

2024 Father Charles Irvin Memorial Writing Scholarship

FAITH Catholic is pleased once again to sponsor a writing scholarship contest for Catholic high school seniors within the dioceses of FAITH's publishing partners. This annual scholarship has been set up to honor our founding editor, Father Charles E. Irvin. More than 20 years ago, Father Charlie and then-Bishop-of-Lansing Carl Mengeling sought to find a way to communicate more effectively with the people in the diocese and to help them feel included in and energized by the Church's mission of evangelization. Their vision was realized in the first issue of *FAITH* magazine, which shared personal witness stories of faithfulness that would inspire and uplift readers. Today, the FAITH Catholic publications honor Father Charlie's legacy.

FAITH Catholic is committed to encouraging young people to write. Modern media will always rely on individuals who use the English language to speak to our ambitions, hopes and dreams. For many, faith is an important part of those hopes and dreams. The ability to express faith lived out in words is our primary reason for establishing this scholarship.

Our second reason is to encourage young people to consider writing as a career. There are many rewarding jobs in journalism – including Catholic journalism. Writing about faith can be a rewarding career and life-giving ministry. FAITH Catholic hopes this contest will give someone a reason and opportunity to seriously consider writing as a career.

The final reason for the scholarship is to demonstrate FAITH Catholic's commitment to education. By supporting our Catholic high schools and faith formation programs, we hope to show our dedication to the good work that goes on there. We also hope this scholarship will both encourage and, in a small way, assist high school seniors in attending college.

Mastering English is one thing. Having something to say is another. Excellent writing requires both. Catholic faith formation fosters both because of its role in creating a society of faith-filled yet critical thinkers. The winning essay must demonstrate this.

The 2024 essay subject is: *Tell us how you want to be Christ's hands and feet in the world.*

Here are the specifics:

Applicants: *Catholic high school seniors who are students at a diocesan Catholic high school and/or who are active participants in their parish's youth group/religious education program.*

Essay length: *800-1200 words*

Entries due: *April 5, 2024*

Scholarship: *One \$1,500 first prize*

Judges: *FAITH and other publications editorial staff*

IMPORTANT SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Submissions: *Submissions should be sent as Word docs attached to an email to appointed diocesan contact.*

Submissions must be sent by DRE, CYM, Catholic high-school teacher or pastor. Direct student submissions will not be considered.

This year, we want you to: *Tell us how you want to be Christ's hands and feet in the world.*

Tips for a winning essay:

- Begin with a sentence that “grabs” the reader. The first paragraph needs to make us want to continue reading – it needs to be interesting. For example, we rarely choose an essay that begins with a quote from someone else.
- Tell us what you think! This is a personal reflection, not a research project. The most common trait of non-winning essays is that they sound too much like term papers.
- Pay attention to spelling and grammar. What you say is the most important thing, but editors tend to be distracted by misspellings and shifting tenses. Have someone proofread it for you.
- Bring it to a satisfying conclusion. The last sentence needs to be as strong as the first. The reader should feel as if he or she has learned something about you.
- Most of all, be creative. Go out on a writing limb and take risks – it may pay off!