

## Living Life Abundantly

*(Written by young adult Missy Brassie)*

They came by the car load, and there were so many carloads that every spare piece of grass and concrete on the surrounding streets was used for parking. The chairs were full and more were still coming. The line for food snaked around and seemed to hardly move. Meat came off the grill and was on someone's plate in a matter of seconds. When all was said and done, there had been just enough potato salad, and the leftovers were few. It was an unexpected turnout, and it left organizers wondering, "Had people eaten enough? Were they filled?"

There may not have been as much earthly food as was needed, but that doesn't mean the 250 young adults who attended the first annual Bishop's Bash went away hungry. They were fed in body *and* soul: the agenda for the evening opened with the Sacrifice of the Holy Mass, celebrated by the host for the evening, Archbishop Daniel Buechlein. "I accepted the invitation to host the Bishop's Bash because it was an opportunity to let young adults in the Archdiocese know that our Church values them and, indeed, needs their participation in our mission," says Archbishop Buechlein.

It seems unlikely, doesn't it, that on a beautiful Saturday night in early fall, that so many young adults would choose to attend a party held at the home of a man three times their age. It seems even more unlikely that the nature of their gathering was the sharing of the Catholic faith. Yet as they arrived, they were welcomed with open arms by the shepherd of our Archdiocese, who radiated a youthful joy.

As the planning for the event unfolded, no one quite knew what to expect. "I was amazed at the response," the Archbishop stated. "The number of young adults attending the event at the archbishop's residence far exceeded what I expected. And it was an impressive representation of our young Church."

Joe Pedersen, an Echo apprentice working alongside Fr. Rick Nagel in young adult ministry, shared similar thoughts. "Throughout the evening, there was a strong sense that we were participating in something unique...There are few, if any, other places in the country where young adult ministry has been made such a focus or is as supported as it is here in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis."

It's an honest statement, because the Bishop's Bash is only one piece of this beautiful puzzle. Opportunities for young adults to become involved in ministry are flourishing, something apparent by the multiple groups who stepped forward during a portion of the evening to share a word or two about their Catholic young adult organization. At least ten or fifteen people emerged from the crowd, some telling of movements and activities in our vast Church that many in attendance had never heard of. "This event encouraged me to learn about the various programs offered to young adults in the Catholic community and get involved with the groups of my choice," said Christina Frey,

an Indianapolis resident active in St. Monica's Parish. As Archbishop Daniel observed, "The attendees mixed well considering it was a first time several different groups and people of different cultures gathered...I am hopeful that our young adults will help build a community wherein more of their peers will feel welcome and find a Church home."

For Karina Carbajal, a member of the Latino young adult group, that hope is already a reality. "First of all, being invited was something I didn't expect, and meeting people who speak different languages was great, and to see that even when we do not speak the same language, we were united, that made my faith stronger."

Mission accomplished? The concept for the Bishop's Bash was conceived for the purpose of cultivating an atmosphere of unity among the young adults of the Archdiocese. With so many twenty- and thirty-somethings actively seeking a deeper relationship with Christ and a more mature faith, it is necessary to provide avenues for these similar souls to connect and support one another, for it is in community that we grow spiritually. "I am confident that we will see more of our young adults who want to be part of the life of our local Church," Archbishop Buechlein states. "I trust that many will remain in contact and offer their time and talent for our mission to proclaim and live the gospel, participate in the sacramental life of the Church and also help in our ministry of charity."

It was a night touched by the Holy Spirit, and a new energy seemed to fill the crowd. As Missy Scarlett put it, "Young adults often spend a lot of time volunteering for the church on top of their studies, workload and other church group commitments, so it's nice to be recognized, especially by the Archbishop, in a setting where we can relax, rejuvenate and have fun." Rejuvenation was exactly one of the graces from the evening. Joe Pedersen commented on the inspiration and excitement he had for his ministry to young adults. "I was able to see the vast possibilities for young adult ministry in the future."

And so it begins. While the night ended with the bang of fireworks, they served more like a shot-gun at the start of a big race. It seems that many walked away with a renewed spirit and energy and zeal for what is happening in our Church, the Church here in Indianapolis. As Archbishop Daniel observed, "The positive spirit of the young adults was encouraging and contagious...attentiveness at the Eucharist was impressive."

It is impressive, that so many are willing to share their faith and be shining examples of hope to a world so desperate for the Life. Please pray for our young adults, and pray that events like the Bishop's Bash will continue to grow - that more people will learn just what it means to live life abundantly.

[Photos from Bishop's Bash 2009](#)