

Hello Parents!

I pray that you and your family are finding many reasons to rejoice this Easter season! I would like to inform you about this Sunday's Life Night.

This Sunday, May 1, our Life Night is on the Truth About the Occult. The goal for this night is to help the teens to understand the reality of evil and the teaching of the Church in regards to the occult. It will bring to light the dangers of the occult in all its various forms, types, and costumes and how they break the First Commandment. There will be a strong message against the occult and the dangers that even "experimenting" can do. However appealing or enticing and even harmless occult practices might seem, they carry with them a doorway that is open for evil and darkness to enter our lives. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraphs 2110-2122 outline the various abominations that humanity pursues in place of God. The Church has very clear guidelines for us in this area that will help us stay on track. This night will also help the teens to understand the existence of the spiritual realm and its order, including angels and demons. We will address the fall of the angels and our interactions with them.

I have invited Father Sean Ralph, Rector of St. John Cathedral, to give the teaching this Sunday as well as to lead a question and answer session with the teens. I believe they will have many questions for him!... especially on astrology, crystals, ouija boards, mediums, horoscopes, curses, and magic, just to name a few. They may question what the big deal is and how any of these can be spiritually harmful if they don't believe these things actually have any power. They may have questions about other gateways to evil, possession, etc. Fr. Sean is well trained on these topic. Here's a little background info on this wonderful priest: <https://saintiohncathedral.com/sean-ralph>

The word, occult, has two meanings: 1) "outside worship" and 2) "to hide or conceal something."

1) The occult replaces God with something or someone else. It promotes self-indulgent lifestyle without consequence. Occult practices attempt to satisfy man's desire to know his future and destiny. But, it is only in Jesus that we discover our true calling. St. Pope John Paul II wrote, "man cannot know himself except in the sincere gift of himself."

2) Our culture uses darkness and evil as entertainment. Many young people have a fascination with things that are done in secret or darkness. They are exposed to it in movies, books, the internet, social media and may think these things are fun or no big deal. These forms of entertainment can lead us to a misguided view of darkness and evil. Behind some forms of entertainment is a very real spiritual battle.

The very Good News is that Jesus Christ defeated Satan and his reign over us by the power of the Cross! God has claimed each one of us, but we have to choose to remain under His protection and continuously, with God's grace, reject Satan and all his empty promises. When we place our lives in Jesus' hands, we have nothing to fear!

We will end the Life Night in the church lighting candles from the Easter Candle and praying the St. Michael , Archangel prayer together. The darkness can be overwhelming and scary sometimes, but the truth is that even the dimmest light will overcome the darkness. Christ's Light and Love will always overpower the darkness and evil of the devil and His fallen angels.

Possible questions to use to start a conversation at home:

1. Why is the portrayal of magic, witchcraft, etc. so popular in movies and TV?
2. Why do you think teens get started in practices of the occult?
3. What do you think about the Church's teaching on the occult, especially regarding things that either you or your friends think are harmless?
4. What are some ways we can protect our family from being influenced by the occult?
5. How can we be witnesses to our family and friends who play with occult practices and express to them that they are opening themselves up to temptation and evil influences?

Please know that our Life Teen ministry joins you in the responsibility to help protect young people from the presence of and influence of evil. While we never want to glorify evil, we do need to talk about the practices of the occult and their impact on our souls. We need to continually call our young people to holiness by proclaiming the truth and are committed to continually pray for their protection against all forms of evil.

Please don't hesitate to call me if you have any questions.

God bless you! We look forward to being with Fr. Sean Ralph and to seeing your teen this Sunday!

Happy Easter!

Theresa