

Retreat Explores Prayer, Community

Discerners Are Ambassadors for Christ

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In our current day and age, an ambassador is the highest ranking diplomatic representative from one country to another. In the early church of St. Paul, an ambassa-

Vocational Views C.P.P.S. for Tomorrow

dor for Christ was one who allowed the message of God to work through him/her; one who embodied the message of reconciliation and shared that gift with others as a representative of Christ (2 Cor. 5: 17-21).

On March 12-14, 2010 six young men and four young women gathered with other Precious Blood men and women at St. Charles Center and Maria Stein Center in West Central Ohio to further explore and discern a call to the religious life as a priest, brother or sister and what it would be like to be an ambassador for Christ today. The men and women were together for liturgies and socials and met separately for discussions about discernment.

The retreat began with introductions and prayer at the Maria Stein Relic Shrine. As each participant entered, names of ambassadors from salvation history were placed upon their backs—Mary, St. James, St. Gaspar, St. Patrick, John Paul II and Dorothy Stang. Participants asked questions of others to determine

who their ambassador was.

Evening prayer included a Scripture reading about the first disciples and questions that prompted reflection upon the call of God in our own lives. The sisters provided tours of the relic shrine.

Br. Matt

Schaefer, C.P.P.S., led two Saturday sessions reflecting upon four interconnected aspects of vocation: prayer, community, service and commitment. Beginning with his own discernment journey, Br. Matt invited participants to appreciate the importance of sharing one's life with others, evaluating one's gifts and talents for communal living and service, and finding a community with a particular charism that speaks to them. He emphasized that service in a particular community is about imitating Christ by reaching out to others and doing so in a way that also engages one's passions and brings fulfillment.

Br. Matt identified a variety of prayer styles that help one discern one's vocation and the necessity of making commitments. The evening session offered a PowerPoint presentation identifying the variety of ministries our missionaries serve in the U.S. and our Latin American missions.



Men and women discerning a vocation to religious life are pictured with C.P.P.S. members and candidates in the chapel at St. Charles Center.

(Photo by Br. Greg Frantz, C.P.P.S.)

A social was held Saturday evening welcoming retreat participants and local C.P.P.S. members to a festive gathering of good food, conversation and games.

On Sunday, discernment retreatants joined the local St. Charles community for Eucharist hearing again the invitation to be ambassadors for Christ and the story of the prodigal son. The retreat concluded with a presentation on the formation journey and next steps in discernment.

Members of the Precious Blood communities were heartened by the youthfulness of those considering the religious life. It is always good to experience the warmth and hospitality of the St. Charles community and the impact that has upon those considering the religious life. It is a wonderful witness of community and mission.

Is there someone you know called to be an ambassador for Christ as a priest, brother or sister?