



DIOCESAN YOUTH APOSTOLATE
ST. THOMAS SYROMALABAR DIOCESE OF CHICAGO



YOY

YEAR OF YOUTH
Newsletter

January 2017 | Issue 1

An Invitation to Year of Youth

"That **they** may be one, just as **We** are."

-John 17:11

Dear People of God,

What a blessing to embark together as one church into these first few days of our celebration of the Diocesan Year of Youth! Just as the Year of Mercy declared by Pope Francis was not limited to a few, **the Year of Youth is a call to ALL who are in our Diocese – young and old alike.** As such, this is not simply a time to focus on increasing numbers, or to conduct as many youth activities as possible. Rather, as in all seasons of the Church, this is a time in which we are each called to a deeper self-examination and a change of heart.

The vision that permeates this year is not limited to a 1 year agenda. It is a vision that challenges us to look at the Church as a living body of flesh, bones, and souls--not just as a building. We often go to great lengths to maintain and beautify the walls and ceilings in our parishes in the hope that they will last for years to come. But how well do we love and care for the souls inside of them?

This year calls us to examine how well we have shared the precious gift of faith that is so freely and undeservedly gifted to us. **We must learn to pass on this gift of faith in a manner that seeks to acknowledge each individual, to understand them, and to respond to their deepest longings instead of** assuming that we know what they need. We do this by humbling ourselves, genuinely listening, and actively investing in the lives of our younger peers, children and

grandchildren. We cannot simply rely on homilies and events for support; rather, we must become a community that continually journeys with each other in the search for truth, and Truth Himself.

To live in the spirit of this year, is to ask ourselves the following questions: Are we a church with vision? Or are we one that is satisfied with a mediocrity of self, others, and our community? Do we live out our call as Christians - to be peacemakers, voices of charity, evangelizers-- to be "other Christs?" Or do we content ourselves with subscribing to our personal idea of Christ? Are we investing in a legacy of faith that will outlast the foundations of our churches? It is in search of these answers that we strive to live lives of authenticity, by seeking Christ and our true selves in the Sacraments, silence, and reflection.

The start of every new year is an invitation to re-examine our priorities and relationships, and a challenge to live up to the highest standards we can set for ourselves. Sitting at the feet of Jesus, let us open our hearts to seek His voice in building the living Church. We pray that we, the earthly Body of Christ, embrace this journey toward greater union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus. What a joyous mission! May the intercession of Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati accompany us as we build God's Kingdom on earth.

In Christ's name.

Year of Youth kickoffs around the nation and from Italy



From top left to right: St. Thomas SyroMalabar Catholic Forane Church, Dallas, TX • St. Thomas SyroMalabar Catholic Church, Detroit, MI • Our Lady of Health SyroMalabar Catholic Church, Coral Springs, FL • Syro Seminarians praying the Year of Youth prayer, at the tomb of Blessed Giorgio, patron of Year of Youth

From bottom left to right: St. George SyroMalabar Catholic Church of Paterson, NJ • Infant Jesus Syro Malabar Sacramento, CA • St. Thomas SyroMalabar Catholic Forane Church, Somerset, NJ • St. Joseph SyroMalabar Catholic Forane Church, Houston, TX

Suggested Activities of the Month

For Youth...

1. Prayerfully examine your personal spiritual life and your spiritual goals for this upcoming year
2. Reach out to a youth coordinator/ regional or national team member, or email info@stthomasdya.org to learn more about YOY and how to get more involved
3. Have a conversation about Year of Youth with your pastor or another parishioner

For Adults...

1. Reflect upon your relationship with Christ and spiritual goals for this upcoming year
2. Have a conversation about Year of Youth with your family and recite the Year of Youth Prayer during family prayer
3. Offer a rosary for your family and the community at your parish/mission

For Achans...

1. In parish council, encourage representation by youth
2. Speak to another Achan about how they are celebrating Year of Youth at their parish/mission
3. Recite the Year of Youth Prayer with parishioners, every Sunday

For Kaikkarans, Parish Council members and other parish administration personnel...

1. Prayerfully examine how you could serve the youth and young adults of your parish/mission that they would love Christ and his Church.
2. Try a conversation with a few youth/young adults from your parish/mission and offer your help and support to their initiatives and projects.
3. Spend at least an hour in this month in silent prayer or adoration for the youth of your parish/mission.

Contact



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