



Catholic Youth Expeditions Inc. P O Box 272, Appleton, WI 54912 cyexpeditions.org

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Scripture: “All who are guided by the Spirit of God are sons of God; for what you received was not the spirit of slavery to bring you back into fear; you received the Spirit of adoption, enabling us to cry out, 'Abba, Father!'” Romans 8:15

Saint: St. Expeditus

Slogan: Hodie, non cras!

Song: Alive Again by Matt Maher

2010 Catholic Youth Expedition Cover Letter

Praise the Lord! It all started with getting locked out of the CYE Base Camp office. We had just installed a window in the office door and after closing it I conveniently *saw* the keys lying on the desktop but inconveniently couldn't retrieve them. I was locked out! Aggravated, I thought about driving back to the parish because I seemed to recall having an extra set of keys in my room. But alas, my car keys were locked in the office as well! Defeated, I shook my head and looked down at my new running shoes. That's it! I had a new pair of running shoes and was still in my grubbies from an early morning football practice with the local Catholic high school football team. I could run back and try to find those keys! I bolted out the door, leaving it swinging wide open behind me, while the coffee house Christian music quickly faded in the distance.

As I ran down the sidewalk on Richmond Street, it dawned on me—we have to creatively *develop* and *sustain* relationships with youth by meeting them in places where they spend time. We cannot expect others to be converted to Christ unless we are willing to be *involved* in their lives on a human level—a personal level. We need to meet young people where they're at! After reflecting upon it more, I began to think of how difficult it is to enter into relationships with our young people when ministry in the Church has become a vague weekly commitment to boring mediocrity at best. I fondly thought of Father Marty Carr. He was amazing at just sitting with an individual and getting to *know* them. He could penetrate through all the layers, all the hurt, all the pain, all the junk, and just relate on a personal and very human level. How did he do it?! How was it that when you sat in front of Father, you felt as if you were sitting in front of Jesus himself? So many times I have been introduced to people, have begun conversations, and then out of my own failure to be present and listen, I have drifted away – becoming distracted by the millions of competing “obligations.” My friends, there is a different way to engage youth, and it is powered by Catholic Youth Expedition's commitment to foster Catholic Christian community through expedition retreats of prayer, proclamation of the Gospel and outdoor adventure.

How does one actually sustain and develop relationships with others? How do we enter deeply into the power of human friendship? Today everything is fragmented, scattered and discombobulated. We are weary and frayed. We rush from one thing to another and treat others with an efficient convenience. Ministry is no longer the ancient art form of Christian living and discipleship but a technical field of gray pragmatism whereby everything is being done “right” but has deteriorated to a shallow average-ness. (Benedict XVI, *Truth & Tolerance*,) Even using words such as *sustain* and *develop* can be so cold – so

business-like. What has happened to us? To me? What once happened as naturally as breathing now seems to take intentional effort. We *must* see one another as persons, not passing shadows merely drifting by one another in an automated, regulated, and scheduled existence; an existence we so often vaguely define as LIFE. Mind you, this was all going through my head as I crossed the Glendale intersection – it was a miracle that I was not run over.


How can one possibly restore the personalism of Christianity? St. Paul knew! He says, “For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry 'Abba! Father!' it is that very spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” (Romans 8:15) Maybe as children, we never experienced the spirit of adoption from our mother and father. Worse yet, maybe we have forgotten that we are God's children! The restoration of the intimacy of personal relationships resides in our knowing that we are children of God. If we know that we have a Father who listens to us, wants to be in relationship with us, and has sent His Spirit to be with us, then we may awaken to the deep relationships we desire at the core of our being. If we *know* that the spirit of adoption has been given to us and shed the spirit of slavery within a calloused world, we can begin to truly know ourselves and others as adopted sons and daughters of God crying aloud with one voice, “Abba!” We can begin to see the restoration of redeemed relationships.

Perhaps we need to be inconveniently locked out of our offices more often. Perhaps it is in our locked-up hearts that we have been living in a spirit of slavery rather than a spirit of adoption. Instead of being locked-up, God wants us to be locked-out! Only then can we realize his Divine love for us and the Divine union he wishes for us to participate in. Only then can we enter into the personalism that Christianity authentically calls us to, and the depth of authentic human relationships we desire.

If you find yourself looking for deeper union with God and others, I invite you to join the 2010 Catholic Youth Expeditions summer staff. Our 9th summer promises to be our best season of expeditions ever with a new mountain bike program and leadership training through a high ropes course! Not to mention our continued commitment to outdoor adventure with hiking, backpacking, water skiing & wake boarding, sailing and newly found Door County tradition--cherry spitting contests!

Let us be alive again! Let us lock ourselves out instead of locking ourselves in! Let us redefine what it means to be alive in light of being God's adopted sons and daughters, knowing our full worth and potential! Expect this summer to be an encounter with the living Spirit of adoption found in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior! Give your life to Him! Enter into authentic relationship now! Do not wait, do not procrastinate. Life is too short. *Hodie non cras!* (TODAY...not tomorrow!)

Fervently,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Quinn Mann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Fr. Quinn Mann

Catholic Youth Expeditions 2010