that “the treasures of the Bible are to be opened up more lavishly so that a richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God’s word. In this way the more significant part of the Sacred Scriptures will be read to the people over a fixed number of years.”

One of the ways in which they decided to enable us to hear more of the sacred Scriptures was to add in a second reading at Sunday Mass.

Another interesting detail is that prior to this council, readings from the Old Testament were almost never used on Sundays and very rarely during weekday Masses. So, not only did they decide to add in a second reading on Sundays, but they also made it so that a broader spectrum of readings is offered for our benefit.

This is truly a great thing because there are so many voices that come at us nowadays via television, the Internet, and social media, that it certainly can’t hurt to have a bit more of God’s Word filling our heads on Sundays.

As for why we don’t have a second reading at daily Mass, I would say that it is reserved to Sundays because it gives a greater sense of solemnity to the Mass. In just the same way, the Gloria and the Creed aren’t recited during daily Masses, because they give a greater sense of solemnity to Sunday, which we of course celebrate as a special occasion because it is our remembrance of the Lord’s resurrection which gives us new life.

From time to time however, throughout the week there may be special Masses known as “solemnities” which do in fact require that we present a second reading (and a Gloria and Creed as well). Examples of this would be the solemnity of Mary the Mother of God, of St. Joseph, of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the Annunciation.

These Masses, celebrated one a year, often fall on a weekday. When this occurs, because they are very important celebrations, the Church desires for them to be given greater solemnity (hence the title).

This month’s YO Father question is answered by Father Keith Romke. Send your questions to youngobserver@rockforddiocese.org.



(Photo provided)

Keys to the future

Thirteen members of Marian Central’s Key Club attended the Illinois and Eastern Iowa District Convention in Springfield, Feb. 28 to March 2, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel and Convention Center. Marian’s 140 member Key Club won first place for the club’s promotional video, created by senior Charles Shin. They also earned a second place trophy for the Single Service Award at the platinum level for their Marian Cares outreach project. During state level elections, Alison Dobbins was voted treasurer for the mighty I-I District. She is a Marian sophomore and the daughter of Tom and Jeanne Dobbins. Club members ended their weekend by attending mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Springfield.

Ridding area of invasive species earns Aurora scout Eagle rank

Scott Patrick Johnson, 18, recently earned the rank of Eagle Scout at a traditional court of honor.

His Eagle project involved clearing invasive species from a natural bog on property owned by Garfield Farm Museum, a site dedicated to conserving examples of life in Illinois during the mid-18th century.

The non-native plants had begun choking out native plants and drying the natural bog on which they were located.

With help from his crew, brush was marked, cut, and dragged to a large fire where it was

burned on site. Thanks to the help given by his crew, the rare, native plants grow unrestricted.

Scott began his scouting trail as a Tiger Cub in Pack 110 of St. Patrick Parish, earning many honors and serving in many posts on his way to Eagle.

Among his activities were taking part in some of scouting’s High Adventure trips including backpacking and canoeing Isle Royale in Lake Superior, backpacking Shawnee National Forest, and sea-kayaking the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

Scott plans to attend college in the fall. He also plans to re-

turn to scouting as a leader and remain active in the troop.

He is the son of Pam and Tom Johnson and brother of Eagle Scout Jeffrey Robert Johnson.

A senior at Aurora Central Catholic High School in Aurora, Scott is a member of the National Honor Society and is an Illinois State Scholar.

He is a member of the theater-technology club and served as head audio-engineer for all of the school’s plays, musicals, and other presentations. Scott also plays saxophone in the school’s jazz and advanced

bands and has participated in several jazz competitions.

In addition to these activities, Scott is active on St. Patrick Parish’s peer ministry leadership team. He attended Camp WOW three years and will be attending a fourth year this summer.

In his leisure time, Scott enjoys exploring the outdoors, cycling, tinkering with technology, getting together with friends, and studying cars. He has worked as a lifeguard for both Splash Country in Aurora and Norris Recreation Center in St. Charles.



Scott Johnson

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