



## Office for Ministry with Youth

Archdiocese of Philadelphia

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

“From my point of view as a Catholic woman of God in a crazy generation, these types of gatherings are important because there aren’t many places where teens can go and worship God without judgment. They teach you things that aren’t really talked about and help you start somewhere. These events remind people of the importance of accepting the creator of life and love into their lives without pushing it in their face. The first time I attended PCYC in 2022, I didn’t know what to expect because it was my first time and I was a little hesitant about the event. Fast forward to when it started, I really liked how they had us sing a long to come together as a family to worship the Lord. When the time came for the holy sacrament, seeing everyone kneel down made me feel like I wasn’t the only one going through my journey with Christ. It made me realize that everyone’s story was still being written and it’s ok if it felt like my story was going slower than everyone else’s.

These types of gatherings have a spiritual / guiding value. When it feels like you're being forced to believe, you're less likely to want to even try. But when you willingly want to develop a relationship with Jesus and need a starting point, these events are an amazing start. The people don't force you to jump into knowing God, they just show you how it affected them and why it's so important that you should have him in your life too. This event taught me 3 things that continue to guide me today: 1: Even though you don't seek him, he's always going to be sitting at the table with love waiting for you. 2: God is such a just God that he will never force you to come to him because he knows that's not genuine love. He will lead you to him because real love is the love that leads you to your purpose and what's best for you. Finally, 3: We might go through some trials but God would never put us through things that would permanently hurt us. He only puts us through temporary pain for us to realize that the only thing we need is him.

Supporting these events are important for us youth because it's the thing that begins our spiritual journey for some of us. After attending, I didn't know that in the next few months I would be on my way to becoming a woman of God and starting my journey with Christ. Going to that event led me to go to NCYC. These domino effects are a prime example as to why you shouldn't be afraid to start that journey. This all goes

to show that yes God loves us and will always have our backs, but we have to take that first step, like I did going to PCYC 2022.”

~ Hedwig, Grade 12

