

## *Our Lady of Mercy Holy Name Society*



*Blessed John of Vercelli, pray for us*

### *Holy Name Society Retreat 2009*

The eighth annual retreat for the men of our Holy Name Society was at the Our Lady of Grace Center, Manhasset, Saturday March 7th. Welcoming us to the Retreat Center that morning was Sister Maria Regina of the Congregation Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Scranton PA, the Center's Administrator.

Present from Our Lady of Mercy for this Retreat were thirteen members of the Society along with our Spiritual Moderator, Father Thomas Tuite.

Following breakfast in the Center's Reception Room, Chris Flatz, the Society's Retreat Coordinator, introduced our retreat leader, Father Roderick Ermatinger, a member from the Order of Legionnaires of Christ, a Missionary Order located in Westchester, New York. In his introduction Chris explained how, with an emergency cancellation by the retreat leader scheduled, it was through the Holy Spirit that Father Roderick came to his rescue.

Father Roderick, he learned, was coming that weekend to Holy Name of Jesus in Woodbury, where he is a pastoral assistant and more than pleased to stand-in as our Retreat Leader. Traveling with Father to Woodbury was Brother Erik, a candidate for the priesthood in the Order of Legionnaires of Christ.

Father Ermatinger began with prayer, setting the tone for his opening discourse, which was to be "Mercy", easily elucidated when he gave us the background for his vocation, a late vocation.

Father said while living a carefree existence, the priesthood was never in the back of his mind, until a serious illness of his Mother's motivated the need for faith, prayer and then followed the unexpected awakening of how for him there was a more profound meaning to life.

From that point, Father said it was easy to let go of his secular career. He continued praying more fervently, attending Mass, silent meditation, together with the encouragement of a brother, a priest in the Legionnaires of Christ, there was soon that desire to serve God.

For our conversation this morning, Father said he would be speaking on “Mercy” and its real consequence “Love”. A discourse to be followed by our own personal prayer, for it is most important that we have a dialogue with God, for we are people of prayer.

From our earthly beginning we have a mission, Father explained; our mission is to be a missionary through our love for God. As an example of this missionary, Father told of Saint Therese of Lisieux, a Carmelite Nun, who spent her entire adult life never leaving the Convent, who is now the patron Saint of Missionaries. Sister Therese, when dying of tuberculosis, is said to have said, “I love Him, My God I love You”.

In talking about “Mercy” Father emphasized that mercy is the greatest act of love. We have to accept God’s love into our hearts. God works through our soul, works through the Holy Spirit into our hearts.

Father further showed through his discourse many ways that we should see God’s love for us, a merciful love especially seen in His passion, in His death on the cross and in His resurrection.

Father ended his morning meditation by stressing what is the greatest gift of Mercy, Confession, the power to have our sins forgiven.

Individual Confession’s then followed to be accompanied by our personal prayer with God, while sitting in a room of the Conference Center or while strolling around the ground’s of the Center’s, before breaking for lunch.

After a most enjoyable respite for talk and lunch the group resumed the Conference with Father Roderick, an afternoon session and meditation on the second part of the retreat theme, “Holiness”.

Holiness is loving God and serving God. Father emphasized for us that in contemplating what holiness is, contemplate on Heaven, for the end of our life is to be with God.

One of the great mysteries of Christianity father said is suffering. We can look at the “good thief” on the cross, our Blessed Mother, Mary Magdalene, all offering their suffering at the foot of the cross for the perfection of their souls.

God wants us to trust in Him; He wants us to be holy. God gives us the graces to make us holy. We have interceding to God for us, our Blessed Mother, our Angels, our Saints.

For example Father said, the power of God is seen in the story of Christ at the well with the Jewish women, who after leaving Christ at the well, accepted the grace of God in

her soul. God wants us to accept His grace in our souls, make a difference, go out into the world, take a risk for Christ as St. Paul did, as the Apostles did.

Father Roderick then told a conversion story, a story about an Anglican priest, Father Jones and his choice about joining the Catholic Church. This priest in talking to a Catholic priest was advised to pray about his fascination for the Catholic faith, then go to Rome and see for himself the Catholic faith.

Many years later he sees this same Catholic priest, tells him he did see Archbishop Canterbury of the Anglican Church, went to Rome and now after twenty years has at last accepted the Catholic faith.

So God through divine providence knows of the choices that we must make, choices that may take time to make, but all a part of our path to holiness.

Our relationship with God should be very simple. God wants to be with us. There are with God's love extraordinary moments of grace, which is what holiness is about. We are called to be with God in Heaven.

The example of God's grace is the Virgin Mary, who accepted God's word brought by the Angel Gabriel. We should and can do great things for God.

Father in conclusion left us with those thoughts, thoughts about Mercy, Love, Heaven.

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

Frank White, Secretary  
Our Lady of Mercy Holy Name Society

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