

St. John Paul the Great Catholic Campus Ministry
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Tyler, TX 75701
www.uttylercatholic.org



Students on a scavenger hunt at the University Center on Campus.



November 2016 Newsletter

St. John Paul the Great Catholic Campus Ministry
Serving the students of the University of Texas at Tyler and Tyler Junior College

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Chaplain's Message

We've come to the end of the year recognizing the many blessings God has given us and joyfully prepare to receive symbolically and in reality through the Eucharist the gift of Our Savior Jesus Christ! When we take these shorter days of daylight to prayerfully reflect on the past year, and prepare for the coming year of grace, we are tempted to make grandiose resolutions to pray more, do more exercise, eat less, and give more: often, this is a recipe for disaster. What is more important, and what will actually bear fruit, is focusing on Jesus Christ—letting him consume more of our day (in prayer), imitating his detachment from the world (less food), giving our best to all we encounter (exercise which gives us energy!), and seeing how we may more faithfully make sacrifices to grow the kingdom of God (giving). So I want to encourage you, just as I have the students these first few weeks of Advent, to focus on Jesus Christ! Look at Him on the Cross, visit Him in the Blessed Sacrament, and read about His life and His Church in the Scriptures! What I can promise you is that you'll find

yourself more at peace, more "in tune" with the people around you, and more prepared to receive the gift of Jesus in the Eucharist at Christmas.

My prayers are with you and your family as we approach these coming days of Christmas, and I ask yours for our students, and in a special way, for my family: after 45 years of marriage to my awesome mother, my dad is FINALLY entering into communion with the Church this Christmas, and I will have the joy of confirming him and giving him first holy communion on Christmas day! God bless each of you during this Advent season, and have a blessed Christmas!



In Christ, Through Mary,

Father Justin Braun

Student Profile- Jordan Siranni

Year: Freshman

Major: Kinesiology

Hometown: Kerrville, TX

Favorite Saint: St. Padre Pio

Why did you choose to attend UT-Tyler? "I attended UT-Tyler as a CAP student, which is a program that allows you to transfer to UT-Austin after a successful year at one of the other UT schools, like Tyler. So UT-Tyler was not my first choice. But now that I have been here for about a few months, I have actually decided I want to stay for my 4 years as an undergrad, mainly because I have gotten connected at the JP2 center."

How did you get connected with Campus Ministry? "I visited Tyler for an orientation this past spring, and my parents and I stopped by the center. I hadn't thought about it much between then and when I got to campus in the fall. Some students from the center found me during the first week of school and I came over for Mass and activities and have been plugged in ever since."

What sort of activities are you involved with at the JP2 center? "I spend most of my time between classes at the JP2 center studying or visiting with students. I always go to Sunday Mass on campus. I am also in a FOCUS bible study. On Mondays I play Frisbee or whatever other sports are being organized with the students from the center."

Do you have any special devotions? "I pray the rosary twice a week, once on Monday on campus, and I make an effort to pick another day to pray it. I am trying to make it to 3 days a week. I also start my day in prayer now, and try to spend at least 15 minutes a day reading scripture."

What are your plans after graduation? "I am planning on going to graduate school for physical therapy, hopefully at Angelo State University."

Thanksgiving at the JP2 Center



A Thanksgiving celebration was held at the JP2 center on Sunday, November 18th. Approximately 60-70 people attended the event, including the UT-Tyler basketball team!

2 Turkeys and a Ham were cooked, as well as a wide variety of side dishes. Dan Onderko was greatly disappointed when he came to work Monday morning to see that there were no leftovers!

Thank you to all who donated food, drinks and utensils for our celebration.

Reflections from the Development Office

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Dan Onderko, development director for St. John Paul the Great Catholic Campus Ministry. I consider it a tremendous honor to have served in this capacity for the last 2+ years. My wife and I and our 3 sons are active at the Cathedral parish in Tyler.

UT-Tyler holds a very special place in my heart as my wife and I are both alumni. I graduated with my master's degree, and my wife graduated this past August with her BSN. She is currently an R.N. at Christus TMF Louis and Peaches Heart Hospital.

My involvement in campus ministry began in 2009, when I convinced my younger brother, Luke, to attend UT-Tyler, where he studied Mechanical Engineering. He and a group of other Catholic students and faculty started a Catholic student organization long before there was ever a physical center. (On a side note, my brother Luke and his wife Tareyn, whom he met while attending UT, were married by Father Paul Key in December of 2014. Tareyn converted to Catholicism and was confirmed this past Easter.)

Over the past few years, I have watched this ministry blossom since the “Blue House” was purchased, giving us a physical center. Then a full time Campus Minister was hired to provide ongoing catechesis and plan fun activities that would attract college students to our center. As we grew in numbers and depth, the Bishop agreed that FOCUS would be a great fit here. We started with 2 missionaries and then increased to 4. Many of these events have been logical steps or milestones toward building a foundation for a vibrant ministry.

This leads me to the fall of 2016. Many miraculous events have occurred at this ministry over the years, but nothing has inspired me more than what I have seen this semester. The growth in our students has been phenomenal. The JP2 center has become a place of prayer! More often than not, if you walk into our chapel, a student is in prayer with Christ in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Many times, our chapel is overflowing at Daily Mass; often my family will attend and find it very difficult to find a place to sit! I get to witness young men and women going through deep conversion, and starting on a radical and beautiful path toward salvation with Christ.

These practices I see on a day to day basis have renewed my confidence and commitment to this ministry. I firmly believe that God will continue to bless St. John Paul the Great, and I believe that when my children are of the age to attend college, there will be a beautiful church across that street from the University.

I cannot explain how thankful I am to all of you, our benefactors, who without our ministry would not exist. I want you to know that your gifts and prayers are having a profound impact on college students in our Diocese, and I don't believe you could find a better investment.



Dan Onderko
Development Director
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Fall 2016 Schedule

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

SUNDAY

Adoration and Confession: 4:45-6:00pm @ JPPII Center
Mass: 6:30pm @ Cowan (FAC 1009)

MONDAY

Adoration: 9:00-10:00am @ JPPII Center
Campus Rosary: 6:30pm @ Harvey Deck
Monday Funday: 7:00pm, location changes

TUESDAY

Adoration and Confession: 4:00-5:15pm @ JPPII Center
Mass: 5:30pm @ JPPII Center
Christian Initiation Classes: 7:00-8:30pm @ JPPII Center

WEDNESDAY

Adoration: 1:00-5:00pm @ JPPII Center
Confession: 3:15-4:45pm @ JPPII Center
Mass: 5:30pm @ JPPII Center
Catholic Underground: 6:00-8:00pm @ JPPII Center

THURSDAY

Adoration and Confession: 4:00-5:15pm @ JPPII Center
Mass: 5:30pm @ JPPII Center
"Your Body and God": 7:00-8:00pm @ JPPII Center

FRIDAY

Adoration and Confession: 11:00am-12:00pm @ JPPII Center
Mass: 12:15pm @ JPPII Center



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