

Archdiocesan youths lock in to their calling at “Adore-a-thon”

GLEN BURNIE - After a week of classroom stress and social angst, many high schoolers use Friday nights to blow off steam at parties.

Forty-three youths from the Archdiocese of Baltimore, however, spent the night of March 11 at a vocations event called “Adore-a-thon.” The event, hosted at Church of the Crucifixion in Glen Burnie, was a lock-in for high school youths who are discerning their vocation.

The Adore-a-thon included a Mass, concert, vocations panel, games, activities and eucharistic adoration.

“It’s not the typical Friday night activity,” said Holy Trinity parishioner David Cupps, 18. “The party thing isn’t my scene. I love my faith. These are my closest friends here. They’re people who live their faith like I do. It’s just awesome to spend time with people who know the Lord like you do and really enjoy praise and worship.”

The night included a Mass celebrated by Father J. Kevin Farmer, associate pastor of Crucifixion and two other Glen Burnie parishes, Holy Trinity and Church of the Good Shepherd. Father Jesse L. Bolger, another associate pastor of the three parishes, and Father T. Austin Murphy Jr., the archdiocese’s director of vocations, concelebrated.

During his homily, Father Bolger asked the youths to examine the meaning of discipleship and how that is essential to discovering their vocation. Father Bolger told The Catholic Review that young people, such as Cupps, are comfortable talking about vocations.

“I think it’s all part of the JP2 generation,” Father Bolger said. “John Paul II made the Catholic Church more accessible worldwide and encouraged a whole generation of priests and religious. His World Youth Days brought millions of young people together.”

Lauren Rivera, 17, a parishioner of Our Lady of the Chesapeake in Lake Shore, was attending her third Adore-a-thon.

“They have such amazing speakers,” she said. “They really open your eyes to what kind of vocations are out there and they lay out that it’s not easy to pick.”

During the panel, Father Murphy was asked if he took a vow of poverty, as nuns do. He answered no, but emphasized that he took vows of celibacy and obedience to the archbishop and his successors. He encouraged humble living.

“It’s important to keep looking at your life and simplify,” Father Murphy said.

Father Farmer said he loved his vocation because, “we get to share in people’s greatest joys and sorrows.”

Dominican Sister Anne Catherine Burleigh, the principal of Mount de Sales Academy, was among several nuns who related stories about their calling.

“I never thought I would be a sister, but God had other plans for me,” she said.

Father Bolger said the teens in attendance were an inspiration.

“I hope they find joy and a true peace in doing God’s will,” he said. “For some, that’s priestly or religious life, for others it’s marriage. I hope they remember our witness and we plant a seed that Christ causes to grow one day and to flourish into priestly and religious vocations.”

One of the event’s chief organizers was Marlene Lauer, a parishioner of Holy Trinity, who serves on its vocations committee.

For more on this story, insights from Father Bolger and a video, visit CatholicReview.org/palmerblog.