***Diocese of Birmingham: Black Catholic Young Adult Listening Session “Where Do I Fit In?”***

 My name is Ethan Ward, and I’m a FOCUS Missionary serving at the Auraria Campus in Denver, CO. I had the honor and the privilege to be in Birmingham for the *Black Catholic Young Adult Listening Session* and the one word I could use to describe it was passionate. Being in those rooms with other fellow black Catholics, I could recognize the people really desire an increase of black Catholic young adults into the Church because it’s not many of us. Being present for this really inspired me and my own journey of faith as a FOCUS Missionary because it’s always great to see more people like me in and involved in the Church. Since I’ve converted to Catholicism my sophomore year of college, I’ve always been the odd one out when attending Mass or other faith-related events. A lot of times, it would cause me to feel out of place. While in college, I remember hearing about Venerable Father Augusts Tolton, and from doing research on his life, it gave me some inspiration to accept the feeling of being out of place because he was in my shoes. It is something that helps me recognize that if I want to see change, it starts with me, so I kept myself on fire for the Lord, and that led me to discern to be a FOCUS Missionary after I finished college. As I embark on this mission, I am reaching out to families, friends, and fellow Christians on behalf of FOCUS to seek prayerful and financial support. FOCUS missionaries fully fundraise their salaries, for both personal living expenses and the service of students. While not everyone can physically join me on this mission, your financial support will enable me to live freely and more readily meet the spiritual and practical needs of the students I serve by subsidizing costs for retreats, mission trips, conferences, and pilgrimages, providing informal meals, and hosting student activities. How can you support me? One way is by getting your contact information which will allow me to schedule an appointment for me to share the rest of my story, the mission of FOCUS, its vision, my financial goals, and so much more. Another way is by going to <https://focus.org/missionaries/ethan-ward/> which will take you to my support page, and you can click on \*support Ethan\* and enter your gift amount and select if you would like to make that a recurring or a one-time gift.