



JOHN PAUL II HEALING CENTER

*Transformation in the Heart of the Church*

## Equipping for Pastoral Ministry Priest Retreat - Event Report February 9-13, 2015 Tallahassee, FL

Last week, we held our inaugural priest conference, “Equipping for Pastoral Ministry”, in Tallahassee. While many priests have attended our other conferences and had beautiful experiences, this conference was specifically for *them*, and built around their priestly identity and ministry. What a beautiful and life-changing week! The nine priests were a true representation of the priestly ministry, coming from as far away as Washington State, both diocesan and religious, and ranging in age from 35 - 70!



The week spoke directly into our mission of “*Transformation in the Heart of the Church*” as these holy men gathered to receive the Father’s gift of healing in their own lives, and uniting as brothers for the Father’s purpose of ministering to “the Bride”. What an encouraging sight! It is not often that you see such life-changing fruit that impacts the entire world through His Church.

Working from the *Healing the Whole Person* workbook, we focused primarily on three areas:

- The priests identity in Jesus as beloved son, brother, bridegroom, father and healer
- The priests humanity in Jesus, including his development, wounds and healing process
- The priests mission in Jesus, healing through the Sacraments and Pastoral Ministry

Bart, Ken and myself accompanied the men through the week with sessions that included teaching, demonstrations, discussions and application; daily Mass and prayer; and fellowship over meals, as well as personal prayer ministry. The men seemed particularly blessed by an environment that allowed them to share openly with their brother priests, as well as with the three of us, whom they called “fathers” of a different kind. We all witnessed and experienced the Father’s love throughout the week, and especially in the times of prayer ministry where we were able to walk with them into new areas of breakthrough and personal healing.

Fr. Chris, from Nebraska, gave us permission to share a part of his experience: *"Through the prayerful, Spirit-filled, and loving ministry of Bob and the team, I was able to encounter some specific places in my life where Jesus wants to love me into greater wholeness. I am looking forward to growing in relationship with Him: both for the happiness that this will bring to me, and for the good effects it will have on the people I relate to."*

Fr. Mark Touns joined us via video conference for a particularly powerful session on pastoral equipping, where he discussed the practical application of material within the Sacrament of Reconciliation, preaching, and spiritual direction. Fr. Mark’s ability to speak from his experience, and to share the fruit that he sees in the lives of his parishioners, was significant in bringing the week together for the priests. Fr. Mark stirred a deeper enthusiasm within them to incorporate this into their ministry!

Team members Margaret and Kim joined us (with the priests permission) to pray encouragement for the priests in a corporate setting, and it was beautiful to witness them also pray for each other in a deep way. The fruit of this prayer time was evident in the joyful expressions on the faces of all the men and the new liberty to which they willingly testified.

On Friday, we ended with Mass and sharing of graces. One of the most powerful parts of the morning involved prayers of blessing over each other just before Mass. The sharing of graces was a heartfelt and collective thank-you to God for what He had done in the week, and for the relationships that formed between us.

Fr. Jason, from Atlanta, shared his thoughts about the week, as well:

*"What impressed me most about the retreat was its INTEGRATED METHODOLOGY and HOLISTIC APPROACH. Bob has been able to apply the knowledge and best practices he has learned from clinical psychology, John Paul II’s Theology of the Body, and other healing ministries into an inner healing ministry that is both profound and easy to follow. I know that I will use all the knowledge and experiences I had in the celebration of the sacraments, in spiritual direction, and in my own healing ministry at the parish. I highly recommend this retreat for any priest of any age or experience."*

Words cannot adequately describe the encouragement, joy, peace and brotherly love we experienced with these men! God is *“Transforming the Heart of the Church”*. These men are both the hope and the fulfillment of St. John Paul’s proclamation of a “New Springtime” in the Church. The holy father was fond of the exhortation, “Become who you are”. These men are-and it is awe inspiring to behold.

It is with gratitude for your prayers and support that we share this report with you. Together, we are all participating in the Father’s desire for His Church – “A Church so beautiful the world will run to Her!” These men, and the many others who have given their “yes” to God, are the fruit of His heart’s desire.

With gratitude and praise to Jesus,

Bob and The John Paul II Healing Center Team

