



(Photo provided)

New students join Boylan NHS

Boylan Central Catholic High School in Rockford inducted members to the National Honor Society Nov. 3. Sixteen seniors were selected for membership by the faculty who based their evaluations on the candidates' scholarship, service, leadership, and character. New members are (front from left) Julianne Caliston, Mandi Steinhagen, Amy Englund, Anna Wojciechowski, Alison Kosek, (middle) Maraleen Ruiz, Anabel Nosek, Savannah Oseguera, Julia Paris, Linaya Wright, (back) Connor McGarry, Zach Couper, Andrew Summers, Alex Kaplanes, Emily Quinn, Austin Lombardi. Recently Boylan's and Belvidere North's National Honor Societies partnered with KCancer Baseball to raise awareness of the Be A Match Bone Marrow Registry. In the early fall, Boylan NHS hosted one of two annual blood drives and raised funds for disaster victims aided by the American Red Cross.



(CNS photo/Karen Callaway, Catholic New World)

Ike Ndolo, a Catholic music minister and worship leader (right) sings during Mass attended by thousands of middle school students Oct. 15 during the Holy Fire event in Chicago. More than 5,000 young people attended.

Holy Fire!

Work hard at faith says hip-hop artist

By Michelle Martin | Catholic News Service

A Catholic hip-hop artist told a crowd of youths gathered for Holy Fire in Chicago that they need to work as hard at their faith life as they do at sports or other pursuits.

Wearing a jersey with "believer" written across the back, Joe Melendrez said when he was little, he wanted Air Jordan shoes because he wanted to "be like Mike."

"Nobody ever told me I was too young to be like Michael Jordan," he told the cheering youth. "They said, 'Go for it.' It's the same with your faith.

"Chicago, it's time to stop saying, 'I'm too young to have faith.' Don't let anybody tell you you're too young."

More than 5,000 young people got the chance to dance and laugh and pray and worship, all in the context of deepening their faith, at Holy Fire at the UIC Pavilion arena on the west side of Chicago.

The first-time event featured faith-based music in genres from pop to hip-hop, complete with pounding bass and room for participants to dance in front of the stage.

Holy Fire took place Oct. 14 and was repeated Oct. 15 to accommodate the students.

Hosts from Brad Farmer and Gene Monteraselli — who together make up APeX Ministries — used juggling, comedy and the image of saints as spiritual superheroes to draw in participants.

"Here in October 2016, the miracles are still occurring," Farmer told the crowd Oct. 14. The saints, he said, "fully invited the Holy Spirit into their lives. That's how they activate their superpowers.

"To be a saint, you don't need to have an extra strand of DNA, you don't need to have a radioactive spider bite you. To be a saint is to be a human being full alive."

While Allison Lewis liked the APeX duo's juggling and jokes, classmate Madison Runaas said she liked the Oswald Brothers Band, who opened the day.

"No offense to religion teachers," Runaas said, "but religion class can be kind of boring. This is much better."

YOUNG OBSERVER

VOCATION CORNER

The importance of silence

Today's culture is very, very noisy, busy, chaotic, and fast-paced. Flashing lights and opportunities to get distracted are all around us.

The interesting thing is that many of these things that seem so good and keep us busy and engaged, do not in fact offer us any opportunity to truly be refreshed.

Rather, many things we turn to in our brief moments of down time in the midst of our busy schedules in fact only serve to tire us even more. This is compounded by the fact that this very cycle of busy-ness doesn't allow us the opportunity to step back and assess how much we need time to rest and to reflect.

In light of this, I want to propose that it can be tremendously fruitful to purposely and intentionally insert small periods of silence into your day.

These moments are, of course, perfect opportunities for prayer.

Moments to reach out to God for the purpose of connecting with Him can bring profound peace and a sense of calm and refreshment.

These moments are crucial to our lives (and to our sanity!) because they connect us to reality!

How often do we hurriedly go through our day, filling our time with mindless things, without taking a few moments time to reach out to truly connect with God?

All of us are called to be in relationship with Him for eternity, **that is our reality**, and yet we often fail to engage this fact throughout the day.

Make the effort to get the most value out of your free time by reaching out to the one who made you.

— Father Keith Romke, Diocesan Director of Vocations, kromke@rockforddiocese.org.

Aquin scholars honored

FREEPORT—Aquin Central Catholic Junior Senior High School, here, has recognized Griffin Koester and Drew Broge as this year's Daughters of the American Revolution and Sons of the American Revolution award recipients. The students were selected by their teachers and peers because they demonstrate qualities of dependability, service, leadership, and patriotism to a great degree in their homes, schools, and communities. Griffin is now eligible to write an essay and enter the DAR scholarship contest.

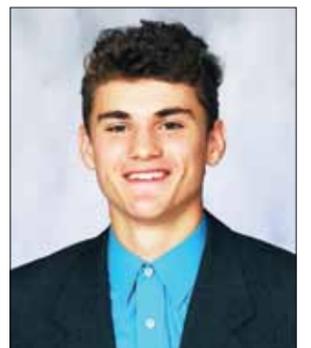
Patrick Gustafson has been selected as Aquin's Wendy's® High School Heisman® honoree. The scholarship was created by Wendy's founder Dave Thomas in 1994. Thomas dropped out of high school when he was 15 years old in order to work full-time and went on to become one of the most successful entrepreneurs in history, but at 61, he earned his GED. Since then, his foundation has awarded nearly \$2 million to encourage students to finish high school and attend college.



Griffin Koester



Drew Broge



Patrick Gustafson

(Photos provided)

Helping

IN INDIANA

The Rocked by God team from St. Patrick Parish in St. Charles traveled to Indiana for the *Grásta Dé!* rally in October.



(Photos provided)

St. Charles youth take their beliefs on the road



Ashley Conile (with raised arm), who was also a speaker, leads responses at the rally.

ST. CHARLES—On Oct. 16, 12 high school seniors and three college students from St. Patrick Parish in St. Charles traveled to Andrean High School in Merrillville, Ind., for the annual *Grásta Dé!* (Gaelic for “God’s Grace”) rally for middle school teens.

The rally is sponsored by the Diocese of Gary. More than 450 middle school teens participated in the rally.

This was the second time the group has been presenters at the annual conference. This year the Rocked by God Team led the music for the day, including the Mass, presented a skit and led the seventh-grade break-out session.

Team member Ashley Cornile gave a talk based upon Micah 6:8 in the break-out session.

The Rocked by God team is led by St. Patrick youth minister Mike Zak.



Middle schoolers gather in Merrillville, Ind., for *Grásta Dé!*

YO FATHER

Q Am I responsible for getting others to Heaven?

A **Yes!**
Let me repeat that.
Yes!

I truly think that this is the most emphatic response I’ve even given to a yes-or-no question in this column, and as you read it I want you to understand that this is a good and very exciting thing!

Frequently when people see the word “responsible” it tends to put them on edge a bit, because it means that something is expected of them. As human beings, we don’t like failing and as a result I think we tend to prefer not to have to be responsible for things!

The responsibility to get others to heaven is not something that we should fear but rather something that we should be happy about.

Allow me to explain: When we are baptized we become members of the Church which is the Body of Christ. St. Paul explains in 1 Cor 12 that a body is one although it has many parts and if one member of a body suffers, the rest of the body suffers with it.

If we think about this practically, we know that if our foot gets hurt badly, this would prevent us from walking. That would affect our exercise, which could have ramifications for our whole body.

Nothing is isolated.

Well, the same thing is true in the body of the Church. We are all integrally united through our baptism and are given a mission to strive to help others to reach our goal, which is heaven.

Now, someone may ask if this mission is limited to those who are baptized, because I said we become members of the Body through baptism. Although this may seem like a loophole, let me assure you it is not!

Jesus prayed at the end of the last supper that “they all may be one.” Jesus was praying for unity, because His desire is that all of humanity — every single person — be united as one and participate in His Church. Now, we of course are far from this in our world today, but this is what Christ longs for and as a result it is what we have to strive to carry out.

Although we are responsible for helping others, I think it can be helpful to view it as more of a mission.

Because the idea of mission, I believe, puts more focus on the journey and the efforts put in to achieve

a goal, whereas the idea of responsibility seem to place more weight on the completion of the goal itself.

I say that because everyone has free will, and we can try our best to lead others to heaven, but if they choose to reject our attempts to help them come to know the Lord, then it isn’t as if we’ve failed in our responsibility.

Our mission as Catholic Christians is to spread the good news of the Gospel, the news of God’s love for all and His desire to grant us His salvation. If we hold back this news and fail to spread it to all that we can, then it is possible that some people may never know what God longs to offer them.

So **Yes!** you do have a responsibility — or better yet, a mission — to lead others to heaven.

Or to put it another way, you have an opportunity to lead others to Christ and to help them to receive the greatest gift that the world has ever known.

So rejoice because you have in your possession the best gift ever. You’ve been given it in abundance. And your task is to give it away ceaselessly!

So get out there and start giving!

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

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