

Employment | Site Map | Feedback

- [Bishop](#)
- [Cathedral](#)
- [Catholic Sun](#)
- [Diocesan Profiles](#)
- [Heritage](#)
- [Links](#)
- [Multimedia](#)
- [Offices](#)
- [Parishes](#)
- [Prayers](#)
- [Schools](#)
- [Vocations](#)

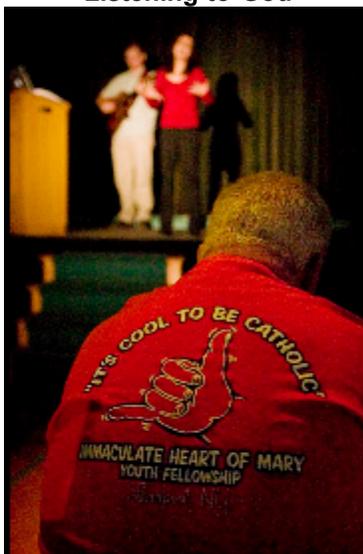
Search

Catholic Sun

Regional News: North / East / South / West
 Health Care / Local News / Youth / Sports / Vocation
[View Archives](#)

March 8-14, 2007
 VOL 126 NO. 9

Listening to God



Deacon John Woloszyn watches a performance during the FX Youth Rally

By Claudia Mathis/ SUN staff writer
 SUN photo(s) Paul Finch

Diocesan youths gather for FX (Follow Christ) Youth Rally

The gymnasium at St. Matthew's School in East Syracuse was filled to capacity on Saturday, March 3. Close to 500 high school aged boys and girls had come from all areas of the diocese to take part in the fifth annual FX Youth Rally. The theme of the rally was "Listen Up!" That theme was reflected in the activities throughout the day. The teens, which live in a culture that is frequently punctuated with noise, were encouraged to take time to listen to God.



Bonnie Charles, adult LIFE TEEN member at Holy Family Parish in Syracuse, attended the

What's New

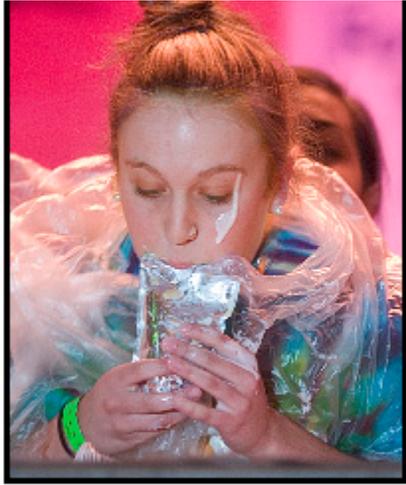
- [Bishops' Voter Guide \(10/08\)](#)
- [Register to Vote 2008 \(09/15\)](#)
- [Bp. Costello's Homily to Catholic Sch. Educators \(09/09\)](#)
- [Journey of Faith 2008 \(09/01\)](#)
- [Two New Principals Named \(07/22\) archives...](#)

Notices

- [Safe Environment Program](#)
 - [Victim Assistance](#)
 - [VIRTUS Online Registration](#)
 - [VIRTUS Training Schedule](#)
 - [PGC Facilitator Application](#)
 - [Rebuilding Faith and Trust](#)
 - [Journey of Faith 2008](#)
 - [Safe Environment Bulletin Blurbs](#)
 - [Vocation Blurbs 2007-08](#)
 - [2007 Central Admin financial statements](#)
 - [2007 Heritage Campaign financial statements](#)
- [more...](#)

Events

- [ATTENTION SEPARATED/DIVORCED: BRANCH OUT AND GROW](#)
 - [ATTENTION SEPARATED/DIVORCED: BRANCH OUT AND GROW](#)
 - [Separated/Divorced Healing Weekend](#)
 - [ATTENTION SEPARATED/DIVORCED: BRANCH OUT AND GROW](#)
 - [THE THIRD OPTION](#)
- [more...](#)



Jessica Hogle, front, and Jenna Ballard, behind her, from St. Mary's in Minoa during an ice breaker at the FX Rally for Youth

rally, along with 78 Holy Family confirmation students and 17 LIFE Teen members. It was the third time Charles had attended the rally and she was thankful for the opportunities the event offered the teens. "Here, they can experience the Holy Spirit in a deeper way and they can be introduced to the richness of our faith that they normally wouldn't get during a Sunday Mass," Charles said. Kim D'Alterio, a sophomore at West Genesee High School, came to the event with her Holy Family confirmation class. "I came because I need it for confirmation, but I would come anyway because it's fun and inspiring," said Kim. "I like the music and the opportunity to go

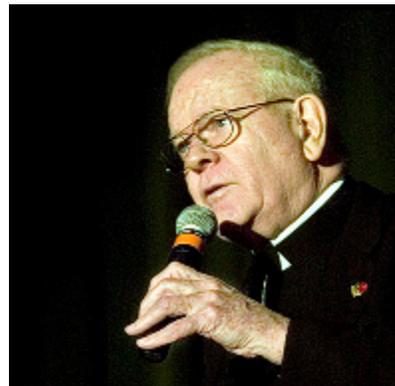
to confession during the rally — it's really hard for me to find time to go to confession at home."

Anxiously awaiting the program's start, some teens were meeting up with friends and others were tossing beach balls and balloons about the gym.

In the back of the gym, religious jewelry was offered for sale, along with CDs and sheet music from the featured music at the rally — the Mark Doman Band. A Respect Life table was also on site. Seminarian Chris Celentano served as emcee for the day and exuberantly opened the rally, encouraging the youth to participate in a game similar to the "The Price is Right" television program. The youths' participated enthusiastically. The game reinforced their listening skills. Celentano also introduced diocesan superintendent of Catholic Schools, Mike Calabufo.

Calabufo offered a "thankfulness" prayer to start the day and told the teens that God is a strong listener and helper. He informed the teens that their part at the rally was to "listen up." Celentano then introduced Bishop James Moynihan who said he liked the theme of the rally. The bishop talked about both Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, saying that even though Pope John Paul II was a "media magnet," the new pontiff has drawn even larger crowds. Bishop Moynihan said the reason is because Pope Benedict XVI always says something profound, but in simple wording that is understood and appreciated.

Bishop Moynihan also told the story of how St. John the Baptist proclaimed the word of God, quoting from what he said was one of his favorite Bible passages: John 1:30-45. "It's a wonderful story," said the bishop. "And 70 years later, John still remembered the situation. Whenever or wherever we experience Jesus, we always remember what the situation was." Bishop Moynihan emphasized the importance of the teens developing



a friendship with Jesus. “Today you’re going to learn how that friendship develops — you’re going to be with Jesus today,” said the bishop. “He becomes your friend when you spend time with Him, listening to Him.” He said the way to get to know Jesus is to read the Bible and then to think about what was read. “You’ll spend some time thinking about Him today,” Bishop Moynihan said. “You’ll be asking Him to give you a strong faith. The world needs the God of Jesus Christ. We have to listen to God.” Celentano then took the stage, urging the youth to be open to what the Lord says.



The Martin Doman Band performed to an appreciative crowd in the gym. Performing songs that were interspersed with games, Doman told the youth that it is possible to praise God and have a good time at the same time. “There are times in the Bible where Christians are encouraged to make a loud noise,” Doman said. “Don’t be shy — it’s cool.” The youths then listened to a presentation by nationally known youth evangelist Caroline Gambale who told the teens that they frequently are not tuned into God because of a restlessness of their spirit and that even she was guilty of it. “Something’s got to change,” stated Gambale. “We have to ask ourselves — ‘What’s getting in the way of our tuning into God?’”

Gambale told the teens that when she was a high school student she began to make compromises. “I wasn’t true to my faith,” said Gambale. “I wanted to fit in — I was totally partying on weekends. By the end of my freshman year in college, sin was keeping me away from God. I asked God to show me that he loved me — I felt empty and not fulfilled. Whenever you pray like that, He answers us. His love is amazing.”

Eventually, Gambale was invited to be part of a parish mission team and then participated in a prayer group. While on the parish mission team, Gambale heard a priest talking about confession and made the decision to go. “It really helped me — it gave me the grace to live for God. When I went to the prayer group I saw happy Catholics. I experienced the Holy Spirit. It was an amazing experience of God’s love.”

Gambale assured the teens that if they sincerely prayed to Jesus and asked Him to come into their lives, He would. She then led the youth through a prayer exercise accompanied by music performed by Doman on guitar. Celentano then took the floor, informing those in attendance that priests were available at the rally if they wanted to go to confession. Before lunch, Celentano led the teens in a game that was intended to promote cooperation and communication skills. In an attempt to move the youth out of the gym and into the cafeteria for lunch, four teens were chosen to lead them out of the room. But, before that happened another person was chosen to accompany each team member to the stage. The four leaders were covered with a clear trash bag, seated at a table to eat a banana and a container of yogurt and told they couldn’t use their hands to eat. Their partners were to act as their “arms” in the process of eating. The game helped the youngsters experience what it means to rely on someone else.

After lunch, the youth had a choice of five workshops to attend. In addition to a workshop that explored the process of learning how to listen to God, another was offered for teens that were living their faith, but wanted to learn how to pray on a deeper level and to live out their

faith in a more dynamic way. Two vocations workshops were offered for males and females who were interested in religious vocations. In addition, a music ministry workshop was offered for youth ministers and teens. It was “standing room only” in this workshop which was facilitated by Doman.

Doman opened the workshop by singing Amazing Grace. He then shared how music helps him connect with God. “Music is a very spiritual thing,” said Doman. “Music is a special gift that God has given to us. We’re all musicians. It helps us through our emotions.” Doman encouraged those at the workshop to be open to the power of the Holy Spirit in order to deal with the challenges they face. And he said it could be done through music and prayer. “The most important thing to remember is that Jesus came to save us — God can pull us out.”

Doman guided the group through a spiritual exercise to the accompaniment of the guitar. Some of the youth were visibly moved while participating in the exercise. Doman asked everyone to close their eyes and listen while singing the words “come fill me,” at the same time imagining they were in a peaceful place and talking to God about their troubles. In closing, Doman stressed the importance of prayer when going through hard times.

Emily Brien, a confirmation student at Holy Family, said the rally had been a great experience. “It’s refreshing to see people enjoy God through the music,” said Emily. “I feel like I’ve been opened to God’s presence.”



Subscribe to the Catholic Sun
catholicsun@yahoo.com The
weekly newspaper for the
Diocese of Syracuse New York

- 1 year for \$20
- 2 years for \$38
- 3 years for \$58

Payment can be sent to:
421 South Warren St.
Syracuse, NY 13202

Or you can phone in your
subscription order to: Sara Vollmer
at (315) 422-8153 or 1-800-333-
0571 (Mastercard and Visa
accepted)

240 East Onondaga Street Syracuse, NY 13201-0511
Phone: 315.422.7203 Fax: 315.478.4619