

## Fr. Charles Irvin Writing Scholarship 2017

**FAITH Magazine is once again sponsoring a writing scholarship contest for Catholic high-school seniors in the Diocese of Lansing.** This annual scholarship was set up to honor our founding editor, Father Charles E. Irvin. As founding editor of FAITH, Father Charlie inspired and guided a fine team of writers to deliver the first official publication for the Diocese of Lansing.

**FAITH 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 Magazine 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'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 2017 essay subject is: How would I explain Jesus Christ and what he means to me to someone who doesn't know him?**

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 3, 2017. Awards given at graduation.*

**Scholarship:** *One \$1,000 first prize, plus publication in FAITH Magazine 2017 Teen edition*

**Judges:** *Father Charles E. Irvin, Founding Editor, FAITH  
Father Dwight Ezop, Editor in Chief, FAITH  
Patrick M. O'Brien, Managing Editor/Creative Director, FAITH  
Elizabeth Martin Solsburg, Editorial Director/Vice President, FAITH*

### **IMPORTANT SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

**Submissions:** *Submissions should be sent as Word docs attached to an email. Send to: [esolsburg@faithcatholic.com](mailto:esolsburg@faithcatholic.com).*

**Submissions must be sent by DRE, CYM, Catholic high-school teacher or pastor. Direct student submissions will not be considered. By entering your students' essays, you agree that Father Charles Irvin or a representative of FAITH Magazine will be invited to present the award at your school's or parish's baccalaureate Mass or awards ceremony.**

**Tips for a winning essay:**

- This year, we want you to tell us a story about a how you would explain Jesus Christ and what he means to you to someone who does not know him.
- 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. And, this year we are particularly looking for a story.
- 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!