



# THE MICHIGAN CATHOLIC

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## Youth 'Give it all to God' at Rainbow 35

by [Daniel Meloy](#) • February 23, 2017



Kevin "Mr. Peace" Szawala speaks to young people about the need to let go and trust in God's love during the 35th annual CYO Rainbow conference Feb. 11-12 at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center in downtown Detroit. (Dan Meloy | The Michigan Catholic)

### *Young Catholics celebrate Christ with hundreds of friends in downtown Detroit*

**DETROIT** — A young person living out his or her faith is amazing.

Thousands of young people gathering to celebrate their faith: that's a cause for celebration.

The Catholic Youth Organization hosted the 35th annual Rainbow Conference Feb. 11-12 at the Renaissance Center in downtown Detroit, where thousands of young Catholics from across the Archdiocese of Detroit had the chance to worship, socialize and grow in holiness.

The theme, "Give it all to God," was selected from one of the readings of the week, said Mary Luckhardt of St. Colette Parish in Livonia, who is part of the CYO Youth Council leadership team, which helps plan Rainbow.

“It’s the excitement of young people being your age, being Catholic and being excited about their faith, that seems to bring the best out of people,” Luckhardt said. “This is my first Rainbow, and I like seeing people get a deeper love for Jesus, growing with God.”



Fr. Joseph Horn elevates the Blessed Sacrament during adoration at CYO Rainbow XXXV conference. (Dan Meloy | The Michigan Catholic)

This year’s Rainbow featured Fr. Tony Ricard of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, director of KnightTime Ministries and publisher and chief editor for Two Knights Publishing Company, & Kevin Szawala, a local youth minister known as “Mr. Peace,” a motivational speaker, hip-hop artist & director of youth ministry at St. Mary Parish in Milford.

“It’s my first Rainbow, and I’m enjoying meeting a bunch of people and getting to know better the people I already know,” said Joseph Redlawski of St. Christopher Parish in Marysville. “It’s reassuring knowing people are going through the same things I’m going through. It’s just fantastic seeing the amount of youth that are close to Christ and are on fire for Him.”

During the Saturday afternoon keynote address, “Mr. Peace” recalled his experience speaking with youths around the country, noting that many young people feel a lack of a self-worth that can lead to unbearable anxiety.

“The human mind thinks of 60,000 to 78,000 thoughts a day, and on average, 80 percent of those thoughts are negative,” Szawala said. “Out of those negative thoughts, 98 percent are thoughts we had yesterday. What’s that telling us is the same negative record is playing over and over.”

Szawala stressed the need to let go, and let God’s love come in, which in turn means learning to love yourself. “Jesus said the greatest commandments are to love your God with all your heart, mind and soul and to love your neighbor as yourself,” Szawala said. “But so many don’t love themselves, so how can you love others, if you don’t love yourself?”



Young people kneel in prayer during Eucharistic adoration. (Dan Meloy | The Michigan Catholic)

Leading the group in praise and worship, “Mr. Peace” emphasized that it was OK to stand out, it was OK not to have all the answers, to not have it all “figured out like the others.”

“If we are ridiculed, bullied and pushed down, that’s OK, because I know someone I love who was ridiculed, bullied and pushed down, and so do you,” Szawala said. “So please, stop by after this, give a hug. I don’t have all the answers, but He does. I just want you to know you’re here, you are miracles.” For more information please visit his website at: [www.mrpeace.org](http://www.mrpeace.org).

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