



Youth Commission Presentation 38th Diocesan Convention

Nov. 3, 2007

Good morning.

My name is Michael Sahdev; I am the President of the Youth Commission and I am honored to be here to give the Youth presentation for convention. With me today is our vice-president, Jessica Palmer; our secretary, Brittany Tate; and Sophia Faiella, our administrative assistant.

I will be discussing three main topics: what we accomplished last year, our current plans and where I hope to lead the youth commission in the coming year. We have made a great start and we have very high expectations for the upcoming year.

We had many successful events last year. Approximately 100 youth attended the Christmas Ball held at the Chapel of St. Andrew in Boca Raton. This was a terrific event which included great food and great music, and really set the tone for the Christmas season. Our largest annual event is the Acolyte Festival, which grows in attendance every year. Youth from every parish look forward to this event. Also, we attended Summer Camp at DaySpring in the Diocese of South West Florida.

However, the last year was not all play. Both our former president, Douglas Dozier, and vice-president, Kit Faiella, participated in the Province IV Mission trip in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, to help clean up and build up the areas affected by the hurricanes. Kit was a member of the design team for the mission trip. This summer there will be another opportunity for our youth to participate in a mission trip in Mississippi. Last year was a very successful year, and we will take what we learned and build on that success for this year.

Our Youth Convention was held at the Duncan Center, Delray Beach, last month. The weekend was filled with team-building exercises and lots of inspiring information. Elections were held for the coming year, and we began to identify needs and issues that we had in common throughout our parishes. We were honored to have Bishop Frade there as one of our speakers. The bishop gave us an insight into many of the concerns that would be discussed at the House of Bishops. We had an inspiring convention and everyone left energized with a sense of purpose going into our next year.

Currently we are making some exciting plans for the new year. We begin with our Christmas Ball which will be held at All Souls' on Miami Beach. Building on the success of last year's Ball, we expect to attract even more youth to this event this year.

We have identified both a need and an interest in having both youth and adult training sessions for peer ministry. We plan to begin these weekends in a few months. Also, soon we will begin planning the annual Acolyte Festival that will be held in April 2008 at St. Martin's, Pompano Beach.

As the new president of the youth commission, I have set some goals that I am asking for your help in achieving. The most important goal concerns community. The youth of our diocese need to know and support each other. In our schools, it is often very lonely being a Christian teen. We are not in the majority and we are not the "popular group." The youth of our diocese need many opportunities to become friends and to be able to simply "hang out" together so that we can form a network of support for each other. Our Episcopal youth and their friends need to experience that it can be fun to be Christian and to socialize with other Christians. We must offer an alternative to popular culture. By encouraging the youth in your parishes to attend Youth Commission meetings we will be able to structure events to suit the needs of our teens.

I have taken the first step toward strengthening our youth community by preparing to set up a Youth Commission Myspace page where all youth can access, post and request information easily. Most teens access their Myspace pages on a daily basis. This will be used for announcements as well as getting to know each other. Our youth, from Key West to Jupiter, will be able to keep in touch on a daily basis if they want to. We can easily post information about youth events being held throughout the diocese and build excitement about the event, as well as receive immediate feedback from those who attended the event. This is one step in helping us to achieve our goal of having enough youth and adults to help us plan future junior high and senior high retreats, Happening and other community building events.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has generously volunteered their time to help with our many youth activities. That also includes the parishes, especially the Chapel of St. Andrew, Holy Family and Christ Church, who have graciously hosted our meetings and events.

We ask at this time that all clergy, youth ministers and youth coordinators help us by working together in your deaneries to send representatives to our Youth Commission meetings.

We have many goals; we look forward to working with you to achieve them.

Thank You.

Michael Sahdev

Diocesan Youth Commission President, 2007-2008