



Thousands of Catholic leaders from all walks of life will ring in the new year at the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) SLS Leadership Conference, which will offer five days of fellowship and evangelical instruction in the heart of Chicago, IL.

“Sometimes it can feel lonely trying to reach those in the world who seem too busy and distracted to realize God’s love for them,” said Paul DeBuff, a previous conference attendee.

“The FOCUS SLS Conference not only gave me practical tools to help me reach the world around me for Christ, but it also encouraged me that I was not alone in this effort to make disciples of all nations,” he told CNA.

SLS is a leadership conference for church leaders of all types, including religious education teachers, bishops, chaplains, missionaries, students, bible study leaders, lay ministers, and seminarians. While SLS was previously a private event, it is now open to the public to anyone who is pursuing leadership in evangelization.

The organization’s website says the event hopes to allow attendees to “be inspired by world-class speakers, be renewed in the sacraments and adoration, and be ignited with zeal for the mission to make disciples of all nations.”

The conference, titled “SLS18: Inspire & Equip,” will take place from Jan. 2-6 and will host speakers including Bishop Robert Barron, Fr. Mike Schmitz, Sr. Bethany Madonna, Dr. Edward Sri, and Curtis Martin, among others.

SLS will also offer three different tracks to specifically minister to each group of church leaders: a collegiate track, a lifelong mission track, and a campus ministry track.

Adoration, the sacraments, evening concerts, entertainment, educational sessions and other resources will also be available. More than 100 priests concelebrated Masses at the last SLS conference, and more than 1,000 confessions were heard.

The main goal of SLS is to equip current and aspiring church leaders of all levels to gain confidence in leading bible studies and prayer, inviting others into discipleship, and teaching the truths of the Catholic faith to others.

“At SLS, I was able to learn a concept, such as Ignatian prayer, in the morning during Training Sessions, then solidify it in my mind by teaching it to my peers in the afternoon power sessions,” recalled a previous SLS attendee, Adam Sanchez, in a statement on the SLS website.

“It inspired me to see the vibrancy of the Church among my peers and grow in hope for our future,” Sanchez continued.

Since FOCUS first held its inaugural National Conference in 1999, more than 53,000 people have attended FOCUS events over the years. The last SLS conference was held in 2016 in Dallas, TX and hosted more than 3,400 people. The SLS conference is held every other year, alternating with the SEEK conference, which is aimed at college students.

Registration is still open, with commuter and day passes available:
<https://sls18.com/registration/general/>