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# Call To Action conference shifts to Louisville

Zoe Ryan | Oct. 9, 2012
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The Catholic church reform group Call To Action will hold its annual conference Nov. 9-11 in Louisville, Ky., veering from its usual host city of Milwaukee. The shift in venue is part of the organization?s ongoing commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression principles, said Call To Action communications and programs director Nicole Sotelo.

To reach out to new people in different parts of the country, future national conferences of the Chicago-based organization will alternate between various locations and Milwaukee, where it has been for the last 10 years, Sotelo said.

Next year the conference will return to Milwaukee, and in 2014 it will be in Memphis.

?I think reaching out to different populations is very important, especially since the rise in Catholicism tends to be in the Southern U.S.,? said Becky Schwantes-An, 29, who attended her first conference in 2007. She is a member of the St. Louis Call To Action chapter and has served on the national organization?s committee for young Catholics.

?Unfortunately there?s not much conversation in the church about anti-racism? and in broader society you really have to dig for it, she said.

Speakers this year include civil rights activist Diane Nash, Enrique Morones from the organization Border Angels to talk immigration, and Social Service Sr. Simone Campbell from the lobbying group NETWORK.

Brennan Hill, 78, a professor emeritus of theology at Xavier University in Cincinnati, is a conference regular. He sometimes sees students and former students there, and this year, because of Louisville?s proximity to Cincinnati, some people from his parish are attending, he said.

With Catholic issues prevalent in this election year, the history of the Call To Action movement has been on his mind, he said, from its nascent start with the U.S. bishops who then distanced themselves from it, to its focus on issues now playing a role in U.S current affairs. Call To Action ?has attempted to hold onto the fundamental notions of Vatican II and move into the modern world,? Hill said.

Nearly 1,300 have registered so far, Sotelo said. Last year more than 1,600 attended. Parts of the conference were also live streamed.

Past conferences have been in Detroit, Chicago and Milwaukee. In 2001, to celebrate Call To Action?s 25th anniversary, the conference was held in Los Angeles, Chicago and Philadelphia.

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