

# Aleteia

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## Minnesota Mass and winter coat drive draws 12,000 students

*J-P Mauro | Oct 13, 2018*



*Courtesy of Nativity of Our Lord School*

*The theme of the event was "putting faith into action."*

Thousands of Catholic students gathered at U.S. Bank Stadium, home of the Minnesota Vikings, for a youth event to kick off the new school year. The night began with a Mass, celebrated by Archbishop Bernard Hebda of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, and included live performances by the rock group Sonar and rapper Connor Flanagan, as well as a winter coat drive run by the charity Coats for Kids.

The second annual Mass of the Holy Spirit saw a crowd of about 12,000 students from 4th through 8th grade, drawn from 79 Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. The theme of the event was "putting faith in action," a sentiment that was

put into practice by the donations of those winter clothes for the needy.

This message was further emphasized by Archbishop Hebda, who told the students, "Every day in every one of our excellent Catholic schools, we have the chance to practice. We practice what it means to be like Christ, to live as Christ lived, to see the world through his eyes."

Archbishop Hebda began his sermon, appropriately for the venue, by talking about the Vikings' victory over the Saints earlier this year. He referenced the game-winning 61-yard pass to Stefan Diggs, noting that the catch was made not by divine providence, but as a result of dedicated practice and planning.

He went on to suggest to the gathering of students that they don't have to be an NFL athlete to show such dedication; rather, the time to start such an effort is right now.

"Our schools are great places for learning the drills, for sharpening the skills, for building our stamina, for learning what true Christ-like success feels like so that on game day we are going to be ready to step up and put our faith into action," he said.

"It might be something as small as a smile to a classmate who's down, or sharing some of our Doritos or broccoli at lunch. It might be helping a new student feel at home in your school, when they struggle with English because they have just arrived in our country."

Of course, all the dedication in the world would be useless without the proper guidance of a good coach. This can be found, he said, through the Holy Spirit:

"It's the Holy Spirit, who like the best coach, breathes life into all our efforts, who inspires us to do our best, to practice what it means to be a good Christian, and to put our Catholic values into action," he said.

Also at the event, as an inspirational speaker, was former Vikings center Matt Birk,

who went on to win a Super Bowl title with the Baltimore Ravens.

"It's important for not only kids and for all of us to know our faith and to learn our faith, but also to put our faith into action," Birk said. "To do it right? So here is a chance for kids to bring an item, to donate something (to someone) who needs it, someone in need to help them out. "And that's at the very center of Catholic teaching."

The event was organized by the Catholic Schools Center of Excellence. ABC News was able to speak with the leader of the effort, Melissa Hamilton, who said, "It's really a one-of-a-kind event. It's so energizing. The students are so excited, and it's really an awesome way to kick off the school year."

While it is still unclear if they reached their goal of 12,000 coats, as they are still taking stock of the thousands of donations, Hamilton hopes that the Mass will have a lasting impression on all who attended it:

"(What) we are really asking students today is to put their faith in action by bringing an item through generosity," Hamilton said. "But we are also asking them to take that lesson home with them throughout the whole entire year."

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