

## **Retreat Themes**

# **Choose Joy**

God created us for a life of happiness, but we instead choose instant gratification over authentic joy. God has given each person free will, and we can choose to either accept God's love for us or reject it. The world says we can be happy without God, but it's only in freely choosing God's will for our lives that we can truly find the authentic joy we seek.

#### Love One Another

Our relationships with the people in our lives are intended to reflect our relationship with God and bring us closer to Him. But, given our fallen nature, we unfortunately experience broken relationships. Through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, we can receive the graces to forgive others and establish authentic friendships

#### <u>Free Indeed</u>

We were created for full communion with God. Sin separates us from God's love and therefore distorts our understanding of our identity as His beloved children. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection give us the opportunity to return to God. At our Baptism, we are freed from our slavery to sin. By the gift of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, we are sons and daughters of God who are free to know, love, and serve God in this life, so as to remain with Him forever in the next.

## **More Than Conquerors**

Suffering is inevitable, but when it comes our way, do we think to invite Christ into that? Our hope is in Jesus, who resurrected from and conquered death. In the lens of hope and trust, we discover how God is a good Father who helps us in our suffering and needs.

#### True Presence

Every Sunday when we go to Mass, we partake in communion. Studies tend to indicate that most Catholics do not believe Jesus Christ is truly present in the Eucharist. After taking a look at the life of Carlo Acutis, a teenager who is on his way to becoming a canonised saint, we see how believing in the true presence can change everything. A deep dive into this soon-to-be-saint story shows us that you don't need to be very old to recognise the beauty and utmost importance of the Eucharist.

## Never Alone {Confirmation}

We all receive good gifts and bad gifts, but God gives us the greatest gift of Himself through the sacraments. At Confirmation, He seals us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit so that we can be better equipped to spread Gospel to others. He did this for the Apostles at Pentecost, and He does it with us today. However, it's not enough to just receive these gifts; we have to accept them and choose to use them.