

# NATIONAL FEDERATION FOR CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTRY

## NFCYM MISSION STATEMENT

TO SERVE THOSE WHO SERVE THE YOUNG  
CATHOLIC CHURCH.

### Our Goals

- Provide vision, leadership, professional standards, and educational, spiritual, and ministry formation to youth ministers
- Advocate for youth in the Catholic Church and in society to ensure their voices are heard and their gifts valued
- Promote and encourage ministry to youth across cultures, settings, and environments
- Ensure that the structures, programs, and services reflect the multicultural and diverse church
- Collaborate with the Catholic Church and with youth-serving organizations to affect youth ministry



Cultivate love of neighbor and try to put yourselves and your human talents and professional abilities at the service of the common good and of truth, always prepared to “make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you” (1 Pet 3:15).

Pope Benedict XVI  
Message for World Youth Day 2009

## Our Roots

In 1930, Chicago was a wide-open town. As a young priest, Bishop Bernard J. Sheil had served as a chaplain at the Cook County Jail, seen young people idolize Al Capone, and witnessed park and playground fights over neighborhood turf along ethnic and racial lines. The Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) was born in the midst of this social upheaval.

With an inheritance from his father and the larger stage afforded a bishop, Bishop

Sheil established CYO to promote Catholic unity and cut inroads into mainstream culture. In the early days, CYO sponsored athletic programs for elementary and high school youth and was unique in that it welcomed participation from youths with diverse faith backgrounds. As the organization took root across the country, CYO offered Vacation Bible Schools, social services, and community centers. Bishop Sheil's program transcended race, ethnicity and social position for the

benefit of Catholic youth.

In parallel fashion, the National Catholic Women's Council (NCWC) formed the Catholic Youth Bureau in Washington in 1937. Under the direction of Father Vincent Mooney, the Bureau encouraged and assisted existing Catholic youth organizations. As a natural outgrowth of the patronage of NCWC, programming also addressed the needs of Catholic girls and young women.

Hallmarks of the Catholic



Youth Bureau were the first "youth conference" hosted in Salt Lake City and sponsorship of Call to Youth, a radio program broadcast by NBC radio on Saturday evenings.



In 1940, the Vatican asked the U.S. Bishops to unite the separate groups into a National Catholic Youth Council. The goal was ". . . to better promote Christian ideals and better safeguard the young from the many pitfalls they encounter." The merger bore fruit in Parish Youth Councils and campus

ministry centers across the country.

Through the years, the name changed, but the mission to the young church remained a consistent emphasis. CYO, as imagined by Bishop Sheil, grew beyond athletics. The face of

youth ministry in the 1960s and 1970s reflected retreat opportunities, community service, athletic programs, and group leader training. Eventually, the programs received financial and administrative support from the United States Catholic Conference (USCC).

## THE TWAIN MEET

## NATIONAL FEDERATION FOR CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTRY GROWS UP

In the early 1980s, double-digit inflation led to financial shortfalls at the USCC. Seeking to balance the budget, the Conference elected to emancipate initiatives with outside funding. The emergency led to the formation of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM), which directed its resources and efforts toward enabling diocesan youth ministry. By 1982, NFCYM was a separate non-profit corporation focused on forming adult leaders to work in partnership with groups providing direct services to youth.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, a renaissance in NFCYM leadership produced foundational training materials for parish and diocesan youth ministry; sponsored robust adult professional development conferences; and, forged collaborative relationships with key ministry partners.

## 25 YEARS OF MISSION AND MINISTRY TO YOUTH



In 2006, Executive Director Bob McCarty reflected on the 25th Anniversary of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry with these words:

“In the fall of 1981 at a meeting in Chicago, (NFCYM) devised a structure, proposed a range of services, and selected a name – which was a very significant decision – since NFCYM represented a commitment to the comprehensive approach of the 1976 document, A Vision of Youth Ministry, rather than a description of either membership or structure. Naming the organization, National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry went a long way toward determining its mission, membership and scope.”

### CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE



Year	Host City	Attendance
2007	Columbus	20,000
2005	Atlanta	22,000
2003	Houston	22,000
2001	Indianapolis	25,000
1999	St. Louis	22,400
1997	Kansas City	17,500
1995	Minneapolis	11,000
1993	Philadelphia	9,000

*You are the light of the world. A city built on a hilltop cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lampstand where it shines for all in the house. In the same way your light must shine, . . . so that, seeing your good works, they may give praise to your Father in heaven.*  
(Matthew 5:14-16)

### WHO WE ARE IN THE UNITED STATES

68,115,001 Catholics, 22 percent of the U.S. population

175 Diocesan Directors of Youth Ministry

12,000 Parish Youth Ministry Leaders: 8,000 volunteer and 4,000 salaried

#### Partners in Ministry - NFCYM Service Centers

##### Collaborating Members

- National CYO Sports
- Catholic Youth Foundation USA
- National Association of Catholic Ministry Leaders
- National Catholic Committee for Girl Scouts USA and Camp Fire USA



62 Youth-Oriented Groups or Organizations, who share in the mission and activities of NFCYM

#### Numbers of Youth Involved in Catholic Youth Ministry

Given the breadth of youth programming offered by the Catholic Church, there is no reliable way to report unduplicated numbers of youth served through various programs. Some students attend Catholic High School and take part in parish-sponsored programs. Other youths take mission trips or participate in youth rallies and retreats. The USCCB confirmed that in 2008, 722,599 youth attended parish religious education programs and 674,380 were enrolled in Catholic High Schools.

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CATHOLIC YOUTH  
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**NFCYM**  
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## THE PEOPLE BEHIND NFCYM

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**Ruby Mikell**

Director of Operations

**Michael Theisen**

Director of Membership Services

**Matthew Robaszekwicz**

Membership Services Coordinator and Meeting Planner

## SOUL SEARCHING

The U.S. Bishops have issued a call to a comprehensive pastoral outreach and ministry to adolescents. In *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Youth Ministry*, the church leaders endorsed programs that include religious education, worship opportunities, leadership development, and programs and services that put youth on the "radar screen" of the church. This approach affirms not only that religion matters in the lives of youth, but also that youth matter in the life of their faith community.