



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH

DANNY MANTIS

AY: How did you first get involved in the ACYOA?

DM: When I was in my early teens, my mom started taking me to church in Racine because they had a youth group there that she had heard about. After going to church a few times, she dropped me off one Saturday to go Christmas caroling. I was way overdressed. I was wearing a white turtleneck and black corduroy pants, and as Der Yeprem has described it, I was a “painfully shy kid” and awkward too. Needless to say it made for quite an interesting first ACYOA experience, and hopefully the photos don’t surface. Regardless my mom continued to make me go and I would participate in things like that from time to time, and when I turned 18 I became the Chairperson of our ACYOA Seniors and everything snowballed from there.

AY: So what impact has the ACYOA had on your life?

DM: Well, I’d say that my time on Central Council is to blame for a majority of my grey hairs. Aside from that, I’d say that my involvement in the ACYOA has had a really profound impact on my life. I feel like I found myself as a result of the ACYOA, and grew out of my painfully shy years. I grew as a person. I grew spiritually. I met some of my best friends and my wife. I honestly could not tell you what my life would be like without the ACYOA.

AY: Tell me more about your time on Central Council.

DM: I was elected in 2009. I don’t remember why I wanted to run, it was probably because I thought being on CC was the cool thing to do. I served as treasurer in my first year, vice chair my second year, and chairman the last two years. It was a fun four years, and I also learned a lot - how to think about issues that the church grapples with, how to present my point of view to others, and possibly most important – how to pick my battles.

AY: So, now that you’re not on Central Council, are you still involved in the life of the church?

DM: I am. It’s difficult sometimes because I live in Chicago, IL, but my home parish is St. Mesrob in Racine. I’m an elected member of the Permanent Trust Committee which is in charge of the church endowment fund, and I also serve as a Diocesan Delegate from my parish.

AY: Tell me more about being a Diocesan Delegate.

DM: Honestly, it’s a blast – I love it. I really enjoy being part of the conversations that set the direction of our Diocese on a macro level, and it’s a huge honor to represent my parish and bring their opinions to the floor of the Diocesan Assembly. I will say though, there are times it’s

challenging because I'm the youngest delegate in the room by about 10 years...maybe 20 even.

AY: How does being a Delegate intersect with the passion that you have for the ACYOA?

DM: Well first of all, every time I get up to the microphone I get to say "Back when I was in ACYOA..." But besides that, since I'm relatively fresh off of Central Council I still remember some of the challenges that the ACYOA and the Central Council face. For instance, my first year as a Delegate I made a motion to pass a \$250 parish assessment to help generate a little revenue since the ACYOA Central Council relies entirely on interest and donation income. In the years since then people are paying close attention to that assessment in an effort to make sure that 100% of the parishes make a contribution. Little things like that go a long way, and I'm proud to help in that way.

AY: Any last thoughts?

DM: Yes. Well, actually more of a shameless plug... Going back to the idea of the value of the perspective that young people bring. Last year, my parish tasked me with bringing a Bylaw amendment before the Diocesan Assembly to reduce the age to hold office at the Parish level from 21 to 18 (actually it'd be 19), however we were unsuccessful. I think that this change would be a valuable one in our Diocese, and that our parish would benefit from the perspective and energy that young adults bring to the table. With that I'd ask that the ACYOA and its members help make that Bylaw amendment by taking leadership roles in each of their respective parishes, and show people the value that they bring. Additionally, I'd ask that ACYOA members talk with their parish council, delegates and others from their parish to encourage them to vote in favor of this important change.