



**SIX HUNDRED AUSTIN-AREA YOUTH ATTEND
SEXUAL ABSTINENCE PROGRAM**

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AUSTIN, Texas—Six hundred middle school and high school youth attended the Catholic Edition of The Silver Ring Thing (SRT) at St. Michael's Catholic Academy in Austin on Friday Feb. 17, 2012 at 7 p.m. This is in stark contrast to the 160 students rallying with Planned Parenthood for birth control earlier that afternoon on the UT campus.

The Silver Ring Thing promotes sexual abstinence until marriage centered on a Christ-focused relationship. It's about guys, girls, dating and waiting, love, second chances and the best choices. The teen program features a rock concert-like show with lighting, music and special effects to create a performance that is attractive to today's youth. Through comedy, drama, videos and testimonies, students are challenged to make a commitment to abstinence until marriage in a relationship with Jesus Christ. It also encourages forgiveness and undergoing a transformative change in their lives, starting over from past mistakes. Father Brian Eilers, Director of the Catholic Student Center at Texas State University, reminded participants there is always an opportunity for a new start in reconciling with God and the Church.

Nearly half of the youth made a commitment to purity by purchasing a silver ring as a symbol and reminder of their decision. After each event, students who make this commitment are followed-up with emails and text messages that encourage and equip them in their commitment. "The presentations were fun and engaging and got the message across in an effective way. I was glad I came and I hope others are exposed to this message of purity," said Sophie Lillis, a high school sophomore.

Two hundred parents attended the concurrent parent's session that addressed sexual mores in today's youth culture and how they can encourage and support their child's commitment to abstinence. "To have a program of this caliber offered free to the teens of Central Texas is a beautiful gift and tremendous opportunity," said Dee Dee Stone, a parent who attended the event. "My daughter and I have matching rings as a result of the evening's program."

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Austin, the John Paul II Life Center, and St. Michael's Catholic Academy, sponsors of the SRT, had a count of 450 registrations earlier in the day and were overwhelmed when 600 youth showed up for the performance.