



Vocations and Seminarians Newsletter

September 15, 2006

Diocese of Baton Rouge

Dates to Remember

- World Youth Day - October 29, 2006 - Diocesan Rally at St. Isidore the Farmer Church, Baker
- Holy Hour for Seminarians with Bishop Muench at the Bishop Tracy Center - December 21, 2006, 5:00 p.m.
- National Vocation Awareness Week - January 8-12, 2007
- World Day for Consecrated Life - February 4, 2007
- World Day of Prayer for Vocations - April 29, 2007

Dear Seminarians and Friends,

The Diocesan Vocation Directors of the State of Louisiana recently met with the rectors of our two regional seminaries: Father Pat Williams of Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans and Father Gregory Boquet, O.S.B., of St. Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict, Louisiana. Together we form the Vocations Committee of the Louisiana Catholic Conference, and meet twice annually to discuss ways in which we can strengthen our shared mission of recruiting and training men for the diocesan priesthood in the dioceses of our province.

Notre Dame Seminary opened the fall semester with 103 students on its roster representing some 21 different dioceses and religious orders. Of that number, 22 students are new to the seminary this year, including Peter Dang, Al Davidson and Mark Gyan from our own diocese. In a report prepared last April by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University, Notre Dame ranks as the seventh largest theologate out of 45 in the United States in terms of enrollment. The largest is Mundelein Seminary located in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

St. Joseph Seminary College opened the new school year with a total of 81 students which represents a 33% increase from last year. It also ranked seventh out of 13 in size when compared to the other free-standing college seminaries in the United States. (An additional 24 other college seminaries do not offer their own degrees but enjoy a formal relationship with a separate Catholic college or university.) Father Gregory described this year's new students as being "very bright, very mature, and very motivated." Included among the new students are Brad Doyle, Joshua Johnson, Matthew McCaughey and Kevin Piper from our own diocese.

These are very good numbers which speak to the quality of our Catholic families, parishes, seminaries and seminarians. At the same time, we temper our excitement just a bit by recognizing that vocational discernment is a process which only unfolds over time. Many young men enter the seminary for all of the right reasons only to later discover that God is leading them in a direction different from the priesthood. The same CARA report also studied the rate of retention for seminarians during the final four years of theology. In August 2002, 738 seminarians began the first year of theology at our U.S. seminaries. Four years later, 495 of them were enrolled in the fourth year of theology at the combined schools. Thus the retention rate for the class of 2005-06 equals 67%, which was slightly lower than the 72% rate recorded for the previous two years.

The practice of religion and the search for a vocation in life is as humbling an endeavor as it is gratifying. We are so often reminded of our dependence upon God for many of the basic necessities which sustain us and provide meaning and direction for our lives. But the love which we also experience in our families and parish communities is a vivid reminder that the spiritual journey is one worth taking despite its unexpected twists and turns. Please continue to pray for one another, for our seminarians and

priests, and for the faculty and staff of our two seminaries who contribute so much to the formation of priests for our local Church.

In Christ,
Fr. Matt Lorrain

Seminary Websites and Photo Galleries

The two seminaries used by the Diocese of Baton Rouge each have websites and photo galleries which provide interesting glimpses of student life. The St. Joseph Seminary College website is at www.sjasc.edu and contains a media gallery with such slide shows as: "The Great Seminarian Move-In," "Opening BBQ," and "Opening Vespers." The Notre Dame Seminary website is at www.nds.edu and contains a series of photographs entitled "Katrina at NDS" which offers an interesting look at the impact of the hurricane on the seminary, as well as the progress of the rebuilding effort. Visit the sites when you have some time and witness the good spirit which exists on the two campuses.

Vocation Resources

The Office of Vocations has just received the planning materials for the coming year's observances of three important times: National Vocation Awareness Week - January 8-12, 2007, World Day for Consecrated Life - February 4, 2007, and World Day of Prayer for Vocations - April 29, 2007. We will forward these materials in either electronic or printed form to all of our parishes and schools in the coming days. We are also working on a new poster showing the 2006-2007 seminarians, and hope to have it available in a few weeks. In addition, our office has numerous prayer and educational resources available year round for parishes, schools and other Catholic organizations. These include prayer cards, prayer booklets, brochures with suggested activities, vocation stories in DVD format and a few lesson plans. Other resources and ideas may be found online at the following websites:

www.nccv-vocations.org
www.usccb.org/vocations
www.vocationguide.org
www.religiousministries.com

Clergy Day at The Bluffs

The Serra Club of Baton Rouge is once again sponsoring its annual "Clergy Day" on Tuesday, October 10, 2006, at "The Bluffs" in St. Francisville. Golf begins at 9:30 a.m., with tennis and bike riding also available for non-golfers. The day's festivities conclude with a delicious meal served outdoors around 3:00 p.m. All clergy are invited to attend the meal even if they cannot get away for the earlier activities. To RSVP or for further information, please call Don Broussard at 225-751-4173 (home) or Jack Persac, III, at 225-292-3515 (office) / 225-927-3880 (home).

Ministries of Reader and Acolyte

The first and second year theology students at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans are scheduled to be installed formally in the respective minis-

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tries of reader and acolyte at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, October 13, 2006, in the seminary chapel on South Carrollton Avenue. The Most Reverend Oscar Lipscomb, Archbishop of Mobile, will preside at this year's ceremony.

Second year theologians Mark Beard and Paul Gros will be among those instituted in the ministry of acolyte which officially commissions them for service at the altar and distribution of Holy Communion. The Diocese of Baton Rouge does not have any seminarians in first theology this year to receive the ministry of reader.

"Come and See" Weekend

St. Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict, Louisiana (just north of Covington), is sponsoring its first "Come and See" weekend of the school year on November 10-12, 2006. The weekend is open to all interested high school students who are currently attending the 10th, 11th or 12th grades. The seminarians will remain on campus for the weekend to help offer a glimpse of community life and some of the activities which accompany a program of priestly formation. Opportunities to speak to priests and seminarians and hear from them both their "stories" and their encouragement are offered. Participants usually arrive on campus between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Friday evening, and conclude by participating in the 11:00 a.m. Mass on Sunday. Please contact Father Matt or Mrs. Mary Layman at the Vocation Office (225-336-8778) for more information or to register.

The Diocese of Baton Rouge is also joining with our sister Dioceses of Lafayette and Lake Charles to offer a similar discernment retreat on February 9-11, 2007, at the St. Charles Center in Lake Charles. It will be open to all interested men in high school, college or professional life who are considering a call to the priesthood. Transportation will be provided to and from the retreat. Please watch the Vocations Newsletter for more information.

Weekend Assistance for Priests

An important role of the Vocation Director is to offer weekend assistance to the parish priests of the Diocese of Baton Rouge. As of this writing Father Matt is still available for the following dates in 2006: November 25; December 2/3, 16/17, & 23. Available dates in early 2007 include: January 13, 21, 27/28; February 3/4, 18, 24/25; March 10/11, 18, 24/25; and April 28/29. Please give him a call at 225-336-8778 if he can help.

Roster of Diocesan Seminarians

Fourth Theology: Howard Adkins60, St. Agnes
 Michael Alello26, St. Jude the Apostle
 Cary Bani.....48, St. Joseph Cathedral
 Chris Decker25, St. Isidore the Farmer,
 Baker
 Jason Palermo26, St. John the Evangelist,
 Plaquemine
 Chris Redden.....32, St. Alphonsus Liguori,
 Greenwell Springs

Third Theology:	Jamin David24, St. Ann, Morganza Andrew Merrick.....25, St. Mary of False River, New Roads Paul Yi.....33, St. Theresa of Avila, Gonzales
Second Theology:	Mark Beard45, Our Lady of Mercy Paul Gros.....24, Most Blessed Sacrament
Pre-Theology:	Peter Ai Dang40, Sts. Anthony/Le Van Phung Al Davidson.....52, St. Agnes Mark Gyan52, St. John the Evangelist, Prairieville Matthew McCaughey.22, St. Thomas More
Fourth Philosophy:	Todd Lloyd23, St. Thomas More Bryan Thompson.....25, Our Lady of Mercy
Second Philosophy:	Kevin Piper19, St. Joseph, French Settlement Joseph Hoang Vu19, Sts. Anthony/Le Van Phung
First Philosophy:	Brad Doyle.....18, St. George Joshua Johnson18, St. George

Seminary Contact Information

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New Orleans, LA 70118-4391
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St. Joseph Seminary College

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St. Benedict, LA 70457-9900
Telephone: 985-867-2232
Fax: 985-867-2295
Website: www.sjasc.edu

Why not write one or more of our seminarians a note of support and encouragement?