

FORTNIGHT  
FOR  
FREEDOM

*Freedom for Mission*

JUNE 21 - JULY 4, 2017

## ESSAY CONTEST

### OVERVIEW

The Fortnight for Freedom is a national initiative of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), occurring June 21 through July 4, 2017. The purpose of the Fortnight is to encourage Catholics to reflect on their Christian heritage through prayer, study, and peaceful public action to affirm the importance of religious freedom. This year's theme is "Freedom for Mission," which emphasizes the Christian missionary call to demonstrate the Gospel in action. Observance of the Fortnight begins with a national Mass at the Baltimore Basilica on June 21, 2017 at 7:00 PM.

Archbishop William E. Lori, Archbishop of Baltimore, reminds us that "Christianity was born into a hostile environment from which it did not shrink. Rather, led by the Apostles, the Church bore witness to Christ, the living Word of God, by loving one's neighbor in need as Christ would have done." To assist Catholics in the Archdiocese of Baltimore in observing this year's Fortnight and in embracing the freedom that permits our outward expression of faith, the Archdiocese has created the "Freedom for Mission" essay contest.

### GOAL

The goal of the Fortnight for Freedom "Freedom for Mission" Essay Contest is to demonstrate how our Catholic faith (including Catholic school education) instills a sense of mission to bear witness to the Gospel as expressed through acts of charity.

### ELIGIBILITY

The Fortnight for Freedom "Freedom for Mission" Essay Contest is open to all students from Catholic schools, parish religious education programs, and homeschooling co-ops, grades 1 through 12.

### ESSAY TOPIC

Participants are invited to share their personal stories about how their Catholic faith inspires their commitment to perform acts of service and mission within their school, parish, or neighborhood community.

Essay submissions should include a description of at least one service activity performed. Service activities may include initiatives sponsored or organized by a parish, school, or community, and must demonstrate the giving of one's self for the benefit of another.

### EXAMPLES

Examples of missions and acts of service may include:

- A student in a Catholic school or parish religious education program who participated in a service activity.
- A Catholic family who saw a human need and, as a family inspired by faith, responded to the need.
- An individual service project or mission.

### GUIDELINES

Essay responses should be no more than 500 words and must be clear and concise and include references to the following:

- **Christian Act of Service.** What is the act of service? How does it demonstrate our Christian missionary call to live the Gospel? How does it "bear witness" to the Gospel and our Catholic faith?
- **Catholic Education.** How has the ministry of Catholic education – through school, religious education, or homeschooling – instilled a sense of mission to bear witness to the Gospel through acts of charity?
- **Religious Freedom.** Discuss the importance of living in a society that embraces the God-given freedom to express one's faith through service to others.
- **Impact.** What were the benefits derived from this mission or act of service? How has it impacted you? How has your understanding to serve others been deepened?

## **SUBMISSION PROCEDURES**

Essay submissions may be mailed or sent electronically.

### **Mail:**

Complete and sign the entry form. Entries must be postmarked by June 12, 2017 and mailed to:

Archdiocese of Baltimore  
Office of Communications  
320 Cathedral Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201

### **Electronic:**

Visit [www.archbalt.org/fortnightforfreedom](http://www.archbalt.org/fortnightforfreedom), click on the link for "Essay Contest" and complete the "Entry Form" and email it with the completed essay to [communications@archbalt.org](mailto:communications@archbalt.org). Entries must be submitted by June 15, 2017.

Photographs and testimonials are excellent additions to entries. Submissions will be primarily evaluated on how well the entrant fulfills the aforementioned guidelines through their personal story

## **EVALUATION**

Evaluation of entries will be conducted by representatives of the Archdiocese.

## **AWARDS**

Two winners will be selected, and two honorable mentions will be selected.

- 1<sup>st</sup> grade through 5<sup>th</sup> grade winner and honorable mention
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade winner and honorable mention

Each winner will receive a \$100 Visa gift card. Each honorable mention will receive a \$50 Visa gift card. The parish or school with the most participation, or attendance at the Fortnight Mass on June 21, 2017, will receive a visit from Archbishop Lori to teach one religion or religious education class. Date to be determined.

Winners must be available to attend the national Opening Mass of the Fortnight for Freedom, June 21, 2017 at 7:00 PM at the Baltimore Basilica, where they will be announced. Winners may be asked to read all or a portion of their essays during the June 21 Mass, which is to be aired live on the Eternal Word Television Network. Winning entries will also be published in the Catholic Review and shared on the Archdiocese of Baltimore's social media channels and website.

## **TIMETABLE**

June 15 – All entries must be submitted by this date.

June 21 – Winning essays announced and read at the Opening Mass.

## **SPONSORING ORGANIZATION**

Archdiocese of Baltimore