

Future of Archdiocesan Holy Name Union topic of 97th convention

The future of the Baltimore Archdiocesan Holy Name Union was among the topics discussed at the 97th annual archdiocesan convention May 18 at Our Lady of Fatima in Baltimore.

Some 50 people attended a convention workshop led by William Schummer titled “The Way Ahead,” which focused on the future of the organization and how it might grow its membership. BAHNU’s low visibility within the archdiocese was blamed, to some extent, on a lack of publicity.

“We’re not very good at public relations,” Mr. Schummer admitted. “The word’s just not getting out.”

A common theme in the workshop was inconsistent communication within the union and between the parish societies, and a number of ideas were floated for rectifying this, including the development of a Web site and the maintenance of a comprehensive mailing list. Effective communication was determined to be critical in the encouraging and support of the parish societies.

“It’s time to stop talking and start doing something,” Mr. Schummer said. “We need to meet these objectives if we are going to grow.”

According to William Harris Jr., president of BAHNU, there are some 800 members of BAHNU, and 30 Holy Name Societies in the archdiocese.

Two parishes have active Junior Holy Name Societies, one of which was established at Transfiguration parish by Melvin Wilson, a Circle Medallion Award winner.

“We really need to try to identify ways to bring in younger members,” Mr. Schummer said.

Steve Melnyk, president of the Holy Name Society at St. Ignatius, Hickory, suggested a conference of parish-level leaders to brainstorm, exchange notes and provide BAHNU leadership with input. Jerry Wagner, Secretary of the St. Ignatius society added, “We need more person-to-person communication.”

On May 14, BAHNU met with Archbishop Edwin F. O’Brien and presented him with a \$1,000 contribution toward his discernment dinner.

BAHNU also familiarized the archbishop with other examples of the organization’s generosity, such as 10 \$500 scholarships awarded to students attending archdiocesan secondary schools and an equal number of \$500 stipends each year to deserving seminarians.

In the meeting, the archbishop was asked to encourage pastors to consider sponsoring a Holy Name Society in their parish and to have pastors support their existing Holy Name Societies.

The Holy Name Union was created in 1274 by Pope Gregory X to promote greater devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus. Baltimore’s Holy Name Union was founded at Baltimore’s Corpus Christi parish in 1891 and became the Baltimore Archdiocesan Holy Name Union in 1911. The second Sunday of each month is designated as Holy Name Sunday, and on these days the society’s members process into the early Mass.

Father Michael Carrion serves as spiritual director of the organization.

At the conference, Circle Medallion Awards, the highest award made by the Archdiocesan Holy Name Union, were presented to five individuals, four lay members and one clergy. Receiving the award were Monsignor Martin E. Feild,

pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Taneytown, and lay members John Cieslak, William Schummer, Don Ward and Melvin Wilson.

New officers were also elected during the convention.

The 2008 - 2010 Officers are

President - William W. Harris Jr.

Executive Vice President - William L. Schummer

First Vice President - Melvin R. Wilson

Second Vice President - Cleveland G. Cosom

Third Vice President - Joel M. White

Secretary - Dorothea McGee

Treasurer - Michael F. Armetta

Assistant Treasurer - Deacon Henry Siarkowski

Marshal - Joseph P. O'Connor