

From the Youth Office

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As we continue to navigate through this time of pandemic, youth ministry is being challenged in many ways. These challenges may seem daunting, but they have provided us with a unique opportunity to think outside the box and try some new ideas for outreach to the youth of the Archdiocese. Over the last few months, the youth office has been sharing many resources through social media and the outreach section of our website: www.romancatholic.kingston.on.ca/outreach. This page contains information, activities, reflections, and even YouTube videos for youth and their families, as we all live out the liturgical year a little bit differently in 2020. On a personal note, since there have been fewer meetings and events to attend, my husband and I have had the time to participate in some fun activities at home with our kids to celebrate various feast days and liturgical holidays.



Providing opportunities for young people to gather together while remaining physically distanced has been fun! In September, a group of young adults hiked up Rock Dunder together, chatting and getting acquainted while increasing our fitness level and admiring the view from the top! On another outing in October, while the Fall leaves were in their glory, young adults met in Harrowsmith to walk the Cataraqi Trail. We had a beautiful afternoon and were very pleased that Archbishop Mulhall and a number of clergy were able to join us. In November, we launched our first virtual evening event, 'Found Together', which featured husband and wife duo Jesse and Kathleen LeBlanc, who are incredible Catholic musicians and wonderful youth ministers. They facilitated an evening of music, prayer, reflection, and conversation on the importance of community. At the beginning of Advent, Archbishop Mulhall spoke to young adults about preparing spiritually for Christmas. As we head into 2021, we look forward to more opportunities to gather safely in person and virtually. If you would like to become involved in our young adult activities, please email Nadia at youth@romancatholic.kingston.on.ca.



You can also follow us on our Facebook page, @youthofficekingston, or check out the youth page of the Archdiocesan website: www.romancatholic.kingston.on.ca/young-adult.

Another highlight of the Fall months was that I was given the privilege of hosting some listening sessions with young people from across Canada for the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. Seven young people from our Archdiocese represented us in these conversations: Cisilia Kocherry (Belleville), Justin Silva (Trenton), Maya Forbes (Smiths Falls), Jett Gazeley (Kingston), Mikaela Dickison (Kingston),

William Tran (Belleville), and Nicole Forestell (Stirling). Several local youth ministers and other young adults from our Archdiocese helped facilitate small groups during these virtual calls. A big thank you to all of you for participating! In these conversations, participants were asked to share what it is like to be a young person in 2020. What is their reality? What are their hopes -- their dreams -- their stresses? What is their view of the Church? What is their view of the world in which we live? These were amazing conversations! It was so refreshing to hear authentic, raw answers to these questions and to get some great feedback to help the Church in Canada engage and relate more effectively with young people. I hope that we will be able to have similar conversations on the local level, since this process provides so many valuable insights.

The overwhelming response from the youth who participated in the national conversations was that young people want the Church to talk about what is happening in our world. They want the Church to share its teachings and explain the 'why' behind them, so that they can more fully understand them and be able to have meaningful conversations with their friends and families. They also said that they just really appreciated having the opportunity to have discussions with others who shared their faith and were their own age. With this in mind, the youth office plans to host some sessions in the new year with young people and with clergy and parishes to discuss some hot topics in society and the Church. Let's discuss topics that you are curious about; that you have questions about; that you hear being talked about on the news -- issues that affect our lives

and often come up in conversation in the media, in school, in workplaces, and around the dinner table. What was so beautiful about these virtual conversations was how respectful these young people were when sharing their opinions, thoughts, and lived experiences. They listened to one another, affirmed one another, and questioned one another in a spirit of fruitful dialogue. In a world bombarded by social media, dialogue is too often negative -- and even toxic -- with many people taking the opportunity to vent in aggressive or even hateful tones. Our hope is that we can bring back conversation as a peaceful and meaningful dialogue about important issues that young people are yearning to discuss and hear the truth about. I am excited to see what the Holy Spirit has in store for us!

As always, please continue to check our website and social media accounts for information and resources. Please feel free to reach out to me anytime! Wishing you all a blessed and joyous Christmas season.

