

A few weekends ago, 6 students and I attended a life changing experience in Indianapolis, Indiana as we were a part of a group of 133 people from our diocese that joined 25,000 others at the National Catholic Youth Conference. I wanted to take a moment and share with you in our students words what the experience was like:

"23,000 catholic teenagers, lucas oil stadium, singing, dancing, praise, worship, reconciliation, mass, workshops, free hugs, udder cream, sand painting, animators, keynote speakers, valimar jansen, dance parties, whitehall pants, prayer, NCYC 2011 ♥"

"NCYC 2011 ♥ best thing i could've possibly done for myself. most incredible weekend of my life by far"

"NCYC was amazing! it was soo much fun and i learned a lot. It brought me closer to God in a way. There were some strong messages that i got out of it. It was indescribable. :)"

"NCYC was beyond incredible; 23,000 kids just like me defending, believing, and living the same faith all at the same party. My journey began the first night in the stadium when we all broke out singing "the circle of life" from the Lion King, the fact we all grew up with it and know all the words made me feel connected to these thousands of kids. Then on the last night we had mass in the stadium with everyone. All knew the responses, when to stand/sit/kneel/pray/sing, and all had respect for the Eucharist. We all joined hands for the Our Father and we felt like one big family. The realization hit me that even though these kids are from all over the country and are so unique from each other, just like the Lion King, we have that connection to each other so strongly bound in our faith- we are one in Christ- and I'm so proud to have been a part of NCYC. CATHOLICS ARE SO COOL!

"This has by far been the best weekend of my life. I experienced Christ in a whole new way at NCYC in Indianapolis. Though I thought of myself as a strong Catholic before this trip, my faith has grown even stronger during these past few days. I had the best Reconciliation of my life, met new friends and grew closer to old ones, went to Mass with 25,000 people! The Lord works in wonderful, mysterious ways! Amen(:"

"NCYC was so much fun we got to have church with over 23,000 people. Was so much fun but it could be better if so more guys would go next time!!"

"NCYC was amazing. There are no words to describe 23,000 kids in one stadium all believing the same things. Just the fact that everyone always knew what to say and what to sing was so cool. Also, I never realized how much Christ was present in our lives until they connected Him to so many things, from music to Kung Fu Panda. NCYC was the best weekend of my life, and I can't wait until 2013"

I thank you all for your support in helping these students participate! If you missed out, there will be a chance this February to get a small taste of that experience at the Diocesan Youth Conference!

~Jim H