



VOCATION CORNER

God's choice (not yours)

Sometimes I hear young men and young women tell me that they are extremely open to a religious vocation...

The bottom line is that there isn't a single person in this world that's even deserving of communicating with God...

You don't get to decide that, God does! So open up your hearts to pray and ask Him where He is calling...

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



Q I couldn't go to Washington for the March for Life this year. What can I do to show my support?

A Great question, I was unable to attend too, and I was wondering the same thing myself, so I talked to the director of the LIFE Office in the diocese, Jennifer Collins, and here are some of the great suggestions that she came up with...

things you can do anytime.

First and foremost, we can never pray too much.

Now this of course is what you'd expect for a priest to say, and it doesn't really offer you all that much direction, so I'll go a bit deeper and get specific.

A great resource for prayers would be the "9 Days For Life" app that has been put out by the USCCB. It offers prayers, reflections, and ideas of things to do in order to make a difference in defense and the support of life!

Another great way to make a difference is to engage in some form of fasting.

This need not be extreme either! I'm just suggesting

Bishop Malloy answers students' questions at Newman Center in DeKalb

By SHARON BOEHLEFELD | Features Editor

When Bishop David Malloy drove to DeKalb, Jan. 14, he invited students to "ask me anything."

First, though, he shared a meal with them in the dining room of Christ the Teacher University Parish, the Newman Center to most who know it.

Then he told them about some of his concerns as bishop, especially for young people like those gathered at the Northern Illinois University parish.

He told them he worries about young people falling away from faith. He worries about their souls. He worries that they don't feel support when their faith is tested.

But he assured them the Church is there to help them through the tough moments they'll face in college, in life.

And he told them, "I heard laughter here. I heard normality." People of faith, he said, can be normal.

What did they want to know? Here's a sample.

Why force people to follow the faith instead of making them fall in love with it?

Bishop: We try to present ... not rules, like a book ... We have to feel a friendship with Jesus Christ, but we all know there are rules of friendship. You went home for a week and your best friend finds out from two other people. ... Your friend wonders, "What am I? Chopped liver?"



Alejandro Rivera (front) and Kevin Wilkins, NIU students



Sycamore High School students (from left) Claire Schroeder, Danielle Grum and Kyle Doty, joined Kevin Drendel of Indian Creek High School in Shabona for the dinner and conversation with Bishop Malloy.



Micah Pfundstein, missionary

'Ask me anything'

We can't do away with the rules and at the end of the day, when (Jesus asks) "Did you love me?" ... it's going to have to do with the rules of friendship. What is your spiritual life like as a priest, as a bishop?

Bishop: Spiritual life goes through cycles. ... like in a marriage ... there will come a day when you're 45 — can you imagine 70? — someday youthful beauty isn't there, but something else has grown. ... for priests it's kind of the same way. As a young priest, you're still learning how to pray. (Later) you get a feeling you've walked with the Lord. ... It's like a good stew. It kind of simmers itself.

How do you help friends who have lapsed? Can you invite them to come to Mass more?

Bishop: You're going to have to use your own smarts. Each one of your friends is going to be different. Some are touchy. You've got to go light with them. ... Pray about it. Look for opportunities. Pray about that and God will



Bishop David Malloy answers questions from a student at the Newman Center in DeKalb, Jan. 14.

help you. You might make a mistake but God sometimes uses our mistakes.

It does matter for us to be right with the Church.

Sometimes we need to let somebody know clearly that they're doing something that's not right.

It's a little like swimming in a stream ... that's going in the right direction.

Why did you become a priest?

Bishop: The "hound of heaven" ... started nipping a little. I got the feeling that I wasn't in the right place. I really started asking in prayer, "Where do you want me in life?"

It's all worth it. There are good days and bad — because life is real.

You should be having this conversation. If you're thinking about marriage, pray about it. Because it is a vocation. Ask the Lord to clarify your vision.

We are only happy when we're really trying to make our will mesh with His.



Johan Hernandez (front), a freshman philosophy major, attends Kishwaukee Community College.



Brianna Foley listens to a remark from Bishop Malloy.



Andrew Hubbard (right) is a senior industrial engineering major from St. Thomas the Apostle in Crystal Lake.

Huntley Scout finishes Eagle project

Eagle Scout candidate Ryan O'Sullivan of Boy Scout Troop 157 conceived the project for the creation of the Msgr. Steve Knox Flame of the Holy Spirit Fire Pit for St. Mary Parish in Huntley. The renovated fire pit was dedicated on Aug. 22.

The project meets one of many requirements to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout.

In the summer of 2013, the parish Youth Ministry built a brick fire pit with some temporary seating using left over bricks and cinder blocks from the Ministry Center.

In March 2014, Ryan proposed to Msgr. Knox, pastor, the idea of building an improved fire pit that offered permanent seating and a safer area to build

a fire. Msgr. Knox agreed and Ryan began doing some research.

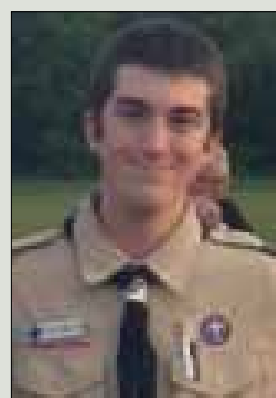
In April 2014, he contacted Phil Schleifer of Advantage 1 Landscaping and a former Boy Scout parent. Schleifer offered advice and support when the time came to plan the fire pit area and he also made a suggestion to visit Horizon Landscaping Design and Supply in Crystal Lake.

With his father, Knight Jerry O'Sullivan, Ryan went to Horizon Landscaping Design and Supply in Crystal Lake just to get some ideas. During the visit, the owner of Horizon Landscaping Design and Supply, Marcy Marks, offered to donate a new fire pit kit assembly, valued in excess of \$300. She later donated some retaining walls bricks and other

assistance. Menards in Carpentersville and Bakely Construction in Huntley also helped.

Ryan arranged to meet with Msgr. Knox at the end of May 2014 to present his finished project proposal and received approval.

With the help of Boy Scout Troop 152 Scout leaders, fellow Scouts, and members of Knights of Columbus Council 11666, Ryan's project was completed in a couple of weeks last summer.



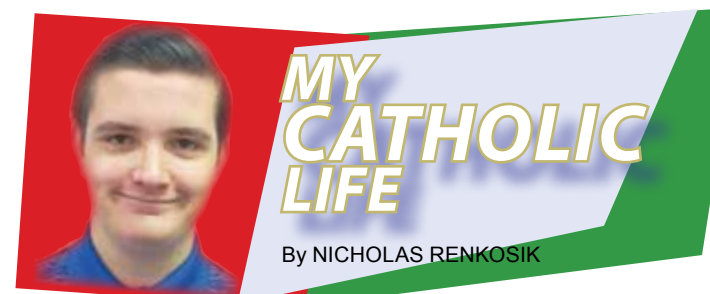
Ryan O'Sullivan

have played the piano for 11 years and the organ for three years.

I am thoroughly delighted to start accompanying Masses here at St. John the Baptist Parish in Johnsburg twice a month: one 4 p.m. Mass on Saturday and one Friday morning Mass. I currently play piano and organ for two other parishes on Sundays: St. Mary in Woodstock (my parish) and St. Patrick in Hartland.

My inspiration for serving the Lord goes back about 10 years. My family and I were part of St. Thomas the Apostle in Crystal Lake and we would routinely attend the 10:30 morning Mass on Sunday. We always

Share your faith stories: If you are a high school or college student who is interested in sharing your faith journey, tell us in about 250 words.



chose a pew near the piano and organ console. I remember admiring the pianists and organists who would play hymns beautifully weekend after weekend. Later in time, after we moved to Wonder Lake and music lessons, I finally decided to sign up to become

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an accompanist at my parish. I have been serving my parish for about a year now.

Other genres of music I enjoy playing, aside from sacred and liturgical, include classical, early jazz, ragtime, and silent film scores and selections.

Among my hobbies are collecting antiques, specifically clocks, antique sheet music, early phonograph records, typewriters and so on.

I am most pleased to become a part of the Music Ministry at St. John and I look forward to meeting many of you in the next weeks.

— Nicholas Renkosik is a sophomore who lives in Wonder Lake.

Put "My Catholic Life" in the subject line. Be sure to include your age, phone number (not for publication), school, parish and town. Send a digital photo, too.

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