

This year's retreat included talks by an all-star Catholic line up of speakers.

- **Fr. Mark Haydu, LC** presented on the "Keys to Understanding Pope Francis". During his talk, Fr Mark presented 10 attributes of our blessed father. Although I did not memorize the 10 attributes, I came away with how blessed we are to have such a well-rounded leader sitting in the Pope seat.
- **Fr. Bruce Wren** presented his *Ideas on Lent* and "How to Get to Heaven". The foundation for his talk was grounded in the meaning of the ashes we receive on Ash Wednesday as stated in the Priest's words "Remember that you are dust and to dust you will return." The ashes are a stark reminder that our time on earth is not meant to be easy (we have to work) and the timeframe for completing our works on earth is limited. If we follow the meanings of the ashes, we can focus our Lenten activities on three areas:
 1. What virtue can I live that will bring me closer to God as presented in Ezekiel 9:4.
 2. Ask God's forgiveness for my past sins, seek his mercy, and ask for protection from harm and evil as well as seek to forgive those who have wronged us. Genesis 4:15 provides the basis for how we should approach God.
 3. We need to wipe sin from our life. The works we do during Lent help us to wipe out our worst sins. Dante's *Divine Comedy* provides a compelling case for why we need to purge sin from our lives.
- **Fr. John Connor:** "Adam I and Adam II". This talk was centered around the book, *The Road to Character* by David Brooks. Fr Connor discussed the concept of, Adam I, a highly-driven career person who motivated by success and making things thrive (sound familiar). Adam II is motivated by loving God and the neighbors God puts before us. This person possesses spiritual courage, love, and endurance that is driven by their faith. Adam II is the type of person who Lumen strives to form. What I found encouraging is that we need to be both Adam I and Adam II. Where we struggle is maintaining a balance between the two Adam. This is a place where Lumen helps to guide us in striking this balance.
- **Dr. Vitz:** "How Men and Women Complement Each Other: The Evidence from Psychology and Neuroscience". Both husbands and wives really appreciated the perspectives that Dr. Vitz presented. We all have been exposed to the falsehoods that men and women are the same (except for our "plumbing), men are superior to women (macho view) and women are superior to men (feminist view). Dr. Vitz's alternative perspective is that men and women complement each other. When we learn to embrace our complimentary differences (e.g., empathetic vs competitive) we can live richer lives as husbands and wives as well as fathers and daughters.
- **Jim Hislop:** "The State of Lumen". Lumen's value proposition continues to evolve. Jim made a compelling case for when we fully take advantage of what Lumen offers its members, we as members and our families can achieve a substantial growth in our

spirituality and overall happiness. Lumen is truly a gift and one we need to share with others. I know this sounds like I am drinking the Lumen cool aid, but Jim's presentation coupled with my own experiences grounds my assertion of the value Lumen affords us.

- **Sue Stone** gave a testimony on how she and Bob's faith has grown over the past 5 years through their active participation in Lumen and how this has positively impacted their children's faith as well as their grandchildren – awesome testimony.
- **Euse Mita**; "Whom do you seek?" Euse gave a personal testimony on how his faith and the formation he received through Lumen allowed him to endure and persevere through life's hardships. These challenges include his son's struggle and victory over brain cancer, a down syndrome grandchild, and the loss of half his personal wealth during the economic downturn in 2008. There was not a dry eye in the room, including Euse's.

I know we have busy schedules. The Lumen National Retreat, however, provides a phenomenal ROI on our spiritual growth as well as an opportunity to grow in faith with our spouses and experience a rich fellowship with Lumen members from across the country. Lory and I both come out of the retreat with our spiritual tanks filled and ready to fully embrace this Lenten season. I hope and pray more of us will be able to attend next year's retreat.