CAC Wishes Everyone a Blessed Christmas Season and a Happy and Healthy 2014!
Please Support CAC Programs!

Since 2006, Catholic Athletes for Christ has been the first name in Catholic sports ministry, thanks to the overwhelming response to its programs and the financial generosity of its supporters.

During 2013, CAC took a major step forward in advancing its ministry and high school chapter programs to more cities, to more schools, and to more Catholic athletes. CAC needs your support, now more than ever, to make full implementation of these programs a reality in 2014.

**Please help CAC achieve its 2014 goals by making a year-end, tax-deductible donation.**

To make a donation by credit card or bank transfer, please click the "Donate" button below:

To donate by check, please mail a check payable to "Catholic Athletes for Christ" to Catholic Athletes for Christ, 3703 Cameron Mills Road, Alexandria, Va. 22305.

CAC is a IRS-recognized 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All contributions to CAC are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Thank you for your support!

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Interest in CAC's High School "Catholic" Chapter Program Continues to Grow!

Following the September announcement by the Diocese of Trenton (N.J.) of its long-term commitment to CAC's high school chapter program, many other schools and dioceses from across the country have shown interest and are reaching out to CAC to set up pilot chapter programs.
Deacon Chase Hilgenbrinck addresses crowd after receiving the 2013 CAC Courage Award on November 13 in Arlington, Va.

If your school/diocese is interested in joining the growing number of high schools interested in becoming CAC "Cathlete" Program Chapters, please contact CAC at chapters@catholicathletesforchrist.org.

CAC Honors Former Pro Soccer Player
Deacon Chase Hilgenbrinck with 2013 Courage Award

On November 13, CAC honored Deacon Chase Hilgenbrinck, former professional soccer player and current seminarian at Mount St. Mary's, Emmitsburg, Md., with its third annual CAC Courage Award. The award recognizes superior Catholic evangelization in sports.

The Most Reverend Thomas J. Paprocki, Bishop of Springfield, Ill., and CAC Episcopal Board Chairman, and Ray McKenna, CAC Founder and President, presented Deacon Hilgenbrinck with the award at a public reception in Arlington, Va.

CAC also honored Arlington Diocese high school "Cathletes" at the event. Previous CAC Courage Award recipients were Rick Eckstein, Washington Nationals' former hitting coach (2011) and Kerry Fraser, former NHL referee (2012).

Deacon Hilgenbrinck spoke eloquently about his call to the priesthood received while he was playing professional soccer. He quoted theologian Scott Hahn saying "obedience delayed" is disobedience in explaining his difficult discernment process. He went on to explain that he ultimately left professional sports at the pinnacle of his financial and professional success because "God's will became clear through prayer and reflection."

"Deacon Hilgenbrinck exemplifies what it means to be a true 'Catholic Athlete' through his words and actions," CAC's McKenna said. "In addition to living out his faith on the field, Deacon Hilgenbrinck was selected for his bold and courageous testimony about his dramatic career change from professional soccer player to seminarian. He consistently provides a compelling Catholic witness at all times."
CAC Hosts Marian Baseball Retreat "Hail Marys and Home Runs"

Nearly 60 Catholics, including current and former professional baseball players, CAC baseball and football chaplains, and other attendees from across the country, attended CAC’s 7th Annual Baseball Retreat at the Franciscan Serra Retreat Center in California, November 19-21.

This year’s Marian retreat theme was "Hail Marys and Home Runs". The keynote presentation, "The Four Pillars of Mary", was delivered by CAC Athletic Board Chairman and former five-time MLB All-Star Mike Sweeney.

"This year's CAC Retreat exceed expectations," CAC President Ray McKenna noted. "We had the highest number of clergy/chaplains attend the retreat (14) and the Marian-focused presentations were outstanding and many attendees have commented to me about the life-changing impact the retreat has had on their spiritual life, which is the ultimate goal."

CAC Sponsors Mass for Baseball Executives at MLB Winter Meetings in Fla.

On December 11, CAC sponsored Catholic Mass at Major League Baseball's Winter Meetings in Orlando, Fla.

More than 25 MLB executives attended the Daily Mass, which was celebrated by Fr. Victor Ulto, pastor at St. Bernadette Catholic Church in Port St. Lucie, Fla.

"Our annual Mass at the Winter Meetings is just another
example of our growing MLB ministry program," said CAC President Ray McKenna. "We are looking forward to continuing and expanding our ministry work at Spring Training and during the 2014 season."

CAC Co-Sponsors Catholic Sports Conference in Northern Virginia

More than 150 student-athletes, coaches, athletic directors, and parents from across the region attended the 2013 Catholic Sports Conference, co-hosted by CAC and Seton School Athletic Department, on September 21 in Manassas, Va.

The goal of the conference was to highlight the need for Catholics to develop a faith-focused sports culture at all levels, both on and off the playing field.

The conference featured talks by Ray McKenna, CAC President, and Dr. Bill Thierfelder, former Olympic-level athlete, sports psychologist, and currently president of Belmont Abbey College. Dr. Thierfelder also serves on CAC's Board of Directors.

Mr. McKenna spoke on the CAC mission and the organization's many activities, including its development of high school chapter programs to assist in the formation of "Cathletes" - Catholic athletes who live out their faith both on and off the playing field.

"In addition to our ministry programs for professional and Olympic athletes, CAC's focus has been on developing its high school chapter program," McKenna noted. "We're working to bring the chapter program to high schools nationwide." CAC's high school chapter program focuses on the core virtues of charity, honesty, humility, meekness, moderation, purity, and sportsmanship.

Dr. Thierfelder's keynote presentation focused on living out core Catholic virtues both on and off the playing field. "Too often, we deal with the body, mind, and spirit as three separate and compartmentalized parts of our lives," Dr. Thierfelder said. "We are all three things at the same fraction of every second and I've
worked with many athletes who, once they understand that truth, become not only better players but better people."

CAC Meets with Bishops at USCCB Meetings in Baltimore

CAC President Ray McKenna met with several bishops serving on CAC's Episcopal Board during the USCCB meetings in Baltimore, Md., in November. Issues discussed included CAC's Major League Baseball ministry program and high school chapter program. All of the bishops expressed excitement about further expanding CAC's ministry in their dioceses.

Upcoming CAC Events

- **February 20-22:** CAC Events, Mass and Dinner, NFL Combine, Indianapolis, Ind.
- **February/March:** CAC "Men In Black" Tour, MLB Spring Training Sites, Arizona and Florida.

For more information on events, email kevin@catholicathletesforchrist.org.