

Dominican High School Preaching Conference



ADRIAN, MI -- July 5, 2011- “**Decide it, Excite It, Ignite It**” is the catch phrase created by Michael Petro for the 13th Annual Dominican High Schools Preaching Conference that took place June 25 to June 30, 2011 at Siena Heights University, Adrian, Michigan.

Ninety nine students **DECIDED** to attend this years conference. Through prayer, presentations, activities, and interaction with each other they were **EXCITED** about the Dominican Tradition, Signs of the Time, Preaching in Action and Preaching through Art. They return inspired to **IGNITE** their own school communities.

Collegio San Antonio Participants

Attending the conference from Amityville were eight students from St. Agnes Academic HS, six students from St. John the Baptist HS and another four students from Collegio San Antonio our high school in Puerto Rico. This years conference with its total of 99 students was one of the largest group yet.

Participants began the conference by forming community in an opening ritual in which schools combined water brought from home. That water is used later in the week at other prayers. As always, St. Dominic, St. Catherine, St. Martin de Porres and Antonio de Montesino “visited” the students. After experiencing interfaith circle dances and a visit to Adrian’s famous Spotted Cow ice cream shack, participants concluded the day with liturgy.

This year’s signs of the times workshop topics were Human Trafficking, Catholic Social Teaching (given by our own Marie Danaher, OP), the Immigration Issue, Iraqi refugees and the United Nations Mellenium Development Goals (by our own Margaret Mayce, OP). Each presenter shared ways in which students could respond to these justice topics of the Order.

After a day of service in the Adrian area, the students joined the Adrian Sisters for Tuesday Evensong Prayer for Peace. They then enjoyed pizza and desserts with their sister prayer partners of he week. The Preaching through the Creative Arts sessions began on Wednesday. Our own Barbara Schwarz, OP was the keynote presenter for the day. Students then chose two sessions in which to participate among their choices were, monoprint, mandalas, liturgical preaching, liturgical movement, t’ai-chi chih, rosary making, collage, teaching dances of inclusion and print making. It was a great week and a wonderful experience for all!



St. Agnes Academic HS Participants



The conference ended with a closing liturgy in which each school presents it’s action plan, a plan decided upon by the students as a vehicle for bringing what they learned at the conference back to their school communities. As they leave Adrian, Michigan with a song of joy on their lips and the Dominican spirit firmly planted in their hearts the students are commissioned to go forth and preach the “Good News.” Wherever they go they now know that they are and will always be a part of our “Dominican Family.”

St. John the Baptist HS Participants

As if that was not enough excitement for me, upon going back to the convent for lunch, I was informed by Sister Ida that arrangements had been made for me to speak to the sister in charge of three other Dominican High Schools on the island, as well as a friar who was the chaplain for the University run by the Dominican friars. So, we rushed back to Bayamon (a two hour trip from Isabella) to our next meeting.

I have always been told that "God's time is not our time," but during this trip that phrase

really hit home for me. We met with S. Margarita and Br. Raphael for about an hour speaking about the High School Conference, the College Conference and Dominican Young Adults USA. The spirit was definitely present and very active during our discussion. Both of them were explaining to me that they were trying to initiate a "Dominican Youth Movement" on the island. I said to them, "well I guess the third trip here is a charm, because these programs would provide a great foundation to initiate such a movement." They agreed and said they would like their students to participate in both of the conferences, hopefully for this year! In addition, Br. Raphael said there are about 70 or 80 lay people who have been studying and praying with the friars for a number of years now. They have been yearning to learn more about our Dominican life. I told him that Dominican Young Adults USA would be the

program for them. We spoke about the group in Bayamon forming their own chapter and then connecting at times with the Isabella chapter to possibly collaborate on projects. Needless to say, I was thrilled with the conversation and plan on following up with these two people in the coming days!