CMSM Sponsors ‘Think Tank’ on Religious Brothers Vocation

SILVER SPRING, MD (November 28, 2012). Once a strongly attested vocation, the numbers of religious brothers in the United States are receding. On Thursday, November 29 and Friday, November 30, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) is sponsoring a meeting, to be held in Ossining, New York at the headquarters of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, of representatives from four groups committed to fostering the vocation of religious brotherhood in the United States and to consider ways of highlighting a vocation to the brotherhood as members of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, a vocation that has contributed much to the development of Catholic Faith within the United States.

The four groups participating in this two-day ‘think tank’ are the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, the Religious Brothers Conference, the National Religious Vocation Conference, and the Religious Formation Conference.

Many major urban areas with sizeable Catholic populations in the United States have benefited from the ministry of religious brothers in education, health care, pastoral care and mission, while many communities of priests and brothers proudly point to the role of religious brothers in missionary endeavors as well as in witness to a vowed life of service among the Christian faithful. Numerous canonized saints have come from the ranks of religious brothers, pointing to the historic and ecclesial significance of this honored vocation.

Too rarely do vocation promotions refer strongly to the vocation of the religious brother. Demographics, however, show a steady decline in the number of brothers at the very time that a witness to dedicated discipleship might proclaim a viable alternative for young men who, although called to a way of living with and for God, do not feel called to the priesthood.

This first ‘think tank’ in Ossining will be facilitated by Marianist Brother Steve Glodek, SM, a past president of CMSM and former provincial of the U.S. province of the Society of Mary, as this group of peers searches for ways of making this great Christian vocation better known within the Catholic community.

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The Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) supports and offers resources for U.S. leaders of Catholic men’s religious institutes. CMSM promotes dialogue and collaboration on issues of religious life as well as peace and justice issues with major groups in church and society. There are more than 17,000 religious priests and brothers in the United States.