

# Catholic high school youths learn about evangelization

**By Elizabeth Lowe**

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SPARKS - Mount de Sales Academy senior Madison Bolesta remembers how good she felt after a classmate spontaneously invited her to attend Mass at the Catonsville school one morning before school.

"It's easy (to do)," said Bolesta, a parishioner of Sacred Heart, Glyndon. "We need to be that person."

Bolesta was one of about 40 students and 10 campus ministers from 10 Catholic high schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore who attended a daylong conference Sept. 25 at the Monsignor O'Dwyer Retreat House to talk about the New Evangelization and Year of Faith, which begins Oct. 11.

The "New Evangelization" refers to a movement promoted by Blessed Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict to encourage people to grow in their faith - especially those who have drifted away from the practice of their faith. Pope Benedict has asked believers to "re-propose" the Gospel to others. He also established the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization.

The Sparks conference was the first of its kind, organized by the Department of Evangelization's Division of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, said Scott Miller, the department's director.

*To view a slideshow, navigate the arrows below:*

The conference aimed to “look at the New Evangelization and prepare for the Year of Faith” and “how they (students) can be better at sharing their faith in small and large ways,” said Miller, who noted this includes the use of social media as a way of faith sharing.

The conference featured prayer, witness talks and Mass celebrated by Father Samuel V. Young, pastor of Our Lady of Grace, Parkton.

In his homily, Father Young told the youths that “we need to be the advocate God calls us to be.”

During her presentation, Ginny Dauses, campus minister at St. Mary’s High School in Annapolis, handed out candy and mustaches on sticks to the youths as metaphors for being joyful about their faith.

“It’s so important for you to be F.A.T.,” said Dauses, referring to the acronym which stands for faithful, available and teachable.

Before youths can evangelize, Dauses said, they must first know and love God; be faithful, available and teachable; and joyful.

“We’re sharing good news,” Dauses said. “The majority of you are already doing it without even knowing it.”

Jonathan Garrish, a junior at Calvert Hall College High School in Towson and a parishioner of St. Joseph, Fullerton, said he learned “how to spread my faith in a new way.”

This includes “Jesus tweets” on the social media website Twitter and blasting Christian rock music in his car, Garrish said.

Conventual Franciscan Friar Father Matthew Foley, director of campus ministry and a religion teacher at Archbishop Curley High School in Baltimore, said the conference topic “is so important.”

“Young people ministering to each other is incredibly effective,” Father Foley said.

Shannon Collyer, campus minister at Mount de Sales, said the conference made

evangelization relatable to the youths.

“I hope all of these students implement some of the things we talked about today,” Collyer said. “What a big difference that would make in the greater Baltimore community.”

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