

## **FOCUS National Events**

FOCUS alternates years with hosting its national events: SEEK and the Student Leadership Summit (SLS). SEEK2017, held in January 2017, had nearly 13,000 participants, most of them college students, come together in San Antonio, Texas. SLS16 was held in January 2016 in Dallas, Texas, welcoming more than 3,400 attendees. The next conference, SLS18, will be held in Chicago, on January 2 – 6, 2018.

Nearly 53,000 people have attended FOCUS events since the inaugural National Conference held in 1999, where 25 students came together to pray, deepen their Catholic faith and learn how to share Christ with others.

### **Student Leadership Summit (SLS)**

The Student Leadership Summit (SLS) is an event for anyone who wants to be a leader in the new evangelization. SLS utilizes dynamic training and revolutionary peer-to-peer learning techniques to equip student leaders, launching them into mission back on campus.

SLS16 attendees included students, staff, missionaries, chaplains, seminarians, alumni, benefactors and Catholic lay persons. SLS16 also included a Lifelong Mission Track for post-college attendees to learn how to deepen their own faith and share it at their parish, at work and with friends and family.

During SLS16, more than 100 priests concelebrated at the daily Masses, and priests heard more than 1,000 confessions, many occurring after Eucharistic adoration on Saturday evening. SLS16 included several nationally recognized speakers such as Sr. Bethany Madonna, Fr. Mike Schmitz, Jennifer Fulwiler, Pat Lencioni, Curtis Martin (FOCUS founder and CEO), Dr. Jonathan Reyes and Dr. Edward Sri. Likewise, singer/songwriter Matt Maher performed inspirational songs of faith. Former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum, Republican, made a special visit and encouraged the audience to stay strong and defend their values.

Journalist Kathryn Jean Lopez attended SLS16 and shared her experience in the National Review Online, [FOCUSed on the Light](#).

“At SLS, I was able to learn a concept, such as Ignation prayer, in the morning during the Training Sessions, then solidify it in my mind by teaching it to my peers in the afternoon in the Power Sessions,” said Adam Sanchez, a sophomore at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. “It inspired me to see the vibrancy of the Church among my peers and grow in hope for our future.”

Registration and information for SLS18 is here: <https://focusoncampus.org/sls18>.

### **SEEK**

SEEK is a gathering of college students on a journey. It’s a place where they can come together to take on some of life’s bigger questions and learn from one another where wisdom and experience lead. SEEK is an opportunity for students to personally grow in their faith or to encounter Jesus Christ for the first time. While SLS is invite-only, SEEK is open to the public.

At SEEK2017, comedian Michael Jr. and folk rock band The Oh Hellos entertained the crowd. More than 35 speakers talked about relationships, discipleship and challenging topics on today’s college campus, including Sr. Miriam James Heidland, Sr. Bethany Madonna, Fr. Mike Schmitz, Mark Hart and Dr. Edward Sri. Impact Session presenters included Archbishop Chaput, Fr. Dave Dwyer, Fr. Robert J. Spitzer, Ryan

Anderson, Jeff Cavins, Paul Darrow, Dr. Scott Hahn and several more. Many of the talks will be available for digital download at <https://www.shopfocus.org/seek-2017-talks.html>.

Most participants of SEEK2017 attended daily Mass with nearly 300 priests concelebrating. During the powerful Thursday evening of Eucharistic adoration, thousands went to confession, some for the first time in years, experiencing God's healing power of forgiveness. Priests heard more than 5,000 confessions over the course of the five-day event.

Most SEEK2017 attendees were college students, but many supporters attended, including FOCUS chaplains, who are integral to FOCUS' work on campuses. Other attendees included FOCUS alumni, benefactors and those who wanted to learn how to deepen their own faith and share it with others. Many said their experiences at SEEK2015 restored their hope for the future of Catholicism.

Chicago natives Kelley, Lauren and Maggie Hartman experienced SEEK2017 in different ways. It was the first national FOCUS conference for each of these three sisters. Maggie, a senior at Harvard University studying pre-med and religion who will be a FOCUS missionary after graduation, said, "You can see Christ reflected in each person and how He desires to meet each of us individually."

"I hope this week at SEEK2017 young adults experienced the Lord seeking each of them in a unique way," said Archbishop Charles Chaput, O.F.M. Cap. "When people experience that God is seeking them, they'll be more likely to seek Him as well."

The post-event press release is online here: [Souls Ignited at SEEK2017](#).

SEEK2019, will be held in January 2019. The SEEK2019 dates and location will be announced at the end of the SLS18 conference.