

March 14, 2008

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Dates to Remember

- ◆ "Come and See" Weekend – March 14-16, 2008, St. Joseph Seminary College
- ◆ Chrism Mass – March 19, 2008, 10:30 am, St. Joseph Cathedral
- ◆ Admission to Candidacy for Orders – Mark Beard and Paul Gros – March 27, 2008, 5:15 p.m., Notre Dame Seminary Chapel
- ◆ 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 – Jamin David, Andrew Merrick and Paul Yi – May 31, 2008, 10:00 am, St. Joseph Cathedral
- ◆ Transitional Diaconate Ordination – Mark Beard and Paul Gros – June 21, 2008, 10:00 am, St. Joseph Cathedral

Dear Seminarians and Friends,

A religious vocation or call almost always contains an element of mystery. Once it reaches the level of consciousness, the candidate may alternate between feelings of excitement and fear as he or she contemplates the implications of the call. One often examines personal qualifications for the job, calculates the likelihood of success and happiness in relation to living the call, and even inventories the reasons why he or she might legitimately turn down this invitation. A call must be tested and discerned before it can be embraced and lived. Even then, one must be content with a certain amount of doubt and mystery in the living of one's vocation.

Of course the journey does not end with ordination or the final profession of vows. One's promise and commitment to service must continually be renewed as one gains insight into the mystery of the vocation. One illustration of this dynamic is the annual recommitment of priests which takes place at the diocesan *Chrism Mass*. The Chrism Mass is the Mass during which the holy oils are blessed or consecrated, and then distributed to the parishes for use throughout the year. The Chrism Mass for the Diocese of Baton Rouge is typically celebrated on Wednesday of Holy Week at 10:30 am at St. Joseph Cathedral.

Both the name of the Mass and the readings for the Mass point to Jesus' anointing and consecration as Christ and Lord, and subsequently to the anointing received by all baptized members of his Body, the Church. We hear the words of the prophet Isaiah, "*The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me...*" and later, "*You yourselves shall be named priests of the Lord, ministers of our God you shall be called.*" The responsorial psalm continues with, "*I have found David, my servant; with my holy oil I have anointed him...*" The second reading from Revelation echoes the theme of a priestly people.

The Gospel reading from Luke recounts Jesus' first homily at Nazareth, and His reading of the above-mentioned passage from Isaiah and then proclaiming: "*Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.*" The ministerial priesthood and the priesthood of all the baptized both share in the one priesthood of Christ. The sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and holy orders all make use of the sacred oil of Chrism which is consecrated at the Chrism Mass. We can see why this particular Mass is an appropriate time for priests to renew their "dedication to Christ as priests of the new covenant."

After the homily, Bishop Muench invites his brother priests to accept once again the "responsibilities of the priesthood out of love

for the Lord Jesus and his Church." Second, he asks them to renew their resolve to be "faithful ministers of the mysteries of God..." Third, he invites them to rededicate themselves to imitating "Jesus Christ, the head and shepherd of the Church..." A priest makes all of these promises on the day of his ordination, but without the understanding which comes from lived experience and the practice of one's priestly ministry.

Every vocation reaches maturity through participation in the paschal mystery. The life, death, and resurrection of Christ must somehow find expression in the lives of priests, religious, married couples, and indeed all followers of Christ. Our struggles and our failings are as necessary to growth as our successes and triumphs. A religious vocation will express both the dying and rising of Christ. "Our wounds become our wisdom," as a priest once commented during the preaching of a parish mission.

As I look forward to renewing my own priestly promises this coming Wednesday, I am mindful of the growth which has occurred in my life over these past twelve months, as well as the lessons yet to be learned. I have a strong sense that the best years of my priesthood are still ahead of me, even as I offer thanks for the moments of grace already experienced. I pray that all of you will have a Blessed Holy Week and a Happy Easter.

In Christ,
Father Matt Lorrain

Admission to Candidacy

On Thursday, March 27, 2008, seminarians in the third year of theology at Notre Dame Seminary will celebrate their *Admission to Candidacy* for sacred orders. In the simple yet 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 14 students representing 8 dioceses and religious orders, including Mark Beard and Paul Gros from the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Bishop Shelton Fabre will be the presider for the ceremony to take place at 5:15 pm in the seminary chapel.

Vocation Opportunities:

◆ St. Joseph Abbey Discernment Week

(For those interested in monastic life)

St. Joseph Abbey, a community of Benedictine monks in St. Benedict, Louisiana, will host a program for men ages 20 to 45 interested in discerning a call to monastic life. The program will be held during Holy Week, beginning on Wednesday, March 19th and concluding on Easter Monday, March 24th. Participants will pray and work with the monks as well as attend seminars on topics related to monasticism. Participants will also have the opportunity to celebrate the Paschal Triduum with the monastic community. Anyone

interested in more information is asked to contact Brother Jude Israel, O.S.B., vocation director of St. Joseph Abbey, at either 985-867-2249 or brjude@sjasc.edu.

◆ “Find Your Path” Discernment Retreat

(For those interested in religious life as a brother)

The Brothers of the Sacred Heart are sponsoring a weekend discernment retreat on April 11-13, 2008, at the Rosaryville Retreat Center just outside of Ponchatoula, Louisiana. The retreat is open to men ages 17 to 35.

The retreat will provide time for reflection, listening to God’s voice, and discerning where God is calling you at this time. You will also meet other Catholic men who are at important, decision-making points in their lives. For more information or to register, contact Brother Chris Sweeney by calling 504-352-9940 or by email at brochris66@hotmail.com. Also, visit the brothers’ website at www.brothersofthesacredheart.org.

Serra Club Crawfish Boil

Each spring the Baton Rouge Serra Club sponsors a crawfish boil for the men and women from our diocese who are in formation for the priesthood or religious life. The date for this year’s event is Sunday, April 27, 2008, beginning at 4:00 pm in St. Jude the Apostle Parish Hall located adjacent to the church at 9150 Highland Road.

The Serra Club was founded in 1934 in Seattle, Washington by a group of Catholic businessmen and friends who gathered for lunch and discussion. The organization takes its name from Blessed Junipero Serra, the Spanish Franciscan missionary who founded nine California missions beginning with San Diego in 1769. The Serra Club’s mission is to foster and affirm vocations to the ministerial priesthood and vowed religious life, and through this ministry, further our members’ common Catholic faith.

There are two chapters in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, which are currently led by presidents Michael Olinde and Fred Bahlinger. Both chapters meet twice each month for Mass and discussion, and membership is open to both men and women. Please call the Office of Vocations if you are interested in attending a meeting or joining.

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 seminarians 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 concelebrated Mass at historic 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 the anticipated crowds will leave seating very limited. Receptions will follow both ceremonies at the Catholic Life Center in Baton Rouge.

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 still available in **2008**:

- ◆ June 1; August 2, 16/17, 24, & 30/31; November 1/2, 8/9, & 15/16; and December 6/7, 13/14, & 20/21

Please telephone him at 225-336-8778 if he can help.

Roster of Diocesan Seminarians

- ◆ 4th Theology: Jamin David25, St. Ann, Morganza
Andrew Merrick..... 27, St. Mary of False River,
New Roads
Paul Yi..... 35, 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.....24, 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 of Padua
and Le Van Phung, Baton Rouge
- ◆ 2nd Philosophy: Brad Doyle20, St. George, Baton Rouge
Joshua Johnson20, St. George, Baton Rouge

Contact Us

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Seminary Contact Information

Notre Dame Seminary and Graduate School of Theology

2901 South Carrollton Avenue
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Fax: 504-866-3119
Website: <http://www.nds.edu>

St. Joseph Seminary College

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St. Benedict, LA 70457-9900
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Website: <http://seminary.saintjosephabbey.com>

It is right for us all to encourage our seminarians in their decision. Consider writing a brief note to tell one how much you respect him for his choice to explore priesthood!

Father Lorrain and each of our seminarians will also willingly write a note of encouragement to someone *you* think might have a vocation! Personal contact and invitation is so very important – let the Vocations Office know if someone you know could use a spiritual nudge in the Lord's direction!