



ST. LWANGA NEWS

Youth Mission Centre
of St. Lwanga and
the Ugandan Martyrs

Diocese of Saint John's–Basseterre
Youth Ministry Newsletter

Dear Friends,

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Welcome to the second issue of the **Diocesan Youth Ministry Newsletter**! This edition comes with a fresh new look, featuring a redesigned layout and the new logo of the **St. Lwanga Youth Mission Centre**.

This issue is, in many ways, an expression of thanksgiving for the blessings we have experienced from March until the end of the school year. Although these pages cannot capture everything that has happened at our Youth Centre in Antigua and in our parishes, they offer a glimpse of some of the events, encounters, and initiatives that have enriched our youth ministry. This time, we especially wanted to give a voice to those who participated, inviting them to share their personal reflections.



We hope this newsletter will continue to grow as a place where we can share what is happening throughout the Diocese of St. John's–Basseterre, inspiring one another in faith and service. If you have news, photos, or stories you would like to share, we invite you to send them to us for future issues.

Stay connected with us! Whether you would like to organize an event at the Centre or in your own community, prepare a retreat or prayer day, or another kind of programme; join one of our activities, or simply stop by when you are in Antigua – you are always welcome!

Sr. Edita Maria Ulman, SSps

Diocesan Youth Delegate / Newsletter Editor

In This Issue:

- * **Regional Updates: Highlights from the Youth Commission Zoom Meeting – p. 2**
- * **So, This Is Adulthood? A reflection of a young woman's journey into adulthood – p. 3**
- * **Confirmation Retreat with Bishop Llanos: A Participant's Testimony – p. 4**
- * **The Word That Unites: Bible Quiz Competition at Holy Family Cathedral – p. 5**
- * **Fun & Games Fridays: Chess at the Youth Centre – p. 6**
- * **Movie Nights at St. Lwanga Centre: Nourishment for the Mind and Soul – p. 7**
- * **Virgin Gorda: Youth Envisioners Outreach Programme – p. 8**
- * **Three Challenges to the Youth: Fan the Flame in Your Life – p. 9**

New Logo for the Diocesan Youth Centre

Youth Mission Centre of St. Lwanga and the Ugandan Martyrs has a new logo. It is another step in making the patron saints of the youth of our Diocese better known and giving our youth ministry a recognizable identity.

The logo was designed by Oleksandra Korchevska-Tsekhosh (pictured), a researcher, graphic designer, and design educator from Ukraine, with over 14 years of professional experience.

It is especially significant that the logo was created by a designer from the country whose history has also been marked by the witness of many martyrs for the faith. Like St. Charles Lwanga and his companions, they remained faithful to Christ and to their moral convictions, even at the cost of their lives.

May the witness of all those who have remained faithful to the Gospel continue to inspire us, young people, to live our faith with courage, integrity, and hope.



Youth Mission Centre
of St. Lwanga and
the Ugandan Martyrs

Regional Updates in Brief: Highlights from the Youth Commission Zoom Meeting

TORTOLA

from Sherma Nicholas

Five youth leaders have come together, and **two training sessions** have already taken place, focusing on the new paradigm for youth ministry introduced during last summer's Jamaica training. Future plans include **developing a study manual** based on the formation programme.

ANTIGUA

from Reina Mason

A variety of **successful youth activities** took place at Holy Family Cathedral and OLPH Tyrell, including Lenten bonfires, Lenten missions, the Way of the Cross, nature walks, Bible quiz competitions, a beach picnic, and a Confirmation retreat, bringing young people together in faith, friendship, and community.

MONTSERRAT

from Amanda Osborne Cabey

Young people participated actively in the **Stations of the Cross and Easter celebrations**. A **youth retreat** was held from Good Friday until the Easter Vigil, bringing together 12 participants aged 12–17 for a time of prayer, reflection, and fellowship.

Two young people, after a period of preparation, expressed their willingness to serve the Church and became **Eucharistic Ministers**. The youth ministry continues to grow, now supported by four leaders, including a new member who joined in December.

The youth also organized a **Pentecost family celebration**, bringing families and the wider community together in faith and joy.

VIRGIN GORDA - ON PAGE 8

from Cathy Ann Bascombe

DIOCESAN CATECHETICAL OFFICE

from Morvette Thomas

The AEC (Antilles Episcopal Conference) 2025 Youth Leadership Conference in Jamaica was revisited through the **"Call Back" session (online)** prepared by Mrs. Morvette Thomas from the Catechetical Office and Mr. Darren Bennett, a youth leader from Jamaica, in collaboration with other AEC youth leaders. The meeting provided an opportunity for discussion, reflection, informal sharing, and updates on the ongoing journey of youth ministry across the region.

WHAT IS THE DIOCESAN YOUTH COMMISSION?

The Diocesan Youth Commission **consists of one representative from each country** of our Diocese. The members were nominated in consultation with parish priests and diocesan collaborators and commissioned by the Bishop to serve **a three-year term**. The Commission also includes Fr. George Wacuma, **Youth Chaplain**; Mrs. Morvette Thomas, **Catechetical Coordinator**; and Sr. Edita Maria Ulman, SSpS, **Youth Delegate**, who coordinates its work. **Our mission is: to support the spiritual growth of young people, strengthen collaboration among the islands, discern the needs of youth, and help develop a common pastoral direction for youth ministry.** Since its formation in October 2025, the Commission has met three times online and remains in regular contact with the AEC Youth Commission, fostering collaboration across the region.

Visitors from St. Kitts and Nevis

An opportunity to visit the St. Lwanga Youth Mission Centre was taken by **Ms. Vanessa Richards-Phipps, a member of the Diocesan Youth Commission** together with her husband, who serves the Church as a deacon.



As we meet usually online, meeting in person was a special joy and an opportunity to strengthen connections. During the visit, we also met with **Mr. Ellis Southwell**, who serves with the AEC Youth Commission, sharing experiences and encouraging further collaboration in youth ministry across the region.

I would like to introduce you to Robyn (21, Antiguan), one of the students who comes to the St. Lwanga Youth Centre. Actually, it is because of her that we now have Friday chess and games afternoons at the centre. What began as a simple chess game after her classes quickly became conversations about faith, life, relationships, and the deeper questions hidden behind a thoughtful mind.

Robyn is not satisfied with answers like, "It is this way because it has always been this way." She is a thinker who wants to understand why things happen and how they can be improved. Today, I invite Robyn to speak. I believe many adults will recognize their own journey into adulthood in her words, while younger readers may find in them a preparation for what lies ahead.

In September, Robyn hopes to begin college. Alongside her studies and preparation for this new step, she is currently working to earn money to help pay for her education.

If anyone would like to support her financially in her studies, you are welcome to contact us.

So, This Is Adulthood? The Realities No One Prepares You For

As I get older, things I always heard but never understood now make perfect sense. Phrases like *"ignorance is bliss"* don't sound so harmless anymore—because the more you understand, the more morbid everything seems to feel.

No one prepares you for how early you might have to grow up. Sometimes, adulthood doesn't wait for you to be ready. It's forced on you through situations you didn't choose, and suddenly you're figuring things out that should've come much later.

No one prepares you for how long it takes to find yourself. You grow up thinking you'll just "become" someone one day, but instead, it's a constant process of unlearning, relearning, and questioning everything you thought you knew about yourself. And in that process, you might make choices that don't always serve you. You might end up in places or situations that aren't good for you—trying to understand yourself through things that were never meant to heal you.

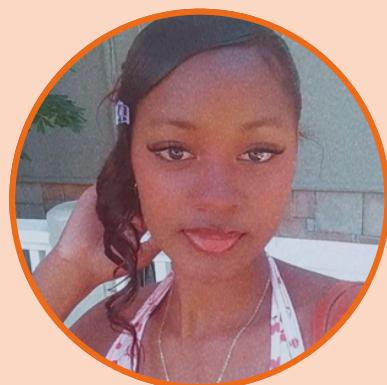
No one prepares you for what you lose or gain along the way. As you get older, you outgrow people you thought you'd be with forever. You lose loved ones you believed would always be there. There are long pauses in the pages of your life—the hard stages where you find yourself alone for a long time. And grief changes. It's no longer just about death—it becomes the quiet mourning of a relationship, a friendship, a situation, a version of yourself, or even the life you once imagined.

But along the way, you form new and even unexpected connections, gain experience and learn lessons that prepare you for the future, and get even just a little bit closer to the person you strive to be.

No one prepares you for the things you start to notice. About people, life, and yourself. Some truths are disturbing, and once you see them, you can't unsee them. You start to understand how powerful the mind really is—for better or for worse—and how easily it can make or break you.

And at some point, you might find yourself searching for something deeper—turning to faith, or to anything that brings a sense of grounding or peace. And maybe, if you're lucky—or intentional—you begin to realize the importance of your mental health. Not as a trend, but as a necessity.

For what it's worth, everything's okay—or at least it will be. You'll figure out life for yourself and on your own terms, because **there's no single linear path, you see. So take it at your own pace.**



"Adulthood doesn't wait for you to be ready. It's forced on you through situations you didn't choose, and suddenly you're figuring things out that should've come much later."

Robyn, 21, Antiguan



EXPERIENCING COMFORT, HEALING, AND CONNECTION WITH GOD

Confirmation Retreat with Bishop Llanos – A Participant's Testimony



On Pentecost Sunday, 16 young people received the Sacrament of Confirmation from Bishop Robert Llanos at the Holy Family Cathedral in Antigua. A few weeks earlier, in April, as part of their preparation for this important moment in the life of every Catholic, the young people attended a spiritual weekend at the Retreat Centre at Mount Tabor. The event was organized by Ms. Morvette Thomas, Head of the Catechetical Department of the Diocese. Jessica Beaupierre, who had been preparing the group for Confirmation, also accompanied them during those days.

One of the participants shared her very special experience from the weekend. Savanna is 15 and is often seen in church — whether during the Way of the Cross, Sunday Mass, or other parish activities. We wish her, and all the young people who received the gift of the Holy Spirit, that this gift may unfold in their lives and bear fruit in both their spiritual and social lives as they become full members of the Church.

*“During a recent Confirmation retreat, many Confirmation candidates experienced a deeply emotional and spiritual moment as Bishop Robert spoke to the group. Through prayer and speaking in tongues, he shared messages that touched the hearts of many in the room. As he spoke, **he addressed personal struggles and challenges that many of the candidates had been silently carrying. It felt as though God was speaking directly to each person through him, reminding them that they were seen, understood, and never alone in what they were facing.***

The atmosphere in the room was incredibly powerful and emotional. Many people were brought to tears, including myself, as the experience created a sense of comfort, healing, and connection with God. For many of the Confirmation candidates, it was a moment that strengthened their faith and reminded them that God truly knows their struggles and walks with them through difficult times.”

Savanna Raguette, 15, retreat participant



THE WORD

UNITES: BIBLE QUIZ COMPETITION

That Friday evening in April at the Holy Family Cathedral in Antigua was filled with emotions: the nervous excitement of competition, the curiosity of the participants, the enthusiastic cheering for favorite teams, and, above all, the warm atmosphere of being together as one Church united by the Word of God.

*Six teams took part in the competition, including two representing the youth of Holy Family Cathedral Parish: "**Chapter Champions**" and "**The Chosen Trio.**"*

*Among the participants were **Kayla and Jonathan**, who, for the past few months, have taken on a special responsibility in the parish as members of the technical team that provides the live video streaming of the 9:00 a.m. Sunday Mass. Their generous service behind the scenes has become an important part of the parish's ministry. They now share their experience of preparing for and participating in the Bible Quiz Competition.*



Our journey together has been a meaningful and uplifting experience. It all began when Sr. Edita approached Jonathan and I after Stations of the Cross and invited us to be part of the Bible quiz organised by the Holy Family Catholic Cathedral. From that moment, we felt encouraged and included, and we decided to take part as a way of growing in our faith and knowledge of God's Word.

Our team name, "The Chosen Trio," was inspired by our love for the TV series The Chosen.

We met once or twice a week at the Youth Centre to read and reflect on the assigned Bible passages. Our Bible studies have been both engaging and insightful. We explored **the Letter to Philemon**, where we learned **about forgiveness, compassion, and reconciliation**. This short but powerful letter reminded us of the importance of treating one another with love and grace, just as Christ teaches us. We also studied **Exodus chapters 37–40**, which deepened our understanding of dedication and obedience

through the careful building of the Tabernacle, showing how devotion to God is reflected in attention to detail and faithful service.

The Bible quiz has been a fun and enriching experience as well. It challenged us to recall what we learned while encouraging teamwork and friendly competition. Although we did not come first place, the experience was still very valuable, as it pushed us to study harder, stay focused, and grow in confidence. Through this, we strengthened both our understanding of Scripture and our bond as participants.

Overall, this experience has helped us grow spiritually and personally. It has brought us closer together, strengthened our faith, and inspired us to continue learning and living out the teachings of the Bible in our daily lives.

Kayla Edwards



"I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ."

Philem. 1:6



Fun & Games Fridays:

— Chess at the Youth Centre —

It has already become a weekly ritual: a large cardboard box filled with different games is brought outside the Youth Centre, where a table and benches are set up. Since February, every Friday afternoon from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m., St. Lwanga Youth Centre has been hosting **Fun & Games Fridays**. Students from the school are invited to come, play, watch, or simply chat. The number of participants varies from week to week, and so do the games. Sometimes, in two hours, we manage to finish only two games of chess. On other Fridays, more fast-paced players join us, and we have seven to ten participants. It is not only about having fun. **It is about creating a space to meet people and get to know one another. Around the chessboard, interesting conversations often develop about life, faith, school, friendships, and many other topics.** One Friday, we even had a very special visitor — a real donkey named Playboy! That Friday was certainly full of fun.

Ashton is one of the bright minds who comes to play chess. He shares his experience and how he sees the value of these moments at the Youth Centre:



Nestled in the heart of St. John's, Antigua, St. Lwanga Youth Mission Centre sits next to the well-known St. Joseph's Academy, one of the island's leading secondary schools. Its lively grounds echoing with the chatter of students and the hum of community life. Imagine a modest but welcoming building, where the gates are always open to young people seeking connection, learning, and play. The atmosphere is vibrant yet calm, with tables set up for games that spark both competition and friendship. Among these, **chess has become a favorite — a game that draws teens together, teaching patience, strategy, and respect.** Picture a group of eager faces bent over boards, some learning the moves for the first time, others already plotting clever traps, all sharing in the joy of discovery. The Youth Centre transforms this ancient game into a modern tool for growth, where every checkmate feels is not only a small victory on the board but also a step toward building confidence and community.



At the youth Centre, board games such as chess or Scrabble often becomes a social bridge. It allows young people from different backgrounds to connect over a shared interest, breaking down barriers and encouraging teamwork. **Friendly tournaments or casual matches can create a sense of community, where everyone feels included and valued.** This makes the Youth Centre not just a place to play, but a hub for friendship and collaboration. When we play games we are not just playing for fun - we are learning together as well.

Ashton Gordon, St. Joseph's Academy student



Movie Nights for Parishioners: Nourishment for the Mind and Soul

When I received the invitation to watch the movie **Purgatory**, I must confess that I was undecided about going. It is such a sensitive topic, and many people remain uncertain about the reality of purgatory.

I am so glad that I went! Upon arriving, I was warmly welcomed by the hospitable helpers. The bags of popcorn and fruit juice waiting at the entrance made me feel as though I were in a cosy home cinema.

The movie *Purgatory* was truly enlightening. The famous paintings depicting souls awaiting the time when they could be united with their loving God and Saviour were deeply moving. The documented experiences of visionaries who were visited by those who had died, asking for prayers so they could be released from purgatory, were especially eye-opening. The testimonies about Padre Pio removed any uncertainty I still had. I thought to myself, "If Padre Pio says so, then I'm convinced!" I am now certain that praying for the deceased is something we **MUST** do every day. Wherever we are, regardless of our

age or circumstances, **praying for the souls of the departed is a beautiful act of charity.** If you ever feel that you are not doing enough, here is something we can all do: pray for the souls in purgatory!



Cheryl Anne de Freitas, School Teacher

Accepting the invitation to watch the movie **Two Crowns**, I came with a small group of fellow parishioners. As we entered the movie hall, I was immediately impressed by the welcoming refreshment table, which created a warm atmosphere and made us feel like one family gathered together. The film, which tells **the life story of St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe**, one of the great prophets and witnesses of the last century, was

inspiring and deeply moving. One of the scenes that stayed with me was the apparition of the Virgin Mary to the young Maximilian. She offered him two crowns, and he later told his mother that he wanted them both: **purity and martyrdom.** Another scene that deeply touched me was the story of the doctor and the miraculous healing.



Sandra, Member of the Legion of Mary

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL AFTER DEATH? - A CATHOLIC EXPLANATION

MOVIE NIGHT

PURGATORY
THE SECRET REVELATIONS OF THE SAINTS

MOVIE NIGHT

7 DEADLY SINS
LIVELY VIRTUES



Video Lecture
by Bishop Robert Barron

MOVIE NIGHT



TWO CROWNS



VIRGIN GORDA

YOUTH ENVISIONERS ON MISSION

The first **outreach programme of the Youth Envisioners** for 2026 was a joyful experience of service and connection. The team visited Valley Day School, Little Rainbow School, and Ciboney School, where they distributed stationery boxes, each thoughtfully prepared with a small treat inside.

During their visits, the young people shared uplifting words, encouraging the children to respect and listen to their parents, teachers, and friends, and reminding them that Jesus loves them. The outreach was a meaningful experience filled with connection, kindness, and purpose. The warm welcome from the schools and the smiles of **the children encouraged the Youth Envisioners to continue serving and making a positive difference in their community.**

YOUTH PAINT SESSION: CREATING ONE PICTURE TOGETHER

The Youth of Virgin Gorda gathered at Nail Bay for a special social evening, enjoying a relaxing **sip and paint session**. Thanks to the generosity of Keri, who kindly donated the venue, the young people had the opportunity to unwind, share laughter, and create new memories together.

Although not all members could attend, the evening was filled with joy, meaningful conversations, and connection. We are grateful to the youth leadership team—the president, vice president, and secretary—for organizing the gathering, to Fr. Boniface for providing pizza, and to all parents for their continued support.

As a youth ministry community, we are reminded of **the importance of staying connected with our young people—checking in on them, learning about their lives, and accompanying them in their journeys. Every person matters**, and when someone is missing, we truly feel that a part of our community is absent. We continue to pray for our youth and young adults, supporting them with love, encouragement, and friendship.

Wishing you all peace and joy — enjoy the photos!

Cathy Ann Bascombe, Youth Coordinator, Virgin Gorda



Three Challenges to the Youth FAN THE FLAME IN YOUR LIFE!

Fr. George Wacuma's Message on the Feast of St. Lwanga and Companions

Photo credit: Unsplash

On 3 June, young people gathered at the Holy Family Cathedral in Antigua for a special Mass celebrating the patron saints of the youth of our Diocese — **St. Charles Lwanga and his companions, the Ugandan martyrs.** Drawing from the homily of **Fr. George Wacuma, Diocesan Youth Chaplain**, let us reflect on three challenges and, at the same time, three practical tools that can help us, as young people, deepen our faith and strengthen our spiritual journey.

1. GROW CLOSER TO JESUS IN THE EUCHARIST — READ HOW TO BE HIS

"I have been taught what the Eucharist is, and I knew who the Lord is in the Blessed Sacrament," Fr. Wacuma shared. **"But through reading this book, I have deepened my knowledge and my love for the Eucharistic Jesus."** The book Father mentioned is **How to Be His: A 33-Day Dedication to Our Eucharistic Jesus**, written by two Dominican authors. This spiritual journey, introduced few months ago in the parishes of our Diocese and concluded on the Feast of Corpus Christi, helped him grow in a deeper understanding of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Fr. Wacuma encouraged the young people to take up this spiritual journey themselves:

"I am inviting all of us, especially the young people: read this book, and it will make a great difference in your life! Dedicate yourself to becoming one with God, because He wants us to become one with Him."

2. GET TO KNOW THE STORY OF ST. LWANGA AND HIS COMPANIONS

"My message that I leave with you this evening is connected with the celebration of St. Charles Lwanga and his companions. I hope you know the story of St. Lwanga..."

These words became both a challenge and an invitation for the young people to learn more about the life and witness of St. Charles Lwanga and his companions, whose courageous faith led them to give their lives for Christ and who are the patron saints of the youth of our Diocese.

Do you know the story of St. Charles Lwanga from Uganda? **Perhaps this is a good time to find out more about these courageous witnesses of faith.** You may even write a short article about their story and share it with us for the next issue of the newsletter.

3. DON'T LET THE GIFT OF GOD JUST SIT THERE. MAKE IT AFLAME IN YOUR LIFE!

Toward the end of his homily, Fr. Wacuma reflected on the words from the first reading, taken from St. Paul's Letter to Timothy: *"For this reason, I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God which you have received through the laying on of hands."*

"I challenge you in the same way," Fr. Wacuma told the young people. **"You have all received the gift of God in your hearts. Do not let it just sit there. Make it aflame in your life."**

