Catholic-Muslim Dialogue
Off to a Good Start

September 27, 2007

The Inauguration of Catholic- Muslim Dialogue in the Lehigh Valley was successfully launched at DeSales University on Sept 24th, 2007. Close to hundred people from valley attended to the event to mark the first in a series of lecture organized by Salesian Center & Lehigh Dialogue Center. Prominent Catholic Speaker Father Thomas Michel, SJ was a guest speaker from Vatican and he shared his experiences in Muslim-Catholic dialogue in his 35 years of committed work. Mr. Abdullah Bozkurt , LDC President, talked about the programs they are running in the Valley to promote dialogue and understanding. Fr. Thomas Dailey, Director of Salesian Center for Faith and Culture, reminded the audience St. Francis de Sales’s focus on love and he said that is why the title was chosen as”may we come to know each other better”

Keynote Speaker Fr. Michel stressed the importance of “patience” in dialogue endeavor. He said “destruction is easy, but building something into life require perseverance and strong patience on the part of engagers.” He also noted “trust” is the first step in a true dialogue. “People were always suspicious at the beginning” he said “but once you establish trust, you can easily improve your relationship.” Fr. Michel underlined the importance of “life sharing dialogue” rather than “talking dialogue.” He continued “we share a lot of things in this life, like social justice, values, freedom, love etc.” “Instead of debating dogma or doctrine, we can talk about the values that bring us together” he added.

The seminar was part of an agreement between Salesian Center for Faith & Culture and Lehigh Dialogue Center to start a dialogue events twice a year. The goal is to explore the commonalities and differences between the two world religions in the hope of coming to know and understand each other better.
Father Thomas Michel, SJ, secretary for interreligious dialogue of the Society of Jesus and former secretary of the Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims in the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.