

Diocese of Charlotte Young Adult Ministry

The Vine: Catholic Young Adults in Asheville

Jesus of Nazareth, the True Vine, likes people; always calling them to him; hanging out with them individually, in small groups, or even in crowds; pointing out people that nobody else noticed. He encountered them in their work, in their homes, in the synagogues, on the street. And for someone who had no place to lay his head, he always acted with perfect hospitality. Truly, the Son of God likes people so much, he became one. He always meets them where they are, shows the Father's love for them, shows them He believes in them, and then shows them the Way that is himself.

Like our namesake, The Vine—Catholic Young Adults of Asheville likes people: welcoming new people with hospitality, and being together with those we've been friends with for years now. I'm not going to pretend that we're all best friends, but we like coming together, and like Jesus, we get together where we are: in our homes, out and about, over potlucks, lunch in a restaurant, or grilling out (or any meal—like Jesus, we like food), or hikes, or a music venue, or just walks around a neighborhood, or serving the homeless, or building a Habitat House. And we do any number of those things at least once a week, whether "officially" as The Vine, or in the friendships we've formed, or spontaneously. We make the time to come together because we believe we should be more than a group, we should be a community, friends, and family.

But if we stopped there, we stop at the waters' edge, and Jesus called us out into deep waters. There's a belief—not universal to every *branch (member)* of the Vine, and it doesn't come up all the time—a foundational belief that everyone The Vine welcomes, everyone we show hospitality to, every friend, everyone, is called to holiness, to sainthood, and we're called to help each other get there. It comes up briefly in conversation at our weekly lunch, it's in the depth of sharing at the monthly meeting, in the pursuit of faith in our weekly reflections on the Catechism, in the way we come together in prayer for Adoration and the Rosary, in the way we challenge each other and ourselves to be good, to long for grace, to grow in the faith. Ultimately, the Vine truly believes each Catholic Young Adult member of the Church and all the great big family of humanity are called to draw life from the True Vine, and that we'll bear fruit at a hundred-fold, even in this life and in eternity with each other in God if we do so.

Young adult ministry, no matter where it is or what form it takes, is an invitation to all of us at that stage of new independence developed in the context of community and mature relationships; an invitation to join a community of peers in faith, that leads to community in the broader parish, the pilgrim Church on Earth and the community of the cloud of witnesses that is communion of the saints. It is an invitation to take up, or renew, the journey to Christ with fellow travelers walking the same roads, facing the same challenges. Young Adult Ministry is ultimately an invitation to be more firmly grafted with others to that True Vine that roots us in the divine life, to flourish and flower with a beauty that gives glory to God.

—Submitted by David Mayeux, The Vine, Basilica of St Lawrence, Asheville