

MARCH 22 2007

Catholic Men's Conference expects to draw 3,000

357

■ Fifth annual event, aimed at strengthening spirituality, takes place at University of Detroit Mercy on Saturday.

By GREGG KRUPA
The Detroit News

DETROIT — Greg Elliott's inspiration came as he realized that striving "to be the best dentist in Michigan" was not the most important thing in life.

"I realized I needed to be more loving and more attentive with my wife and children," said Elliott, whose dental practice is in Farmington Hills. "Hard drivers like us spend our whole lives trying to be 100 percent in the

business world. ... But we don't have our priorities straight. It should be God first, and then family and then patient."

Men have too few opportunities to share with each other those discoveries, Elliott said, and that is why he will be one of about 3,000 men attending the fifth annual Catholic Men's Conference at the University of Detroit Mercy from 7 a.m. to about 3:30 p.m. Saturday. "It's an environment where men can be at home with other men who are not ashamed to say that God means a whole lot to them," said Paco Gavrilides of the Office of Evangelization of the Archdi-

Metro Detroit

ocese of Detroit.

Such evangelization was touted by the late Pope John Paul II and has been continued by many church officials, who seek to make Catholics more outgoing sources of inspiration.

And men who have attended the Catholic Men's Conference say that feeling God's presence through other men has deepened their spirituality.

"It's just an amazing day to spend with the brothers," Elliott said.

Among the speakers are Bishop Robert Carlson of the Diocese of Saginaw; Ralph Martin, the director of the graduate program in new evangelization at Sacred Heart Major Seminary; and Cardinal Adam Maida, who will celebrate a Mass at 2:30 p.m.

In a program aimed primarily at youths and young men, Jim Beckman, executive director of ImpactCenter, a consulting center in Colorado for ministers to youths and mentors, will speak about worldly challenges to younger men.

"Our culture is so geared to relativism, and some of the mind-sets that sort of form a backdrop to our culture today create an environment for young adults and teens in which no one wants to offend anyone," Beckman said. "But there is no way one can be a Christian man in the world today without standing out."

You can reach Gregg Krupa at (313) 222-2359 or gkrupa@detnews.com.