

# YO FATHER

# YOUNG OBSERVER

# Fe at

**Q** I've heard the youth summit was a lot of fun in the past, I'm planning on attending this year for the first time, but I'm a bit nervous because I've never been to a big youth gathering before. What can I expect?

**A** Let me begin by saying that I am SO glad you are coming and I think you're in for a treat.

The number one reason why I say that is because just like in the past we've invited someone very special to play the biggest role in the day!

**His name is ... Jesus!**

My favorite part of the youth summit is there are 2,000 people gathered together for Mass and adoration and Jesus, **God Himself**, wants to be there with all of us and He will, in fact, come there because He loves us and values us.

There will also be fun and inspiring talks about how God loves us with His great mercy, meaning He never stops loving us even when we make mistakes (which we all do. I make mistakes all the time!).

There will also be great music, food, games, and time to be with friends.

**I'm also so happy Bishop David Malloy will again be celebrating the Mass.**

He'll also be staying to chat with all of you during lunch and then to highlight the fun that will start back up after we've had a chance to eat.

I can't say what he'll be doing after lunch (it's a secret) but I know we're all excited about it and that you should be too!

It is such a gift to have a bishop who wants to spend time with you, to know you, and to show you he cares and he's dedicated to making sure you know the Lord in a deep way!

So too there will be more than 25 priests — **that's a lot of priests!** — present to hear confessions and to dispense God's limitless mercy for you!

In other words, a really cool part of the youth summit is you can walk in dragging the burden of sin on your back, and you can walk out refreshed and renewed after exchanging that burden for the presence of the Lord deep in your heart.

An extra bonus in your coming is you give me the opportunity to see you! So let me say thanks in advance!

I think the biggest fear a lot of first-timers have is that it's easy to think we're just going to sit around, sing "Kumbaya My Lord," and tell each other about our feelings.

Well, I'm happy to tell you this idea is **not** what is going to happen.

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



(Observer file photos) Chat with Bishop David Malloy after Mass and during lunch.

## Live your faith

9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Rock Valley College in Rockford



Lunch on the lawn.



Let Father Kyle Manno fire you up.



Refresh your soul at confession.



Sing along with Paul Vogrinc and his band.



## Aquin Selects Homecoming Court

Aquin Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School in Freeport selected 10 seniors for this year's homecoming court. They are (from left, front) Ana Awender, Suyeon Youn, Mallory Furlong, Katya Awender, Griffin Koester, (back) Drew Broge, Caleb Stovall, Patrick Gustafson, Carter Budenz, Kory Korosec. Griffin Koester was elected queen and Drew Broge, king.

## VOCATION CORNER

# Finding God's plan whi

**A**s a priest I have an opportunity to visit people in the hospital and in rehab facilities quite often.

And, as you might imagine, the outlook and the spirits of the individuals whom I meet run the spectrum. Some of them are ready to give up hope whereas others have smiles on their faces no matter what it is that they are enduring.

From time to time I am so blessed by the opportunity to

be inspired myself and to be reminded of God's goodness and God's plan through the words of those who I go to visit. Within the past few weeks I've had two such instances.

The first came from a young lady who very unexpectedly was diagnosed with a painful disease that has her in and out of the hospital. She is one of the most positive people that I've ever met. She never complains and she repeatedly says that she knows that God has a plan, she

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# el God's mercy

the Rockford Diocese annual Youth Summit Oct. 30



Spend time with Jesus.



(Photo provided)

Be inspired by Connor Flanagan, a musician and youth minister. He has spent the last several years traveling the country leading retreats and speaking at both youth conferences and parish events. He uses personal testimony to show how everyone has what he calls a "God-Sized Hole" within our own hearts.



## le carrying the cross

knows God is good, and she knows God is going to get her through this. Her strength, which comes from Christ, inspires me to have a deeper faith that God knows exactly what He is doing in each of our lives!

The second inspiration came from a woman (who is also one of the most positive people that I've ever met!) who is in a rehab facility and isn't sure when she'll be released to return home. Of course she wants to be home, but she's sure if she has to stay

longer it's because God is calling her to continue to be encouraging and to bring hope and positivity to the other people who are there with her!

Both of them are inspiring because they know that God is at work even when things are tough. So never give up hope and know that God is with you and that He has a beautiful plan for you!

— Father Keith Romke, Diocesan Director of Vocations, [kromke@rockforddiocese.org](mailto:kromke@rockforddiocese.org).



(Photo provided)

### Marian Selects Homecoming Court

Nominated for king and queen of Woodstock's Marian Central Catholic High School homecoming court this year are (seated from left) Morgan Litterer, Kaylie Baader, Kelly Mink, Madeline Peters, Alexandria Weck, Karlie Blaz, (standing) Daniel Elder, Nicholas Edwards, Patrick Struttman, Davis Meyn, Jack Schneider, Jacob Noe.

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