

Dear Brothers and Sisters



I just returned from a ten-day pilgrimage, accompanying one hundred youth as we travelled from NJ to Detroit, the Upper Peninsula on Lake Michigan, Chicago, South Bend Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington DC, Gettysburg and Philadelphia.

It was a vocational pilgrimage, to help these youth discern their vocation, their calling in life. The youth on our two buses came from our parish here in Woodcliff Lake, and from other parishes in NJ, as well as some pilgrims from Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio and Indiana. We did street missions in the towns and cities we visited, processing as we sang, talking with people we met on the streets, sharing our experience of having encountered Jesus Christ in the Gospel.

We slept on the floor every night - in parish halls, gymnasiums, and in churches, and invited the youth to spend the ten days of pilgrimage without their cell phones. Being disconnected from social media allowed us to communicate with one another, to look one another in the eye.

Our destination was the Field of Blood in Gettysburg, where tens of thousands were killed and wounded in the Civil War. On that very field we had a vocational meeting together with ten thousand other youth pilgrims who had travelled from all over the country to be present for this event. The meeting in Gettysburg was presided over by the Apostolic Nuncio - that is the Papal representative to the United States, Archbishop Christophe Pierre. A vocational call was made, and 250 young men stood up for the priesthood, and 350 young women for the Convent. From our two buses, we had ten boys and eight girls stand up for the vocational call.

A pilgrimage pulls us out of our comfort zone, and pulls us towards Christ. Each one of us has a vocation, our vocation is to be Christian, which means to be happy. Christ speaks to the heart of each one of us, and calls us to Him, to experience the joy and love that can only be found in Him.

Let us pray for all the youth who went on pilgrimage, and let us pray especially for those who responded to the vocational call and that the Lord may defend their vocation.

Fr. Sean