

Young adults, decisions and Christ

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier

In recent years, the phrase "What would Jesus do?" has become a part of popular Christian culture, a slogan that asks Christ's followers to consider his life's example when making decisions. Next month, young adults will have an opportunity to explore the practical implications of that phrase at a retreat.

On Saturday, Nov. 9, from 8:30 a.m. to noon, the Borromeo Prayer Center, 3011 Dewey Ave. in Greece, will host a retreat called "Priorities and Decision-Making with Christ." The retreat is co-sponsored by the center and Odyssey, the Diocese of Rochester's young-adult network.

How participants set priorities and make decisions will be the focus of the retreat, according to Mary Ann Fackelman, the prayer center's coordinator of leadership development. Fackelman is also coordinator of parish pastoral council development in the diocesan Office of Pastoral Planning.

Fackelman said young adults generally lead busy lives that may allow them little time to think about how they choose what they do with their time. For example, she said, a young adult may think spending time with family members is a priority, but upon examining his or her schedule, finds that he or she is actually doing little of that.

"More often than not, we find that ... we're driven by other things, by other people, by other goals and dreams," Fackelman said.

Many concerns are competing for a young adult's time, she said. And those concerns all have legitimate claims as long as they are not the only ones in a person's life, she said. People make decisions out of a sense of obligation; circumstances;



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the duty to fulfill other's needs (such as the needs of a spouse or an aging parent); and out of their own sense of self, she said. More often than not, however, one's sense of self has the least influence on how a decision is made. If young adults never take into account their own needs in making decisions, they may eventually resent others' demands on their lives and time, Fackelman said.

"If you never do anything out of who you are, it's like you're living someone else's life," she said.

This is not to be confused with selfishness, she stressed. Rather, it is in the best interest of everyone around you to take time to nurture your inner being. That's because there's a

cost for not doing so. You may be neglecting many things that could increase your happiness, including spending time with loved ones, she said. Whether it's listening to music, relaxing in a natural setting or simply socializing with friends, how we choose to spend our limited free time can make or break us as spiritual beings, she emphasized.

"If you're never around what gives you life and joy and happiness, it gets straining," she said. "If everything you do is a chore and everything you do is draining, it gets pretty lifeless."

The retreat program will ask participants to look at the life of Jesus, she said, and have participants ask such questions as "What seemed

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important to Christ?" and "What type of people did he spend his time with?" She noted that although Christ was obviously devoted to the welfare of others, he also took time out of his routine to pray and be alone.

"He had sense to replenish," she said, noting how Jesus would leave a crowd to meditate in the desert or by the shore of a lake. Unlike many harried young adults, Jesus knew he couldn't serve others if he didn't take time to nourish himself, she said. Routinely paying attention to one's spiritual needs prevents the serving of others, including children, from becoming a "chore," she said.

She added that young adults may be extremely responsible — paying their bills, holding down jobs, being good citizens. However, because of their busy lives, they may neglect their spirituality, foregoing regular church services, for example. Yet getting in touch on a regular basis with one's soul allows a person to experience gratitude for the gift of life and to answer the question: "What are my blessings? What do I love?" The retreat is an opportunity to get in touch with that sense of gratitude, she said.

"A lot of our life is just kind of keeping on track," Fackelman said. "This is an invitation to say 'Am I tracking the right path?'"

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Nov. 9 retreat at the Borromeo Prayer Center costs \$15, and participants are asked to bring a snack or beverage to share. If you wish to go, call 585/482-9023 by Nov. 6.

Calling all writers, musicians, videographers

In the special Books, Music and Video issue Nov. 14, the *Catholic Courier* will publish a list of diocesan individuals or groups who have produced books, musical tapes and CDs, and videos in 2002.

If you or someone you know released such a work this year, send us in writing by Nov. 7 the name(s) of the author(s)/performer(s), the name and brief description of the work and a contact number in case we have any questions.

Please keep in mind we need your submissions — in writing — by Nov. 7.

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