

Our Lady of Mercy Holy Name Society



Blessed John of Vercelli, Pray for Us

HOLY NAME SOCIETY RETREAT 2008

The annual retreat for the members of the Society was held Saturday, February 23rd at Our Lady of Grace Center, Manhasset. Our retreat Master was Father George Kabiri, a priest of the New York Archdiocese assigned to St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Harlem.

Our Lady of Grace Retreat and Conference Center is run by the Congregation Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Scranton PA. It is located in the former Kelly Mansion on Shelter Rock Road, Manhasset and was donated to the Sisters by the Peter Grace family who had purchased the mansion for the Sisters.

Spending last Saturday in their retreat were thirteen members of our Holy Name Society along with our Spiritual Moderator, Father Tom. The theme for the retreat selected by Father George was "forgiveness" Father conducted his retreat in two sessions with a break for lunch, which was served by the staff of Our Lady of Grace Center.

In opening his discussion, Father emphasized that forgiveness is the need to forget, forget past wrongs, misconceptions and mistakes. It is this understanding of failings, which could and do bring disorder to a family's normal daily course of action.

Father at this point stated forgiveness starts with your immediate family through prayer and love. He recalled for us the parable of the two sons, whose father forgave the wayward son who had asked forgiveness.

The grace of God is obtained through forgiveness. As God loves us, he will always forgive us if through prayer we ask for forgiveness.

In closing this session Father in resolving our questions where forgiveness could be difficult, such as situations of evil, restitution, anger, stress, accident, death, violence, there is first there is prayer to God, followed by love, compassion, concern, kindness. Each day resolve to forgive even though to forget may only be achieved with time.

After a most enjoyable respite for lunch the group returned to the Conference Room for further discourse with Father George on the theme of our retreat, forgiveness.

In setting his afternoon sequence, Father George asked Chris Flatz to read to us from the bible the parable of the “Prodigal Son”, a story we all know so well and a characteristic illustration of compassion found through the love of God.

Nothing should affect our love and relationship with God. In reality each of us is a gift from God and in our struggle to obtain heaven there is God’s love and forgiveness.

Father told us that to be reconciled with someone, family member or friend, it is so much easily reached if we begin with prayer, prayer shared with God, prayer’s power of reconciliation.

The elaboration by Father George on the deep attachment there is within a family, led to a lively discussion as to the actions of each of the son’s in the parable and why it is necessary for us to give forgiveness. The willingness of the father to forgive his wayward son caused resentment in the obedient son and showed how essential the Father’s compassion was.

Procrastination on forgiveness can be a mind-set and devastating should it be delayed too late. Father said that God has given each of us freedom but day in and day out, our life revolves around our dependency on God.

Father’s insight on forgiveness, you could say, was captivating. His presentation and our interchange each session emphasized the positive qualities retained from being present that day.

As planned Father George before Mass that concluded our retreat, our seventh annual, made confession available for all who desired.