



# Eagle of the Cross



## Information Packet & Nomination Form

2024 | Revised: December 2023

25th annual ***Eagle of the Cross*** Award  
Description

The Eagle of the Cross award is given annually to outstanding juniors and seniors in high school within the Diocese of Youngstown who show particular zeal in the improvement of their own parish ministry programs, high school ministry teams, or youth work in general within the Diocese.

Nominees must be Catholic, and must exemplify the qualities of moral integrity, prayer, good works, and Catholic-Christian leadership. This award was created by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, and is the highest honor presented to the youth by the Diocese of Youngstown. Up to 3 awards per county for parish involvement, and up to 2 awards per diocesan Catholic high school are awarded each year.

All completed nomination forms will be accepted throughout January to mid-February, and must be signed by both the **nominator** and the **nominee's pastor** (i.e. pastor at the parish at which the candidate is most involved). The nomination must be submitted by the nominee's pastor, and received (mailed or delivered) at the Diocesan Offices by 3:00pm on Friday, February 23, 2024. It is encouraged that the nominator gives the nomination to the parish by **Friday, February 9, 2024**, so the parish can have the option to mail the nomination(s) by **Friday, February 16, 2024.**

For the Catholic High School category, signature of the School President or Principal is also required, **and should still be returned to the nominee's pastor for submission.** Please be mindful of the nomination deadline and allow yourself time to obtain the appropriate signature(s).

\*Faxed or emailed copies of this form will not be accepted.\*

The Eagle of the Cross Awards ceremony will take place on **Tuesday, April 30, 2024** at 6:00pm at St. Columba Cathedral with a reception in the Banquet Hall to follow.

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# NOMINATION INSTRUCTIONS

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## PRE-NOMINATION ASSESSMENT:

The individual you are planning to nominate needs to be actively practicing their Catholic faith. Please prayerfully consider if you view this individual as a practicing Catholic before nominating them. As a reminder, the Church's criteria for considering any person a practicing Catholic is the [Five Precepts of the Church](#) (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pgs. 493-494). The Precepts are as follows:

- Candidate goes to Mass every Sunday, as well as all Holy Days of obligation
- Candidate utilizes the Sacrament of Confession at least once a year
- Candidate receives the Eucharist at least once a year during the Easter season
- Candidate observes all days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church
- Candidate helps to provide for the needs of the Church through their time, talent, and/or treasure

## FILLING OUT A NOMINATION

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- After completion of the pre-nomination assessment, nominations may be submitted by any adult (i.e. pastor, parish leader/staff, school faculty/staff, friend of the family, etc.) who has personally observed the teen and can attest to his/her Catholic-Christian leadership. Multiple nominations for a nominee will be judged together based on a point system.
- **The point system:** The maximum number of points a teen can receive is **30 per nomination** – 5 points for each of the 6 questions. It is required that the teen must accrue at least 25 points to be eligible for the award. **Each county can be awarded up to 3 awards and each school can be awarded up to 2 awards.** Judges will take the top 3 candidates per county and the top 2 per school *that surpassed* the 25 point minimum score. Please note that not only is the nomination judged by writing *quality and examples*, but also by *personal testimony* of those who know the nominee well.
- Answers to the essay questions on this form are the principal material used for judging. Please give *specific, thorough, and distinct examples in all 6 categories*. The more descriptive the information is, the more helpful it is to the judges.
- Excerpts from your nomination may appear in the 2024 program, should your nominee be selected as a recipient. A teen may only receive this award once.
- Use the Official Form (pages 6-7 in this packet) and additional paper, if necessary. Please email [mdisalvatore@youngstowndiocese.org](mailto:mdisalvatore@youngstowndiocese.org) to request a Word/Google Doc version of this form if you need to type it. Other formats are not permitted.
- Nominees in each category (County or School) should exemplify more significant participation within the category for which they are nominated (i.e. "School" → mostly school activities; "County" → mostly parish activities). Well-rounded teens may provide a strong example of both, so please include examples of both.
- This award is not geared towards quantitative hours of service, as ministry and service cannot often be quantified. This award is geared towards the morality, character, and integrity of the individual as perceived as an outstanding Catholic Christian, even when his/her good works go unnoticed or unseen, *as expressed in this nomination*.
- If the individual is nominated in the **Catholic High School Category**, please note **non-mandatory** activities/service, as this award honors those students who go above and beyond the mandatory

expectations and requirements. Additionally, the teen should be *registered* at and *actively participating* at a Catholic parish. \*The parish at which the teen is registered and the parish at which s/he participates most is encouraged to be, but does not have to be, the same.\*

- Please list **1 additional reference who is not in the candidate's immediate family** who should be prepared for a phone call inquiring about why the reference thinks the candidate should be considered for nomination:

	First and Last Name	Relation to Nominee	Phone Number	Email
Reference 1:				

## SUBMITTING A SOLID NOMINATION

Be sure to review this section closely PRIOR to completing the form.

### JUDGING PROCESS:

Nominees receive from 0 - 5 points per question (5 = excellent examples given, 4 = good examples, 3 = adequate examples, 2 = minimal examples, 1-0 = irrelevant examples or no examples given). The importance of EXAMPLES cannot be stressed enough; the samples below show the type of example that would receive higher points than others:

### SAMPLES:

1. How does this young person **contribute to parish or school programs?** (Highlight most of the teen's contributions, but feel free to add other examples as well.) Is this person involved in parish/school programs—youth/campus ministry, liturgical ministry, service, peer ministry, prayer groups, etc.? Does this person demonstrate leadership in these activities? How so?

**Helpful:** Joanna trained as a peer minister at her high school so she could help others who have been bullied and marginalized to feel accepted and be reminded of how important they are. She is also a lector, choir member, and leader in her parish youth Bible study group.

**Not helpful:** Joanna is a gifted pitcher on the school softball team.

2. In what ways is this youth involved in **personal outreach to the larger community/Diocese?**  
How involved is this person in serving the wider community through service and justice initiatives? How often does this person participate in any diocesan, regional, or national/international programs (Ex: NCYC, mission/service trips, Chrism Mass, etc.)?

**Helpful:** After returning from a great experience at a mission trip in Kentucky, José encouraged his group of friends to join him each Friday after school to assist elderly and handicapped persons in his neighborhood. They did yard work in the fall, and helped shovel snow in the winter.

**Not helpful:** José fulfilled his 40 hours of service requirement for school.

3. In what ways is the **prayer and spiritual life** of this young person evident?  
How active is this person in their Catholic faith? Is it evident that he/she is pursuing Christ and developing a relationship with Jesus? Is he/she developing spiritually? **How so?** Does s/he engage in spiritually-focused experiences, encounters, and programs?

**Helpful:** After voicing to me how he sensed the Holy Spirit nudging him, Donovan asked his priest last year if he could train to be an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion for the parish. Since Donovan was trained and commissioned, he is always present for his scheduled Mass and distributes the Holy Eucharist with great reverence and joy. This year, he began taking Communion to his homebound neighbor.

**Not helpful:** Donovan goes to Mass.

4. How does this person demonstrate **moral integrity**?

In what ways is it evident that this person adheres to a code of moral conduct and ethical judgment based on the values of the Gospel? How does she/he demonstrate that he/she is sound and rooted in his/her faith and beliefs?

**Helpful:** Sophia displays moral integrity by reminding her friends and acquaintances that she will not participate in or listen to gossip, and gently gives them good reasons why she does not when they inquire. It is important to Sophia to see the good in others, and this is evident in the way she compliments others for their good deeds, and encourages them to continue to act that way. She uses social media for the common good, as she often posts inspirational pictures with Scripture verses or quotes from saints in the caption. I overheard her turn down an invitation to a party when she learned that drinking would take place.

**Not helpful:** Sophia is a great person who is always happy and smiling.

5. In what ways does this young person exhibit **Catholic-Christian Leadership**?

Does this person promote and model gospel values for others, especially his/her peers? What are some examples of this teen leading others? (Highlight leadership roles taken throughout his/her experience.)

**Helpful:** It was discerned that Delaney serve as a co-director of the parish youth retreat as a high school junior last year; she was humble, organized, punctual, and prayerful in the way she spoke and carried herself. She made sure that every meeting began and ended with prayer and on-time. She also gave an honest and inspirational witness talk, sharing a number of ways in which she experienced God's love throughout her story. Her peers seemed to be truly inspired by her story and maturity, and she was asked to serve as co-director again this year as a senior.

**Not helpful:** Delaney played the role of the Narrator in the school musical, and is in Spanish Club.

6. How does this youth **inspire you** as a Catholic Christian?

This is a chance for you as the nominator to explain why you think this particular teen is worthy of the Eagle of the Cross award in general. Please share **how** the way s/he lives his/her faith has impacted and inspired you.

**Helpful:** Anthony has been blessed with a beautiful and clear singing voice which helps me to pray when he cantors at the parish and at school. I was impressed to hear that he goes to the grade school PSR/CCD classes monthly and Vacation Bible School every summer to lead worship and music during Mass. I think it is amazing for the children to see a teen so involved and unafraid to share his gift of singing and playing guitar; Anthony inspires me to revisit my dreams and passions that I have lost throughout the years, and pick up the hobbies I enjoy doing again and glorify God through these things!

**Not helpful:** My grandson, Anthony, is the sweetest boy.

**Questions? Please contact Maddie DiSalvatore at (330) 744-8451 x 310, or**  
[mdisalvatore@youngstowndiocese.org](mailto:mdisalvatore@youngstowndiocese.org).

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**Nomination Form 2024**

**PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT NEATLY**

**Nominee Information**

Nominee Name \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Gender  Female  Male

Nominee High School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade  Junior  Senior

**Parish Information**

County \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's Parish \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor Name \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor/Admin. Signature (required) \_\_\_\_\_

**Nomination Category** (check **one** per nomination)

County (Parish)

Catholic High School (within the Diocese) – Principal/ President Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominator Information**

Nominated by \_\_\_\_\_ Nominator Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

(must be provided if you wish to receive a "receipt" of the nomination from the Diocesan office)

Nominator relationship to the Nominee (Ex: teacher, CM, YM, DRE, Pastor, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE ANSWER ALL 6 QUESTIONS**, use additional paper as needed. *(Do not forget to include **distinct** examples!)*

1. How does this young person **contribute to parish and/or school programs?**

2. In what ways is this youth involved in **personal outreach to the larger community/Diocese**?

3. In what ways is the **prayer and spiritual life** of this young person evident?

4. How does this person demonstrate **moral integrity**?

5. In what ways does this young person exhibit **Christian Leadership**?

6. How does this youth **inspire you**?