

2012 WDREF Conference Evaluation Comments

Enthusiasm was high as people arrived on Wednesday evening for the pre-conference. That enthusiasm continued throughout the next two days. On the evaluations, people were asked to rate the various aspects of the conference as Excellent, Good, Fair, or Poor. Below is a summary of the ratings and comments made on the evaluation forms.

The theme of "Share the Story" flowed through the whole conference with 90% rating it overall as Excellent, 5% as "Good+", 5% as Good. To not receive any "Fair" or "Poor" overall ratings was extraordinary.

The content, schedule, and location were excellent. Moving to other locations (St. John the Baptist Church for Mass and Forts Folle Avoine Historical Park for the banquet) might have been difficult for the committee, but it was lovely for the participants and gave them a beautiful experience of the diocese.

I felt relaxed and spiritually fed. I could not have hoped for a better experience, truly a boost for me and my ministry. This was wonderful.

There were many thank yous to the committee for the tremendous amount of work they put into the conference and their attention to detail.

91% of the people rated Joe Paprocki's presentation as Excellent; 95% rated Carole Eipers' as Excellent. Joe's presentation and presentation style were great, very engaging and practical and easy to follow. He was uplifting, inspiring, and affirming, touching both veterans and newbies, alike.

Carole was awesome and incredible! Her stories were fun and funny with each one leading to good, thought-provoking ideas giving us great things to think about and to work on doing and being. She opened my eyes to more!

The Workshops were also appreciated very much. The topics were pertinent. Their Excellent-Good ratings ranged from 80-94%.

The planning committee designs the prayers, readings, and music around the conference theme. When asked if the prayers and Mass were inspirational in fit and theme, 84% rated them as Excellent, 14% as Good.

People really liked the antique "treasure chest" (steamer trunk) that held the "treasures of our faith", i.e. the Bible, General Directory for Catechesis, Catechism of the Catholic Church, Catholic Catechism for Adults, and other books. During the opening prayer, the chest was opened and many of the books lifted out and put on display.

As part of our Friday prayer, large tiles with the names of our five local organizations were presented; we are the sum of our parts. WDREF's strength and pertinence lies in the strength and pertinence of each organization.

The first church that was built in this part of the state was an Indian Mission Church. To honor that aspect of the Catholic story and in celebration of Kateri Tekawitha being canonized a saint, Native Dancers from a parish in the Diocese of Superior joined in the celebration of the Mass and performed the story of Kateri's life afterwards. Numerous positive comments were made about their presence.

Many positive comments were made about Bishop Peter Christensen who presided at Mass and joined us for the banquet. People loved his homily and appreciated the way he incorporated into his homily his thoughts on the importance of story and his appreciation for PCLs and WDREF.

The Thursday Banquet was held at Forts Folle Avoine Historical Park, about 10 miles from the conference hotel. 79% rated the Banquet as Excellent; 17% rated it as Good.

The location was beautiful, awesome, very wonderful, a great site. Everything (the site, the décor, the table decorations) fit the area. It was rustic, cozy, a great sense of hominess, a nice experience. The food was

delicious, great, and wonderful! People loved the dessert idea – the Empty Cup Project where people made a freewill donation, were given mugs to make ice cream sundaes, and they kept their mugs. The whole experience of the site, banquet and awards presentation was "just the best".

The environment at The Lodge at Crooked Lake conveyed both the theme and the Northwoods setting. The location was beautiful, gorgeous, a great setting. The Northwoods feel of The Lodge was much appreciated with its cozy, yet very functional space, and nice décor. The space was beautiful to start with and the items, signs and symbols added by WDREF made it amazing. One person noted that "living the story" in the Northwoods was different from the way they live the story in the city and appreciated seeing that difference with the great touches added by WDREF to the natural setting and environment of The Lodge where the conference was held.

Positive comments were made about the Prayer Room, the intimate, peaceful setting, the variety of old prayer books there, and the "treasure chest" (steamer trunk) that was moved there from the main meeting room after the opening prayer so that people could continue to look at the treasures of our faith in that setting. It was exceptional! 71% rated the environment as Excellent; 17% as Good.

The Exhibits also rated very high: 61% Excellent, 37% Good.

Many people thanked the exhibitors for being there and donating door prizes. The exhibitors were cheerful and helpful. What a wonderful gift of time, presence & friendliness from our exhibitors! It was good to see a number of the publishers represented by our dedicated reps and a few new folks, as well.

In addition to the textbooks, various exhibitors were selling books for enrichment or spiritual development. Some were selling gifts, jewelry items, sacramentals and other religious articles. Having the exhibits next to the meeting room made it easy to visit the exhibits at any time.

Publicity and Promotion of the conference was rated 50% Excellent and 48% Good. People liked the e-vites that WDREF and some of the local organizations sent a number of times, providing information on the speakers, location and other details.

The Registration process was rated as 80% Excellent, 16% Good.

The emails sent in the weeks before the conference to those who had registered were much appreciated. They helped to provide people with details and other information that made the onsite process go smoothly, even though it was a little crowded when the bus arrived with dozens of people from the Milwaukee and Madison areas.

The Conference Booklet was beautifully done! The pages were bright, well laid-out, very professional in appearance. 75% rated it as Excellent; 23% as Good.

People loved the added touches of having blank pages for notes and the history on the church where Mass was celebrated and The Forts where the banquet was held. Well done!

Hospitality received similar high ratings; 74% Excellent, 25% Good.

It was wonderful at all levels. The warm atmosphere of The Lodge was reflected in the warm greetings of the attendees. Great job making people feel welcomed! The meals and snacks were great. The Hospitality Room gave people one more place to gather for casual conversation. The "free stuff" was a "Wow"! Thank yous were expressed for the many, many free items that were given to everyone (valued at over \$40 per person). They were great to get and always fun with many useful books.

"Great job!" Many Blessings. Let the story continue on and on.