



CYO 70TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION 2007-2008

Historical Tidbits:

- The Catholic Youth Organization was officially established in Cleveland in December 1937 when Rev. James O'Brien was appointed as diocesan director. Its primary purpose was to guide, serve and assist the parishes in providing programs for children.
- The date was March 16th, 1937. The committee name was the Youth Committee. It was the first meeting of the CYO office for the Diocese of Cleveland. Fr. Jim O'Brien, who had been appointed by Bishop Schrembs to serve as the first Youth Director of CYO for the Diocese of Cleveland, convened the meeting and CYO was underway.
- At that first meeting there were 12 persons present, and the minutes of the meeting recorded that Fr. O'Brien noted that just as 12 apostles had gathered in an upper room to pray and consider how they were going to carry out the work of Jesus Christ, the 12 persons gathered on behalf of CYO would depend on prayer and the grace of the Holy Spirit to guide the vision and plan to enable CYO to reach the youth of the Diocese of Cleveland.
- Fr. O'Brien initially worked out of his quarters in the St. Anthony Home for Working Boys on Detroit Ave. The first office was in the Allerton Hotel in downtown Cleveland.
- The first Knights of Columbus track meet was held May 14, 1941 at the old Cleveland Arena on Euclid Avenue near E. 37th St. It was held there for 30 years, from 1941-1971. Numerous Olympic and world class athletes participated in this meet with at least 13 world records broken at the meet by 1975. One newspaper headline read, "9 Olympians Compete in KC Meet; World Records Fall in 440, Vault, Shot"

- CYO Resident camp was established in 1945 at Madison-on-the-Lake.
- Pope Pius XII, commenting on the influence of athletics July 29, 1945 said, "Sports, properly directed, develops character, makes men courageous, a generous loser and a gracious winner; they refine the senses, gives us intellectual penetration and steel the will to endurance."
- In 1950's, Priest's Committee on Athletics was established and so begin the long affiliation with the Cleveland Department of Recreation under the auspices of Muny Basketball, Cleveland Baseball and the AAU.
- First Diocesan Young Adult Convention was held in 1956 in the Statler Hotel.
- Under Fr. Corrigan's leadership in the 1950's –
 - There were over 5000 children in CYO athletics and over 1500 campers at the CYO camp in Madison;
 - Through financial backing from the Knights of Columbus track meet, many additions (such as a pool and chapel) and improvements were made to the CYO camp.
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- In 1961, CYO Camp Corde was constructed on 29 acres at Parmadale in Parma.
- By 1969, CYO sports included baseball, football, wrestling, soccer, track, ice skating, basketball, and bowling leagues for boys, and basketball, volleyball, softball and track for girls. There were 15 Deaneries in the Diocese of Cleveland along with Deanery offices in Akron, Barberton and Lorain. Deaneries were considered the link between the parish youth program and the Diocesan Youth Department Office.
- In 1970, camp in Madison was renamed Camp Isaac Jogues in honor of the American martyr (this camp was open from June 23, 1945 to May 18, 1991).
- In 1974, CYO instituted Coaches Certification Program, first such program in the country.
- A new multi-purpose center was completed in 1989 at Camp Isaac Jogues and named after Dan Ferrazza.