**2022 High School Youth Conference**

**February 26-27, 2022**

**Columbia Convention Center**

Come join Catholic youth and adults from around the Diocese as we gather on February 26-27, 2022, at the Columbia Convention Center for the 31st Annual Diocesan High School Youth Conference! This year we move from the White Oak Conference Center to the Columbia Convention Center. While it will be different, I am certain that it will be an experience you won’t want to miss! The theme for this year is “Restored!” We invite you to be part of this exciting and new conference!

***“For I will restore you to health; of your wounds I will heal you, says the Lord. “The outcast” they have called you, with “no avenger.” Jeremiah 30:17***

A lot has changed over the past 18 months! So many things put on hold or even cancelled. For a lot of teens, it feels like they have missed out and will never get back what one has lost! Graduations, family gatherings, school events, even time with their friends… cancelled! Because of COVID, so many of us have lived in fear, anxiety, and isolation! For two days, I want to invite you to leave that behind! Leave the baggage that holds you down from living life to the fullest! God has a plan for your life! So many of us have been carrying around baggage brought on by our sins and like the cancelled culture we don’t see a way out! My brothers and sisters, God wants to “RESTORE” us to life in the full! God wants us to experience His healing, joy, and hope that only He can provide! You don’t have to feel like your life doesn’t matter, or you are not worthy to be loved! God says you do matter, you are worthy to be loved, and you are not a mistake! Come and be RESTORED through God’s grace and love. I guarantee your life will never be the same!

This weekend promises to change your life! Our keynotes for the weekend are going to challenge, encourage, and give you hope! This year’s presenters for the conference are Father Agustino Torres and Chika Anyanwu. This weekend we will also have challenging and thought-provoking workshops, awesome music, fun games, and skits. You will have the opportunity to experience grace in Adoration, Reconciliation, and the Eucharist! Bishop Guglielmone will be joining us for the closing mass on Sunday.



**Father Agustino Torres, CFR**, is a priest with the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal based in the Bronx, New York. He is the founder of Corazon Puro, an organization dedicated to forming youth. He hosts the EWTN television shows Icons and Cliccon Corazon Puro in Spanish. Father Agustino was one of the friars who founded Catholic Underground, an apostolate of the Friars of the Renewal, and the Casa Guadalupe (women) and JPII (men) houses of discernment. He is internationally sought to address topics such as the Church’s teachings about human sexuality, vocational discernment, and missionary discipleship.

A person with curly hair

Description automatically generated with low confidence**Chika Anyanwu** is the formation director for Vagabonds Ministry. When she is not discipling missionaries, she serves as an international Catholic evangelist and the author of “My Encounter: How I Met Jesus in Prayer.” She is a graduate of California State University, San Bernardino, a two-time alum of NET Ministries, a devotional writer for Blessed Is She, and a contributor to YDisciple and Life Teen. Chika loves sharing about all things Jesus, social justice issues and the dignity of the human person, being single and happy (but still looking!), Mama Mary, and living for Heaven all with goal of glorifying God! She draws her joy and enthusiasm from her beautiful Nigerian family, loves coffee, and strives for sainthood every day, although bad drivers challenge her sanctity.

**Youth Leaders Information**

First, I want to thank you for bringing your youth to this new event! It is an honor to have you bring your youth and adult chaperones to the 31st annual high school youth conference! I know events like these are not easy to get your group altogether as you have so many things that are going on. I want you to know that our conference is going to look different this year! Some things you will probably enjoy better (like staying in a real hotel and putting your people in the rooms as you want) than what we had at White Oak. Something that I think we will miss, though, is the free time that we had outdoors for youth to play and hang out! It is going to be different this year, but I think the changes that we will see are going to outweigh the things we are going to miss. Below are a few things that you will need to consider:

**Registration**

Registration cost for the conference is $100 per person before January 15, 2022. After January 15, 2022, the cost is $120 per person. Currently, you can pay for your group online. However, the paperwork will still need to be filled out and sent in (email is fine). We are currently working on developing a cost-efficient way to do everything online. Please see the registration information which is included. We plan on having online PR and adult release forms available for you after Thanksgiving. More information to follow.

**Hotel**

We have a room block with the following hotels: Hampton Inn, Hilton, and Hyatt. All hotels are located very close and within a block of the Columbia Convention Center. We ask that you please use our block hotels which we reserved for the youth groups of our diocese. It is your responsibility to get the necessary rooms that you need for your group. You are responsible for how many rooms you need and whether you want the hotel for Friday and/or Saturday night. The last day you can book a hotel room will be January 25, 2022. However, please note that these rooms are first come, first serve. The cost for the hotel per night is $149. Hotel links are listed below:

**Hampton Inn:**

[https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/caedthx-dyc-c7ee0f14-6079-471f-b996-1e5929f6eff8/](https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/caedthx-dyc-c7ee0f14-6079-471f-b996-1e5929f6eff8/" \t "_blank)

**Hilton:**

[https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/caecchf-dyc-4953666b-a7eb-440c-9976-8f8422d0be5a/](https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/caecchf-dyc-4953666b-a7eb-440c-9976-8f8422d0be5a/" \t "_blank)

**Hyatt:**

<https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/south-carolina/hyatt-place-columbia-downtown-the-vista/caezv?corp_id=G-DYC2>

**Parking**

Parking is an additional cost at these hotels. However, the Convention Center stated we are welcome to leave our cars in their lot at no cost with the understanding that it is an unsecured surface lot so you would do this at your own risk. If your parish will be using the unsecured surface lot, we are asking you to consider giving $10 to offset the cost of having police officers patrol the lot both Friday and Saturday evening.

**Meals**

Included in your registration is lunch on Saturday. You will be responsible for the Saturday night dinner and Sunday breakfast. I will work with the Columbia Convention Office to identify restaurants nearby and see if we can get any discounts.

**Parish time**

Throughout the weekend we are going to work on building time in for parishes to gather and talk about what they have seen and/or have heard.

**Basic Schedule**

Below is a basic schedule which will give you an idea of when things begin and end:

**Saturday, February 26, 2022**

9:15 a.m. Registration begins

10:00 a.m. Morning Session Begins

12:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00 p.m. Afternoon sessions (Workshops/Keynote/Parish time)

4:30 p.m. Break for Dinner

7:00 p.m. Evening Opening Session/Keynote/Adoration

10:00 p.m. Done

**Sunday, February 27, 2022**

9:00 a.m. Morning Session (Opening, Keynote, Mass with the Bishop)

11:30 a.m. Dismiss

**Reconciliation**

Reconciliation will be Saturday evening during Adoration. If you have a priest that would be available to offer the sacrament of reconciliation, please let us know. We will need to have them at the convention center from 8:00-10:00 p.m. but no later than 10:00 p.m.

**First Aid**

We are looking for a few people who have medical backgrounds who would be willing to help with medical issues that come up during the weekend. We will waive their registration cost for the conference.

**Masks**

At this time, we will not be enforcing mask use during the conference. However, we are under the City of Columbia policies. (This past year, the Columbia Convention Center had a mask policy in place. Right now, according to the people at the Columbia Convention Center, they do not foresee a mask policy.)

**Scholarships**

Please note that we do have scholarship money available for those who might need help with attending the conference. Please contact our office with your request.