



JOHN PAUL II HEALING CENTER
Transformation in the Heart of the Church

Seminarian Summer Program Event Report June 8 - July 2, 2015



June marked the first “month-long” *Seminarian Summer Program* at JP II Healing Center. Ten seminarians, as well as a couple of priests, participated in all or part of the program. Men from multiple diocese, as well as religious orders, began their formational month by participating in the *Restoring the Glory Five-Day Retreat* in early June. The retreat took the men deeply into their masculine identity, how they relate to God as men, their interpersonal relationships, and growing in chaste celibacy. During the week, they had “sem only” lunches and meetings with some of the JP II staff, and enjoyed sharing the Neumann Center with the other conference attendees.

Week two began with a silent retreat, with spiritual direction provided by Fr. Mitch Semar of the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, focusing on Ignatius Rules of Discernment and the three stages of the spiritual life. Fr. Mitch, who was deeply touched by the ministry during his own formation, provided truly inspired direction and hope to the seminarians. The men commented repeatedly about the value of silence and spiritual direction to unpack everything they encountered within their own hearts the previous week. A

particular thank you to Fr. Mitch (and Bishop Fabre), for the gift of Fr. Mitch's time and care in supporting the men.

By the third week, the men really began to find a pace, both for the program, as well as their free time. The week consisted of mornings of teaching (*Healing the Whole Person*), with an emphasis on identifying and bringing healing to personal deficit, often in the areas that undermine priestly ministry, including abandonment, rejection and shame. The afternoons focused on personal and priestly identity, and their vision for their vocation. The week also included times of personal prayer ministry, mass, adoration and some relaxation.

During the final week, we pulled the entire program together, as well as adding a solid experiential element. One day was spent on a float trip on a nearby, spring-fed river, providing the opportunity to engage God in outdoor activities. One stop along the way included a rope swing, tied high up in a tree overlooking a 60' deep spring-fed "blue hole". The swing came to represent adventure, courage, and the overcoming of fear in the hearts of many of the men.

We'd like to share some of the feedback from the seminarians who attended. The future of the Church is in good hands with men like these!

One seminarian, in a letter to his bishop wrote:

"As I experienced this healing in my heart, I found my desire to be a priest become clearer and stronger!.....After a particularly consoling experience of resting in His comfort and light, I was left with the thought: 'This is something I've always wanted, but never thought I would have.'....This confidence and freedom that I have received in my desire to be a priest is the overarching grace that ties together all the other graces of this retreat."

Some of the other seminarians commented:

"This month-long seminarian program has been nothing short of life changing!"

"Because this ministry is faithful to the Church and colors all of its content with the wisdom of the Church, it is easy to see clearly that the human condition is truly that perfectly integrated tapestry where nothing should be fragmented."

"... I was born again from the heart. No words will ever describe what you have done for me. Every seminarian can and will benefit from this extraordinary ministry. Simply...WOW."

All of us at the John Paul II Healing Center are grateful for the seminarians, priests, vocation directors, bishops and benefactors who made this program a success. We look forward to our continued work with seminarians, priests and religious who have answered God's unique call on their lives.

Blessings to all of you!

JPII Healing Center Team