

Institute focuses on evangelization

Dr. Jack Buchner tried to alter perceptions Oct. 4, with every ounce of energy he had.

The director of evangelization for St. Joseph of Cockeysville stood in front of 50 people in the basement of the parish center, his hands waving in the air and voice brimming with passion.

The attendees of the parish's annual Evangelization Institute came from 14 archdiocesan parishes and were fascinated by his reflections on the Our Father and its focus on asking God for absolution of others and self

"If you can get (your) arms around this bit on forgiveness, you can put up with anybody all the time," Dr. Buchner told the crowd. "This part of The Lord's Prayer reminds us of our every day consciousness of sin. Scripture is pretty clear. There is something about a person who learns this bit and lives this bit about forgiveness."

Mike Mooney, a 22-year-old member of St. Joseph, has become a regular at Dr. Buchner's various workshops and programs because of their raw power.

"He's just a spectacular speaker," Mr. Mooney said. "It's always good to hear what he has to say and learn about my faith."

There were plenty of options to learn more about the role of evangelization at the institute where five speakers were featured in workshops.

Stephen Butz addressed dealing with difficult people, St. Joseph associate pastor Father Roque Lim talked about forgiveness in the Mass and Father Joseph R. Wenderoth spoke of the sacrament of reconciliation. Dr. Buchner led a workshop on taking on the attitudes of Christ while Janet Crowley focused on evangelization in everyday life.

"Reconciliation and forgiveness are key to the evangelization process," said Sharon Bogusz, the archdiocese's coordinator for evangelization and adult catechesis. "Each Catholic is called to be a sign of God's mercy and love. This evangelization Institute

has been incredibly effective in reminding us of this universal call that each Catholic has to be welcoming and reconciling.”

The focus on forgiveness may not seem like a natural for evangelization, but Dr. Buchner said there is more below the surface.

“I’m not so much called to share the Good News as I am to be the Good News,” he said. “I’m going to be the Good News as a Catholic if I know how much I’m loved. Then I’m forgiven. If I can know this and appreciate this, I’m going to be Good News for other people, which is evangelization.”