



## Office for Ministry with Youth

Archdiocese of Philadelphia

### Philadelphia Catholic Youth Conference (PCYC) Youth Witness

“My name is Beniris and I am a Junior...I attended the PCYC Program in 2022 as a Freshman. The PCYC Program was one of the best programs I’ve ever done. As a freshman, I was very lost in my faith and I didn’t understand it in the slightest. Now, I am the closest to God I’ve ever been, although I have a lot to improve on... The PCYC Program opened my eyes to trust in God. The culture of family and community at PCYC made me feel warm and safe. I didn’t feel ashamed with my lack of understanding and instead I was opened to a new way of living.

How the PCYC impacted me was informing me that God always has a plan for you no matter what. I cannot remember her name, but a lady who was there, she talked about a very deep and sensitive topic. She didn’t directly say it but I know what she meant. She had struggled to find the point and reason to keep going, but with God’s help she trusted him and she is now here and helping others like us who were lost to find the true way of life. She spread the word of God in a different way, in an inspiring way, such an amazing way. I never felt so understood by someone who was just talking their heart out to a crowd. I was just a freshman but that deeply impacted me. It deeply inspired me and motivated me to try and give my faith another try. I was lost but with the PCYC and her words, they have brought me here and her words have also helped me become more involved within my community. I go to a Catholic school of all faiths and in my Sophomore year I decided to go to the Puertorican Mass they have annually, and I felt good. I felt accomplished, I was there, I was there walking with everyone in a line holding a large flag of my heritage while also being united with my faith. I never felt so proud of myself and I knew that this would be a long road, but I was willing to do it to find my faith. I didn’t want to be in the dark anymore, I wanted to understand God’s love just as much as all those people who went up there and spoke to us at PCYC 2022.

Now, I’m a junior and although it’s been 2 years, that PCYC experience had helped me so much in a way I cannot explain with words. I’ve shown it with actions. I have become a Campus Ministry Student Leader at my school, which is that I help lower classmen who are similar to who I once was. Out of 84 students only 25 were accepted, I was part of the 25. My whole mission as a Campus Ministry Student Leader is to help, I want to assist, I want to

be just like those people who spoke at PCYC. I think about that often, I think about that trip very often.

The PCYC trip was the kind of trip that made you focus in the present moment. I wasn't stuck in my past, I wasn't thinking about the future. I was thinking about the moment and how God was standing before me. I know he was there, his presence was standing in that room, with those people who spoke. And, the clips! The clips that people would put on my shirt to show kindness. I was too shy to give anyone a clip, but I wish I did. If I were to go again, I'd take in the moment even more than I did 2 years ago.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my appreciation for the [PCYC and the] NCYC Program and to please continue being great. Never stop loving God. Amen”.

~ Beniris, Grade 11

