

Pondering a priestly vocation



Following the ordination liturgy, Bishop Matthew H. Clark meets with retreat participants for a luncheon in the rectory of Sacred Heart Cathedral. The luncheon and discussion session, which lasted two hours, gave participants the chance to have their questions about the priesthood answered, and also to ask Bishop Clark about his own personal experiences.

ture, and wonderful husbands and fathers too," Father Horan commented in the bulletin.

Finnerty said the retreat helped to leave "an impression that will always stay with them no matter what they go into. At least they're willing to explore (the priesthood); that's all you can ask for."

Phil said the retreat enabled him to grow in his overall faith, saying, "It was more than just a priest thing; it was an evangelizing experience. There was a fear they were going to try and push things, but they were there to support you."

Michael said that normally, he's guarded about whom he discusses his discernment with: "It's something that you can get labeled for."

Matt Dunne, 20, said that he's "about 50-50" on pursuing a religious vocation — and therefore, he sometimes prefers not to mention this fact because supporters might assume he's going into the priesthood.

"I don't think people mean to put pressure on you. They just know there's a need (for priests)," said Matt, a parishioner at Church of the Resurrection in Perinton.

That need was emphasized, Bishop Clark pointed out, toward the end of the ordination Mass. The bishop had asked the retreatants to stand up, and they were greeted by lengthy, loud applause from the congregation.

"There was something more in there than a casual response," Bishop Clark told the young men. "There was something deeper in there."

Finnerty said the June 23-24 retreatants are scheduled to reconvene for a barbecue Aug. 13, and that retreat organizers are looking to form smaller discernment groups throughout the year. She also hopes the retreat will become an annual event at ordination time.

COMING NEXT WEEK:
Creative youth ministry in Livingston



Chris Potter, from St. Anne Parish in Rochester, responds to a comment by Bishop Clark during the June 24 luncheon and discussion session in the Sacred Heart Cathedral rectory. Young men from age 16 through their mid-30s attended the retreat.

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