



November 30, 2017

Dear Religious,

In 2003 we began the HERE I AM LORD Vocations Conference. From very humble beginnings, the conference grew into a quite remarkable experience for all involved, spread out over the course of four (4) days. Over the past 15 years, a lot of changes have occurred. The one thing I have noticed is that vocations directors are more actively involved at the national, diocesan and parish levels than ever before. Many of you are assisting with retreats for Middle and High School students as well as College Students. These are but a few of the many amazing things those involved in Vocation Ministry are actively engaged in. Dioceses are helping to establish Parish based vocations ministry initiatives! Marriage groups, acknowledging marriage as a vocation, are also new to many parishes. In some small part, I would like to think that we were ahead of the game in addressing these issues.

Recently, I was afforded the opportunity to listen to the Holy Spirit. I viewed this as an opportunity to reboot our ministry here at St. Pat's by looking at everything we are actively involved in. After over 20 years in Youth Ministry and just turning 65, I view the next five years as crucial in trying out a variety of new ways to meet young people and their parents! I also wanted to use this as an opportunity to take HERE I AM LORD back to it's beginning and starting anew, so that we could allow the Spirit to lead others from our parish (and beyond) to take this important ministry on. In order to give others a chance, I felt the need to revert to an opening night followed by a single day event.

While this was praying on my mind, when I took a hard look at things last week, I found that our Religious Registration for the conference was down 50% from previous years and that for whatever reason, our Saturday registrations were virtually non-existent. In discussing these details with people whose opinions I value, I decided it was the right time to make a decision to make these changes effective in 2018.

So with that said, this is what HERE I AM LORD 2018 will look like:

Thursday March 1, 2018

Noon – 5 pm Set Up for Vocations Fair
5 – 6:30 pm Pot Luck Welcome Dinner for Religious & Parish
6:30 – 7:30 pm Vocations Talk for Religious Ed Program & Parish
7:30 – 8:30 pm Parish Holy Hour for Vocations & Families

Friday March 2, 2018

8 am – 3 pm Middle School Workshop
3 pm Breakdown of Vocations Fair
5 pm Dinner for Religious & Parish
7 – 9 pm Parish Concert by Tony Melendez
9 pm Conclusion of Conference

We hope and pray that you will continue to be a part of our HERE I AM LORD family as we go forward and revise the conference so that HERE I AM LORD continues to meet the needs of the parish and you, our religious partners. As always, thank you for your prayers & continued support!

In the Peace and Joy of Christ,
 Sincerely,

Mike Zak

HIAL Conference Director