



*Precious Blood Family at the SEEK 2017 conference in San Antonio, Texas*

## Conversations

*by Timothy Armbruster, C.P.P.S., Vocation Director*

Looking out the window as we landed, I saw green grass along the runway. I knew then we were no longer in Kansas. Just after the first of the year, I traveled to San Antonio, Texas to attend SEEK 2017. I was joined by Fr. Steve dos Santos, Sr. Patty Kramer, Sr. Karen Elliot, and Lori Bengé. We came together as Precious Blood family.

SEEK 2017 was a conference with tons of college students from hundreds of colleges. Over 13,000 college students came together for five days of talks, workshops, art, and worship. It is sponsored by FOCUS, an

apostolate that focuses on launching college students into lifelong Catholic mission. FOCUS missionaries work with college students to invite them to grow in their Catholic faith and relationship with Jesus Christ. Even beyond graduation, students are encouraged to continue to be leaders in ministry and reach out to others.

We were invited to interact with students in various ways throughout the week. We had our traditional vocation booth and materials to hand out. We had

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opportunities to have conversations, celebrate Mass, attend workshops and celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation with the students. I had several good conversations in speaking about our community and spirituality as well as just talking about life and discernment.

In sharing our charism and spirituality, we talked about reconciliation as more than just sacrament. Many students I talked with were faithful in a daily examination of conscience and going to confession, but one thing I kept hearing in these conversations was the wrong and negativity in their lives. Very few of them were finding anything positive or good or life giving about themselves. It was a challenge getting them to see something different about themselves.

Another student shared about the disappointment in not hearing God's voice in her life. She shared that other classmates had been talking about God moments and hearing God's voice and knowing that it was truly God speaking. She was feeling left out, that she was not worthy or not doing something right because she was not having life-shattering experiences. I shared with her from my own experiences and commented that I have never heard that big, booming voice; rather I have heard God speaking in the quiet of life. It is that peace that one knows deep within after debating about an issue and finally making a decision that one can live with.

Another conversation focused on how to relate to others, including family members, who have not had these same spiritual experiences. One student spoke about having just returned from spending time with family over Christmas break and was uncertain about her parent's faith because they couldn't see eye to eye. It was obvious she was alive with the Spirit but didn't know how to share her experience with others who hadn't had the same experience.

At times, I felt like an outsider or someone on the margin, since I hadn't shared some of those same experiences. It is obvious the students are having great experiences and growing in their faith, but sometimes I wonder if they are making connections with other areas of their lives or with people off campus. Although these were only a few conversations with a few students, it seems many conversations I have revolve around reflecting and making connections in one's life. In many ways, it is one conversation worth having. ✦