

# Get ready for the

Oct. 26

2014  
CATHOLIC Youth  
**SUMMIT**  
"Blessed are the poor in spirit..."  
DIOCESE OF ROCKFORD  
Boylan Central Catholic High School  
Rockford



(Observer file photo by Margarita Mendoza)

Students take part in an impromptu greeting at the 2013 Catholic Youth Summit, which was held at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.

**Special Youth Summit section**



## Rosary grad Kaleigh Ellis urges young women to write to Pope Francis



(Photo provided)

**Kaleigh Ellis**

**A**urora resident Kaleigh Ellis has added her voice to a special project for Pope Francis.

A sophomore at St. Mary's College near the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, she is among a small group of Campus Ministry students who are organizing a national campaign to write letters to Pope Francis.

They're inviting Catholic women of the Millennial Generation (born between 1981-1995) to write him about their love for the Catholic tradition and ideas for how the Church might better reach their demographic.

The campaign is in response to

data that shows a significant drop in young women practicing the faith. (#VoicesOfYoungCatholicWomen)

Kaleigh is in the dual degree in engineering program, working toward a chemistry degree from St. Mary's and a degree in engineering from Notre Dame.

She is the daughter of Kevin and Deborah Ellis of Aurora, a parishioner of St. Peter Parish, and a graduate of Rosary High School. She was a 2011 recipient of the diocese's St. Timothy Award.

Over the summer, she traveled abroad in Spain.

## Marmion junior wins national video contest

**M**armion Academy junior, Christian Surtz of Batavia, is one of two national 16-18 year-old winners of the IP (Intellectual Property) video contest.

Each contestant created a 90-second video explaining the importance of the patent system and how a patented invention has had an effect on their lives or the life of an inventor. Surtz's video features Knuckle Lights™, hand-held lights designed for safe walking, running and cycling in the dark. Invented by Dan Hopkins, the lights helped Surtz, a cross country runner at Marmion, by allowing him to run in the dark, thereby freeing up daytime hours for many of his other activities.

"We were impressed with how thoughtfully this year's winners were able to draw a connection between themselves, the IP system, and the economy as a whole. We congratulate them on this achievement," said IPO Education Foundation President Louis Foreman.



(Photo provided)

Marmion Academy junior Christian Surtz demonstrates the value of Knuckle Lights™ in his award winning IP Video.

Surtz received a \$5,000 scholarship and will be honored at the IPO Education Foundation's Awards Dinner on Dec. 9, in Washington, D.C.

See Surtz's video at [marmion.org/surtz](http://marmion.org/surtz).

## Pope Francis challenges you

**I**n his World Youth Day message for this year, Pope Francis encourages young people to live the Beatitudes and selects three of them as themes for World Youth Day celebrations for 2014 through 2016.

He writes about the revolutionary power of the Beatitudes. He urges them to "have the courage to be happy," and to be "poor in spirit."

"In proclaiming the Beatitudes, Jesus asks us to follow Him and to travel with Him along the path of love, the path that alone leads

Continued on page 10

## VOCATION CORNER

### God's call

**O**ne question that I always ask in interviews with young men who are desiring to enter the seminary is simply: "Why do you feel that God is calling you to be a priest?" The answers are usually great and can in fact be pretty inspiring.

The thing that impresses me is that the answers normally don't stop at: "Well, I think it would be fun, or, because I want to help people, or, because it make sense." The answers go beyond this and truly touch upon the fact that they feel called by God to this particular life.

They will say things like "When I pray about it (and thus when I talk to God about it) I can sense a deep tug on my heart," or, "Everything else that I've tried leaves me empty, so I'm left to conclude that God is drawing me subtly towards a deeper union with Himself."

**All** of us have vocations, either to priesthood, religious life, marriage or a dedicated single life. And **all** of us need to do more than simply sit down and think about what we want to do with our lives. We need to pray and to ask God to reveal His plan to us. This is powerful and effective because God loves us and wants for us to be joyful and fulfilled!

When I'm asked why I'm a priest, I can smile and say: because God has willed it and I desire nothing more than to fulfill His plan, because I know it will be best for both of us.

If someone asks you why you do what you do, or, why you are what you are, what answer will you give?

— Father Keith Romke,  
Diocesan Director of Vocations

Write to him at [kromke@rockforddiocese.org](mailto:kromke@rockforddiocese.org).



(Observer file photo by Sharon Boehlefeld)

## October is rosary month

Say a decade a day of the rosary with Bishop David Malloy. Go to <http://observer.rockforddiocese.org/decade-a-day>.

# YO FATHER

**Q** I'm going to the Youth Summit with my parish youth group. I didn't go last year, so I'm wondering what it will do for me? What am I supposed to get out of it?

**A** This year's diocesan youth summit is going to be great! Last year over 1,400 teens and adult leaders encountered the Lord in a powerful way through prayer, talks, and inspiring and moving music.

This year we expect even bigger things as the number of participants has climbed higher and higher

as registration forms come piling in! For starters, this means that there will be even more energy and excitement buzzing all throughout the venue.

**So, why should you come? Because it's an opportunity to encounter the Lord.**

Throughout the day there will be talks with topics that are relevant to your lives as they are today. I'll go out on a limb and say that at some moments you'll be thinking that the speakers are talking directly to you. You might even think that your best friend went up to one of the speakers and told them your whole life story because of how pertinent their words will be to your life.

Bishop Malloy will be celebrating Mass, which I believe is an opportunity to really try to enter into the Mass in a way that you never have before. How often do you stop to think about how profound and beautiful it is that God Himself enters into your being at Mass each and every week (or at least that you are invited

to experience this each and every week — I hope you take God up on the offer **every** week!)

There will be an opportunity to go to confession, which may seem scary and daunting, but in reality is an awesome opportunity. There will be plenty of priests, who know just how difficult life can be at your age, and they will be ready to help lift heavy burdens off of your shoulders.

Finally the day culminates with a very moving and powerful session of eucharistic adoration. This final experience involves an opportunity to spend time with our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament. Jesus will truly be present in the host, and while there is music fueling and guiding our prayer, the priest will be bringing Jesus throughout the aisles so that you can experience Jesus drawing close to you, which is in fact a reminder that Jesus draws close to you whenever you call out His name in prayer.

So, hopefully that gives you a few ideas as to why

you should be at the youth summit!

**The next question that often comes up is: "What do I do after the summit?"**

You see, often people get very excited at the summit and then feel their fervor taper off after they get home and don't have a thousand-plus other teens singing with them about God's love on a daily basis. This would pertain to many other retreat experiences as well.

I'd say that there are a couple of things to do.

The first would be to frequently recall the peace, or joy, or whatever it was that lit a fire within you at the event. With this recollection in mind, simply remind yourself how real it was at the time, and remember that although the emotion may not currently be present, that the God who allowed you to experience His love in a new way on that day does not take away His love. That love is just as real at home as it would have been at the summit.

Then, try to enter into that moment and to simply dwell with God in that. Try to find rest for your heart with God in prayer.

The second thing that you can do is to get more involved at your parish. Take advantage of opportunities that your youth group has. Reach out to other teens at your parish and try to get to know them.

All of this points to establishing a group of friends that you can talk about God and the faith with. It is crucial that we all have friends with whom we can share our beliefs and who can support us in our love of God.

Finally, you can make the decision to attend the next youth summit!

I hope and pray that you come to the summit, that you enjoy it, and that you continue to grow in your relationship with our good and loving God!

*This month's YO Father question is answered by Father Keith Romke. Send your questions to [youngobserver@rockforddiocese.org](mailto:youngobserver@rockforddiocese.org).*



## YOUNG OBSERVER

# 2014 CATHOLIC Youth SUMMIT

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit..."*  
DIOCESE OF ROCKFORD

# Loving my faith, living my faith

*'As a way of accompanying our journey together, for the next three years I would like to reflect with you on the Beatitudes found in the Gospel of St. Matthew (5:1-12). This year we will begin by reflecting on the first Beatitude: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:3). For 2015 I suggest: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Mt 5:8). Then, in 2016, our theme will be: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Mt 5:7).*

— Pope Francis in his message for World Youth Day 2014



Pope Francis gives a thumbs up as he greets the crowd at the 2013 World Youth Day welcoming ceremony in Rio de Janeiro. Pope Francis announced the themes for the next three World Youth Day celebrations in his message for World Youth Day 2014. The Rockford Diocese is centering its youth summit on this year's theme.

**Oct. 26**

**It's all at Boylan Central Catholic High School**

*4000 St. Francis Dr., Rockford, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.*



(Diocesan archive photo)

### Mass with Bishop Malloy

11 a.m.



(Observer file photo)

### Lunch

Noon

### Snacks

3 p.m.



(Observer file photo)

### Confessions

Beginning at 12:30 p.m.

### Adoration

4 p.m.



(Observer file photo)

### Q&A with Bishop Malloy

1 p.m.



(Observer file photo)

### Music by Paul Vogrinc

All day long

Paul is music director of Arise Ministries and a worship leader with a passion for leading others closer to Christ through music. He and his wife live in Rockford with their three children.



(Observer file photo)

### Break out sessions

2 p.m.

### Father Keith Romke

Father Romke was ordained a priest in May of 2011. Since then he has served at Holy Cross Parish in Batavia and St. Bridget Parish in Loves Park. He is also the diocesan director of vocations. His favorite thing to do is to share his

love of Christ with others so that they too can be transformed and experience the joy and peace that can only come from God. He also writes Vocations Corner.



(Observer file photo)

### Kassandra Salgado

Kassandra believes it is important to "set the world on fire" by inspiring others to live out their Catholic faith. In addition to being a "soldier of Christ," she enjoys target shooting, archery, and participating in and teaching mixed martial arts. She's also an adult fitness coach. She is finishing her degree in Family and Individual Development at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.



(Observer file photo)

At the summit post selfies, ask questions, share your faith at

## #DORYS2014



(Observer file photo)



(Photo provided)

### Emcee Miles Foley

9:45 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Miles is a youth minister, teacher of the faith and dynamic Catholic presenter who will serve as emcee for the day. Miles graduated from Franciscan University and has a master's degree in pastoral theology from the Augustine Institute. He currently works for Lighthouse Catholic Media.



(Photo provided)

Keynote Speaker

### Rich Curran

10:15 a.m., 3:15 p.m.

Rich is a nationally known Catholic speaker who addresses over 50,000 teens and adults each year. Using humor, stories and specific action steps, Rich invites and inspires you to embrace and cherish your Catholic faith within the context of our modern world. Recognized for his vast experience and expertise, Rich was one of the top 100 leading professionals in Catholic formation invited to attend the National Symposium on Adolescent Catechesis funded by the Lilly Foundation in 2008. Rich is best known by his titles — father, husband, disciple, and itinerant preacher.

# Watch



# Real Faith TV

sundays at 6 a.m. on WREX-TV, Channel 13 in Rockford.

too early? Catch it on the Web at [www.realfaithtv.com](http://www.realfaithtv.com)

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(Photo provided)

Twenty-three seniors from Marmion Academy were commissioned extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist at the Marmion Abbey Church in Aurora. Ten seniors were commissioned at an all-school Mass on Sept. 18 and the others were commissioned at the Sunday Mass on Sept. 21. They are (not in photographic order) Noel Abraham, Paul Bancroft, Thomas Boland, Jack Cason, Reilly Dougherty, Benjamin Freda, Daniel Garza, Andrew Glanville, Trevor Jones, Russell Joyce, Samuel Liesen, Brodie Malatt, Timothy Mason, Colten Renier, Sharbel Romanos, Michael Seeman, Thomas Sieben, Robert Stephens, Blake Turcich, Conroy Unruh, Alex Vandenberg (not pictured), Anthony Wegman, and Patrick Zolfo.

## Young Observer is looking for your stories of faith

If you are a high school or college student who is interested in sharing your faith journey, tell us in about 250 words. Share your experience at the youth summit. Write about how you live your faith every day. Talk about what being Catholic means *to you*.

Send your essay and a photo of yourself (from the youth summit, if you want) to [youngobserver@rockforddiocese.org](mailto:youngobserver@rockforddiocese.org). Put "My Catholic Life" in the subject line. Be sure to include your age, phone number (not for publication), school, parish and town.

*"Believing in God, knowing Jesus, praying and going to Mass. ... That's what makes us different, that's what helps us see the world differently, through Jesus' eyes,"*

— Trenton, New Jersey, Bishop David M. O'Connell at a youth Mass

## Pope Francis challenges you

From page 7

to eternal life," he writes. "It is not an easy journey, yet the Lord promises us His grace and He never abandons us. ... But if we open the door to Jesus and allow Him to be part of our lives, if we share our joys and sorrows with Him, then we will experience the peace and joy that only God, who is infinite love, can give.

"The Beatitudes of Jesus are new and revolutionary," Pope Francis continues. "They present a model of happiness contrary to what is usually communicated by the media and by the prevailing wisdom. ... Jesus challenges us, young friends, to take seriously His approach to life and to decide which path is right for us and leads to true joy. This is the great challenge of faith. ... If you too are able to say 'yes' to Jesus, your lives will become both meaningful and fruitful.

"First of all, try to be *free with regard to material things*. ... Second, if we are to live by this Beatitude, all of us need to experience a conversion in the way we see the poor. ... (Third) They have *much to offer us and to teach us*," he writes. "The poor can teach us much about humility and trust in God."



(Photo provided)

Young people from St. Rita of Cascia Parish in Aurora attended the Steubenville North Youth Conference in Rochester, Minnesota, last summer. The weekend included inspirational talks, music and song, celebration of the Eucharist, Adoration, and opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation throughout the weekend. People from St. Rita who attended were (back, from left) Daniela Martinez, Samantha Negro, Susan Monroy, Tina R Fubio, Siobhan Midgley, Rafael Barraza, Miguel Sanchez, Karina Sanchez, chaperone Julie Thomas, (front) Carlos Villarreal, Alexis Thomas, Nathan Colwell, chaperone Joe Beary, group leader Mary George, and Andrea Tellez.

## YO on the record

By CHARLIE MARTIN | CNS

Lights Bokan, a Canadian indie artist, has had quite a career and she's only 27.

She has lived all over the world, legally changed her name to "Lights" (a play on her maiden name Poxleitner) and received numerous honors, including Canadian "Pop Album of the Year." In her current hit, "Up We Go," Lights' full-of-energy, upbeat sound gives this single a rising sense of hope.

Her song encourages us to start rebuilding our lives, even if we're in a low place. In the words of the song's character, "it's been a hard year and I only know from down this low, it's only up we go, up we go."

She is right. We can only establish a new beginning right from where we are, no matter what the situation. If you are ready to start again in a new direction, consider making some hard but necessary changes.

First, close the door. Often, to start in a new direction, it is necessary to move beyond previous situations. It may be painful to give up on what you hoped to achieve, but if the time has passed, or you have run out of options, let go. Trust that something new and even better awaits you.

Also, learn to prepare.

**Little is gained in life by repeating the past and expecting a different outcome.**

Mistakes are just that, but they are also teachers. Observe carefully what went wrong in your past efforts. Let go of any self-judgment or criticism about what occurred and have faith that you have learned from the past.

With more preparation and insight, you are ready to start again in a new direction.

## Up we go

Sung by Lights  
© 2014 Universal, Warner Records



(Photo/music.iamlights.com)

Here, in a familiar place  
We got our heads down  
And we pretend it's  
'cause the night  
Is dark, and running out  
of space  
For us to run around  
But it's a dead end and  
money's tight  
And it's been a long time  
of this  
Something's got to give

Refrain:

Everyone here is ready  
to go  
It's been a hard year with  
nothing to show  
From down this road  
It's only on we go, on

we go  
Everyone here is  
ready to go  
It's been a hard year  
and I only know  
From down this low  
It's only up we go, up  
we go

Let's get on another  
flight  
Maybe set out to sea  
Kick it up and shake our  
fist at it  
'Cause death is harder to  
come by  
Than it is to breathe  
When you got to make a  
break for it  
'Cause it's been a long

time of this  
Something's got to give  
(Repeat refrain.)

Nothing gives easy  
Easy gives nothing  
I'm just trying to keep  
income coming in  
Dawn is bound to break  
When the night is done  
Always darker days  
before brighter ones  
(Repeat refrain.)

Put your preparation into a specific plan. Take what you have learned and see how your lessons apply to what comes next. For example, if you face a failed relationship, but the dream of enduring love still inspires you, then open yourself to how to meet new people, not necessarily for romance, but just to form new caring connections.

Consider how the mistakes made in past relationships can be avoided in the future. If helpful, work with a professional guide to see how new behaviors or attitudes can lead you to more successful relationships.

**Whatever your goal, form a plan filled with**

### specific steps.

Keep nurturing yourself with a vision of those opportunities that uplift your spirit, even if they are not what you were originally looking for.

For example, if you really wanted to be a physician but continued to face rejection letters from medical schools, consider alternative ways to achieve your goal to serve others through medicine. Investigate other programs, even if they won't turn you into a doctor.

**Don't settle for believing that there is no path to your goal. Be creative.**

Also, gather allies. Few of us achieve much in life with the support of others. Reach out to those who can share your positive vision.

Avoid naysayers, but if someone with creative and caring criticism believes that you have overlooked some gaps, listen attentively. Such individuals are not being negative, just perceptive.

Fill your life with belief, including with individuals who believe in you.

**Look for God's purpose for your life.**

Each of us comes into this world with purpose for what we can give to others. Following such a purpose leads to lasting satisfaction and meaning. Even when you're feeling really low, there is a way up.

Failure, disappointment and loss do not erode God's purpose. Start from where you are, ask God to show you the way and be ready to "up we go."