



ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT—After a procession through the conference space, Bp. Edward Rice led a Holy Hour, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Saturday evening during Diocesan Youth Conference. (Photo by J.B. Kelly/The Mirror)

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE—Several diocesan priests, along with Bp. Rice, heard confessions throughout the course of the Diocesan Youth Conference, including Fr. Joseph Kelly, associate pastor of St. Mary Cathedral, Cape Girardeau. (Photo by J.B. Kelly/The Mirror)



CLOSING MASS—Spencer Mead, who attended DYC with a contingent from St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Ozark, prayed during the closing Mass on Sunday morning. (Photo by J.B. Kelly/The Mirror)



RECREATION—On Saturday evening, youth and their adult leaders had the option of making the rounds at various game tables or playing in a trivia contest after the dinner hour. (Photo by J.B. Kelly/The Mirror)



SAINTS—Fr. Scott Sunnenberg, pastor of St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Ozark, presented a workshop at the Diocesan Youth Conference about our “heavenly traveler’s assistants,” the saints. (Photo by J.B. Kelly/The Mirror)



DYC 2017

‘Through the narrow gate’

By J.B. Kelly, West Plains, MO

Youth of the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau were challenged to pick the “right way” to “travel” toward eternal salvation during the 24th annual Diocesan Youth Conference March 25-26 in West Plains. Tying-in with the theme “Through the Narrow Gate,” based on Matthew 7:13, presenters at the conference provided the attendees with valuable insights and counsel on how to navigate through the journey of life in ways that lead to true sanctity.

During his homily on Saturday morning, Bp. Edward Rice reflected on the many “ways” or “roads” which one can choose to travel in life, warning against taking the “easy road,” the “whatever road,” and the “me’ road,” all of which are the paths of indifference. He said that going down those “roads” never leaves one satisfied, but rather leads to emptiness, to a “dead end.”

“Easy’ rarely ends up good,” Bp. Rice said. He urged the youth to instead consider the “adventure” of following Christ on the “narrow road.”

“The ‘narrow road’ is the road of discipleship ... the Lord inviting us to renounce self, take up the Cross, and follow in His footsteps,” he said. “The ‘narrow road’ leads to the Cross, the ‘gate’ to the Resurrection. It’s not a dead end!”

Bishop Rice was present for the duration of the conference, celebrating liturgies and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, hearing confessions, and interacting with the youth through the many other activities and events of the conference.

Workshops provided opportunities for youth and adults to learn how to better rely on Christ in making decisions and striking healthy balances between church, family, school, sports, jobs, relationships, and other aspects of life. Attendees were encouraged to turn to the saints for inspiration, to frequent the sacraments, and to look to the Church for guidance to “stay the course.”

More than 400 youth and adults attended this year’s conference, the planning team of which was the youth group at Our Lady of the Lake Parish, Branson, under the leadership of Pat Hutcheson. ©TM

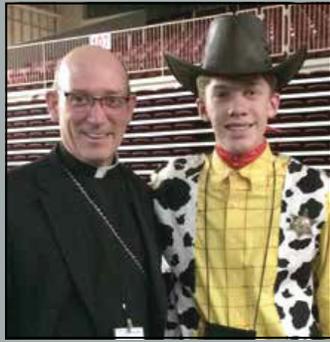
**Over 400 attend annual
Diocesan Youth Conference
in West Plains**



CARD GAME—Bishop Edward Rice (Right) played a round of cards Saturday evening with a group of youth and adult leaders during the Diocesan Youth Conference, March 24-26. (Photo by J.B. Kelly/The Mirror)



WORKSHOPS—Maryann Mitts of St. Peter the Apostle Parish in Joplin and Catholic Campus Ministry, Missouri Southern University, gave a workshop on handling “the stress of being a teen in today’s world.” She gave participants tips on how to strike a balance between Church, family, school, and other aspects of life. (Photo by J.B. Kelly/The Mirror)



TRIVIA NIGHT—Bishop Edward M. Rice caught up with “Woody,” a character from the movie Toy Story. Adam Waltman, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Springfield, dressed up for the trivia game during the Diocesan Youth Conference March 24-26 in West Plains. (The Mirror)



SEMINARIANS—Seminarians Nicholas Newton, Joshua Carroll, Brian Straus, and Deacon Joseph Stoverink shared a moment of fraternal frivolity in between workshop sessions at the Diocesan Youth Conference held March 24-26 in West Plains. (Photo by J.B. Kelly/The Mirror)



KEYNOTE—Keynote Speaker Jesse Manibusan encouraged those attending the Diocesan Youth Conference (DYC) to be “joy-filled people” and to not give in to discouragement when facing “bumps in road” as we journey through life. Over 400 attended the 2017 DYC held March 24-26 in the West Plains Civic Center. (Photo by J.B. Kelly/The Mirror)



EUCHARIST—Daniel D’Souza, a freshman at Springfield Catholic High School, received Communion from Bp. Rice during the closing Mass of the Diocesan Youth Conference on Sun., March 26. (Photo by J.B. Kelly/The Mirror)

Parents are in driver’s seat

Bishop Edward M. Rice led a session with parents during the Diocesan Youth Conference on Sat., March 25. He spoke of the importance of family, parents being the first teachers of the faith, and how to make sure youth “know the rules of the road, the principles of the faith,” to help them live their lives.

West Plains, MO

Echoing what Pope St. John Paul II said in 1999 while in St. Louis, Bp. Rice reminded parents that, “As the family goes, so goes the nation.”

“Family life has always had its challenges and our generation is not the first to deal with issues of poverty, violence, alcoholism, unemployment,” he said. “And today, we face other issues as well: Immigration, the drug epidemic, and racism.”

“One of the verses from the Old Testament I’ve always loved comes from Joshua 24:15, ‘As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord,’” Bp. Rice said.

“Pope John Paul II, in his letter ‘On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World’ stated that the mission of the family is to ‘guard, reveal, and communicate love,’” Bp. Rice said. “When that is accomplished, the family reflects God’s love for the world and the Church. Pope St. John Paul II challenged families, ‘Families, become what you are.’ What does that mean? It means to live out your baptismal call as family to be a witness to Christ in the world.”

“Today, the Church urgently needs families that are willing to strive for the personal sanctification of all their members, and especially children who are the future of the Church,” Bp. Rice told parents, “families that will witness to the beauty and truth of Catholic teaching on marriage and the family, to foster the family’s moral and spiritual strength, to withstand the threats in contemporary society.”

Pope Francis has stated that, “parents always influence the moral development of their children, for better or worse.”

“As parents, you must embrace this role consciously and enthusiastically,” Bp. Rice said.

“Never fear to speak of the faith,” he said. “Silence becomes lost opportunities.”

“Talk about the homily, read good religious books and update yourself,” Bp. Rice encouraged. “If, as Pope Francis has stated, the Church is a ‘field hospital,’ then the family is the nearest hospital where healing occurs.”

In closing, Bp. Rice posed several questions: “So, what lessons are you teaching your children? Are you in the driver’s seat? Is your home a ‘domestic church?’”

Bishop Rice’s homily and talks from the 2017 DYC may be found at www.dioscg.org.

Bishop Rice: *‘Is your home a Catholic home?’*

I recall when one of my seminary classmates had me over for dinner. There was a note on the top of their television, “Would Jesus watch this program with you?”

When we think of the filth that comes into the home by way of television, computer, or magazines, some of which is nothing more than soft porn, it is almost as if we have given the devil permission to live with us. We have unwittingly given sin permission to enter our homes, opening ourselves to temptation, vice, and sinfulness. We must reclaim the home as the “domestic Church” where the faith is lived and witnessed!

I ask, and this is where the ‘Driver’s Ed of Faith’ occurs: **“Is your home a Catholic home?”**



YOUTH LEADERS—Natalie Wren, youth leader at Holy Trinity Parish, Aurora; Mary Black, Co-Director, Camp Re-NEW-All, Cassville; Logan Lauffer, Holy Trinity Parish, Aurora; Bp. Edward M. Rice; Megan Gearhart, Holy Trinity Parish, Aurora; and Megan Moore, Co-Director, Camp Re-NEW-All, Cassville, were at the annual Diocesan Youth Conference in the West Plains Civic Center March 24-26. (The Mirror)