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'Share ministry with me'

Staff Report

Archbishop Borders urged more than 1,000 participants in a national lay evangelization conference here to "share ministry with me" and as evangelizers renew the Church by forming communities that offer healing, the Gospel truth and the opportunity for constant prayer.

Declaring that the Church will only endure through "solid and renewed parish life," he invited his listeners to model their parish communities on the communities first formed in the early Church.

"Strengthen Jesus' healing, teaching and praying in the parish and you will be evangelizers," the archbishop said.

Preaching during the closing liturgy of the first annual National Catholic Lay Celebration of Evangelization,

Lay evangelists cha

which included the "commissioning" of participants as evangelizers, Archbishop Borders said "you and I are sealed with the Holy Spirit ... owned, as it were by God" and "called by Him to extend His kingdom."

He stressed that a pre-condition of any extension of God's kingdom is the determination "to spread the truth of the Church" founded by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He said this is accomplished by preaching the Gospel, by evangelizing.

Archbishop Borders, the main celebrant of the Mass at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, was joined by Bishop Thomas Welsh of Arlington, Va., and Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Lyons of

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urged by Abp. Borders to renew parish life through preaching

Washington. The three-day conference, sponsored by the Paulists' Office of Evangelization, was hosted by the Baltimore and Washington archdioceses and the Arlington diocese.

In stressing the need to revitalize parish life as the basis for evangelization, Archbishop Borders said "all of you are here ... because you believe (that) evangelization is the key to the present and future life of the Church."

"... I am convinced that the rock upon which the Church will continue to perdure in our time is the rock of solid and renewed parish life."

The archbishop said parish communities will grow on the basis of three things: the capability to provide

healing, both physically and spiritually; the presence of the truth through the Gospel; and the opportunity for prayer, individually and together in worship.

In urging that parishes be places "where people can find healing," he said the "world is scarred," and family life to a large extent seems to be in chaos. "... you and I, brothers and sisters in Christ, must be the people who bring healing to our scarred and broken world because we are alive with the love of Jesus. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit."

Archbishop Borders went on to note that those seeking healing must also be nourished by the Word of God, through teaching "the beauty of Jesus of

Nazareth to every man, woman and child who comes to us."

He added that the strength needed to teach as Jesus taught "comes from prayer, the kind that Jesus recommended that takes us apart in order to find His Father, and the prayer that follows intimacy with God, the worship together that is at once a signal of and for reliving the Resurrection."

"If you will change the face of the earth through evangelization, be people of prayer first," he declared.

"As a bishop," he said, "I need you to share ministry with me. Your connection to me ... to your own bishop ... is in your parish. Strengthen Jesus' healing, teaching and praying in that parish and you will be evangelizers."