

Convocation of Catholic Leaders

by Marc Cadag

The Convocation of Catholic Leaders in Orlando on July 1-4 brought together myriads of individuals including cardinals, clergy, religious and lay, in order to celebrate and discuss the Joy of the Gospel in light of the changing landscape of Catholicism in the United States. I was blessed with the opportunity to attend as a representative of the CFC-Youth/SFC, which are branches of an international lay ecclesiastical movement known as Couples for Christ.

During the Convocation sessions that pertained directly to the youth, it was pointed out that the major struggle was that the younger generations are moving away from the Church, as young as 10 years old.

We are living in one of the most difficult times to be a Catholic in the USA and the question to reflect on is how do we address the negativity in these changing times. One of the best answers was that we need to support the youth because they are the future. Young people in the Church are highly underestimated, but they are the future leaders and members of the world. Investing time, knowledge, and resources into the youth of today will provide less worry about the future because they will be prepared for what the world has to throw at them. They are the Church's future priests, bishops, community leaders, and many others will have their own families.

During the Convocation, it was opportune to have a meeting of the Asian and Pacific Islanders attended by Bishop Randolph Calvo and Bishop William Justice, members of the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Island Affairs. Asian and Pacific Islanders are six percent of the overall US population, this racial group is relatively small, but it is growing at a fast pace. It was interesting to note that within the API communities, there are different groups of different ethnicities. The meeting helped to show that even within a minority such as API, there are so many sub-minorities that work within their specific ethnicity. The important lesson, it seems to me is the need to assist each other as Asians and Pacific Islanders, not separately as Filipinos, Koreans, or Vietnamese, etc. We need to help each other to figure out what we are doing and how we can do it better.

The Convocation provided many lessons to digest, but I believe one of the underlying themes behind every session was Unity. No matter what periphery or group we belong to, we are all Catholic. We need to work together as members of the one Catholic Church. The Convocation was an amazing moment and process to get everyone on the same page and share our ideas. May we continue to pray for each other as we continue to do God's work. AMDG!

Marc is currently a student at NJIT where he is finishing up a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering. He previously served as a youth leader for CFC-Youth NJ and transitioned into Singles for Christ (SFC) for further pastoral nourishment. He is also a catechist at St. Mary's Church in Nutley, NJ.