

2016 Eastern Diocese Acolyte Retreat



“Saints Peter and Paul” was the theme of our fifth annual Eastern Diocese Acolyte Retreat held on June 28, 2016. On an overcast early summer day 53 altar servers, adults and clergy gathered with our bishop, The Rt. Rev. Paul Sobiechowski, at Divine Providence Parish in Norwich, Connecticut.

The retreat began with Holy Mass celebrated by Bishop Paul. Our diocesan youth chaplain, Fr. Sr. Rob Nemkovich and host pastor, Fr. Chris Rogalski concelebrated. Cliff Nemkovich served as the lector for the Mass and two acolytes from Norwich did an outstanding job of serving at the Altar with Reverence. Fr. Sr.

Rob Nemkovich proclaimed the Gospel. Bishop preached to the Acolytes first thanking them for the important service and ministry they give the Church. He spoke about the importance of Sts. Peter and Paul in the Church and reminded the Altar Servers what an important role they have of teaching the faith-





ful and encouraging others to serve Jesus. Bishop reminded how the laity during Mass look to the Altar Servicers for direction and that their ministry is a very important one as the Church gathers for worship. He asked the youth to serve and lead by example

always following Jesus and teaching others to Him as well. During the Mass prayers were offered for Fr. Robert Fredrickson who was hospitalized, Fr. Jan Wilczek battling cancer and Fr. Michal Gitner recovering from surgery.

Following a group photo all enjoyed some outstanding dunkin donuts provided by the men of Divine Providence parish.

Fr. Henryk Wos gave the first presentation on Saint Peter. He spoke about the relationship St. Peter and the others Apostles had in following Jesus during his three-year ministry. He taught about the important leadership and service Peter gave to Christ and His Church. Portions of Peter's Letters in the New Testament were shared with our acolytes. He also told the Altar Servers that St. Peter was



martyred for his outstanding faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Fr. Robert Koerber gave our second session on Serving at the Altar with Reverence. Fr. Robert point-



ed out some do's and don'ts for the acolytes and reminded them about the great privilege it is to serve at the Lord's table and be so close to the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. He gave an excellent handout with an Altar Server's Prayer, an appropriate dress code, proper vesture and some important rules for them to follow to make sure proper Reverence and respect is given during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Here is the prayer that you may want to share with your Altar Servers if they were unable to join us in Norwich: *"Loving Father, Creator of the Universe, You call Your people to worship, to be with You and each other at Mass. Help me, for You have called me also. Keep me prayerful and alert. Help me to help others in prayer. Thank you for the trust you have placed in me. Keep me true to that trust. I make my prayer in Jesus' name, Who is with us. Amen."*



The third and final presentation of the retreat was given by Fr. Sr. Rob Nemkovich. Fr. Sr. Rob spoke about St. Paul. He shared a few video clips about the conversion of Saul to Paul, and his life and service to the Church. The marching song "My Name is Paul" was enjoyed by all - singing about *how much he walked and how much talked* as he was argua-



bly the greatest missionary in the Church taking the message of Christ and his saving Gospel throughout the ancient world. Fr. Sr. Rob reminded the youth about how many times we hear from St. Paul during Mass from the New Testament reading. The servers learned that St. Paul also was martyred for his faith and that Paul serves as an example for us - as we serve God at the Altar and also share our precious faith in Christ and the Gospel with others.

After grace was sung by all - the grace from our Youth Retreat to the hymn of the doxology, the altar servers then were treated to a great lunch for youth - pizza.

Our acolytes, clergy and laity then traveled to the beautiful Mystic

Aquarium in Mystic Connecticut. A special thanks to Fr. Calvo for arranging this visit for us. We arrived just in time for the sea lion show and then enjoyed seeing the beluga whales, penguins, petting rays and even sharks during shark week (talk about perfect planning). A special exhibit on frogs was

also enjoyed by all and a beautiful tour of the numerous tanks with just incredible sights of God's beautiful creation.

Thanks and appreciation are giv-



en to Fr. Chris Rogalski and our host parish, Divine Providence in Norwich for their fine hospitality and to all the clergy gathered: Bishop Paul Sobiechowski, Fr. Sr. Rob Nemkovich, Fr. Randy Calvo, Fr. Robert Koerber, Fr. Chris Rogalski and Fr. Henryk Vos. Eight diocesan parishes were represented: Central Falls, RI; Fall River, MA; Manchester, NH; Norwich, CT; Lowell, MA; Stratford, CT; Westfield, MA and Woonsocket, RI. **Plan to join us next summer for our 2017 Eastern Diocese Acolyte Retreat where we will again gather in prayer, worship, learning and great fun. Also don't forget our upcoming Eastern Diocese Youth Retreat at Camp Howe in Goshen, MA from August 21-25, 2016 and of course - Convo 2016 - less than a month away.**

Fr. Sr. Rob Nemkovich

