

Graces

Charis
MINISTRIES

News and Events for Friends of Charis Ministries

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Dear Friends of Charis Ministries,

This quarter, we offer stories showing how Charis Ministries sharing the light of Christ with adults in their 20s and 30s across the country through education, prayer, and service. We hope you enjoy!

If anyone you know would like to receive our Graces newsletter by mail or e-mail, please contact us at development@charisministries.org.

Thank you for your interest in and support of Charis Ministries and our outreach to those in their 20s and 30s.

Blessings,



Fr. Michael Sparough, SJ
Executive Director



LETTING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST INTO OUR LIVES

African-American spirituals and murmured "Amen"s filled the second floor of the [Catholic Theological Union](#) (CTU) in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood during Charis Ministries' annual Lenten Day of Reflection. Over 60 young adults gathered to hear Fr. Joseph A. Brown, SJ, share his thoughts on letting the light of Christ into their lives. Singer and actress Adia Dobbins joined musicians Scott Patterson, Patrick Curran, Adam DeLeon, SJ, and Eric Styles, SJ, in accenting the day's message through soul-inspiring lyrics and instrumentals.



Presented in partnership with [Catholics on Call](#) and the [Tolton Scholars Program](#) of CTU and co-sponsored by ReCiL (Reclaiming Christ in Life) of the Archdiocese of Chicago, and Old St. Patrick's Church, the day truly embodied a multi-cultural spiritual experience, fusing evangelical preaching with contemporary Catholic theology. Inspired by multi-media presentations, lectures, private reflection, and small group discussions, participants considered a variety of tough questions about overcoming the past, opening the heart to God, discipleship, and seeking forgiveness. At the end of the day, attendee Andrea Lyke shared, "Today I was finally able to let go of the past and experience peace as God released all the negativity that had been clogging my spirit for so long."

CHARIS RETREATS ON THE NATIONAL SCENE

Charis Ministries' national partners are keeping busy these days! In Ohio, the [Archdiocese of Cincinnati's Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry](#) piloted a Catholic School Teachers' Retreat in February. Thirty young adults spent two days reflecting on their personal relationships with Jesus and the Catholic Church and their personal vocation as Catholic school teachers. Charis Ministries and the [Archdiocese of Chicago](#) are planning a similar retreat for next year. The [University of Georgia in Athens](#) held a *Seekers'* Retreat Day in March for over two dozen students. One student shared, "I arrived seeking so much. I found that I discovered that truly I was seeking only one thing—confirmation, acceptance, and encouragement." See charisretreats.org for a complete listing of all national Charis retreats.

UPCOMING EVENTS

ONGOING

19th Annotation Retreat
Spiritual Direction

MAY

21: Living Ignatian Speaker

JUNE

4: Living Ignatian Mass

13-20: Service Trip to
Pontotoc, Mississippi

JULY

17-19: *Come to the Quiet*
Silent Weekend Retreat

22-26: Pilgrimage of Prayer
Springfield, IL

31: Feast Day of
St. Ignatius Loyola

AUGUST

28-30: *Jesus* Weekend Retreat

SEPTEMBER

13: Catholic Open House

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

CATHOLIC OPEN HOUSE

Know any Catholics in their 20s & 30s who are new or returning to Chicago? Students? Grads? Encourage them to attend our FREE Catholic Open House on Sunday, September 13, 2009. Charis Ministries is teaming up with parishes, ministries and volunteer organizations in the Chicago and Joliet area to share resources with young adults about engaging in their Catholic faith.



View the entire [calendar](#) online!

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FOR THE LEAST OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS PEACE AND JUSTICE RETREAT

Whether service is their occupation or their weekend passion, participants on this year's *For the Least* retreat were rejuvenated in their mission of promoting social justice in their communities. Thoughtful presentations, private reflection time, and small group discussion allowed the retreatants to explore how to continue making a difference despite the many challenges they face in our world.

This annual weekend retreat brought over 30 participants to the Fullerton Retreat and Conference Center in Chicago, including members of the Loyola University [JVC-Magis](#) and [LU-Choice](#) post-graduate volunteer programs and other service-minded adults in their 20s and 30s. Keynote speakers Fr. John Haughey, SJ ([Woodstock Theological Center](#)) and Dr. Nancy Tuchman, PhD (Loyola University [Department of Environmental Studies](#)) connected faith with ecology, and the team member talks challenged participants to look beyond the surface and work towards systematic change.



"This retreat helped remind me, as Hopkins wrote, of the 'grandeur of God,' and become charged with the enthusiasm to make God's reign on earth a tangible reality. It was a true gift to be in the company of such determined and faithful people committed to living the Gospel," said retreat team member Jordan Skarr, who works with the Ignatian Spirituality Project. Podcasts and reflections from the retreat will be available on our blog at [charisministries.blogspot.com](#).

LIVING IGNATIAN SPEAKER SERIES CONTINUES

Charis Ministries' participants are challenged to "Find God in All Things" and deepen their participation in Ignatian Spirituality through our Living Ignatian Series, a program that incorporates service experiences, worship opportunities, and evening speakers.

In October, Claire Noonan, Director of the [Siena Center](#) at Dominican University in Chicago, unpacked the meaning of St. Ignatius' *Examen* prayer. February's conversation with Mike Hayes, co-founder of New York-based [BustedHalo.com](#), introduced tools of Ignatian decision-making. In April, Chicago Jesuit Fr. Pat McGrath, SJ, spoke about making moral decisions and forming one's conscience. In May, Beth Knobbe, campus minister at Northwestern University's [Sheil Catholic Center](#), will present an evening of Ignatian Prayer.

An average of 30-50 people attend each presentation, held at Holy Name Cathedral in downtown Chicago. Regular attendee Jean Bax shared, "I've been a fan of Ignatian spirituality since I was a Jesuit Volunteer. Charis Ministries helps me stay connected to Ignatian spirituality, deepen my understanding of it, and integrate it more into my day-to-day life." Our Living Ignatian talks are also available online on our blog at [charisministries.blogspot.com](#).

EVENT RECAPS

See reviews from participants and leaders on all of our events at [charisministries.blogspot.com](#).

Sign up to our blog be notified when new blogs are posted!

Living Ignatian Service Day March 7, 2009

Twelve volunteers from Charis Ministries and Old St. Pat's worked at the mobile food pantry at the [Mission of Our Lady of the Angels](#) in the Humboldt Park neighborhood of Chicago. They served breakfast and visited with over 200 people in less than two hours! The volunteers also unloaded, sorted, and distributed food donations from Greater Chicago Food Depository.

Charis Cor Mass & Dinner March 31, 2009

Members of the newly-designed Charis Cor gathered for Mass and dinner with Fr. Michael Sparough, SJ and Programming Coordinator Lauren Gaffey. The Charis Cor will serve as leaders at programs and ambassadors in inviting others to become more engaged in Charis Ministries.

Lenten Faith-Sharing Groups February-April, 2009

Throughout the forty days of Lent, adults in their 20s and 30s met at St. Andrew's Parish in Chicago once a week to relate Scripture and Lenten themes to their own lives. "I really enjoy being in a faith-sharing group, especially during Lent," said Anna Kurtz, one of the group leaders. "Sharing with so many diverse and wonderful people brings powerful spiritual and emotional connections to the season that I otherwise would have missed."

DID YOU KNOW
you can donate online at
[charisministries.org](#)