

# Youths recognized at annual Eagle of the Cross ceremony

**By Elizabeth Lowe**

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CATONSVILLE - Avery Daniels, a parishioner of St. Cecilia in Baltimore, credits his family, parish elders and school community with teaching him about service.

"I try to get involved with a lot at church," said Daniels, a senior at Friends School of Baltimore. "My family taught me that ministry and service are the hallmark of Christianity."

Daniels is one of 19 youths who received Eagle of the Cross medals this year from the Archdiocese of Baltimore's Division of Youth and Young Adult Ministry Office.

Twelve youths attended the 2013 Eagle of the Cross ceremony May 2 at St. Agnes Church, which began with a liturgy. The award celebrates outstanding apostolic mission, Christian leadership and moral integrity.

Daniels' service includes ministering as a youth group leader and altar server at St. Cecilia, participating in the Baltimore Youth Catholic Conference and volunteering at soup kitchens and 5K races.

"I didn't think I'd get an award for doing the right thing, but it's really nice to receive an award, that people notice you have been working hard," Daniels said. "It's right and just to do things that help people and it's nice to see that somebody appreciates it."

Baltimore Auxiliary Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski was the principal celebrant at the Mass. Concelebrants included Paulist Father John Hurley, director of the archdiocese's Department of Evangelization; Father Michael Foppiano, administrator of St. Agnes; Father Raymond Harris, associate pastor at St. Agnes; and Monsignor Lloyd E. Aiken, pastor of St. Charles Borromeo in Pikesville and Sacred Heart in Glyndon.

In his homily, Bishop Rozanski likened physical therapists pushing their patients during rehabilitation sessions to youths and service.

"In a sense, what we celebrate here this evening and what we hear in our readings all talk to us about the physical therapy of Christian life - of the fact that each one of us, through the grace of God, is called to move to the higher step," Bishop Rozanski said. "What we celebrate here this evening ... is the fact that you've shown us the way to be stretched a bit through the grace that God gives to us."

He continued, "Jesus always calls us ... stretching us just a bit further, asking us to reflect upon our lives and to see how his grace can be at work through us."

Before the medals were presented, Margaret Brogden, coordinator of youth ministry formation for the Department of Evangelization, called the event "an opportunity for us to recognize young people who exhibit leadership qualities."

A handful of adult leaders were also recognized at the ceremony for their ministry.

The following youths have received Eagle of the Cross medals: Bayley Taylor, Church of the Holy Apostles, Gambrills; Julia Thoreson, Church of the Resurrection, Ellicott City; Leah Henry, Mount De Sales Academy; Avery Daniels, St. Cecilia, Baltimore; John Yalov, St. Charles Borromeo, Pikesville; Heather Konstanzer, St. Francis of Assisi, Fulton; Christopher Thommen, St. Joseph, Cockeysville; Taylor Neugebauer, St. Joseph on Carrollton Manor, Buckeystown; Meghan Norwood, St. Mary, Annapolis; Jessica Swarner, St. Maria Goretti High School; Regina Hufford, St. Mark, Catonsville; Jessica Shade, St. Mary, Pylesville; Tamara Rivera, St. Michael, Poplar Springs; Christopher Rothmann, St. Pius X, Rodgers Forge; and Andrew Bateman, St. Stephen, Bradshaw.

Five additional youths will receive their Eagle of the Cross medals this month.

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