



Vocations and Seminarians Newsletter

August 15, 2007

Diocese of Baton Rouge

Dates to Remember

- Seminarian BBQ with Bishop Robert Muench - August 18, 2007, 4:30 p.m., St. John the Evangelist Parish, Prairieville
- Father Mike Collins' 40th Anniversary Mass - August 26, 2007, 11:30 a.m., Most Blessed Sacrament Church, Baton Rouge
- Parish Vocation Committee Workshop - September 8, 2007, 10:00 a.m., St. George Parish, Baton Rouge
- Bishop's Mass and Brunch for Seminarians and Parents - September 22, 2007, 10:30 a.m., St. Joseph Chapel in the Tracy Center
- World Youth Day, October 28, 2007, St. Paul Church, Baton Rouge
- "Come and See" weekend at St. Joseph Seminary College - November 9-11, 2007, St. Benedict

Dear Seminarians and Friends,

It has been a little over one month since Pope Benedict XVI issued his apostolic letter *Summorum Pontificum* granting wider use of the 1962 Roman Missal, the form of Mass celebrated prior to the reform of 1970. His letter was issued on July 7, 2007, in the form of "Motu Proprio," a Latin expression meaning "by one's own accord" or "on his own initiative," and which indicates that the letter originated from the Pope's own office. The implementation of the Motu Proprio will take effect on September 14, 2007, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

In an accompanying letter to the Bishops of the Church, the Pope makes it clear that his main motivation in allowing greater use of the 1962 Missal is his hope for greater unity and reconciliation within the Church, especially in regard to Catholics who felt alienated by some of the reforms of Vatican Council II, and also out of concern for other Catholics who feel drawn to this particular form of Eucharistic celebration. He writes:

"Looking back over the past, to the divisions which in the course of the centuries have rent the Body of Christ, one continually has the impression that, at critical moments when divisions were coming about, not enough was done by the Church's leaders to maintain or regain reconciliation and unity. One has the impression that omissions on the part of the Church have had their share of blame for the fact that these divisions were able to harden. This glance at the past imposes an obligation on us today: to make every effort to make it possible for all those who truly desire unity to remain in that unity or to attain it anew...Let us generously open our hearts and make room for everything that the faith itself allows."

Reconciliation and unity will not be possible without generosity and tolerance on the part of all Catholics, both priests and laity, conservative and liberal. In that same letter to the Bishops, Pope Benedict continued, "What earlier generations held as sacred remains sacred and great for us too, and it cannot be all of a sudden entirely forbidden or even considered harmful." He asks understanding and tolerance from the overwhelming majority of Catholics who have embraced the "ordinary" form of Mass and the related developments in parish life in the decades following Vatican II.

Catholics who are drawn to the Mass celebrated according to the 1962 Missal are likewise called to generosity in the service of unity. Pope Benedict states in his aforementioned letter to the Bishops that "...priests of communities adhering to the former usage cannot, as a matter of principle, exclude celebrating according to the new books. The total exclusion of the new rite would not in fact be consistent with the recognition of its value and holiness."

During a recent vacation in the Italian Alps, the Pope met with the priests of the local diocese and made these comments in reference to Vatican II

and its still unfolding legacy:

“It seems very important to me that we can now see with open eyes how much that was positive also grew following the Council: in the renewal of the liturgy, in the synods – Roman synods, universal synods, diocesan synods – in the parish structures, in collaboration, in the new responsibility of lay people, in intercultural and intercontinental shared responsibility, in a new experience of the Church’s catholicity, of the unanimity that grows in humility, and nonetheless is the true hope of the world. And thus it seems to me that we must rediscover the great heritage of the Council, which is not a “spirit” reconstructed behind the texts, but the great conciliar texts themselves, reread today with the experiences that we have had and that have born fruit in so many movements, in so many new religious communities.”

Priests and seminarians are called to be witnesses and instruments for unity within the Church. Our training and vocation provides insight into the mind of the Holy Father and the Bishops, while our parochial ministry helps us to become aware of the needs and concerns of our parishioners. Fidelity to our mission requires that we avoid the temptation to impose our own personal spirituality on our parishioners. Certainly our spirituality will be visible through our ministry, but not to the extent that the Sunday Eucharist becomes our own private devotion or possession. A priest attuned to God’s kingdom will be like the head of the household “who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old” (Matthew 13:52).

In Christ,
Father Matt Lorrain

New Seminarians for 2007

The Baton Rouge Diocese joyfully welcomes one new seminarian and one returning seminarian to its program of priestly formation. **Luke Ordogne** is a 23 year old native of Morgan City. He migrated Baton Rouge to attend L.S.U., completing three years there before taking a semester off to consider a growing desire for the priesthood. Luke will enter St. Joseph Seminary College at the junior level in order to complete the necessary coursework in philosophy and undergraduate theology. He has “adopted” Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Baton Rouge as his local parish.

Brent Maher is also 23 years old, a parishioner of Immaculate Conception Parish in Denham Springs, and a 2006 graduate of St. Joseph Seminary College with a B.A. in Philosophy and Theological Studies. After graduation, Brent requested a leave of absence from his seminary formation in order to discern a possible vocation to religious life. After visiting several religious orders around the country, Brent’s search led him back to Baton Rouge and a renewed commitment to the diocesan priesthood. Welcome aboard, Luke and Brent!

Making Every Word Count

“A Reflection on My Summer in Mexico” by Matthew McCaughey

If someone had told me 10 weeks ago that I would be giving talks on religious themes in the Cathedral of Cuernavaca, I would have laughed out loud. “You mean to tell me that with less than a year of Spanish experience I will not only be talking to but teaching adults in a language I can’t converse in for five minutes?” When I say I could not converse for five minutes I had actually tried with the Spanish speakers at St. Ben’s. I was confident in my ineptitude.

Well, if you know God and the history of His work among us, there have been many who have questioned their own perceived faults or impediments to the work of the kingdom. That being said, my completely tenuous grasp of the Spanish language made me the perfect candidate to assist in forming God's people in a foreign country.

On Sunday, May 27 I arrived in Cuernavaca. Wait, actually I missed my 6:30am flight that day and had been rescheduled the next day without cost by the grace of God. After being blessed by my late alarm clock to witness Fr. Bani's first Mass that same Sunday, I arrived in Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico on Monday, May 28. The plan I had agreed on with the vocation directors was 6 weeks of Spanish study in an immersion program and 4 weeks of work-study in a Mexican church.

My first 6 six weeks were filled with the exciting experiences that the new culture had to offer. I was very impressed by the delicious dishes that surpassed even the best US Mexican restaurant's menu in taste and variety. I rarely had a chance to eat the same thing twice! The feast days there were incredible. For St Anthony of Padua's feast the little church in the neighborhood of the same name was decorated completely with flowers. The parishioners showed incredible devotion in making a mosaic of St. Anthony in the shape of an arch around the main entrance out of beans and rice. I also visited awe-inspiring pyramids but more importantly the beautiful, faith-inspiring Basilica of Guadalupe. The devotion of the large groups of pilgrims and the poor approaching the image of Our Lady on their knees was like nothing I had ever seen in all my travels to Europe and through the US.

In planning the next 4 weeks I had contacted the director of the cathedral. When I met and talked with him the only work-related question was, "do you like to clean?" Expecting a menial cleaning job with the possibility of giving English classes, my goal, I was happy to accept. Within the first week the job description changed 180 degrees. The other seminarian working for the priest was having a tooth extraction, and I had to give his talk, entitled "The Christological Dimension of Christ's Miracles," that first Friday... in Spanish! I spent over 8 hours: the first 4 translating the over-my-head theology text he gave me and the next 4 resorting to a translation online and a theology book in English from another American seminarian I had become friends with. After that stress-filled experience every other conference I gave whether at a retreat for parents of children of the Sacraments of Initiation or to extraordinary ministers was easy in comparison. Even though I often misunderstood my questions I think they understood me. And yes, I ended up giving English classes to children beginning my second week at the cathedral. Both experiences were incredibly grace filled.

Despite what I told myself before my work at the cathedral, I don't need a perfect grasp of Spanish to work with Spanish-speakers. It was the people's desire to work with me that really broke the language barrier. Even though the food was great and the churches beautiful, the people really made Mexico for me.

Mass & Barbecue with Bishop Muench

The annual "back to school" Mass and barbecue with Bishop Robert Muench and the seminarians will be held on Saturday, August 18, 2007, at St. John the Evangelist Church in Prairieville. The seminarians will join the parishioners of St. John Church at their regularly scheduled 4:30 p.m. anticipated Sunday Mass, and then gather at the rectory for a social and

meal hosted by Fathers Eric Gyan and Cary Bani. All priests of the Diocese are invited to join us for the meal if they can make it following the conclusion of their own parish vigil Masses. The dinner is expected to begin around 6:30 p.m. or so, and I understand that crawfish étouffée has replaced barbecue on the menu.

Seminarians are asked to wear coat and tie for the Mass and for the formal photographs which are taken immediately following the Mass. The dress code for the remainder of the evening is casual.

Parish Vocation Committee Workshop

The Office of Vocations has scheduled another training and enrichment workshop for both new and continuing members of Parish Vocation Committees in the Baton Rouge Diocese. The workshop will be held on Saturday, September 8, 2007, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the St. George Parish Kleinpeter Activity Center located just off Interstate 10 at Seigen Lane in Baton Rouge.

The workshop will offer an opportunity to share ideas and strategies for promoting vocations in our parishes and schools, and also make available any new resources for the coming school year. Even a committee of one could have an impact on vocation awareness in your parish or school. Please mark your calendars and make plans to attend.

Deo Gratias 2007

Deo Gratias is an annual fundraising event for St. Joseph Abbey and Seminary College located in St. Benedict, Louisiana. In 2006, a Baton Rouge edition of Deo Gratias was held at the Catholic Life Center in order that friends and benefactors living in the Baton Rouge area might participate without traveling to the Abbey. It turned out to be a wonderful evening and so plans were begun to repeat the event again this year.

Baton Rouge Deo Gratias 2007 will take place on Sunday, September 9, 2007, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the main auditorium of the Catholic Life Center. Food is again being donated and prepared by Chef John Folse, with musical entertainment provided by the St. Joseph Seminary Schola Cantorum. Tickets are \$75 per person and available by calling or emailing development director Vanessa Crouere at 985-867-2242 or vcrouere@sjasc.edu.

Mass and Lunch for Parents of Seminarians

The annual Mass and lunch for seminarians and their parents is set for Saturday, September 22, 2007, at 10:30 a.m. in St. Joseph Chapel in the Bishop Tracy Center. The main celebrant for the Mass, and also host of the lunch to follow, will be Bishop Robert Muench. Parish intern Andrew Merrick will also be admitted as a candidate for Holy Orders at this Mass in preparation for his deacon ordination on December 29, 2007.

Weekend Assistance for Priests

The Vocation Director offers weekend assistance to the parish priests of the Diocese of Baton Rouge as he is able. As of this writing Father Matt has the following **2007** dates still available: Aug. 19 & 25/26; Oct. 6/7; Dec. 8/9, 15/16, & 22/23. Looking ahead to the first half of **2008**, he is available Jan. 26/27; Feb. 16/17; Mar. 1/2, 9, & 29/30; Apr. 19/20 & 26/27; May 3/4, 10/11, 17/18, & 24/25; June 1, 7/8, & 21/22. Please give him a call at 225-336-8778 if he can help.

Contact Us

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Roster of Diocesan Seminarians

4th Theology:	Jamin David	24, St. Ann, Morganza
	Andrew Merrick	26, St. Mary of False River, New Roads
	Paul Yi.....	34, St. Theresa of Avila, Gonzales
3rd Theology:	Mark Beard	46, Our Lady of Mercy, Baton Rouge
	Paul Gros.....	25, Most Blessed Sacrament, Baton Rouge
1st Theology:	Todd Lloyd.....	24, St. Thomas More, Baton Rouge
	Brent Maher	23, Immaculate Conception, Denham Springs
	Bryan Thompson.....	26, Our Lady of Mercy, Baton Rouge
Pre-Theology:	Peter Ai Dang	41, Sts. Anthony/Le Van Phung, Baton Rouge
	Al Davidson.....	53, St. Agnes, Baton Rouge
	Mark Gyan	52, St. John the Evangelist, Prairieville
	Matthew McCaughey ..	23, St. Thomas More, Baton Rouge
3rd Philosophy:	Luke Ordogne.....	23, Our Lady of Mercy, Baton Rouge
	Kevin Piper	20, St. Joseph, French Settlement
	Joseph Hoang Vu	19, Sts. Anthony/Le Van Phung, Baton Rouge
2nd Philosophy:	Brad Doyle.....	19, St. George, Baton Rouge
	Joshua Johnson	19, St. George, Baton Rouge

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The seminarians welcome notes of support and promises of prayers from you. Drop a line today!