


# Connections

January 2008


an online publication for the membership  
of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry

## Highlights...





### You Asked For It!

Various members have asked for a streamlined process for printing *Connections*—whether one article at a time or the whole online issue at once. You have two print options:

- Use your browser's print function or click on the  "Print this page" link at the bottom of the right-hand navigation column.
- Print the entire issue by using the link below. This will open a single PDF document made up of "printed pages" of each article in order. You can also download this PDF to your computer by right-clicking the link and selecting "Save Target As..." With the PDF file open, click the printer command in the Adobe Reader interface and the entire issue will be printed.

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 [Open or download the PDF print file for this entire issue.](#) 

### ***On Becoming Youth Friendly***

**By Matthew Schwartz  
Diocese of Rockford**

I grew up in a house with four brothers. We were all involved in sports and other activities throughout the school year and summer. What was business as usual around our house? I can only think of one word: containment.

My family had to negotiate daily meals, transportation, bathroom time, homework, sharing of clothes, family obligations, and bedtime. In church, we were that family that took up the entire pew. I think that is why we were altar boys—so our parents could referee fewer of us in the pew. Parents of children of any age learn to deal with noise, mess, and chaos.

[Read More...](#)

### ***Leadership Perspectives***

**From the NFCYM Board Chair  
Carole Goodwin**

Significant questions keep surfacing at regional and national gatherings of NFCYM members. Here is a sampling of such questions:



- What is our vision as an organization?
- What are the barriers to fulfilling that vision?
- When and how can we take time to do visioning?
- How is our vision connected to the vision of Jesus?
- Do we, as a diocese, or as a national organization, have a cohesive vision?"

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### ***'Round the Regions...***

### ***A Look Back at the 2007 NCYC***



Bob McCarty (among other writers) helps us look back at the National Catholic Youth Conference held this



...reporting from:

- [Region 5 ...](#)
- [Region 7 ...](#)

past November in Columbus, Ohio.

[Read More...](#)

#### **Also Featuring**

- [Grant Boosts Effort to Improve Adolescent Catechesis](#)
- [2008 Membership Meeting](#)

#### **Register Your Diocesan Office on the Online Store**

As more diocesan offices begin using the [NFCYM Online Store](#) we are running into a small but good problem. Not every visitor to the store is allowed to see the following:

- Diocesan acrylic awards
- NCCGSCF medals and patches

Help us make your visit easy. If you have not registered, please go now and make a customer account. [Go to the store](#) and:

- click on Register/Login located in the pink box on the right-hand side of the store's home page.
- enter your e-mail address and check "No, I want to create a new account."
- then click on the "login" button.
- complete the requested fields.



Once the customer account is set all diocesan offices should e-mail the contact information (first and last names) to [Jakzeel Nuñez](#). Your account will be changed within 48 hours to reflect that you are authorized to purchase these items.

After your account is altered you will need to login when you go to the store in order to see the aforementioned items. If you do not login, you will not see them.

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#### **And Don't Miss...**

- [Management Committee Report](#) from the [National Catholic Committee for Girl Scouts and Camp Fire](#).
- [Collaborating Member Updates](#) from [ACTS Evangelism and Worship](#), [The Australian Network of Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinators](#), [Center for Ministry Development](#), [Instituto Fe y Vida](#), [National Pastoral Musicians](#), [Teens Encounter Christ](#), and [World Library Publications](#).
- An update from the [National Association of Catholic Youth Ministry Leaders](#).

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From Our Collaborating Members

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### *From the NFCYM Board Chair*

*by Dr. Carole Goodwin  
Archdiocese of Louisville*

#### *Questions Help Us Renew Our Vision*

- What is your vision of youth ministry?
- What is our vision as an organization?
- What do you need to do in order to achieve the vision?
- What do we need to do?
- What are the barriers to fulfilling that vision?
- What do you need to do to overcome those barriers?
- What do we need to do to overcome those barriers?
- When and how can we take time to do visioning?
- How is our vision connected to the vision of Jesus?
- Do we, as a diocese, or as a national organization, have a cohesive vision?



These questions keep surfacing at regional and national gatherings of NFCYM members.

I recently met with my new archbishop to discuss the vision of youth ministry that drives our archdiocesan efforts. It occurred to me as we spoke that he probably was not familiar with [Renewing the Vision](#), since he was ordained a bishop after it was published. This was accurate, and he genuinely was interested in learning more about issues that the document identifies as guidelines for our ministry.

I thought about that long and hard and realized that many of the pastors in our archdiocese also had little, if any, experience with the document that is so pivotal to our work.

The USCCB published *Renewing the Vision* in 1997, ten years ago! It gave us a framework for our ministry and proposed a vision for our work.

- It is still the document that guides our work and names a common vision?
- Do we still use it?
- Do we still operate with it as our framework?
- Has it stood the test of time?
- Ask yourself:
  - Do I know this document and its content and its proposed vision?
  - Does my bishop know it?
  - Do the pastoral leaders in my parishes know it?
  - Do I believe the document is still pertinent for my work in my parish or diocese?
  - What does the document name as critical components and elements for effective youth ministry?
  - Are those incorporated into the programming I offer in my parish or diocese? Should they be?
  - What is missing?
  - What do I need to do to assure that this document is the framework for the ministry that has been entrusted to me?

These questions identify NFCYM's need to clearly define or redefine our vision for Catholic youth ministry and how we can move toward accomplishing it. I would like to suggest that we all use these questions for visioning sessions at the parish, diocesan, regional, and national levels in this new year.

I know that our agendas are packed and that there is never enough time to get all of our work done, but we must overcome that by making time for visioning. It is critical to our future as an organization and for strengthening the effectiveness of our ministry to the young church.

What opportunities will we have in the next several months to make time for visioning? Maybe we should ask our local youth ministers to gift their pastors with a copy of *Renewing the Vision*. We should each make sure our local bishop has a copy as well!

Last year, the NFCYM celebrated its 25th Anniversary. I would like to propose that now is time to launch ourselves into the next 25 years. We can do that by reconnecting with our “renewed” vision!

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## *Best Practices: Dubuque "Borrows" Ideas for Smoother NCYC Experience*

*By Pat Finan  
Coordinator of Faith Formation and Youth Ministry  
Diocese of Davenport*

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Kevin Feyen is still fairly new as a diocesan director, but he used a time-honored practice to make his NCYC experience go more smoothly.

"I've gotta admit I stole most of these ideas from Michael Theisen, just things he's done with the Rochester Diocese," Feyen says. Aside from bending the Seventh Commandment, Feyen did some good things in Columbus for his Dubuque contingent of around six hundred.

"One thing they really like is our evening newsletter," Feyen says. Each night of NCYC, Feyen produces a one-sheet newsletter that includes reminders for chaperones, information on keynoters, and practical information such as bus departure times, hotel check-out procedures and arena entrance details. He even includes the day's weather forecast so participants know how to dress. Copies are slid under the doors of adults as Feyen or his helpers make late-night rounds through the hotel.

Feyen enlists the help of adults who are not responsible for parish groups to serve as hall walkers, roaming the hotel halls until 2:00 a.m. to enforce curfew and curb noise issues. He is considering paying someone to roam the halls from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. at the 2009 NCYC.

Feyen strongly recommends taking a trip to the NCYC city after your hotel selection is firmed up. He checked out his hotel and all of the logistics with getting to and around Columbus. Feyen's 2007 pre-NCYC trip yielded a detailed map of restaurants within walking distance, which he shared on the iNet. He also hopes to take some video footage in 2009 and post it on YouTube.

Renting two vehicles at NCYC was a worthwhile investment, Feyen says. It gives more flexibility for hotel runs with participants who become ill, and also is handy if you have youth animators or ambassadors who have special schedules, he says.

Lastly, Feyen is a big fan of using [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) to get a thorough evaluation of NCYC and the services his archdiocese provides. His parish leaders gave him high marks . . . although Michael Thiesen probably deserves a lot of the credit!

### Share Your Best Practice

If you have a best practice you would like to share in an upcoming edition of *Connections*, or if someone else's "best practice" could help you in your ministry, [e-mail your practice or concern to Pat Finan](#).

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### *What I'm Reading*

*By Pat Finan  
Coordinator of Faith Formation and Youth Ministry  
Diocese of Davenport*

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If you have spare time for reading, the other 99 percent of us are thinking mean, envious thoughts about you!

But seriously, it is not easy to find time for reading. I have had time recently only for shorter items directly related to ministry. Here are a couple of the better things I have seen.


#### *Stewardship and Teenagers: The Challenge of Being a Disciple*

Approved by the USCCB right after NCYC, this five-page document is well-written for a young audience. It reminds us that “everything you have to share is from God, and it is all meant for sharing.”

The document encourages youth to turn to Jesus as “your best friend and guide” on the path of discipleship and stewardship. Prayer, Scripture, and the sacraments of reconciliation and Eucharist are encouraged. I love its personal pastoral tone when it says: “Trust us! God is always there, waiting to hear from you and wanting you to know of his unconditional love for you.”

I also enjoy the document’s closing challenge, which also points back toward us as youth ministry leaders. It says we should be “a Church that is not afraid to require much, after having given much; that does not fear asking from young people the effort of a noble and authentic adventure.”

I found myself wondering “Are we giving enough?” “Are we asking enough?”

You can find the document at the [USCCB website](#) . Check it out, and take a moment, as I have, to visit with your bishop and see how you might use it in your diocese and parishes.

#### *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*

You might think I need to get a life, reading all these bishops’ documents. But hey, I live in Iowa, where we decide whom the rest of y’all get to vote for in November! Seriously, this statement on faith and politics, produced every four years, is a good resource to share with youth as they explore our church’s social and moral teachings. [Read the document online in English or Spanish at the USCCB website.](#)

Unlike the voters guides you find on your windshield after Mass, the bishops make clear they will not tell you for whom to vote. “Our purpose,” they write, “is to help Catholics form their consciences in accordance with God’s truth.”

Re-reading the document after the Iowa caucuses, I was heartened to hear them say “our participation should help transform the party to which we belong; we should not let the party transform us in such a way that we neglect or deny fundamental moral truths.”

The document does a thorough job explaining Catholic teaching on abortion, war, poverty, climate change, and countless other issues. Ultimately, as I experienced on January 3, you will not find a perfect candidate in this race when you measure their positions against this document. It is a relief to hear the bishops acknowledge this hard reality. However, that did not stop them from speculating that our votes could affect our individual salvation. That brought to mind Mike Huckabee’s recent statement that “Jesus was too smart to ever run for public office.” As long as Jesus is not on the ballot, I will have to take heart in the basic truths of the bishops’ statement: Vote with a well-formed conscience. Do not be a one-issue voter. Do good and avoid evil; and when in doubt, vote for the lesser of evils.

**What Are You Reading?**

If you have a book, article or other media you would like to comment to NFCYM members, [contact Pat Finan](#).

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### *On Becoming Youth Friendly*

*By Matthew Schwartz  
Director of Young Adult and Youth Ministry  
Diocese of Rockford*

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I grew up in a house with four brothers. We were all involved in sports and other activities throughout the school year and summer. What was business as usual around our house? I can only think of one word: containment.

My family had to negotiate daily meals, transportation, bathroom time, homework, sharing of clothes, family obligations, and bedtime. In church, we were that family that took up the entire pew. I think that is why we were altar boys—so our parents could referee fewer of us in the pew. Parents of children of any age learn to deal with noise, mess, and chaos.

[Renewing the Vision](#) reminds us that parishes “need to become youth-friendly communities in which youth have a conspicuous presence in parish life. They are communities that value young people—welcoming them into their midst, listening to them, responding to their needs, supporting them with prayer, time, facilities and money. These are parish communities that see young people as resources.” (RTV 13). There are many reasons that parishes want quality programming for youth. These include:

- A genuine concern for youth
- To get kids to go to Mass
- To stop the Protestant/nondenominational church down the street from snatching up the kids

Some parishes will never have a youth program simply because it has always been that way. Others believe that if they have a young youth minister, the problem is solved. But let us be real. Does sustainable youth ministry really happen because of any of this? Simply wanting something for youth does not mean that it is going to happen. Everyone agrees that quality youth ministry programs are what parishes need. No parish would actively exclude youth.

However, we sometimes support youth by words alone. We can do so much more. Just like parents have youth-friendly homes, we must foster youth-friendly parishes.

What is a youth-friendly parish? What does it look like? I think you will find that it is strikingly similar to a youth-friendly home. A youth-friendly parish is a parish that:

- knows young people instead of simply tolerating their existence
- includes youth in parish programs instead of only asking them to clean up afterwards
- provides quality activities that speak to their hearts as well as their minds instead of just entertaining and occupying them.
- has crayon marks on the back of its pews
- has quality adults speaking up for youth and sharing faith experiences with youth instead of adults supervising them to make sure they behave correctly and do not break anything
- lets kids experience Stations of the Cross, Adoration, and the Rosary instead of just talking about it
- is disappointed when there are no infant baptisms during Mass this weekend
- views youth’s parents as an asset and not an obstacle
- invites youth’s opinions instead of telling them why they should not act or think a certain way
- does not dread confirmation
- celebrates youth’s accomplishments in front of the whole parish community instead of just a blurb on Page 6 of the bulletin
- has squirrely toddlers running away from their parents during Mass
- enables youth to experience quality evangelization, catechesis, and leadership development so they can reciprocate that in their peer groups

- defines reverence as controlled chaos
- takes into consideration youth in every financial and pastoral decision

Like a home, a youth-friendly parish is a place where the basic needs, concerns, and wants of youth are embedded into the psyche of the adults.

Now I have three small, noisy, messy children of my own. My wife is the boss of the house (I am fine with that). However, truth be told, our lovable and adorable kids think and act like they own the place.

Hah! Can you imagine that? Kids thinking and acting like they own the place . . .

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## *Grant Boosts Effort to Improve Adolescent Catechesis*

*By Michael Theisen  
Director of Membership Services  
NFCYM*

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If *Soul Searching* had you doing some soul searching about the faith of young people, here is some hopeful news.

[The Partnership for Adolescent Catechesis](#), an effort to address serious lapses in the church's formation of adolescents, has received two grants to implement a National Initiative on Adolescent Catechesis. The initiative is a seven-year process designed to explore how Catholic teens can more effectively be formed in their faith. The grants include \$450,000 from the Lilly Endowment Foundation and \$75,000 from an anonymous donor.

There is growing concern throughout the Catholic Church about the effectiveness of current approaches to adolescent faith formation. To begin addressing this, the Partnership will host a National Symposium on Adolescent Catechesis this November in Maryland. The event is designed to create a think tank setting where national, diocesan, parish, and Catholic school leaders and practitioners will gather with bishops, publishers, and academicians to critically examine what is and is not working in adolescent faith formation.

We believe that this cross-pollination of experience and perspective will yield a deep and thoughtful dialogue that will lead the Catholic Church toward a transformation in adolescent catechesis.

The Partnership began in 2003 from a desire to develop a common vision for adolescent catechesis. It has worked to complement the themes and approaches for catechesis with adolescents as presented in the *National Directory for Catechesis* and the *General Directory for Catechesis*.

[The National Study of Youth and Religion](#), reported on in the 2005 book *Soul Searching*, identified serious challenges regarding the ability of Catholic adolescents to articulate their faith and live as a disciple of Jesus Christ. The *CARA Report*, digesting the NSYR research, reinforced among Catholic leaders the growing need for parish and school leaders to rethink the church's pastoral ministry and educational outreach with young people. Uppermost on the minds of pastoral and educational leaders is the quality and quantity of resources, including trained leaders who are dedicated to responding to the religious and spiritual hungers of young people.

The National Initiative is a response to these concerns. The Initiative is developed by the Partnership for Adolescent Catechesis, a national Catholic collaborative focused on promoting a comprehensive and contemporary vision of adolescent catechesis. The partners include NFCYM, the [National Conference for Catechetical Leadership](#), and the [National Catholic Educational Association](#).

The Partnership has hired Elzbieta "Ela" Milewska, a doctoral student in catechetics at The Catholic University of America, to serve as project coordinator for the National Initiative.

### More information

Learn more about the [Partnership for Adolescent Catechesis](#)

At this site are a series of ten articles that explore various dimensions and issues of adolescent catechesis.

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### *Discover the Way*

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***NCYC—An Explosion of Joy***  
***By Bob McCarty***  
***Executive Director, NFCYM***

For a moment, let us resist the temptation to move immediately to planning our next event. And I do not mean just NFCYM—I am referring to all of us in our dioceses and organizations. If we fall into the trap of “events are us,” we will miss the special significance of the 2007 NCYC.

The tragic death of Veronica Gantt early in the morning of November 8 changed everything. This was a new experience for NCYC and NFCYM. And though we benefited from an Emergency and Crisis Response Manual developed over the past six years, we were clearly in uncharted territory.

Our immediate response included meeting with the Las Vegas delegation at the Columbus airport, attending to the Gantt family, making all the necessary contacts, supporting the diocesan delegation leader and the parish youth ministry coordinator, preparing a news release, and conducting a news conference.

The tragedy focused our attention on balancing pastoral and program concerns for the opening session, and had an impact on the other general sessions as well. Further, the local and national media highlighted NCYC, moving beyond the initial story to an emphasis on the conference itself. Their stories captured the move from grief and sympathy to the excitement of gathering as the young Catholic Church. They spotlighted the deep faith of the participants.

Participants had the opportunity in Port Discovery to write cards of condolence to the Gantt family. These thousand cards were personally delivered to Paul and Karen Gantt in December. Reading the cards affirmed the genuine compassion of young people, though it is often anchored in their personal experiences of loss, death, grief, and suffering. It was a blessing to read the scriptures of their lives as they reached out to the Gantts.

The closing liturgy completed this experience of the Paschal Mystery, as we moved from death to resurrection and new life. At the end of the recessional song, the young people rose in a spontaneous and extended standing ovation—an explosion of joy. And though our pastoral response to the family, the youth ministry coordinator, and the parish delegation continues, that outburst of joy will be a profound memory of NCYC.

Amid the many e-mails and letters expressing appreciation and gratitude for NCYC, the following came from a freshman at St. George Parish in Tinley Park, Illinois:

*Hello, my name is Cailie and I have recently undergone a life changing experience. NCYC took me on a voyage, a voyage that has taken me deeper and deeper into my faith. There are no words that can describe the feelings that erupted there. The sorrow, the happiness, the total jubilation and the grief; we were all pulled into the vortex of Jesus, where He was standing, arms wide open, awaiting us. Not only did we discover the way, we also walked the way and talked the way. We are all disciples of Christ, We are all one Body, And we have discovered the way.*



Indeed, an experience of special significance.

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*Discover the Way**All Gathered for God's Glory: Ambassadors Reflect on NCYC*

Bridget Wodowski and Michael Powell of the Diocese of Buffalo served as youth ambassadors at NCYC. They introduced speakers, led prayer, and provided a welcoming presence during workshops.

The 17-year-olds shared their perspectives on NCYC with their diocesan paper, the *Western New York Catholic*. Their insights, excerpted here, are followed by thoughts from Denise York, Diocese of Buffalo youth ministry coordinator.

We were astounded that twenty thousand of our peers were gathered to celebrate their faith. It was amazing to see them all gathered for God's glory, totally unafraid to stand up for what they believe in and literally take over the city of Columbus. We felt privileged to interact with nationally recognized speakers one-on-one, as well as get up in front of five hundred to two thousand teenagers to introduce and bless the speakers.

There were so many amazing messages throughout the weekend.

*From Bridget*

The most powerful part of the weekend for me was the story of Veronica Gantt's death early on the day the conference began. It really hit me hard that at any moment, my life could end. I realized that before I die, I want to make a difference. I want to live life to its fullest and be the best that I can be.

My pilgrimage to Columbus has inspired me to "be not afraid." I now know that I am not alone in my faith. There are people just like me around the nation who want to improve their relationship with God.

*From Michael*

I think the most powerful part of this entire trip was Mass on Saturday night. I was truly touched by the faith and spirituality of the twenty thousand other kids surrounding me in the huge arena, and it was awe-inspiring to see approximately seven bishops and three hundred priests concelebrate Mass. It gave me a great feeling to realize that the church cared so much about its youth that it would send that many priests and bishops to minister to us.

The two most important things that I learned this weekend were to be proud of your faith and proclaim it, and to search until you find what makes you truly happy in your life. Steve Angrisano shared a story about one of the young victims of the Columbine school shooting. She stood up for her faith even though she thought she would die for answering that she believed in Jesus. The final message of his story was to always live your life for Him, because you don't know when you might be challenged in your faith or your life might be taken from you.



The second thing I learned was to search until you find, which I was told by the panel of ordained ministers in the vocations workshop I attended. I asked the panel how I was supposed to discern between what I wanted to do with my life and what God was calling me to do, because I always had trouble figuring out which voice was which. They told me that wherever I was happiest and felt I could make the most difference was where God was calling me to be, and that my voice and His were really one and the same if I listened carefully enough. And I'm confident that God was calling me to be at NCYC and praise Him by being an ambassador for my diocese.

*From Denise*

I was amazed to witness Bridget and Mike as ambassadors. They spoke at three workshops during the conference. The first workshop had over five hundred young people. Both of them were astounded to stand before so many of their peers. That was nothing compared to the second workshop, which was a concurrent session for approximately two thousand people. Doug Brummel was the keynote for the session and instead of going with the standard introduction and prayer Doug asked the two of them to do a skit with him. In 15 minutes they learned their parts and they did a fantastic job on stage. The session was projected via video camera on a large screen behind them. It was amazing to see both Bridget and Mike on the large screen. I was crouched down at the front of the stage to take pictures and was able to get their attention. I told them to turn around and their jaws dropped as they turned and saw themselves on the big screen!



That evening at dinner, Bridget was stopped by an adult in the restaurant. He called her by name and took the opportunity to compliment her on the great job she did leading prayer in the workshop. The following evening at his parish dinner Mike was complimented by Mark Mann from the Diocese of Grand Rapids. Mark had been in Doug Brummel's workshop and noted the leadership abilities and stage presence that Mike displayed.

I have the privilege of working with Bridget and Mike as moderator of the Diocesan Youth Board. It was an honor to nominate them and to work with them throughout NCYC as diocesan liaison. Watching them work with speakers and speaking on stage in front of the large crowds was affirming for me. One of my greatest joys is empowering young people to use their gifts and talents and to exceed their personal potential as disciples. Bridget and Mike did exactly that at NCYC, and I am

tremendously proud of both of them.

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*Discover the Way**Collection Strengthens CYFUSA's Efforts**By Cathy Bantua**Director of Development, CYFUSA*

One of the most blessed events for [Catholic Youth Foundation USA](#) is the NCYC Mass collection. More than \$90,000 was collected this year. It helps ensure that resources will continue to be available for our young people.


CYFUSA provided 328 scholarships totaling \$60,000 for NCYC 2007. Under the scholarship program, CYFUSA also provided \$3,000 in scholarships for the 2008 Membership Meeting.

CYFUSA is making progress with its 25th Anniversary Campaign. Launched in 2004, the campaign has received \$247,325 in pledges. The campaign will continue until 2009.



Cathy Bantua joined CYFUSA in August as the full-time development director. Since that time, she has attended the National Catholic Development Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, and workshops with the Center for Nonprofit Advancement in Washington, D.C. Cathy also has started work for the certificate of fundraising management through the Center of Philanthropy in Indianapolis, Indiana. Cathy replaces Paige Blache, who left CYFUSA in July for a position at Trinity College, in Washington, D.C.

CYFUSA welcomed four new members to its board in October: Diane Lampitt, Harcourt Religion Publishers; Mary Pittelli, Discovery Communications; Bro. Albert M. Rivera, FMS, Marist Brothers; and Anna Scally, Cornerstone Media.

Also in October, CYFUSA made available \$9,000 to aid relief efforts for or by young people affected by the southern California fires. If your diocese was affected by these fires, please [download and complete the Aid Application](#)  (36 KB).

Dr. Carole Goodwin, NFCYM chair,

will present the in-service at the January 2008 CYFUSA board meeting. Her topic is *Fostering Catholic Identity in Youth*. That theme will be the NFCYM's priority for CYFUSA grants in 2008. More details about the grant process will be available soon.

CYFUSA is thankful for the support that donors have provided during the past year. This is an exciting time for CYFUSA! The CYFUSA commercial premiered at NCYC. Please consider designating CYFUSA as the recipient or corecipient of your diocesan youth rally collection. The CYFUSA commercial is available for your event. For assistance, [contact Cathy by e-mail](#) or call (202) 636-3825.



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*Discover the Way**Passing the Thanks Along to You**By Bob McCarty**Executive Director, NFCYM*

One of the blessings—and sometimes the curse—of being executive director is that I am the public representative of the Federation. Much like a diocesan director of youth ministry or the president of an organization, I often receive the thanks and the complaints for the work of the Federation. Usually, I have little or no control over the event, action, or situation that prompts the comment. Nevertheless, I serve as the official “face.”

At the 2007 National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), I was especially surprised by how many youth and adults came up to me, even at the Columbus airport, to thank me for the conference. They expressed their joy, excitement, pleasure, and faith. They shared their excitement at “being part of something bigger,” “being energized by sharing stories and faith with peers from throughout the country,” and “feeling so close to Jesus.”

I knew they could not begin to fathom the number of folks who served in leadership roles, worked on committees or handled tasks for NCYC. So I graciously—and humbly—accepted their thanks. I then encouraged them to thank the adult(s) in their parish, school, or diocese who helped get them to NCYC.



Indeed, NCYC was a wonderful celebration of the energy, gifts, and talents of the young church. Musicians, dancers, singers, and speakers enlivened the general sessions. Nationwide Arena rocked with energy.

Port Discovery, the exhibits, the workshops, and The Way Café each contributed to this overwhelming sense that “something very special is happening here.” The hospitality of the eleven hundred volunteers from the Diocese of Columbus was simply incredible. It is an awesome experience to feel the presence of Christ in such a gathering! Clearly, lives were touched deeply. So, too, faith was deepened.

The 2007 NCYC raised the bar and built on the experience of the 2005 NCYC. Of special significance is how much the Federation has learned about doing large conferences. We are a learning organization. From the general membership to the management committee and task groups, we assess previous conferences and we change. We adjusted our conference map to more accurately reflect the changing territory of the participants.

We adjusted the conference format to better handle the increasing numbers of participants while also adjusting its tone to better respond to the spiritual needs of our young people. There is a definite evangelizing dimension to NCYC. It is a celebration of our Catholic faith. The proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ permeated the general sessions, the workshops, the prayer and liturgy, and even Port Discovery.



The format and content changes are examples of how we as an organization have been willing to change, learn, and adapt to changing times, situations, and needs. It is certainly a strength of which we can be proud.

So, as the 2007 NCYC moves into memory, and as we prepare for the 2008 National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry, 2009 NCYC, and all the other NFCYM events, programs, and services, I offer my thanks to the thousands of folks who made the 2007 NCYC happen. And I thank the thousands of adults in diocesan, parish and high school youth ministry who helped young people get to Columbus.

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### 2008 Membership Meeting

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#### *NFCYM Flocks to Little Rock for Business, Fun By Pat Finan Diocese of Davenport*

Liz Tingquist will never forget her first NFCYM Membership Meeting. That is because she will be hosting it!

“I’m not really sure what I’m getting myself into,” she says cautiously. “It sounds like a busy meeting, but I’m sure we’ll have some fun, too.”

Liz, director of the Diocese of Little Rock’s Catholic Youth Ministry Office, will not be the only one getting her feet wet at the January 30-February 2 meeting. The Peabody Little Rock Hotel, site of the meeting, is home of the world-famous Peabody Ducks, who march down the red carpet to the Lobby Fountain every day at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.



Meeting participants are asked to stay out of the fountain, but are welcome to swim in the nearby Arkansas River.

“There are a lot of neat things just within walking distance of the hotel,” Liz says. “Riverfront Park has jogging and biking trails and is really beautiful.”

The River Market District is one block south of the Peabody. It has many restaurants, shops, and nightclubs with live entertainment. Friday night will be NFCYM Night in the River Market District. Restaurants will offer special discounts to NFCYM members. For a small fee, participants can buy a wristband that provides access to clubs offering live entertainment. Participants are reminded to stay out of the hotel fountain after Friday’s festivities.



At the end of the River Market District is the Clinton Presidential Library, a major Little Rock tourist destination. The Library is open daily and is accessible by the city’s trolley line. The trolley stops in front of the Peabody and at several locations downtown.

One block north of the Peabody is the Old Statehouse, which served as the Arkansas capitol until 1936. It now is a museum of Arkansas governmental history and was

the backdrop for Bill Clinton’s election victory speeches.

Also on the trolley line, just a few blocks west of the Peabody, is the Territorial Restoration. This area has been developed into a living museum.

The Peabody offers complimentary shuttle service to and from the Little Rock airport, which is located 10 minutes from the hotel.

For those who wish to rise before the ducks (or any sane humans, for that matter), Morning Madness basketball will be played at 6 a.m. Thursday through Saturday at St. Edward’s Catholic School. No experience is necessary. Bring your own oxygen.

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## Connections

January 2008

### *2008 Membership Meeting*

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#### *In-Service Will Spread “Wow” Spirit of Co-Workers Symposium*

The spirit of last summer’s [national “Working in the Vineyard of the Lord” symposium](#) will be shared at an in-service to be presented Saturday morning, February 2, at the NFCYM Membership Meeting.

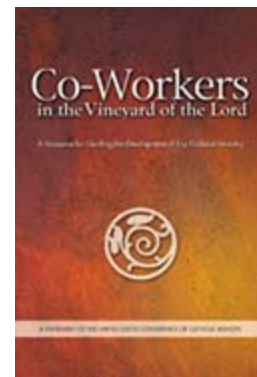
The symposium really was a ‘wow’ moment for our church,” says Pat Rinker, director of youth ministry for the Diocese of Lansing and a participant in the symposium. The event, held July 31 to August 3 at St. John’s University in Collegeville, Minnesota, brought together more than two hundred lay ministers, priests, religious, and bishops representing 26 national organizations, formation institutes, and Catholic colleges.

Rinker recalls an exercise where participants from different areas of ministry were assigned to roundtables to discuss their pathways into ministry.

“It was such a powerful moment,” Rinker says. “We’re more alike than we realize. You know how racism develops? It starts with stereotypes, and we do that in ministry, too. Think about liturgist jokes. But the power of story breaks this down.”

“We came from all different fields of ministry,” Rinker says, “but we left committed to move forward as lay ecclesial ministers, not simply as youth ministry leaders. We’re all in this work together, as partners.”

[Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord](#), published in 2005, has more clearly defined who we are as lay ecclesial ministers and offered guidance for what we do in ministry with other lay ecclesial ministers—those who serve the young Catholic Church.



The goals of this in-service include:

- Engaging NFCYM membership in dialogue about the implications *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* has for diocesan offices, collaborating member organizations, the NFCYM, and the field of youth ministry.
- Identifying current issues and concerns in our ministry relative to the key areas of *Co-Workers* (pathways, formation, authorization, and workplace issues).
- Encouraging members to make specific commitments regarding the implementation of *Co-Workers* in their “back home” ministry setting.

Read the [Recommendations from the Symposium](#)

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## Connections

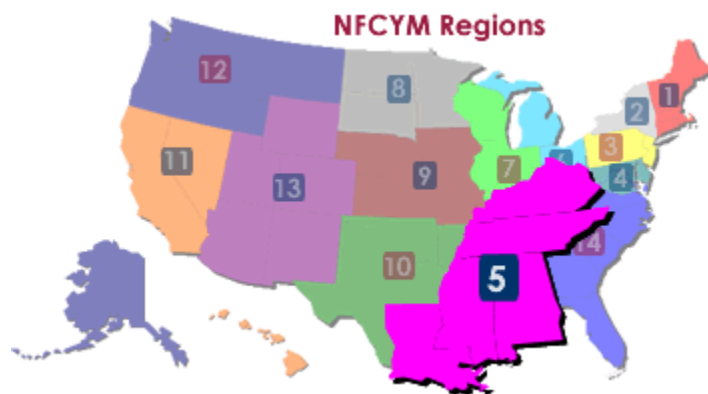
January 2008

*'Round the Regions**Region 5*

Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Louisiana

Submitted by Dr. Carole Goodwin, Archdiocese of Louisville

Our region meets only once a year because of the distance between our dioceses and our shrinking budgets. Our structure mirrors USCCB's provincial divisions. Each state province has additional face-to-face gatherings.



The four provinces each discern a person to serve on the regional leadership team. It includes Christina Theriot of Alexandria, chair; Catherine Mensi of Memphis, treasurer; Bragg Moore of Biloxi, secretary; and Carole Goodwin of Louisville, representative to the NFCYM Board of Directors.

We have a mentoring process for new diocesan directors. Once a new director is appointed, their provincial representative contacts them. The new director also is welcomed by the region's representative to

the NFCYM Board of Directors.

If possible, a neighboring diocesan director visits the new director to explain the workings of NFCYM and our regional structure. That mentor serves as a companion to the new director. We encourage the new director to attend NFCYM's New Diocesan Director Institute and the next province and regional meetings.

Our mentoring process will be active this year. Each of our provinces should have one or two new directors!

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## Connections

January 2008

*'Round the Regions**Diverse Meeting Crowd Makes Region 7 Stronger*

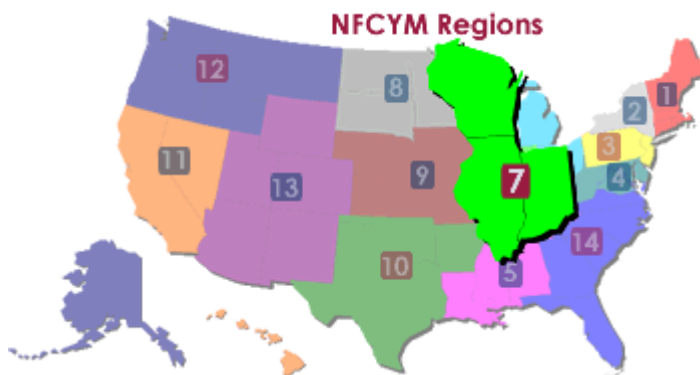
Wisconsin, Indiana, and Illinois

Submitted by Paul Mach, Diocese of Joliet

We were blessed to have 10 of our 16 diocesan directors at our regional gathering in October in Joliet, Illinois. We also were graced with the presence of four collaborating members, our Girl Scout/Camp Fire representative, our NACYML representative, and a potential collaborating member. Including our collaborating members and other guests gives us much more insight and strengthens our community. It truly has made us a better region.

We had great discussions on many areas of youth ministry, yummy food, a time for visioning, and liturgy. Adolescent catechesis was a strong topic of interest.

All of our diocesan leadership positions are filled. We welcome Michelle Fischer-Mandry in Milwaukee, Ron Garcia in Madison, Kyle Holtgrave in Springfield, Illinois, and Sean Martin in Lafayette, Indiana. We will be well-represented at the upcoming membership meeting in Little Rock. Otherwise, things in the Midwest are going fine as we know it!



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## Connections

January 2008

### *Management Committee Reports*

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#### *NCCGSCF Hopes for Good Turnout in Little Rock*

Submitted by Joan Treacy

[E-mail Joan](#)

The National Catholic Committee for Girl Scouts and Camp Fire is asking regions that lack an NCCGSCF representative to discern one, and to encourage all representatives to attend the Membership Meeting in January. Guidelines are available for regions that need help in discerning representatives. For a copy, contact [Joan Treacy](#).

The committee has a busy agenda and hopes for full representation at the Membership Meeting. It will discuss a draft of national policies and guidelines that attendees requested at the NCCYM in Las Vegas. Feedback from all regions is needed. Other agenda items include our newsletter/website and proposed revision of the *I Live My Faith* recognition. NCCGSCF also will introduce its new logo at the Membership Meeting.

Please remember that most NCCGSCF representatives are volunteers. Regions are asked to consider helping to fund the representatives' expenses. They not only provide each region with another vote at the table, but they play a key role in forming national policy and programs for NCCGSCF.

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## Connections

January 2008

### *NACYML Engaging More Members in Its Work*

*By Grace Cassetta  
Chairperson, NACYML Leadership Team*

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The National Association of Catholic Youth Ministry Leaders celebrated its third anniversary on December 2 with more than six hundred members. NACYML's Leadership Team spent its first two years developing the organization's structure and procedures. This year we actively worked on developing as a membership-driven organization. No longer is most of NACYML's work being accomplished solely by the Leadership Team.

Following its annual meeting in March, the Leadership Team recruited members for each of the three NACYML coordinating committees. Two major projects of the committees during the past six months have been planning and implementing the NACYML booth at NCYC and developing a partnership with Ministry Training Source to offer online training and formation to our members.

The NACYML Booth at NCYC was a great success. The project team worked diligently to develop a booth that was both professional and youth-friendly. Twenty-five new members joined NACYML at NCYC, and several members renewed their membership.



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## Connections

January 2008

### *From Our Collaborating Members*

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#### *ACTS Evangelism & Worship Submitted by Paul Bauer*

[E-mail Paul](#)

[Visit ACTS' Website](#)

Technology is a big challenge to the youth ministry community. Many leaders fear it, do not understand it, or do not know how to use it. But American youth devote more time to media than any other activity, as much as eight hours a day. That is more time than they spend in school!

Over the past eight years, ACTS Evangelism & Worship has been presenting multimedia presentations that translate our faith into the language of millennial teens. We recently added "MyPod Speak," an adult workshop about new media such as MySpace, YouTube, and instant messaging. It has been presented in the archdioceses of Denver and Chicago.



We also have found demand for a new kind of confirmation retreat for parishes that find it difficult to engage media-savvy teens. It features a mix of videos, movies, music, games, and interactive activities.

ACTS also is aware of youth ministry budget concerns and continues to work within any budget.

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## Connections

January 2008

### *From Our Collaborating Members*

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*Australians Hope to Harness WYD Energy  
Submitted by Karen Lunney*

[E-mail Karen](#)

There is an event going on July 15-20 in Sydney, Australia, that is keeping most diocesan youth ministry coordinators in Australia a bit busy. But ANDYMC, the Australian Network of Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinators, is looking beyond World Youth Day and the visit of Pope Benedict XVI. The network is asking: "What's next?"

ANDYMC is trying to learn from the Denver experience of WYD in 1993. They want to prepare for and harness the energy from the expected explosion of youth ministry in Australia after WYD 2008.

Among ANDYMC's upcoming projects are a national gathering, a national song competition, the development of competency-based standards for youth ministry, and work with the Australian Bishops Commission on Pastoral Life to develop a national youth ministry vision statement.

ANDYMC is a network of member dioceses which fosters the development of Catholic youth ministry in Australia.



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## Connections

January 2008

### *From Our Collaborating Members*

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*Center for Ministry Development  
Submitted by Ann Marie Eckert*

[E-mail Ann Marie](#)

[Visit CMD Website](#)

As leaders in the field of youth ministry, we are faced with the challenging opportunity to help parish leaders provide for comprehensive youth ministry that includes a solid catechetical heart.

Parish leaders need new models, clear direction, and new insights into the ways that they can provide for intentional catechesis for junior high and high school youth. They also need ways that they can count on parish members to support the faith growth of our young people throughout their life.

The Center for Ministry Development is hosting its second annual *Fashion Me A People Conference* in Orlando, January 10-12, 2008. This conference is focused on lifelong learning and includes youth ministry offerings for parish and diocesan leaders.

Keynote speakers include Rev. Ray East, ValLimar Jansen, and Tom Groome. Workshops presenters include Michael Theisen, Frank Mercadante, Tom East, Alejandro Titus-Aguilera, Rey Malave', Sean Lansing, and Ann Marie Eckert.

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## Connections

January 2008

*From Our Collaborating Members*

*Fe y Vida Book Offers Map to Effective Ministry with Hispanic Youth  
Submitted by Ken Johnson-Mondragón, Director of Research and Publications*

[E-mail Ken](#)

[Visit Fe Y Vida's Website](#)

Many Catholic pastors and youth ministers are concerned with the poor showing of Catholic teens in the *National Study of Youth and Religion* (NSYR). With funding from NSYR and the Louisville Institute, Instituto Fe y Vida has published *Pathways of Hope and Faith Among Hispanic Teens*. This book has more than sixty research-based recommendations for making youth ministry and faith formation programs more effective.



The book focuses on Hispanics—a large, quickly growing, and underserved part of the young Catholic Church. It provides a map for overcoming the historical, cultural, and structural obstacles to their participation in youth ministry programs. A multidisciplinary and ecumenical team of nine writers presents new findings from the NSYR in 49 tables, 64 excerpts from interview conversations, and 18 charts, maps, and diagrams.

Each chapter also includes a theological/pastoral reflection on the data, questions for reflection and discussion, and a list of additional resources. The final chapter offers an overall summary of the findings regarding Hispanic Catholic teens and identifies ten factors that need to be addressed in our church to provide a more comprehensive outreach to them.

Excerpts from the book can be downloaded at: <http://www.feyvida.org/research/researchpubs.html>

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## Connections

January 2008

### *From Our Collaborating Members*

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*National Pastoral Musicians Expands Outreach to Young Music Leaders*  
*Submitted by Tim Westerhaus, chair*  
*NPM Standing Committee on Youth*

[E-mail Tim](#)

[Visit NPM Website](#)

The National Association of Pastoral Musicians welcomes and forms young music ministers through its Youth Section. We recently launched our youth website. A blog will begin within one year for networking and support among youth who lead music in their communities.

Youth highlights at our 2007 national convention included a performance by the National Catholic Youth Choir, concert performances by young adult artists, and breakout sessions for youth.

NPM continues to commit money to develop pastoral music leadership among youth. It will award \$32,000 in scholarships in 2008.

NPM seeks to provide greater formation to young adults who are considering pastoral music as a vocation. Topics at future conventions will include:

- discerning to serve as a professional music minister
- collaboration between youth and adults
- bridging differences between age groups
- guidance for young adult composers
- leadership skills

We also seek to integrate youth fully into our conventions by welcoming their unique gifts and providing them with hands-on experience. NPM also hopes to work more closely with NFCYM, sharing mutual wisdom and experience.

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## Connections

January 2008

### *From Our Collaborating Members*

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#### *Teens Encounter Christ Growing Spiritually, Spreading Globally Submitted by Ron Reiter*

[E-mail Ron](#)

[Visit TEC Website](#)

The TEC Conference—as the guiding organization of the Teens Encounter Christ movement—continues to provide a network of prayer, communication and support for the sixty-five TEC faith communities throughout North America and Europe. TEC helps eight thousand young people each year deepen their relationship with Christ and discern their vocation within the Catholic Church.

Recent projects and events include:

- holding six workshops in five different dioceses to provide continued faith formation for TEC leaders
- preparing for the third annual TEC Congress: “A Prayer of Wheat,” to be held August 1-3 at the Spiritual Life Center in Wichita
- responding to international requests to start TEC including Kenya, Russia, Nicaragua, and Bolivia
- beginning the translation of the TEC Conference Manual into Spanish
- welcoming Thomas Simon of Festus, Missouri, as a part-time office assistant

For more information about TEC, go to [www.teconference.org](http://www.teconference.org)

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## Connections

January 2008

*From Our Collaborating Members*

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*Youth Leader's Debut CD Released by World Library Publications  
Submitted by Lisa Bagladi*[E-mail Lisa](#)[Visit WLP's Website](#)

Noelle Garcia, who serves as youth coordinator at St. Patrick Church in Portland, Michigan, has released her debut recording, *Meet Me Where I Am*, published by World Library Publications. Her CD is a blend of piano-driven rock, jazz, pop, and folk undertones that communicates a personal testimony of hope. Her message is to not let imperfections hold you back, but rather learn, let go, and fully follow Christ as a participating member of his church.

Her songs include *My Child*, which ministers to youth struggling with depression, self-mutilation and suicidal thoughts. It delivers a message of heartfelt compassion.

To learn more about the ministry and music of Noelle Garcia go to [www.noellegarciamusic.com](http://www.noellegarciamusic.com) and [www.wlpmusic.com](http://www.wlpmusic.com)



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