



Vocations and Seminarians Newsletter

October 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,

I recently returned from the 2006 convention of the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors hosted by the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis in Minnesota. The convention provided a wonderful opportunity to collaborate with others in the field and share stories of grace and encouragement. The northern location also provided a nice escape from our still much too warm Louisiana fall weather.

Archbishop Harry Flynn, former bishop of our neighboring Diocese of Lafayette and now the archbishop of the Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis, gave a wonderful keynote address in which he shared that there is no one prototype for a successful vocation director. He may be young or old, introverted or extroverted, so long as he communicates a love of the priesthood. Archbishop Flynn certainly witnessed to his own love for the priesthood when he closed by saying that if he had 100 lives to live, he would live each one as a priest.

His own vocation director, Father Tom Wilson, shared his reluctance to accept the position when first approached by Archbishop Flynn several years ago. Father Wilson explained that his background was in accounting and to his way of thinking the vocation director's job needed someone more gifted in sales. But Archbishop Flynn would not be deterred and responded to him, "Tom, you know what kind of priests we need; help me to find them."

I would like to extend that appeal to all of you serving as priests, seminarians, catechists, youth ministers, and parishioners in our beloved Diocese of Baton Rouge: you also know what kind of priests we need for our local Church; please help us to find them. Although I have a genuine love for the priesthood, I know that working alone will never provide enough opportunities to meet and invite all of the potential candidates living in our Diocese. I need your initiative, insight, and gifts for inviting others to consider God's call.

The convention also featured a local family from Minnesota who are blessed to have two sons who are priests. You might assume that the parents really pushed priesthood and religious life on their children when they were young, but that was not the case. The only practice which seemed a little extraordinary was that the father took his kids to early morning Mass before he headed to work. The kids, now adults, were not exactly happy about being dragged to daily Mass with their father.

The two sons who became priests each received a call to the priesthood during their college years when they were away from home. One of the sons said that his parents' quiet virtue began to confront the selfish nature of his life during college. The other son said that the seed of his priestly vocation was planted by the facilitator of a Bible study. Once planted, the seed found very good soil thanks to the foundation laid by his parents.

So assuming that the parents of our diocese are also sharing faith and

love with their children – and I know they are! – what is needed are other faith-filled Catholics who can build on that foundation by noticing the gifts of our young adults and raising the possibility of priesthood or religious life. If I had 100 lives to live, I do not know that I would live all 100 as a priest, but at a minimum 95 of them! Of course Archbishop Flynn has had more time for his vocation to mature while I am still undergoing the day-by-day transformative work of the Spirit!

In Christ,
Fr. Matt Lorrain

New Vocation Curriculum for Junior High

Junior High School has historically been a time when Catholic religious educators teach about the vocations of priesthood and religious life. It is a time when students are mature enough to ask questions about their future and explore their inclinations without being as inhibited by the social pressures of adolescence and high school. *"What is My Vocation?"* is a newly developed vocation curriculum which has been taught with great success to students in grades six through eight, depending upon the preference of the individual educator or religion department.

The *"What is My Vocation?"* curriculum consists of 15 lessons that discuss such topics as Christian Discipleship, Prayer, Marriage, Single Life, Priesthood, Life in the Seminary, and Religious Sisters, Brothers, & Priests. For more information, especially if you would like to explore using it in your parish's religious education program or school, please visit their website www.whatismyvocation.com.

2006 World Youth Day Celebration

The 2006 Diocesan *World Youth Day* Celebration is just two weeks away and scheduled for Sunday, October 29, at St. Isidore the Farmer Church in Baker. The theme for this year's event is *"Catholic to the Core"* and activities include registration at 12:00 noon, followed by Mass at 12:30 p.m., a meal at 2:00 p.m., and much prayer, music, inspiring speakers, and "extreme games." Adult leaders should call or email the diocesan Youth Office (225-336-8751 or youth@diobr.org) no later than Friday, October 20, with an approximate number of people who will attend. All ages are invited.

"Come and See" and Discernment Opportunity

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.

Contact Us

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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 is 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 18, 24/25; March 10/11, 18, & 24/25. 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 Dang41, 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 Piper20, St. Joseph, French Settlement
	Joseph Hoang Vu19, Sts. Anthony/Le Van Phung
First Philosophy:	Brad Doyle.....19, St. George
	Joshua Johnson18, St. George

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

They will also be glad to write a note of encouragement of their own to someone you think might have a vocation!