

Annual Conference Update

Fr. Kenneth Taylor

Registrations are starting to come in for our Annual Conference being held in St. Louis, July 26-28. Since the registration forms went out in the mail, there have been a number of developments to tell you about.

The most exciting one is that we have confirmed as our Wednesday night banquet speaker the great-grandniece of Fr. Augustus Tolton. Pastor Sabrina Penn heads up a small storefront church in Chicago. As part of her ministry, she works with the youth from the streets of Chicago. She has agreed to come to our banquet to speak to us about Fr. Tolton from the perspective of his family. She has been doing research on his life and his ministry. In addition, she has written two books about him—one for adults and one for children. She will have books available for purchase when she comes to St. Louis.

Cardinal Ritter College Preparatory High School has invited us to have dinner with them on Tuesday night. Mr. Leon Henderson, President, and Fr. Art Cavitt, a member of the school's administrative team, have extended the invitation. Established in 1979, the school moved into a new facility in 2003, and they are eager to show us this landmark urban institution of Catholic education. For those of you who may not know, the school's namesake, Cardinal Joseph Ritter, was not only the Archbishop of St. Louis, but was a national leader in the integration of Catholic schools both in St. Louis and in Indianapolis where he served as Archbishop before going to St. Louis. Since Tuesday night is free on our schedule, this would be one way to get dinner that night without having to pay for it. Also it will be a way for us as a caucus to enjoy some social time together away from the business.

During our time in St. Louis, the Missouri History Museum will be hosting the exhibit: Vatican Splendors—A Journey Through Faith and Art. You will be able to view 200 extraordinary works of art and objects of history from the collections of the Vatican. From objects found at the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul to artifacts dating to early Christianity, this exhibit comprises one of the largest Vatican collections ever to tour North America. Many items have never before been on public view. This might be something you want to plan to do either before or after our conference or on Tuesday nights as the exhibit stays open until 8:00 pm. Normal admission is \$19.50 per person (\$17.00 for seniors), but if we organize a group tour, admission would be \$17.00 per person. The folks at Cardinal Ritter High School have said that they would even work their event around the exhibit if we wanted to do it that way.

However, sorry baseball fans: The St. Louis Cardinals are on the road during our entire time there.

One final note: For those who will be flying into St. Louis, the Embassy Suites Airport has free shuttle service to and from the airport. On arrival, go to the hotel courtesy phone, call the Embassy Suites and let them know that you have arrived. A van will pick you up. On returning to the airport, the van will run on a schedule of every 30 minutes. For those who would like to go downtown, you can take the shuttle van to the airport where you can catch the train that will take you downtown. You would then reverse the procedure to return to the hotel.

Don't delay in getting those registrations in. Many people are waiting to hear from us as to what our numbers are going to be, and we can't tell them until your registration is in. See you in St. Louis!