Think Tank 2 Adopts 5-Point Action Plan to Promote the Religious Brother’s Vocation

SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND (May 29, 2013). Following an historic and successful first meeting in November 2012, the Brothers’ Think Tank held its second gathering at St. Anthony of Padua Friary in Ellicott City, Maryland, on May 14 and 15, 2013. The purpose of the Brothers’ Think Tank is to promote the religious brother’s vocation in today’s church, whether in the context of communities of brothers or in mixed communities of priests and brothers. The meeting was once again moderated by Brother Robert Croteau, SC, chair of the standing committee known as the Brothers’ Focus Group of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM), and facilitated by Brother Stephen Glodek, SM, former president of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men.

The Think Tank participants, who share a passionate interest in the identity and future of the vocation of the religious brother, include representatives of the National Religious Vocation Conference, the Religious Brothers Conference, and the Religious Formation Conference joined in full partnership with the Brothers’ Focus Group Committee of CMSM. In the near future the group will welcome participation from the monastic orders as well as newer congregations of religious brothers.

The goal of this Think Tank 2 was to establish an action plan targeting four major audiences: major church leadership, brothers’ communities themselves, present and future church ministers, and the church at-large. The ambitious five-point action plan includes:

- Advocacy for a "Year of Consecrated Life" in the universal church;
- A letter to major superiors of communities of brothers and mixed communities of priests and brothers expressing appreciation for their support in continuing to value the vocation of the religious brother and urging special emphasis on brothers’ vocation in initial formation;
- A focused media promotion and strengthening of connections with Catholic publications;
- A pilot one-day symposium scheduled for May 2014;
- And a subsequent national symposium.

Ad hoc working groups were inaugurated to begin implementation of each of these action plans. United in full support of the action plan and a firm desire to continue this unique and historic collaboration of the constituent members, the participants scheduled Think Tank 3 for December 3 and 4, 2013, at Maryknoll, New York.

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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.