



Vocations and Seminarians Newsletter

March 16, 2006

Diocese of Baton Rouge

Dates to Remember

- Abbey Youth Festival - April 1, 2006
- "Come and See" Weekend at St. Ben's - April 7-9, 2006
- World Day of Prayer for Vocations - May 7, 2006

Dear Seminarians and Friends,

While visiting Christ the King Catholic Student Center on the L.S.U. campus last week, I picked up a copy of their March bulletin insert entitled "Grace in Action." It is a monthly insert published by *Our Sunday Visitor*, which highlights different themes relating to Catholic Stewardship. One of the articles was directed to the Lenten theme of fasting and encouraged readers to give attention to their spiritual diet as well as their physical diet. The writer commented:

"This Lent, examine your patterns of consumption. • Fast from fast food; feast on healthful home-cooked meals. • Fast from computer/video games; feast on spiritual reading. • Fast from consumerism; feast on almsgiving. • Fast from criticism; feast on praise. • Fast from television; feast on quiet. • Fast from gossip; feast on goodwill. • Fast from rushing; feast on slowing down. • Fast from multitasking; feast on focusing. • Fast from cruelty; feast on kindness. • Fast from doubt; feast on faith. • Fast from cynicism; feast on hope."

The thoughtful meditation reminds us of just how important the season of Lent is for Catholics living in the United States. The relative wealth and freedom of choices that most American Catholics enjoy can also exert a stranglehold on our ability to find true happiness in life. The spiritual joy which comes from volunteering and participating in charitable activities is lost to many Catholics who are caught up in a cultural cycle of spending and waste. We very much need the discipline and simplicity of Lent in order to rediscover our baptismal lives of gratitude and togetherness.

A recent issue of the *Christopher News Notes* gave the example of a recovering alcoholic in San Francisco who sweeps the streets and cleans the grounds of several local schools without being paid. "If I got paid for what I do, it would take the pleasure out of it," he says. "God prepared me to help keep the city clean. I don't work for the city, I work for the people." That could be a motto and spirituality for all Catholics. Our lives should include certain activities that are not done for money, gain, or even obedience to authority. Certain acts of kindness and sacrifice are done strictly out of love for the people who are entrusted to our care.

Transformation is often a gradual process involving numerous stops, missteps, reversals, and restarts. There is no shame in acknowledging human frailty or our slowness to respond to God's initiatives. There is only gratitude for the moments of recognition, and for the people and events who contribute to our ongoing conversion. We are always an "Easter People," even when meditating on the cross, and even when practicing the penitential disciplines of Lent. I look forward to joining you in prayer and renewal at our diocesan Chrism Mass on April 12, 2006.

In Christ
Father Matt Lorrain

St. Ben's Hosts 2nd "Come and See"

St. Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict, Louisiana (just north of Covington), affectionately known as "St. Ben's" to its students and friends, is sponsoring a second "Come and See" Weekend, this time open to *all* high school students interested in seminary life and the process of priestly formation. The weekend experience will allow participants a glimpse of community life and some of the activities which help to promote spiritual formation and growth in character.

The dates are April 7, 8 & 9, 2006, with the arrival taking place between 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. on Friday evening, and concluding with Mass on Sunday morning. Since this will be Palm Sunday weekend, participants will have the wonderful opportunity to experience the Palm Sunday Liturgy at St. Joseph Abbey. Participants pack the usual clothes and toiletries for a two-night stay, as well as towels, pillow, and bedding to fit a twin size bed. Please include slacks and a collared shirt for Mass on Sunday. Please call the Seminary College directly to register or to obtain further information: 985-867-2241.

Admission to Candidacy

On Friday, March 31, 2006, seminarians in the third year of theology at Notre Dame Seminary will celebrate their "Admission to Candidacy" for sacred orders. In the simple but solemn ceremony, the seminarians make a formal petition to their bishop or major superior to be accepted as candidates for ordination to the transitional diaconate and ultimately priesthood. The third theology class at Notre Dame is comprised of 24 students from 13 different dioceses and religious orders. The Diocese of Baton Rouge is fortunate to have six seminarians in this group: Howard Adkins, Michael Alello, Cary Bani, Chris Decker, Jason Palermo and Chris Redden.

"Discerning Life Choices" Continues at L.S.U.

The Office of Vocations is preparing for the final two sessions of its eight-part series being held at Christ the King Church and Catholic Center on the campus of Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Each session is presented by a different speaker and is intended to assist students in the process of discerning their vocation in life. The remaining dates and speakers are:

March 29 – Ms. Wendy Gilmore, principal of St. Jean Vianney School; and
April 19 – Father Gregory Boquet, O.S.B., rector of St. Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict.

Each session follows a similar format: Mass at 6:00 p.m. in the church, followed by a light meal at 6:30 p.m. in the activity center, and then the presentation from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. in one of the 2nd floor rooms.

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Mark Your Calendars

2006

Saturday, June 3, 2006, 10:00 a.m. – Permanent Diaconate Ordination

Saturday, June 10, 2006, 10:00 a.m. – Transitional Diaconate Ordination

2007

Saturday, May 26, 2007, 10:00 a.m. – Priesthood Ordination

Saturday, June 9, 2007, 10:00 a.m. – Transitional Diaconate Ordination

Roster of Seminarians

Third Theology:	Howard Adkins.....	60,	St. Agnes
	Michael Alello.....	25,	St. Jude the Apostle
	Cary Bani.....	47,	St. Joseph Cathedral
	Chris Decker.....	24,	St. Isidore the Farmer, Baker
	Jason Palermo.....	26,	St. John the Evangelist, Plaquemine
	Chris Redden.....	31,	St. Alphonsus Liguori, Greenwell Springs
Second Theology:	Jamin David.....	23,	St. Ann, Morganza
	David Dawson.....	23,	St. Patrick
	Andrew Merrick.....	25,	St. Mary of False River, New Roads
	Paul Yi.....	33,	St. Theresa of Avila, Gonzales
First Theology:	Mark Beard.....	44,	Our Lady of Mercy
	Paul Gros.....	23,	Most Blessed Sacrament
Fourth Philosophy:	Brent Maher.....	21,	Immaculate Conception, Denham Springs
Third Philosophy:	Todd Lloyd.....	22,	St. Thomas More
	Bryan Thompson.....	25,	Our Lady of Mercy
First Philosophy:	Joseph Hoang Vu.....	18,	Sts. Anthony/Le Van Phung

Good Shepherd Sunday

World Day of Prayer for Vocations, May 7, 2006, is observed each year on the Fourth Sunday of Easter, also known as "Good Shepherd Sunday," and intended to promote all Catholic Church vocations.

Of course, calling it a "Day of Prayer" doesn't make it one: spending extra time that day praying for vocations will! And why not choose someone who would make a fine priest, deacon, brother or sister and let them know that you will be praying in a special way that day for them? Imitate the Good Shepherd and be a spiritual strength for them!