

May 15, 2008

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

## Dates to Remember

- ◆ **Notre Dame Seminary Graduation - May 20, 2008, 7:00 pm, Seminary Chapel, New Orleans, LA**
- ◆ **Priesthood Ordination - Jamin David, Andrew Merrick and Paul Yi - May 31, 2008, 10:00 am, St. Joseph Cathedral**
- ◆ **Fr. Henry Vavasseur's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass - June 8, 2008, 3:00 pm, Holy Family Church, Port Allen**
- ◆ **Transitional Diaconate Ordination - Mark Beard and Paul Gros - June 21, 2008, 10:00 am, St. Joseph Cathedral**
- ◆ **Bishop Muench's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass - June 29, 2008, 3:00 pm, St. Joseph Cathedral**
- ◆ **Fr. Vincent Dufresne's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass - August 3, 2008, 3:00 pm, Immaculate Conception, Denham Springs**
- ◆ **Fr. Cleo Milano's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass - August 17, 2008, 5:00 pm, St. John, Plaquemine**
- ◆ **Seminarian BBQ with Bishop Muench - August 23, 2008**
- ◆ **Parish Vocation Committee Workshop - September 6, 2008, 10:00 am, St. Thomas More Parish**

## Dear Seminarians and Friends,

Our newsletter is quite full this month and includes articles contributed by seminarian Brad Doyle and Catholic High School faculty member Mr. Christopher Iwancio. Brad offers a very nice reflection on his experience of attending two of the Pope's gatherings in New York. Mr. Iwancio writes of his faith journey and his recent decision to pursue a religious vocation with the Capuchin Franciscan Friars. They present two striking examples of God's grace at work in the Church.

All of our seminarians have completed their academic work for the school year and are now preparing for their summer assignments. Many will be serving in church parishes this summer in order to gain pastoral experience and to further explore their call to priestly ministry. Three will attend a summer institute for diocesan seminarians sponsored by Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. One will study Spanish and participate in a mission experience organized by the college seminary, and one will be involved in a work/study program at the seminary. A full roster of assignments is included on the last page of this newsletter.

Two of our seminarians have requested a leave of absence from their diocesan studies in order to pursue vocations to the vowed religious life. Kevin Piper will be transferring to the formation program of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, and Luke Ordogne will be exploring monastic life with a Benedictine community in Clear Creek, Oklahoma. We will certainly miss Kevin and Luke in our seminarian community even as we wish them well in their ongoing pursuit of God's call. A loss for our local Church is a gift for our larger Church.

Everyone is of course very excited about our upcoming ordinations. Invitations have gone out for Jamin David, Andrew Merrick, and Paul Yi, and their ordination program is at the printer. On May 31, the Feast of the Visitation, they will present themselves for ordination to the priesthood through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit. Like Mary, they entrust themselves to God's providence as they begin an exciting new chapter in their discipleship.

On June 21, Mark Beard and Paul Gros will be ordained to the diaconate as the final step in their preparation for priestly ordination next year. They are soon to begin a five month parish internship, Beard at St. Thomas More Parish and Gros at St. Jean Vianney Parish, in order to further the process of integration in regard to their academic, spiritual, pastoral, and human development.

In Christ,  
Father Matt Lorrain

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# The Papal Visit to the United States

By seminarian Brad Doyle

“And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”  
(Matthew 16:18 Douay-Rheims)

As his holiness Pope Benedict XVI arrived at St. Joseph’s Seminary and College in Dunwoodie, New York, thirty thousand youth and seminarians let forth a cry of excitement and joy that rivaled any sporting event I have ever attended; at least in passion if not in volume. As the catchy cheer erupted, “*Se ve, se siente, el papa esta presente,*” (“We see him, we feel him, the pope is present,”) one truly felt that the *Rock* had arrived, and never before was he met with such enthusiasm, gratitude, and love. Everyone had grown accustomed to these displays of affection toward our late pope John Paul II, but I don’t think the media nor all of America was expecting such excitement about our present Holy Father’s presence here in the United States. This speaks to the understanding of Catholics and most assuredly of Catholic youth today, that the office of the servant of the servants of God is not just for John Paul II, Blessed John XXIII, or Benedict himself, but is rather a share in the very shepherding of Christ.

The Holy Father visiting our country is not just an everyday event, so when Matt McCaughey, Josh Johnson, Tim Hedrick, and I heard about his visit, we immediately started planning our pilgrimage to New York. Through the generosity of the Archdioceses of New Orleans and New York, and our very own Diocese, we were supplied with tickets to both the seminarian/youth rally held at St. Joseph’s Seminary on Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, and the papal Mass celebrated in Yankee Stadium the following day.

As described previously, the seminarian/youth rally consisted of thirty thousand screaming Catholics, an enormous stage, world famous Christian musicians, and eventually an appearance and address by our Holy Father. The tiring day marked by weary legs and thirsty lips was vindicated when the Holy Father made his grand entrance. In his address, he touched on many key issues, so important and relevant to youth today. He spoke of the hardships and temptations we young Catholics face in today’s society, and in a beautifully moving way, he shared his own experience as a teenager living under the oppressive Nazi regime. He also encouraged us to stand strong against “relativism” and to value an “authentic freedom” that only comes in the “letting go of oneself to be drawn into Christ’s very being for others.” Throughout his address, he gave four different keys to walking in the path of freedom: personal prayer and silence, liturgy, charity in action, and vocations. As seminarians it was wonderful to hear our Holy Father speak so beautifully about these topics, which are so important to our own journeys.

The next day found us in Yankee Stadium for a Mass celebrated by our Holy Father. We arrived at the stadium four hours prior to the start of Mass, which gave us plenty of time to walk around, take pictures, and listen to great entertainment provided by many different choirs and even a performance by Louisiana’s very own Harry Connick Jr. One of the most impressive aspects of the pilgrimage was

the large amount of religious at both events. In the many hours leading up to the Mass, I walked the length of the entire stadium speaking with as many communities as possible, listening to their stories, and hearing about their vocation journeys. This was a priceless consolation for myself and is an example of how vocations, faithfully lived, support other vocations, drawing from individuals a desire to more completely give of self. When the Mass finally began, it was marked by the same enthusiastic cheer that had been heard at the youth rally. The Mass was beautifully grand, musically assisted by an orchestra and five hundred member choir, and prayed so reverently by our pope who showed his commitment to being our priest as well as our pontiff.

The Holy Father drove to John F. Kennedy airport to fly back to Rome after that Mass, but it seems as though all Americans, Catholics and non-Catholics alike, can feel his presence more now than ever before. He gave us his heart, his desires for our country, and the love of a true shepherd. He gave us the words needed to search for and stand up for the truth, the Truth that is Jesus Christ himself. Sitting in the subway on my way back from that Mass with my Diocesan brothers, all sunburned and tired, I had never been more proud to be Catholic, for the very center of the Cornerstone, who holds the "universality" of our Church together, had just celebrated Mass for us, for sixty thousand faithful goers, for the entire world. Pope Benedict brought more than just speeches, presentations, and pronouncements to the faithful of the United States. He brought the beautiful articulation of our Faith, the love that is the source of anything and everything we teach and believe, and the example of a true priest of Christ that every seminarian needs. Yes, I was very proud to be Catholic that day.

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## A Vocation Story

By Christopher Iwancio

I remember when I was in high school and my religion teacher asked me if I had ever considered a vocation to the priesthood or religious life. I thought the idea was absurd. I was skipping out on Mass and certainly not living out a very good Christian life.

Over the years, I began to develop my faith by going to retreats, making an effort to go to church, and trying to pay attention. While in college at Belmont Abbey in North Carolina, I met a great group of friends who really encouraged me to grow in my faith.

After graduating from college, I suffered the death of my mother and this shook my faith. I felt that I had no direction in life. After hearing about a position open at Catholic High School in Baton Rouge from a friend whose brother taught there, I decided it was time for a new beginning.

I arrived at my apartment in the middle of the night, a couple of hours before my first day of teaching, with no bed, no telephone and no electricity. I had to have faith that God was going to provide. I was unsure what I was getting into.

Within the first year I grew a part of the St. Aloysius community as well as developed my teaching skills at Catholic High. Throughout this time I felt a tug on my heart. This restlessness caused me to

grow deeper in my faith and trust in God.

Over the last few years I have spent time discerning a vocation to marriage. I met and developed many great relationships with women of God, but the call of marriage never developed as strong for me. Instead of getting questions from my friends about whether or not I was dating, I was getting questions about where my relationship with God was leading me.

Gradually I developed a capacity for listening during prayer — not listening for one call or another — but a daily discernment of where God was leading me. The support of my friends and colleagues helped me to see my gifts and to use them.

About three years ago I began to spend some time visiting different religious communities around the country. I was looking for an order that had a mix of community, prayer and apostolic life. I was also looking for a community that would allow me to continue to teach. When I visited a small community of Capuchins in California, I felt immediately at home. Besides having a great prayer life, I found they had a welcoming and peaceful presence. I asked one friar how would I know if the life would fit me and he said it would fit like a shoe, very comfortable.

After making more visits to them and more prayer, I decided to apply for the order. I figured that if I don't try I will never know. It is not easy moving such a large distance, but as I learned when I moved here, God will provide.

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## May and June Ordinations

Please mark your calendars for two ordinations to take place this month and next in the Diocese of Baton Rouge!

- ◆ **Priests** – On Saturday, May 31, 2008, three candidates are scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Robert Muench. Deacons Jamin David, Andrew Merrick and Paul Yi will become priests in a special 10:00 am concelebrated Mass at historic St. Joseph Cathedral in downtown Baton Rouge.
- ◆ **Deacons** – 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 another special 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.

- ◆ **2009** – You might also wish to make a note on your calendar of the date already set for 2009: Saturday, May 30, 2009, has been selected as the date for our priesthood ordination. The ordination is scheduled for 10:00 am at St. Joseph Cathedral.

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## First Masses

The first "Mass of Thanksgiving" of a newly-ordained priest normally

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takes place on the day following the ordination, and continues a wonderful spirit of celebration for the favor of God experienced by both the priest himself and the whole Church. Here is the schedule of first Masses for this year's ordination class:

- ◆ Andrew Merrick June 1, 11:00 am ..... St. Mary of False River (New Roads)
- ◆ Paul Yi June 1, 12:00 noon ..... Our Lady of Mercy (Baton Rouge)
- ◆ Jamin David June 1, 4:00 pm ..... St. Ann (Morganza)

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## 2008 Seminarian Summer Assignments

### Fourth Year Parish Internship

Mark Beard – St. Thomas More Parish / Father Tom Duhe'

Paul Gros – St. Jean Vianney Parish / Father Tom Ranzino

### Institute for Priestly Formation

Al Davidson – Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska

Mark Gyan – Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska

Matthew McCaughey – Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska

### Summer Parish Ministry

Peter Dang – St. George Parish / Father Mike Schatzle

Todd Lloyd – St. Joseph Parish (Paulina) / Father Frank Uter

Brent Maher – Our Lady of Peace Parish / Father Michael Miceli

Brad Doyle – St. John the Baptist (Brusly) / Father Matt Dupre'

### Specialized Ministry

Joshua Johnson - Mission Program: El Paso Texas, and  
Sierra Tarahumara, Mexico

Joseph Vu – Work/Study: St. Joseph Seminary, St. Benedict, La.

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## 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 & 28/29; August 16/17 & 24; November 1/2 & 8/9; and December 6/7, 13/14, & 20/21.

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