

## [Delegates gather at annual Diocesan Youth Congress](#)



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### [Youth & Young Adult - Youth and Young Adults News](#)

Published by Kieran McGirl

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Photo by James A. McBride



Left photo: Father Frank Danella of Pius X Spiritual Life Center, Blackwood speaks to delegates at the sixth annual Diocesan Youth Congress, held April 3-5 at Holy Spirit High School, Absecon.

*Kieran McGirl, 16, a sophomore at Gloucester Catholic High School, participated in the sixth annual Diocesan Youth Congress, held April 3-5, as a youth representative/delegate from Church of the Holy Family, Sewell. Diocesan Youth Congress is a vehicle by which the youth of the diocese come together and challenge themselves to become more actively involved in all aspects of the church.*

During his papacy, Pope John Paul II emphasized the importance of youth in the Catholic Church. Today, I believe that he is looking down on our diocese with a smile upon his face due to what occurred at Holy Spirit High School in Absecon from Friday, April 3 to Sunday, April 5.

During this weekend, youth from around the diocese, chosen by the pastors of their respective parishes to represent their church as delegates, gathered for the annual youth congress.

The weekend began Friday evening with a series of icebreakers and pizza, creating the opportunity for delegates to meet and form new friendships.

Throughout the short weekend, young people talked to each other about life's big questions, and about their own lives. This is my personal favorite aspect of the Catholic church: It always seems that whenever you are in need there is always someone there, willing to help.

By the time the delegates were saying goodbye at the end of the weekend, many were exchanging cell phone numbers.

One of the weekend's formal presentations was by Father Frank Danella of St. Pius X Spiritual Life Center, Blackwood, who spoke about St. Paul's conversion.

"It amazed me how one man, through the presence of Jesus Christ, could completely pull a 180 on his life," said one of the youth leaders. "It helped me to deepen my faith and learn that even in the society we live in, which is tainted by abortion, murder and other...unholy things, everything can change."

For many, the weekend was an emotional time.

Delegate Jackie Meenan said, "When I went into the confessional, everyone seemed happy and just fine but as I left, (and) prepared to complete my penance, I couldn't help but notice that there were so many

shedding tears. When reflecting, they realized how they may have defied their Lord Jesus Christ. I then started to weep tears of sorrow.”

Part of the weekend consisted of the delegates brainstorming and composing a document that would ultimately be presented to Bishop Joseph A. Galante.

The youth congress ended Palm Sunday in the auditorium of Holy Spirit, where Mass was celebrated by Father Perry Cherubini, president of Holy Spirit High School.

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