

The Te Deum Foundation Celebrates the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima

Benefit dinner honors retired priest and raises funds for the foundation's new seminary project

(From Catholic News & Herald)

GREENSBORO, NC - On May 13th, the Te Deum Foundation, a North Carolina-based benevolent organization, providing for the spiritual and material needs of seminarians, sponsored a Mass in honor of Our Lady of Fatima. In addition to providing items such as vestments, cassocks, prayer books and other materials for seminarians, the foundation is presently in Phase I of its plan to build a seminary in the foothills of North Carolina.

The Most Reverend Peter J. Jugis, J.C.D., Bishop of the Diocese of Charlotte, celebrated the Mass, held at Greensboro's Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church. Principal concelebrants were the Very Rev. John T. Putnam, Jr., J.C.L., and Rev. Conrad L. Kimbrough. Rev. Christopher A. Roux served as Master of Ceremonies. Concelebrants were Rev. James A. Ebright, Rev. Fidel C. Melo, Rev. Christopher Davis, Rev. Matthew R. Buettner and Rev. Richard G. DeClue, Jr. Rev. Mistery Brad Jones (Diocese of Charlotte) and Benjamin Roberts (Diocese of Raleigh) served as Deacons. Seminarian servers were Jason Barone, Noah Carter, Jason Christian, Paul McNulty and Peter Shaw. Several young men from Our Lady of Grace also served in the Mass.

In his homily, Father Ebright spoke from first-hand experience that Our Lady, as the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, guides seminarians along their path to the priesthood, and for priests, She is "their special Mother, the mother of the one, true priest, prophet and king they seek to follow."

Following the Mass, a sold-out benefit dinner for the Te Deum Foundation was held in Our Lady of Grace's fellowship hall. Guests from the dioceses of Charlotte, Raleigh, Richmond, and beyond heard directly from priests and seminarians how the foundation had helped them, and their colleagues, in the journey from seminary to the priesthood. Father DeClue spoke of how the foundation provided for some material needs -- so that he could stay focused on his studies. Father Putnam spoke of the importance of the foundation's Fatima pilgrimage, saying that on the site of Our Lady's apparitions, he received confirmation that the priesthood was indeed his vocation. Father Roux explained that presently there are no seminaries between Florida and Washington, DC. "Unlike other sections of the country where parishes are closing or consolidating, there's a need here for our unique culture of an expanding Catholic population," Roux said.

At the end of the dinner, Bishop Jugis and Te Deum Foundation president Wilhelmina Silva-Mobley presented a special award to Reverend Conrad L. Kimbrough. Now retired from active ministry, Father Kimbrough continues to mentor young seminarians and bring new men into the priesthood. "Father Kimbrough has and continues to serve Our Lord by bringing new shepherds to His flock," Mrs. Mobley said. In recognition of his many years of service to the People of God and for fostering vocations to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ, the Te Deum Foundation endowed the Rev. Conrad L. Kimbrough Scholarship for Seminarians.

It was in Fatima, back in 2003, where The Te Deum Foundation was formed. Mrs. Mobley was there on a pilgrimage, knowing that she had been called to a special ministry that had not yet been revealed. And, it was while praying in front of the crown of Our Lady (the crown which houses the bullet used on May 13, 1981 in the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II) that Mobley's ministry was revealed. "Build my seminary," a priest behind her said.

And so, the Te Deum Foundation was established to assist seminarians in answering their calling to serve Our Lord. Bishop Jugis has granted permission for Phase I of the seminary project and has blessed the works of the foundation. "The Te Deum Foundation's mission and seminary project are both praiseworthy endeavors in the service of the Lord and His Church." Jugis said.