



Vocations and Seminarians Newsletter

January 15, 2008

Diocese of Baton Rouge

Dates to Remember

- National Vocation Awareness Week - January 13-18, 2008.
- Parish Vocation Committee Workshop - January 26, 2008, 10:00 am-12:00 noon, Bishop Tracy Center.
- World Day for Consecrated Life - Sunday February 3, 2008.
- "Come, Follow Me" Vocation Discernment Retreat - February 8-10, 2008, Rosaryville Retreat House, Ponchatoula.
- Diocesan Youth Conference - February 23-24, 2008, Catholic Life Center.
- Abbey Youth Festival - March 8, 2008, St. Joseph Abbey.
- "Come and See" Weekend - March 14-16, 2008, St. Joseph Seminary College.
- Chrism Mass - March 19, 2008, 10:30 am, St. Joseph Cathedral.
- World Day of Prayer for Vocations - April 13, 2008.
- Serra Club Crawfish Boil - April 27, 2008, 4:00 pm, St. Jude the Apostle Parish Hall.
- Priesthood Ordination - May 31, 2008, 10:00 am, St. Joseph Cathedral.
- Transitional Diaconate Ordination - June 21, 2008, 10:00 am, St. Joseph Cathedral.

Dear Seminarians and Friends,

Parish priests are always on the lookout for stories and faith images which illustrate the beautiful message of the scripture readings proclaimed on Sunday mornings. A new columnist for *Liguorian* magazine offered an interesting reflection on saying "yes" to God after the example of Mary at the Annunciation. The writer, Paige Byrne Shortal, asserts that a "yes" to God is often a "yes to the Unknown."

She goes on to relate the story of her own conversion and baptism into the Catholic faith while in her early twenties. Her parish priest forgot to prepare her for the ritual response to the questions which precede the baptism, and so when he asked, "What do you ask of God's Church?" she replied firmly "Answers." Her priest, who happened to be a Jesuit and quick on his feet, recovered with, "When there are no answers, will you accept faith?" ("Okay, I guess.")

We much prefer maintenance of the status quo in matters of faith and daily living, but God often has other plans for the good of our spiritual development. With God's help, our tentative and uncertain "yes" at the beginning of adult discipleship gradually matures into a generous and beautiful surrender to God's providence. Our human will does not give in easily though, and we can be sure of a great many struggles along the way to wisdom, maturity, and acceptance of the unknown.

The process of vocation discernment also involves uncertainty, risk, and a great deal of faith. We are never one hundred percent sure whether we are pursuing God's will or our own desire, and so we have to accept a certain amount of doubt and testing as central to the process. Vocation directors and seminary formators are very aware of the dynamics of this process and try to offer support without short circuiting the interior dialogue between God and the candidate.

Seminarians say yes to uncertainty many times over during their time of study and formation. They are not usually given a choice of which seminary to attend or which parish to be assigned. They learn to accept any number of decisions made on their behalf by those entrusted with their formation. They trust that the uncertainty will eventually lead to a deeper faith and a deeper understanding of vocation.

With this in mind, please pray for Bryan Thompson as he continues his discernment outside of the seminary. Bryan has devoted several years of his life to discerning a vocation in the Church, and this latest transition is but a continuation of his journey. I am confident that God will eventually lead Bryan to the place where he may best serve the Church.

In Christ,
Father Matt Lorrain

Diaconate Ordination of Andrew Merrick



Catholic Life Television of the Diocese of Baton Rouge will air the *Rite of Ordination to the Order of the Diaconate* of Andrew Merrick. This wonderful program can be seen on Catholic Life Television at the following times:

Baton Rouge, Cox Communications, Channel 15

Airing through February 2, 2008:

Sunday, 6:30 pm

Tuesday, 9:30 am

Wednesday, 7:00 pm

Thursday, 2:30 pm

Saturday, 9:00 pm

New Roads, Charter Communications, Channel 44

Sunday, January 20, 11 am, 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 9:00 pm

Sunday, January 27, 11 am, 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 9:00 pm

Hammond, Charter Communications, Channel 74

Sunday, January 20, 11 am

Sunday January 27, 11 am

St. James Civil Parish, Charter Communications Channel 10

Sunday, January 20, 11 am

Sunday January 27, 11 am

Parish Vocation Committee Workshop

The diocesan Office of Vocations will host a training and enrichment workshop for all parish vocation committees on Saturday, January 26, 2008, from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon in room 206 of the Bishop Tracy Center in Baton Rouge.

This workshop is designed to offer training for both new and existing committees, and will include opportunities for participants to share success stories and ideas for use in other parishes. All parishes are invited to send representatives to the workshop. Please call Ms. Mary Layman at the Office of Vocations (225-336-8778) to register.

Seminary Scholarship Funds

As we begin a new year of discipleship, why not consider a gift to one of our Seminary Scholarship Funds? The Diocese of Baton Rouge currently has 105 named funds which exist for the purpose of educating future priests for service in our local Church. The funds are named in honor of deceased pastors, relatives, and groups, and provide a means for parishes, organizations, families, and individuals to remember loved ones while at the same time supporting the education of our seminarians. The scholarship funds are managed for the diocese by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, and contributions are acknowledged in *The Catholic Commentator*. A complete listing of all funds is available on the diocesan website at www.diobr.org/vocations

“Come Follow Me” Retreat

The Diocese of Baton Rouge is joining with our sister Dioceses of Lafayette and Lake Charles to offer a discernment retreat on February 8-10, 2008, at the Rosaryville Retreat House in Ponchatoula. 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 contact Father Matt or Ms. Mary Layman at the Vocation Office (225-336-8778) for more information or to register.

Ordinations - Summer 2008

Please mark your calendars now for two ordinations to take place later this year in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. On Saturday, May 31, 2008, three men will be ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Robert Muench. Deacons Jamin David, Andrew Merrick and Paul Yi are all scheduled to be ordained priests in a special 10:00 am Mass at St. Joseph Cathedral in downtown Baton Rouge.

Three weeks later, on June 21, 2008, we will celebrate the ordination of two men to the transitional diaconate. Seminarians Mark Beard and Paul Gros are scheduled to be ordained deacons at a 10:00 am Mass by Bishop Robert Muench, also at St. Joseph Cathedral. Attendance at both of these ordinations is open to everyone, but please be forewarned that seating will be limited.

Help Promote Vocations in 2008

Earlier this fall, parishes were mailed hard copies of the catechetical and prayer resources for the annual observances of:

National Vocation Awareness Week, January 13-18, 2008, which is observed in the first week of Ordinary Time each year;

World Day for Consecrated Life, February 3, 2008, which is observed on the Sunday following the feast of the Presentation of the Lord; and

World Day of Prayer for Vocations, April 13, 2008, which is observed on the Fourth Sunday of Easter, also known as Good Shepherd Sunday.

Electronic copies of the materials are also available by calling or emailing Mary Layman at the Vocation Office (225-336-8778). The new Seminarian Poster can be viewed on the diocesan website at this address:

www.diobr.org/vocations/07_sem_pos.jpg

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 dates available in **2008**: May 10/11 & 18; June 1; July 5/6; Aug. 2, 16/17, 24, & 30/31; Oct. 4/5, 11/12, 18/19, & 25/26; Nov. 1/2, 8/9, & 15/16; Dec. 6/7, 13/14, 20/21, & 27/28. Please give him a call at 225-336-8778 if he can help.

Contact Us

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225-336-8778

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225-242-0342

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Roster of Diocesan Seminarians

4th Theology:	Jamin David	25, St. Ann, Morganza
	Andrew Merrick	27, 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:	Peter Ai Dang.....	42, Sts. Anthony/Le Van Phung, Baton Rouge
	Todd Lloyd	24, St. Thomas More, Baton Rouge
	Brent Maher	23, Immaculate Conception, Denham Springs
Pre-Theology:	Al Davidson.....	54, St. Agnes, Baton Rouge
	Mark Gyan	53, 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	21, St. Joseph, French Settlement
	Joseph Hoang Vu	20, Sts. Anthony/Le Van Phung, Baton Rouge
2nd Philosophy:	Brad Doyle.....	20, St. George, Baton Rouge
	Joshua Johnson	20, St. George, Baton Rouge

Seminary Contact Information

Notre Dame Seminary and Graduate School of Theology

2901 South Carrollton Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70118-4391
Telephone: 504-866-7426
Fax: 504-866-3119
Website: <http://www.nds.edu>

St. Joseph Seminary College

75376 River Road
St. Benedict, LA 70457-9900
Telephone: 985-867-2232
Fax: 985-867-2295
Website: <http://seminary.saintjosephabbey.com>

Have you done your part to encourage a seminarian lately? It would be great for you to write a note of support!

Our seminarians also are happy to write their own notes of encouragement to someone *you* think might have a vocation! Don't be shy about suggesting names directly to them, or to the Vocations Office!