



This communication contains initial information concerning the Diocesan Youth Conference for 2023. Please read all the information contained in this communication to ensure you have a full understanding of the event.

What is the Diocesan Youth Conference?

The Diocesan Youth Conference (DYC) is an annual weekend event that gathers high school youth from Diocese of Richmond parishes in one central location. DYC is a highly energetic and engaging opportunity for our high school teenagers to gather as a larger Church community and celebrate the richness of our Catholic faith.

What are some highlights of the Diocesan Youth Conference for 2023?

- **Sacraments.** Mass will be celebrated on both Saturday and Sunday with all attendees. In addition, opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration and the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available.
- **Breakout Sessions.** We will offer breakout sessions for adults and teens focused on a variety of topics – there is something for everyone!
- **Diocesan Youth Choir.** We invite interested youth to participate in the Diocesan Youth Choir for Sunday Mass at DYC. Participants need to indicate if they would like to participate on their registration; these participants and their youth ministers will be notified about rehearsals during the weekend.
- **Rise Against Hunger.** Saturday afternoon includes a meal-packing service project event with Rise Against Hunger, giving teens a way to put their Catholic faith into action during the conference. These meals are sent to our brothers and sisters in need in the international community.

Who should attend the Diocesan Youth Conference?

The Conference is open to youth who are in 8th through 12th grade for the 2022-2023 academic year. No college-aged students may attend the Youth Conference; these individuals should be encouraged to attend the College Summit. *We ask all youth ministers to use appropriate pastoral judgment to determine if their 8th graders are mature enough to socially and spiritually be fully present to the conference.*

Where and when is the Diocesan Youth Conference?

The Diocesan Youth Conference will be held on Friday, February 10 through Sunday, February 12, 2023 at the Greater Richmond Convention Center in Richmond, Virginia.

Most youth and adult participants will be housed in the Richmond Marriott Downtown hotel located at 500 East Broad Street in Richmond. However, depending on registration numbers, several overflow hotels have been identified near the Greater Richmond Convention Center that parishes may be assigned to if necessary. All hotels are within walking distance.

I've heard that college students will be participating in the Diocesan Youth Conference? Is that true?

Yes and no. The "Campus Ministry Summit" will be happening concurrently with DYC this year at the Greater Richmond Convention Center. While most activities will remain separate, both the high school youth and college students will gather together for Friday night entertainment and for our Saturday morning Mass. All college students will have hotel accommodations in an off-site location. All registrations for the Summit are independent from the Diocesan Youth Conference.

A college student in our parish is attending the College Summit, can they travel with our parish to Richmond?

No. While the College Summit and DYC are both happening in Richmond, the start and end times, as well as the start location for each event, is very different. We are unable to accommodate transportation around Richmond for College Summit participants who travel with your parish. In addition, we cannot allow college-aged students to attend the Diocesan Youth Conference, including staying in hotel rooms with youth or adult participants from the Youth Conference. College students who want to attend the College Summit should reach out to their local campus minister or to our office to find out about registration.

What is the theme this year?

The theme this year is **From the Rising of the Sun to its Setting**, based primarily on Eucharistic Prayer III and Psalm 113 and drawing inspiration from Isaiah 60:19, Luke 1:76-79, and John 1:38-39. It can often seem in this life, that there is nothing but change. One day its raining, and the next there isn't a cloud in the sky; one day we are filled with laughter and the next we are overflowing with tears. But every day we know the sun will rise and that the sun will set – although life is marked by change, it is also marked with constancy.

Christ, the light of the world, died so that we could receive forgiveness of our sins and praise him for eternity. In the modern world we can often find ourselves running from place to place, changing scenery, changing careers, changing direction. We are restless until we root ourselves in what is constant: Our Lord. He is always constant – his love for mankind and his desire for us to be in an intimate union with Him will never change. The psalmist reminds us that the proper response to his constant giving to us is to become constant in our praise of Him: “from the rising of the sun to its setting let the name of the Lord be praised.” In the Eucharist we come to understand what constant praise of the Lord really means. In His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, Jesus gives Himself to us as an eternal offering, and in our reception of His Body and Blood we are brought into this one eternal sacrifice which calls us to live our lives out in praise of Him.

This praise requires a dying to the temptation to succumb to the whims of the moment; we are asked to remember what we were made for, to remember what Christ died for, and to praise the Lord in all things. Our fulfillment and purpose can be found in constant praise of the Lord through the changing seasons. The world tempts us into living double lives: in one circumstance we are one person and in the next we put on a new mask. The Lord calls us to put aside our masks and to turn back to him from dawn until dusk. When we find ourselves endlessly turning, Christ asks us like he asked the apostles “what do you seek?” When we guided by the light of the Lord, we can find our way whether the path is clear as day or if it is obscured by the darkness of night. With Christ as our light, the darkness cannot overshadow us. Like Adam and Eve, we are called to praise the Lord in our work and constantly live in his light. We become more like Him, what He made us to be, by becoming constant in our praise of him.

What is the registration fee?

The registration fee per participant is listed below:

Base Registration Fees:

- Youth Participants: \$210 (based on 4 youth per room)
 \$260 (based on 3 youth per room)
 \$310 (based on 2 youth per room)
- Adult Participants: \$235 (based on 2 adults per room)
 \$360 (based on 1 adult per room)

Discounts:

- Early Bird Discount: \$50 off registration fees if entered online by November 30, 2022 at 11:59pm

Additional Fees:

- Optional Sunday Box Lunch: \$7/participant

- Substitution Fee: \$50 for substitutions made by 11:59pm on January 8, 2023
No substitutions will be accepted after January 8, 2023, regardless of reason.
- Cancellation Fee: \$100 for cancellations made by 11:59pm on January 8, 2023
No refunds for cancellations made after January 8, 2023, regardless of reason.

Please note the following:

- **Registration closes on January 8, 2023 at 11:59 pm.**
- Any registrations not fully completed in the online system by November 30, 2022 at 11:59pm will not qualify for the early bird rate. This includes any names that are not correctly entered, or anything entered as “TBD”.
- The Diocese also has needs-based funding for individuals and parishes who need financial support. Please contact our office for more information.

What does this registration fee cover?

The registration fee will cover lodging on Friday and Saturday evenings. Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner as well as Sunday breakfast are included. A late-night snack on Friday and Saturday as well as a conference T-shirt are also included in the registration fee.

What is the lodging situation?

Typically, each hotel room has 2 queen-size beds. Each room will be assigned 2 adults OR 4 youth of the same gender unless your parish opts for smaller numbers of participants per room. The Office for Evangelization will combine parishes with odd numbers to maximize the room allocations.

All participants are required to stay at a hotel assigned by the Office for Evangelization for security reasons. There is NO day-only option available.

What are the requirements for adult chaperones?

For this event, 1 adult is required for every 8 youth who are participating in the Diocesan Youth Conference. Adult chaperones must be at least 21 years of age. Each adult chaperone must be in compliance with the Diocesan Safe Environment Policies, which includes completing the following:

- Screening One Volunteer Form (every 5 years)
- VIRTUS training (once)

How do I register?

All youth and adults must register through their parish Youth Minister OR Catholic school coordinator. The registration process includes:

1. **Registration Form:** Print out and distribute the registration form from www.evangelizerichmond.org. A copy should be maintained by the Youth Minister in case of emergency. **DO NOT SEND THESE TO THE OFFICE FOR EVANGELIZATION.**
2. **Register Participants via the Online Registration System:** If you are the parish Youth Minister, contact the Office for Evangelization to get the event-specific password for the online registration system.
3. **Send payments to the Office for Evangelization** (*if you did not pay via credit card on the online registration system*): Be sure to include your parish/school name along with a list of participants for whom the payment applies. All outstanding registration fees will be invoiced to the parish.

Is there a limit to what size group a parish can register this year?

Over the summer, parishes were asked to submit a forecast form for this event; the number of spots they requested on that form has been reserved for them. **If your parish submitted a forecast form and wants to bring additional people,**

you can enter them onto the waitlist on our registration site after you have used all of your reserved spots. On Monday, January 9, parishes with youth on the waitlist will receive communication from our office as to the status; if offered a spot, parishes will have until Wednesday, January 11 to accept it and to submit final rooming lists. **If your parish did not submit a forecast form**, please contact our office at evangelization@richmonddiocese.org.

Questions?

Contact us via email (evangelization@richmonddiocese.org) or phone (804-622-5159).