

Michael Isaac Youngblood: An Award-winning Lay Minister



Youngblood, an award-winning lay minister for the Cleveland and Toledo dioceses, died Dec. 2 at the Cleveland Clinic after several years of heart dis-ease. He was 51 years old.

Mike was the Director of Black Catholic Ministries and Evangelization in the Parish Life Secretariat and Adult Faith Formation for the Diocese of Toledo since 2000. Prior to coming to the Diocese of Toledo, he worked fif-teen years in the Diocese of Cleveland as a Parish Program Facilitator for Youth Ministry, Campus (Newman) Min-ister and Catechetical consultant. Mike is the former chairperson of the Na-tional African American Catholic Youth Ministry Network (NAACYMN). He was an active member of the

National Association of Black Catholic Adminis-trators (NABCA), serving as the Re-gional Coordinator for NABCA and the National Black Catholic Congress (NBCC).

Mike was an outstanding leader for the Ohio commission of African Ameri-can Catholics (OCAAC). He received the 2011 "Arnetta Hogan Lifetime Achievement Award" from the National African American Catholic Youth Minis-try Network in Jackson, MS.

This award was presented to him be-cause he embodied the essence and passion for young people and their faith development. He presented workshops on evangelization, youth ministry, catechesis and diversity. In 1998, he received the Liberty Bell Award for service from the Cleveland Bar Association.

He was born at 11:45 p.m. on Christmas Eve. He was raised in the Lee-Harvard neighborhood by Lu-theran parents and went to St. Henry Catholic School. In his teens, he con-verted to Catholicism and began many summers as a counselor at Camp Isaac Jogues in Madison Township. He graduated from St. Peter Chanel High School in 1977. At Cleveland State University, he majored in music and psychology and played trumpet in the concert band.

Youngblood became a substitute theology teacher at St. Peter Chanel and assistant band director at Trinity High School, helping, among other things, to plan the band's trips. He later served as a campus minister at Cuyahoga Community College Metro.

Then he began to train catechism teachers and work for a Church in the City initiative. He also started a pro-gram called Companions on the Way, bringing together males from their teens on up to talk monthly about their lives.

In 1998, Youngblood told The Plain Dealer, "I try to give kids a sense of hope and let them know that every-thing isn't bad like they see on TV."

In 2000, he joined the Toledo dio-cese. He lived in West Toledo and oversaw black Catholic ministries, evangelization, adult faith formation and parish life. He was also a trustee and regional director of the National Black Catholic Congress, a trustee of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry and a trustee of other groups. The memorial service was held on Saturday, Dec. 17, in Toledo. Survi-vors include his parents, Willie and Barbara Youngblood,

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Brother Kevin Youngblood and a niece, Lauren Youngblood, dear friend Zenaida Pena along with a host of family and friends.

SOURCE:

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