

Catholic TRANSCRIPT

MAY 2021

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Engaging young people IN THE CHURCH

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- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS: COMMUNITIES OF FAITH
- ENCOURAGING STUDENTS TO SAY 'YES' TO GOD
- CROSSROADS 4 CHRIST SERVES YOUNG ADULTS
- YOUNG MEN FOLLOW JESUS IN MODERN-DAY WAYS



Missionary DISCIPLES

Crossroads 4 Christ attracts young adults to a Christ-centered community.

Young adults from the Greater Hartford chapter chat in a small group discussion during a gathering at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in New Britain.



Liam Fama, who is facing Director of Mission Advancement Brad Endres, gives a talk on almsgiving during Lent to members of the New Haven chapter at St. Joseph Church, part of St. Mary Parish, in New Haven.

“I can’t help but think that at this time, this place is where God wants me to be,” he says. “It’s been a fruitful time to really grow in my faith and have that continuity from my Catholic college community to now.”

■ NEW EVANGELIZATION

At a time when many young adults are drifting away from the Catholic Church, Crossroads 4 Christ is giving them one more reason to stay. Whether young adults are busy launching new jobs or careers, looking for new friends or even potential marriage partners, or pondering their true vocation in life, this young adult ministry is available for weekly spiritual support.

In addition to Catholic friends, Crossroads 4 Christ offers a bridge to a more mature embrace of the faith, one that calls for connecting more deeply with Jesus, supporting one another on the spiritual journey of life, and spreading the good news to others.

“Our mission is to develop communities of young missionary disciples,” says Alex Soucy, executive director of Crossroads 4 Christ. The vision, he says, is to have “young adults reinvigorating the life of the Church.”

Soucy, now age 30, co-founded the organization in 2015 with his friend, Travis Moran, after Pope Francis visited Philadelphia as part of a trip to the United States. “On the bus ride back, the two of us felt inspired by the Holy Spirit to do something, to answer this ache in our hearts that we had for community, for a deeper relationship with Christ,” Soucy explains.

So they invited friends to gather on a weeknight to talk about their faith and spend time at church in eucharistic adoration. The concept took off, and as young people got involved with the group and then moved around the state, they started new chapters in new locations. “It grew organically,” Soucy says.

Today, Crossroads 4 Christ has six chapters in the state, three within the Archdiocese of Hartford that meet at churches in

Story by **SHELLEY WOLF** | Photos by **AARON JOSEPH**

When Christopher Tillotson attended an evening meeting of Crossroads 4 Christ at St. Joseph Church, part of St. Mary Parish, in New Haven, he finally felt spiritually at home. He says he felt connected to God and part of a warm and welcoming community of like-minded young adults, openly expressing their faith.

“It has brought me closer to Christ because I’m with other young adults, and we’re talking about topics and learning about ways to carry out the faith,” the 22-year-old says. He’s also participating in spiritual exercises “just trying to more actively discern what God wants for me.”

Tillotson found the New Haven chapter of Crossroads 4 Christ last summer after gradu-

ating from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts and landing a job in Connecticut as an engineer.

“When I was at WPI, I was involved with the Newman Club and I began thinking, ‘I’m going to start a job in an area where I don’t know anyone,’” he says. He suddenly realized he would need to build a whole new life and wondered where he

*Reaching Out,
Healing Together*

EDITOR’S NOTE:
Crossroads 4 Christ, a young adult lay apostolate, is funded in part through the Vicariate Outreach Program of the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal.



Christopher Tillotson, who recently moved to Connecticut, appreciates being welcomed and supported in faith by members of the New Haven chapter.

would find spiritual support.

Fortunately, a friend suggested he join Crossroads 4 Christ, a young adult lay apostolate with six chapters throughout Connecticut. Each chapter offers weekly gatherings where young adults can find a Catholic community of their peers to grow together in faith.

Meetings provide an opportunity to make new friends, hear how God is working in their lives, learn more about the Catholic faith through 10-minute spiritual talks and even set aside time for adoration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Tillotson says group members also invited him on summer hikes and on a winter ice fishing trip. He joined the parish, too.

'INTO THE DEEP' CONFERENCE

Crossroads 4 Christ will hold its second annual Young Adult Conference from May 17 to 23. This year's theme, "Into the Deep," aims to bring participants deeper into the abundant life Jesus offers. The weeklong conference will offer local and national speakers through online talks and virtual Q&As as well as the opportunity to join the C4C community at a few in-person events. Free registration is open to all young adults, ages 18 to 39, and anyone interested in learning about young adult evangelization and Catholic life. For registration and more information, visit 4conference.org. For more information on chapters and weekly meetings, visit crossroadsforchrist.org/chapters.

New Britain, New Haven and Watertown, and an administrative office in a former convent in Manchester. The apostolate is also gaining a following online too. Last May, when it hosted its first weeklong "Reason for Hope" Young Adult Virtual Conference, 1,100 young adults participated from 46 states and 28 countries.

'ENLIGHTENING COMMUNITY'



Tom Saunders, who joined the Greater Hartford chapter, values growing in faith through short spiritual talks and adoration.

"I just fell in love with the members and the teachings they do, and I made some good friends out of it," he says. Saunders views the group as "an enlightening community. I feel like I'm getting more spiritual knowledge of the teachings of our Catholic faith and we're going more into depth with the catechism."

As a result, he says, "It makes me feel close to God, the Holy Spirit and the Trinity. It makes me think I can live my life more like Jesus, spreading the faith and loving my neighbor."

Saunders especially looks forward to adoration. "Adoration is probably my favorite," he says. "It's the glue to everything we talked about. That hour with your own thoughts and God, trying to connect the teaching and what you've heard, it's a good peaceful and meditative moment that you rarely find in the hustle and bustle of life."

During the gatherings, Saunders also likes hearing other young adults talk about how their lives are changing. "It's a way to share

in people's lives," he says. "It's a great way to build your love for the community and your Catholic faith." He says he's now planning to switch his parish affiliation to St. Francis of Assisi Parish.

GROWING WITH OTHER YOUNG ADULTS



Lauren Noce, who attends the Greater Waterbury chapter, enjoys participating in group service projects.

Lauren Noce, now age 26, began a job in 2019 as education coordinator for Carolyn's Place, a pregnancy care center in Waterbury. "It's awesome because it's right downtown, near the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception," she says.

While attending daily Mass at the Basilica at noon, she says she was surprised to spot a few other young adults like herself. Among them was the leader of the Crossroads 4 Christ Greater Waterbury chapter, who invited her to a meeting at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Watertown.

"I went. Everybody was super warm, welcoming, young and passionate about their faith," Noce says. "I felt like I never left Franciscan University. It's a great way to meet good people."

During the early days of the pandemic, Noce says, she participated in meetings through Zoom, and later through a hybrid option of video conference or in-person meetings, which offered her critical spiritual support when she contracted COVID-19 herself and needed to quarantine at home. Now recovered, she appreciates how flexible and accommodating the weekly program is.

Noce has also found many other reasons to stay connected. "I've participated in some service projects that we've had," she says, such as raking leaves for an elderly woman and Christmas caroling at a nursing home. Some Crossroads members volunteered at Carolyn's Place, too.

"There's a young couple that just got engaged and did a really sweet interview about the virtue of chastity, because that's part of my job at Carolyn's Place," she adds, to educate others in the beneficial teachings of the faith.

When it comes to Crossroads 4 Christ, she says, "They're some of the nicest people I've ever met. They just support me in my faith. Whatever they do, I want to be a part of it."

Noce particularly delights in the hikes combined with prayers. "It's just a good avenue to meet people at the same stage of life and grow with them." 📍



THE HARTFORD BISHOPS' FOUNDATION CONTINUES SUPPORTING LOCAL FAITH COMMUNITIES DURING COVID-19

Thanks to supporters of The Hartford Bishops' Foundation and the Forward with Faith Campaign, more than \$2.7 million was disbursed by the Foundation in 2020 to support local community needs, innovative new Catholic education and evangelization programs and COVID-19 emergency response services across Litchfield, New Haven and Hartford Counties.

Below is a selection of testimonials from the Foundation's 2020 grant recipients:



Funding from the HBF provided students and teachers at Catholic Academy of Waterbury with laptops and touch-screen devices to enable safe in-person and distance learning.

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart to Archbishop Blair and The Hartford Bishops' Foundation. Our staff and students will reap invaluable benefits as a result of the generous grant we received for our technology. In these difficult times, the quintessentially Catholic education we promise to our students is possible because of you. God bless you!"

— Christa Chodkowski, principal, Catholic Academy of Waterbury



St. Thomas the Apostle Church received funding from the HBF to enhance its online communications with parish families and host virtual faith formation classes, retreats and numerous other activities.

"The Hartford Bishops' Foundation's 'Innovation Grant' has enabled our parish to establish a digital hub with online faith formation programs, resources and activities for families of all ages to access from home. More importantly, our ability to communicate with families via text messaging and email newsletters will help drive church attendance and enrollment in our faith formation program. We are very thankful for the Foundation's support which has helped us move forward with redesigning faith formation at St. Thomas."

— Wanda J. Mascola, director of Faith Formation, St. Thomas the Apostle Church, Oxford

THANK YOU to the families who supported The Hartford Bishops' Foundation and made these grants possible. To learn more, visit hartfordbishopsfoundation.org.

"IN THESE DIFFICULT TIMES, THE QUINT-ESSENTIALLY CATHOLIC EDUCATION WE PROMISE TO OUR STUDENTS IS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF YOU."



St. Paul School received emergency response funding for new technology, professional development and facility upgrades to continue Catholic education while keeping teachers and students safe.

"On behalf of the faculty, staff and students of St. Paul School, I thank you for the generous grant from The Hartford Bishops' Foundation. It is very much appreciated as we continue to face increased expenses in providing a high-quality educational experience to our remote learners and a safe and clean environment to our students here at school."

— Fayne M. Molloy, principal, St. Paul School, Kensington