

August 2026

Ascend Newsletter

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY IN THE DIOCESE OF WATERFORD & LISMORE

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Another busy and **BLESSED** year for Ascend Youth & Young Adult Ministry, thank God! It's always good to **PAUSE** before the new academic year begins to reflect and be **THANKFUL** for the year gone by. We have encountered wonderful young people in schools, in parishes and at events, and have been so impressed with the calibre of leaders who work alongside us voluntarily, and with school staff who go above and beyond. We are always especially **GRATEFUL** for all those who pray for youth & young adult ministry in our diocese. In March our first three year plan came to an end, but we're already discerning and planning for the next phase: looking forward to sharing those details with you in the coming months! May the **HOLY SPIRIT** continue to guide and direct all that we do here in the Diocese of Waterford & Lismore for young people! A huge thank you to everyone who has supported us through prayer and / or financial contributions - this work would not be possible without your **SUPPORT**!



Pope John Paul II Pilgrimage to Medjugorje 2026

AMEN!



The third annual Pope John Paul II Award Diocesan pilgrimage to Medjugorje took place on 15th - 22th April 2026 with fifteen Pope John Paul II Award participants from Ardscoil na Mara, De La Salle College, Blackwater Community School, Waterpark College, Coláiste Dún Iascaigh and Cahir Parish, along with a teacher, Faith Reps and young adult leaders from Holy Family Mission and Tramore parish, Bishop Phonsie and our Spiritual Director, Fr PJ Breen PP. The young people were an absolute credit to their schools, families and parishes and had an amazing week, praise God! The group gave their heart to everything we did, from climbs to processions, night prayer and walking rosaries, daily Mass, testimonies, Q&A sessions, music sessions and of course the fun and games every day! Seeing them participate so well in the readings, prayers of the faithful and collections at Mass in St James' Church (as well as our own group Masses in local churches) was very inspiring and they were even commended by the new English speaking pilgrim chaplain, Fr Jason Lewis, who spoke to our group one day.

A personal highlight was watching our young pilgrims carry big envelopes of intentions from their parishes at home with them to each site in the shrine area each day, and light candles for the intentions of all those supporting them financially and spiritually back home.

A real highlight was the ability to share a zoom link of our candlelit procession as we prayed the Luminous Mysteries together with those back home.

Our leaders were exceptional - fantastic witnesses to faith and fun throughout the whole week, despite how long and tiring the days can be! We're also very grateful especially to the parishes and schools who supported these young people, and all our young people participating in the Pope John Paul II Award!

We've heard great feedback from parents, thank God:

- "...I think she had one of the most meaningful experiences so far in her precious life and that is down to all the leaders/priests. Thank you all so much."
- "...She really enjoyed the week. I've never seen her so positively impacted by anything so much before..."
- "Thank you to all of the leaders for the amazing week [my son] had in Medjugorje. He was buzzing after it and really enjoyed the whole experience."
- "...She had the most wonderful time. It was really good for her..."
- "...She really enjoyed being on this new adventure. She is so happy that she got a chance to go..."

We're very grateful for the ability to be able to bring young people on pilgrimage from the Diocese as we are seeing the genuine effect on their faith lives.

thank you!



SUMMER FUN & FAITH!

Many of the young people who were part of our JP2 Pilgrimage to Medjugorje joined us for a Saturday in June at Glencomeragh House for a day of fun, prayer, hiking and sharing! We began our day with Mass, before trying some energetic icebreakers. After a delicious lunch from Holy Family Mission we hiked in the local forest, prayed a rosary together there and caught up on life since our pilgrimage in April. After some well-received refreshments, we finished our day with a time of adoration together in the chapel.

The Youth 2000 Summer Festival in Newbridge in August provided further opportunities for a number of young people from our diocese to deepen their faith, make new friends and see how the Catholic Church is alive and active in Ireland!



Faith Camp Leaders

Campa Mhuire Mháthair faith camps for children were back this year in Dungarvan, Tramore and Ardmore, providing a fun faith experience for over 160 children. Ascend was very blessed to be able to support the coordinators, young leaders and faith reps who volunteer their time, energies and willingness to serve at these camps with resources and ideas!

A large number of our Medjugorje youth pilgrims from this year and last year were volunteer leaders at two Faith Camps this summer in the Diocese, working with children aged 6 - 13, through catechesis, music, drama, sport, art and prayer, all while making new friends themselves and growing in leadership skills and faith. In the evening times the young (and older!) leaders gathered together for food, fellowship, games, music and very often, some beautiful times of prayer too in homes and gardens in the summer sunshine. What a gift to see these young people encountering Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and through each other's lives, having genuine fun and games together too, and giving so generously of themselves!



CAMINO: SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA



In July, Bishop Phonsie travelled with a small group from the Diocese to walk the Camino - taking in the stunning scenery, opportunities for conversation and reflection along the way.



Creation Surf in Tramore ran their second annual Surf Camp at the start of July, hosting 20 teens for this epic mix of faith and the outdoors! Well done to the Creation Surf Team, Fr Taddeo and Fr Stuart for making this happen! Creation Surf Retreats for Post-Primary Schools and Community Groups are offered in Tramore, providing a natural blend between the great outdoors, reflecting on the existence of God and the beauty of His creation, and moments of prayer too. Contact info@freedomssurfschool.com



Parables Tour with Fr Mike Schmitz

Fr Mike Schmitz is a renowned American priest, preacher and podcaster. His *Bible in a Year* podcast has had over 1 billion downloads and his regular videos on Ascension Presents have a huge following due to his sincerity and dynamic preaching style which resonates with all ages, but young people in particular. On Monday July 20th, a group of 30 young adults, priests and faith reps travelled to his Parables Tour event in Dublin which was a fundraiser for campus ministry in Duluth where he is based. It was a fabulous day with a real pilgrimage feel to it! We were blessed to attend Mass celebrated by Bishop Fintan Gavin and 5 other Bishops at which Fr Mike preached in St Kevin's Church before the Parables Tour event in the National Stadium where Fr Mike skilfully and beautifully broke open a number of parables to inspire and challenge us to go ever deeper in our faith. On the bus journey home people shared their experiences of the day and expressed a desire for more events and outings like this for young adults to grow in faith and fellowship!



CALLED TO GREATNESS

On Monday 2nd March we welcomed 40 teens to St John's Pastoral Centre for our third annual "Called to Greatness" Workshop for JP2 Award participants. They heard vocation stories from Fr John Harris, Sr Kathryn Press and Seán & Ellen Purcell, enjoyed pizza, and were energised by some games and led in a time of reflection by Holy Family Mission. Delighted to have so many involved this year!



POPE JOHN PAUL II AWARDS

Congratulations to the 65 recipients of the Pope John Paul II Award completed in 2024/2025 who were awarded their medals by Bishop Cullinan at a ceremony in St Mary's Parish Church, Cahir on 11th March. Some were able to attend on the night, but their contribution to their parishes, schools and communities was commended highly.

Aoife, Kate, Sarah and Lily from Coláiste Dún Iascaigh Cahir spoke beautifully about their experience of the award, and Thuy Nga from Ardscoil na Mara gave a fantastic account of the Papal Cross award which she and four of her classmates completed.

Please God these bright and enthusiastic young people will continue to give of their time to their parishes and communities, and continue to deepen their faith. In the words of Pope Leo XIV on 21st November 2025 who spoke to 16000 young people in a stadium in America via zoom: *"You are not only the future of the Church. You are the present. Your voices, your ideas, your faith matter right now. And the Church needs you. The Church needs what you have been given to share with all of us. If you want to help the Church prepare for the future, start by being involved today. Stay connected to your parish. Attend Sunday Mass. Join youth activities and say 'Yes' to opportunities... Remember, making a difference usually happens through simple, daily faithfulness."*

Huge thank you to all the parents and guardians, the Award Leaders, clergy, parishoners and parish volunteers who support the John Paul II Award participants every year, and also to Fr Peter, Fr John and Fr Taddeo for their welcome to Cahir parish for the ceremony, to Sharon in the office, and to Michael the sacristan for all his assistance on the night!

MONTHLY ENCOUNTER FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Running since March 2022, Encounter is our Young Adult Outreach (18 - 35 year olds) in the Waterford City region. Once a month young adults are invited to join us in St John's Church for a talk or testimony followed by a time of adoration and music, with confession available too, rounding off with some pizza and chat afterwards (and some competitive Jenga games too!) This year we were blessed to have excellent talks from Fr PJ Breen, Emma Sisk, testimonies from St Stuart McGovern, Dominic Taaffe, as well as Róisín Blackwell and Elijah Nyangasi (young adults from our diocese). Holy Family Mission and the Sisters of Mary Morning Star provide great support each month. We also love seeing our young adults stepping up to leadership roles: as MCs, hospitality or serving for adoration! Thanks to Fr Tom for hosting us every month! We would love to see Encounter with its simple format spread to other areas, and it was a real blessing to host Encounter in Dungarvan for the first time in July, with a great turnout from locals as well as young adults volunteering at the Joy of Faith Camp running that week.



REVIVE



15th January 2026 saw the roof of the SETU Arena being lifted again with music, laughter and a whole lot of fun! Students from Waterpark College, De La Salle College, St Augustine's Dungarvan and Ardscoil na Mara joined us for our 2026 Senior Cycle Conference and participated brilliantly from the get-go! Our keynote speaker was Fr John Harris OP, Provincial of the Irish Dominicans and no stranger to speaking at youth events, being one of the most sought after speakers in Ireland and former national Spiritual Director for Youth 2000 Ireland. His talk on how we are individually known and loved by God, and made for friendship was really powerful! Fr John spoke to us about how life can be artificial and fake, but we're called to "the real" - and that's where God meets us. Róisín and Michael, Holy Family Mission Alumni, were super as our MCs and also shared their testimonies. We had two great teams leading our workshops from Holy Family Mission and a combination of David Elliott and Billy Butler from Tramore (great to see young adults and Faith Reps working together to lead teens!) Bishop Phonsie, Sr Shaila (Poor of Jesus Christ), Fr Stuart McGovern and Pat Reynolds (HFM) were fantastic on our *Called to Greatness* panel explaining their own vocations - the path God has called them to in life, be that religious life, priesthood or married life. It definitely opened our eyes to some of the similarities in these vocations, as well as the need for silence in our own lives so we can hear God speaking his invitation for our own "call to greatness" to each of us.

Our music ministry led by Fr Patrick Cahill and HFM community and Alumni were so gifted and blended fun and more inspirational worship music too, especially during our period of adoration at the end. We had a great team of volunteers, drawing from Faith Reps, young adults and religious communities: the sisters of the Poor of Jesus Christ, the brothers and sisters of the Home of the Mother, the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Sisters of Mary Morning Star. Along with these, our Core Team made the whole event possible in hundreds of ways from set up, music, indoor soccer and basketball, manning our Game Zone, prayer spaces, adoration and just general fun and chat too!



FAITH REP UPDATES

Our Faith Rep programme is in its fourth year, and we will be recommissioning a number of Faith Reps who have done two - three years already in their parishes at the end of September. Due to a lower number of applicants this year, the Youth Task Force made the decision not to run Faith Rep Training in 2026. In a way this was a blessing because it gives us breathing space to really evaluate our current model, take feedback from faith reps and parishes, continue to offer additional support to them as a group and at parish level, and tweak our training modules for 2027 recruitment. The model continues to grow and develop, both in its training structure and in the confidence and experience of the Faith Reps themselves. We have seen Faith Reps involved in the following (non-exhaustive list!):

- Running Youth Groups
- Creating Youth Noticeboards in Churches
- Intentionally inviting young people to events
- Supporting the Pope John Paul II Award
- Running Adoration for Local Secondary Schools / Youth
- Assisting with Alpha Youth in schools and Alpha Life Essentials in the Diocese
- Pilgrimage leaders
- Facilitating Exam Liturgies in parishes
- Volunteering as Leaders at Summer Faith Camps
- Volunteering at Diocesan Youth Days
- Running Prayer Spaces in Parishes
- Helping to facilitate Confirmation retreats
- And most importantly, praying for our young people!

We are so grateful for all the wonderful men and women who have come forward so far to walk with young people in their parishes. If you are interested in becoming a Faith Rep, check out www.waterfordlismore.ie/parish-faith-reps

We also offered further training in the past few months and it was great to have Faith Reps from all three years so far represented there. We looked at "Nuts & Bolts: How to Run an U18 Event in Your Parish": the planning stages of Under 18 ministry at parish level, including paperwork, risk assessment, social media considerations, promotion etc - we like to call them the 7P's of U18 ministry!



9 NEWLY COMMISSIONED AND 14 RE-COMMISSIONED FAITH REPS IN SEPTEMBER 2025, BRINGING OUR CURRENT TOTAL TO 55!



We've had some great days of discussion, sharing ideas, hearing stories of what's already working in various parishes and how young people are engaging, looking at ways to get started and ideas for content for events. We also offered training on Lenten and Holy Week Ideas, Supporting Exam Students in Your Parish, Different Prayer Styles including revising Prayer Spaces; reflecting on our Love Languages and styles of working with others.



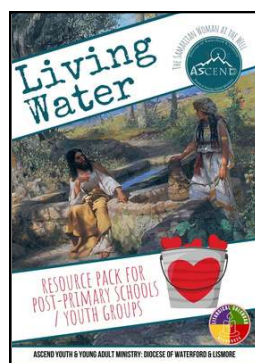
Throughout the year we work closely with Stephen Plunkett, Diocesan Safeguarding Director, on updating our resources for those who want to run U18 events in their parishes, with relevant checklists, relevant forms, templates and Risk Assessments, as well as looking at training around social media. Having this for Faith Reps or anyone interested in U18 ministry takes the mystery and the fear out of these activities and is a great resource to build on going forwards. Our Diocese has also been asked by the National Board for input into updating training guidelines for U18 leaders because of the exceptionally high number of young leaders in our diocese!



RENEWAL DAY: SUPPORTING RE TEACHERS & CHAPLAINS

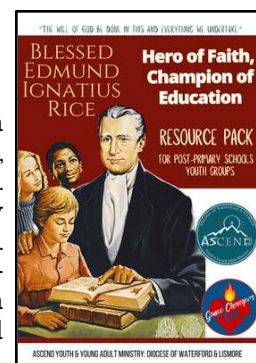


Another great day at our Diocesan REnewal RE teacher conference in February at Glencomeragh House, with presentations from Fr John Harris ADM, Hannah Clarke of Scripture Union on their excellent resources, Sr Kathryn Press re: Alpha Youth, Retreat options in the Diocese (Holy Family Mission and Creation Surf Retreats, Tramore) as well as inputs from Dermot Dooley at De La Salle College and Margaret McCann, Faith Rep and former teacher at De La Salle, and also on Ascend resources for teachers. The teachers enjoyed the opportunity to network with others, learn about new opportunities and be spiritually renewed through Mass with Bishop Phonsie and a reflection time with Olivia Elliott Post Primary DA in the afternoon.



ASCEND RESOURCES

Each week during term time, Faith@Home Family Newsletters, Let's Dive In Children's Resource, and To the Heights Youth Resource are created, uploaded to the Diocesan website and emailed to hundreds of subscribers. As well as this, Ascend Resource Packs are created to provide more meaty resources on a variety of topics, particularly saints and liturgical seasons. All of these are available to download from www.waterfordlismore.ie/youth-ministry and it's really encouraging to receive emails from teachers, parish volunteers, pastoral workers and Diocesan Advisors, locally, nationally and internationally who use these too.



Alpha Youth ran in two schools in our Diocese in the past year and **Alpha Life Essentials** was also trialed for young people participating in the Pope John Paul II Award in April, facilitated by Sr Kathryn Press and a fantastic team of Faith Reps. Life Essentials is part of the Alpha Suite and encourages conversation with young people on matters of life and faith, with dynamic video content, fun games and hospitality and a chance to discuss matters with their peers and leaders. It was a great learning opportunity for our Faith Reps in particular as they tried their hands at different elements of leading a youth session - from hospitality / registration, to icebreakers, to leading small groups. It's definitely something we will be considering again for the coming year. Please pray for more and more young people to have meaningful encounters with Jesus through this series! Sr. Kathryn Press, ASCJ coordinates Alpha Youth in our diocese. Please reach out if you want to see Alpha Youth in your school/ parish: srkathryn@alphaireland.org



ALPHA LIFE ESSENTIALS

TRAINING YOUNG MISSIONARIES AT HOLY FAMILY MISSION



HEART SPEAKS TO HEART



Exploring different ways to pray with young people

Ascend Youth & Young Adult Ministry

A particular joy for members of the Task Force again this year was being involved with training the young community members at Holy Family Mission in areas such as Alpha Youth (facilitated by Sr Kathryn), *Preparing for Family Days* and also *Heart Speaks to Heart: Different Prayer Styles* to use with Young People (facilitated by Nodlaig). Every year these young adults at Glencomeragh House who have given a year of their lives to grow in faith and service are a joy to work with: their willingness to serve here in the Diocese is always so appreciated and helpful! Please pray for the staff and new community members who will be starting Year 11 at Holy Family Mission at the end of September!



POPE JOHN PAUL II AWARD PARTICIPANTS WHO MADE A WONDERFUL CONTRIBUTION AT ST PAUL'S PARISH THIS PAST YEAR!

CANONISATION OF CARLO ACUTIS AND PIER GIORGIO FRASSATI!

On September 7th a large crowd gathered in the Cathedral for the Canonisation Celebration for St Carlo Acutis and St Pier Giorgio for a time of adoration - something very close to both saints' hearts. After a talk by Youth & Young Adult Ministry Officer, Nodlaig Lillis, Sr Kathryn Press led us in a Scripture passage very close to Pier Giorgio's heart, from 1 Corinthians 13. He transcribed this passage and always kept it with him. Olivia Elliott and her team of helpers, Liam, Róisín, Amelia, Chloe, Michael and Jack led us beautifully in the rosary and prayers through the intercession of our new saints. After a time of silent prayer and beautiful music by Fr Patrick Cahill, our time of adoration drew to a close. Afterwards all those present were given the opportunity to be blessed by a First Class Relic of Carlo Acutis.

St Carlo Acutis, pray for us.

St Pier Giorgio Frassati, pray for us.



CONGRATS TO FR STUART MCGOVERN

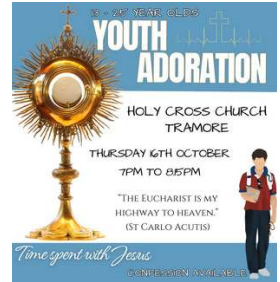
It was with great joy we celebrated the ordination of Fr Stuart on the feast of Christ the King. Fr Stuart joined us on our pilgrimage to World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon as a seminarian!



YOUTH ADORATION

Something we've found time and time again in youth ministry in the diocese is how profoundly our young people respond to spending time with Jesus in the Eucharist.

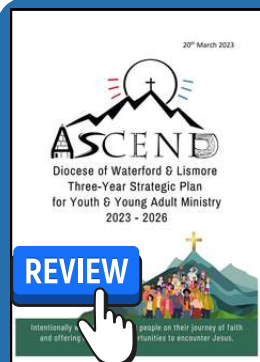
Our Faith Reps in **TRAMORE** Parish have also successfully facilitated a beautiful **YOUTH ADORATION** initiative for the past two years.



Facilitated by our Faith Rep in **LISMORE**, along with parishioners and newly ordained curate, Fr Stuart McGovern, Eucharistic Adoration was introduced in Blackwater Community School at the end of the academic year and hopefully will go from strength to strength in the coming year.



A new **JOURNAL RESOURCE**, "Heart Speaks to Heart: A Guide to Adoration for Young People" was designed by the Ascend Team for use by schools / parishes who wish to offer adoration to young people.



A TIME TO REVIEW, A TIME TO PLAN...

The time has flown but our first three-year strategic plan is already finished! Currently the Task Force for Youth & Young Adult Ministry are evaluating and processing the past three years - and it is so encouraging to see what the Lord has been doing in our diocese. We look forward to sharing a summary of our findings with you in the coming months, and are already planning ahead to where the Lord wants to bring youth and young adult ministry in the diocese for the next few years!

STRATEGIC PLAN PRAYER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Father of Kindness, You have created the hearts of our young people to know, love and serve You. We thank You for blessing us with the privilege of intentionally walking with them on their journey of faith and offering meaningful opportunities to encounter Jesus in their lives. Jesus, grant that we may reflect You and Your love to all we encounter. You are the Way for those who need guidance. You are the Light in the darkness for those who are lost. You are the Truth that cuts through the confusion and doubt. Holy Spirit, guide our thoughts, words, actions and intentions, that all we do may be for the greater glory of God. Mother Mary, be a mother to our youth and let them feel the warmth of your maternal embrace. We ask this through the intercession of St John Paul II, St Pier Giorgio Frassati, St Carlo Acutis, Blessed Chiara Luce Badano, St Declan, St Carthage, St Otteran, St Ita, Our Lady of Knock, St Joseph and St John the Evangelist. Amen.



THE NATIONAL PICTURE...

On 13th - 14th May Nodlaig joined other youth ministry coordinators from diocese and religious movements across the country, and members of the Irish Bishop's Conference sub-council for Youth Ministry at Mount St Anne's Retreat Centre, Killenard for a retreat experience for those involved in leading ministry to "come away and rest". It also provided opportunities to network with others, receive formation, and understand the workings of the sub-council and the proposals of the working group for the synod.

Overall there was a great sense of hope and excitement around the vision for youth and young adult ministry that seems to be developing across the country and it was so encouraging to hear what's happening in different regions, and be able to share our own progress too. We were also presented with the new "Made for More" - Irish Bishop's framework for non-exam RE for Catholic schools, and a number of ways that youth ministry / parishes can support this practically were highlighted for us - something very much a part of Ascend youth and young adult ministry vision. On a personal and professional level, it was a really important event to be part of, which led to a renewed sense of hope and excitement, and an eagerness to really discern where the Lord is calling us in our next strategic plan for youth here in the Diocese.

As a follow-on, the Munster Youth Ministry Coordinators have also begun a monthly zoom to network, offer support and encouragement and see areas where we overlap and can work together.



Youth Ministry Coordinators from around the country gathering for a time of retreat together in May.

YOUTH 2000 SUMMER FESTIVAL

Over 700 young people from all over the country attended the Youth 2000 Summer Festival held in Newbridge from 13 - 16 August, and Waterford & Lismore young people were delighted to be part of it all! Apart from welcoming new faces and seeing our young people grow deeper in faith and friendship together, we were also so proud to see so many of our young people volunteering in so many roles: catering, music, leading prayer and action songs, reading at Mass, MCing, cleaning, security duty and more. Ascend had some fantastic conversations at their stand, and Holy Family Mission were deeply involved too, with both Fr Patrick and Pat leading talks and workshops, and Fr Patrick providing music on the Sunday as well as celebrating the opening Mass on Thursday. Roll on the next retreat!



SOME OF THE DIOCESAN GROUP WHO ATTENDED THE Y2K SUMMER FESTIVAL - IT IS ALWAYS IMPOSSIBLE TO GET EVERYONE INTO A PHOTO ON ONE DAY!



YOUTH 2000 MUNSTER

At the most recent Youth 2000 Munster retreat in Midleton (17th - 19th April), we were very proud to see some of our Diocesan young adults stepping up, to volunteer in everything from catering to MCing the entire event!



Youth 2000 is a national Catholic movement in existence in Ireland for over 35 years and aims to bring young people aged 16 - 35 to the heart of the Church. The retreats run on a donation-only basis and young people are immersed in an atmosphere of prayer, fun, fellowship and faith with Adoration and Rosary being at the heart of all Youth 2000 does.

IGNITE IRELAND CONFERENCE



Many people from all around the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore, young adults, religious and lay people joined hundreds of others to be at the Ignite Ireland Conference in the Dublin Convention Centre in May, at which world renowned Catholic author and speaker Scott Hahn delivered two inspiring inputs. Scott was joined by keynote speakers Maura Murphy and Fr Patrick Cahill (Holy Family Mission) among others. Both Maura and Nodlaig were blessed to be part of the planning team for the event. There was a real and tangible sense of hope and excitement about evangelisation in Ireland and having the courage to share simply what God has done in each of our lives, and help introduce others to the Kerygma, the Core Gospel Message! Sincere thanks to the Irish Dominicans for making this wonderful event happen!



Preparations are underway to bring a group of young adults to **WORLD YOUTH DAY** in Seoul, South Korea in August 2027 - keep an eye on social media and the www.waterfordlismore.ie for more information. Please keep this plan in your prayers - we saw enormous fruit from our last WYD experience in Lisbon, and know the power it has to transform young lives!

OTHER GOOD NEWS STORIES IN THE DIOCESE



THE SHRINE WAS SHOWN ON NATIONWIDE ON 5TH AUGUST, FEATURING INTERVIEWS WITH FR MICHAEL, MILLIE, RIAN AND ISOBEL FROM THE ST CARLO ACUTIS PASTORAL AREA.



CARLO ACUTIS SHRINE, ARDFINNAN

A first class relic of St Carlo Acutis was officially installed at the Carlo Acutis Shrine in Holy Family Church, Ardfinnan in January '26. Fr Michael Toomey, who installed this shrine as an outreach to youth in the pastoral area and beyond, met Carlo's mother at his canonisation in Rome in September and received a second class relic of Carlo which is also visible at the shrine. People from all over Ireland have been visiting the shrine in the past year, and RTÉ's Nationwide recently featured the church while looking at the wide appeal of St Carlo. Schools are also welcome to arrange a visit to the Church - contact office@stcarloacutisparish.ie

HOLY FAMILY MISSION



Holy Family Mission celebrated their ten-year anniversary at their reunion in June. 115 young people have been part of the formation programme there, including 6 from our own Diocese. We are so grateful for the invaluable support and witness of the team and community members at youth ministry initiatives and events in the diocese. It was wonderful to meet so many Alumni at the reunion, and to hear and see how the Lord continues to work in and through their lives and witness!

Holy Family Mission continue to run Confirmation retreats, Post-Primary retreats for schools within and outside the diocese, and regular Family Days also. Their retreat team is very much in demand each year, so bookings need to be made early!



CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF HFM!

YOUNG ADULT GROUPS

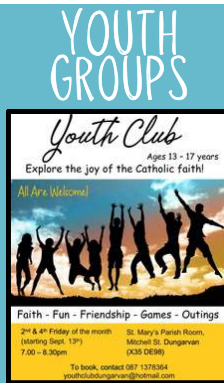
LIGHT THE FIRE Young Adult Group in Clonmel has been running for three years now and meets once a month on a Wednesday.

PILGRIMS OF LIGHT, an evening of prayer, discussion and food facilitated by the Sisters of Mary Morning Star ran last Spring in the city.

YOUNG ADULT GROUP has begun meeting in the Cathedral on Monday nights for a time of Gospel sharing and fellowship and will be back in September as Lumen Christi!



Youth Groups for Under 18s have been running successfully in St Oliver's Parish Clonmel, St Mary's Parish, Dungarvan, and Ballyporeen/Clogheen providing friendship, fun and faith formation for young people in the areas. A good number of Faith Reps are involved with running these groups, as well as Alumni from Holy Family Mission, and Sisters of Religious Family of the Incarnate Word - so it's great to see the connections being made between youth and their parishes!



LOURDES DIOCESAN YOUTH HELPERS



A wonderful group of 26 Transition Year / Fifth Year students from all over the diocese volunteered for the 2026 Lourdes Pilgrimage, and their families, schools and parishes can be extremely proud of their voluntary efforts, as they went above and beyond in caring for other pilgrims and bringing their youthful joy and enthusiasm! They were accompanied by 7 leaders, two of whom are currently seminarians for our diocese. It was a blessed experience; with many of them hoping to return in the future - this year a number of the youth helpers were there for their second time! A huge thank you on their behalf to all who made it possible for them to travel, and those who supported them financially and spiritually. All who asked for prayers, were remembered at the beautiful Lourdes Grotto and the daily Masses.



HOME OF THE MOTHER SUMMER CAMPS

At the end of July the Home of the Mother hosted a summer encounter for teen girls near Cahir. There was time for daily Mass, prayer, crafts, formation meetings, games, and even a hike up Knockmealdown and Sugarloaf mountains as well as Lough Curra. Many had experiences of Jesus in the Eucharist and Mary's love for each one, with abundant fruits of grace and conversion!

