

July 15, 2008

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Dates to Remember

- ◆ **Fr. Vincent Dufresne's 25th Anniversary Mass - August 3, 2008, 3:00 pm, Immaculate Conception Parish, Denham Springs**
- ◆ **Fr. Cleo Milano's 25th Anniversary Mass - August 17, 2008, 5:00 pm, St. John the Evangelist Parish, Plaquemine**
- ◆ **Seminarian Mass and BBQ with Bishop Muench - August 23, 2008, 4:00 pm, St. Jude the Apostle Parish, Baton Rouge**
- ◆ **Deo Gratias - Benefit for St. Joseph Abbey - August 24, 2008, 6:00 pm Mass & Reception, Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Baton Rouge**
- ◆ **Parish Vocation Committee Workshop - September 6, 2008, 10:00 am, St. Thomas More Parish, Baton Rouge**
- ◆ **World Youth Day, October 26, 2008, Ascension of Our Lord Parish, Donaldsonville**
- ◆ **Bishop's Mass and Brunch for Seminarians and Parents- September 20, 10:30 am, St. Joseph Chapel, Tracy Center**
- ◆ **"Come and See" weekend at St. Joseph Seminary College, November 14-16, 2008, St. Benedict**

Dear Seminarians and Friends,

Parish priests are blessed to hold membership in at least three different families: their families of origin, the family of priests, and the parish families to which they are assigned. All carry with them certain responsibilities and obligations, and in turn all provide nourishment and support in the living out of one's faith and priestly vocation.

On June 14, I had the distinct pleasure of presiding at the wedding of a family member from the first group mentioned, that of my oldest niece and godchild. The wedding took place at the beautiful Immaculate Conception Church on Baronne Street in New Orleans, better known to locals as the "Jesuit Church." When I was in the seminary I would take the Tulane Avenue bus once a month to see my spiritual director at the Jesuit Church, and then return via the more leisurely means of the streetcar all the way up St. Charles Avenue.

For priests, family of origin weddings differ slightly from parish family weddings in part because of the greater length of time that we have known one another. Even the mundane task of assembling documents for the marriage file can trigger stored memories of past events. For example, my niece's baptism certificate states that she was baptized at St. Rita Church on Lowerline Street, which is not exactly accurate. She was actually baptized two blocks away in the chapel of Notre Dame Seminary, which does not keep its own sacramental records. (A reception was held in the basement of the seminary, in the student "watering hole" known as the *Biblicum!*)

Though celibate, Catholic priests are nonetheless given numerous opportunities to participate in various dimensions of family life. We celebrate First Communion with children we baptized seven years earlier, and preside at weddings of former altar servers and youth group members. Shared memories add a depth and warmth to chance encounters and later sacramental celebrations, which helps to explain why priestly ministry becomes so much more fulfilling with the passage of time.

We spent some time last week nourishing the bonds within the family of the priesthood at a gathering for seminarians and priests hosted by Holy Rosary Parish in St. Amant. Food and drink were consumed in good measure, and legendary tales of seminary and rectory life were retold for the amusement of the seasoned veterans and the edification of the younger recruits. The conversation is to be continued at the August 23 gathering at St. Jude the Apostle Parish in Baton Rouge.

Finally, I encourage you to attend the two 25th anniversary Masses for Fathers Dufresne and Milano on August 3 and 17 respectively, for

further illustrations of how the priesthood converges with family life. Representatives of all three of the above mentioned family groups will be present at these Masses celebrating a combined fifty years of priestly ministry. Of particular interest will be the skill and tact with which the appointed homilists select a few noteworthy moments in the lives of our honorees in order to interpret the mystery of God's call. Be prepared for grace and humor, wrapped in the clothing of nuance and discretion.

In Christ,
Father Matt Lorrain

Father Adrien Rouquette

Today, July 15, is the anniversary of the death of the first native-born diocesan priest to serve in Louisiana. Adrien Emmanuel Rouquette was born of a prominent Creole family in New Orleans on February 26, 1813. He received much of his education in France and displayed great talent as a writer and poet before expressing a desire for the priesthood.

He was accepted for studies by the Most Rev. Antoine Blanc, the Bishop of New Orleans, and sent to the newly created St. Vincent de Paul Seminary in Plattenville. He was ordained to the priesthood on July 2, 1845. He was then 32 years old, which would have been considered a very late vocation for the time.

For the sake of clarity, the first native-born Louisianan to be ordained a priest was Etienne-Bernard-Alexandre Viel, who entered the Oratorian novitiate in Paris in 1756. However, Father Viel was *ordained in Paris*, and only later returned to Louisiana to serve. The first ordination to take place in Louisiana was that of Juan de Dios Valdes, ordained in 1797 in the Ursuline Chapel in New Orleans. But Father Valdes was *born in Cuba* rather than in Louisiana.

The first person to be ordained within the present boundaries of Louisiana and also spend his entire life ministering here was Jean-Baptiste Blanc. Ordained in 1823, Father Blanc, was a *native of France* and the brother of the future Bishop Antoine Blanc. So in the final analysis, Father Rouquette was the first priest to meet all of the criteria of birth, seminary education, ordination, and priestly ministry in Louisiana.

The first 14 years of Father Rouquette's priesthood were spent as secretary to Bishop Blanc. After repeated requests, he was finally granted permission to undertake missionary work among the neglected Choctaw Indians living in St. Tammany Parish. He became fluent in the Choctaw language and devoted the remaining 28 years of his priestly ministry to the Indians before dying on July 15, 1887.

Mass & Barbeque with Bishop Muench

The annual "back to school" Mass and barbecue with Bishop Robert Muench and the seminarians will be held on Saturday, August 23, 2008, at St. Jude the Apostle Parish Hall in Baton Rouge. The seminarians will join the parishioners of St. Jude Church at their regularly scheduled 4:00 pm anticipated Sunday Mass, and then gather for a social and meal hosted by Fathers David Allen and Chris Decker. All

priests of the Diocese are also 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 6:00 pm in the Parish Hall.

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.

Diaconate Ordination



Catholic Life Television of the Diocese of Baton Rouge has begun airing the *Rite of Ordination to the Order of the Diaconate* of Mark Beard and Paul Gros. This wonderful program can be seen on Catholic Life Television at the following times through July 26:

Baton Rouge, Cox Communications, Channel 15

Sunday, 6:30 pm

Tuesday, 9:30 am

Wednesday, 7:00 pm

Thursday, 2:30 pm

Saturday, 9:00 pm

Baton Rouge Deo Gratias 2008

Deo Gratias (Latin for "Thanks be to God,") is an annual reception and dinner to benefit St. Joseph Abbey and Seminary College located in St. Benedict, Louisiana. The Baton Rouge Deo Gratias 2008 will take place on Sunday, August 24, 2008, at Our Lady of Mercy Church, beginning with Mass at 6:00 pm, followed by a reception and dinner in the Parish Activity Center. Food is again being donated and prepared by Chef John Folse. Tickets for the reception and dinner are \$75 per person and are available in advance and at the door. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. For more information please contact Vanessa Crouere at 985-867-2242 or vcrouere@sjasc.edu, or visit the website - www.sjasc.edu/2008-deo-gratias-baton-rouge.html.

Parish Vocation Committee Workshop

The Office of Vocations has scheduled another training and enrichment workshop for new and continuing members of Parish Vocation Committees in the Baton Rouge Diocese. The workshop will be held on Saturday, September 6, 2008, from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon at St. Thomas More Parish Activity Center 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 person could make a difference for your parish or school. Please mark your calendars and make plans to attend.

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Called By Name

This January, the Diocese of Baton Rouge will repeat a very successful vocation promotion initiative. "CALLED BY NAME" is a program that invites men and women, 16 years of age or older, to consider priesthood or consecrated life. "CALLED BY NAME" was last used by the diocese from 1990 to 1992 and has since been recommended by the US Bishops' Committee on Vocations in their document, *A Future Full of Hope: a National Strategy for Vocations to Priesthood and Religious Life for the Archdioceses and Dioceses of the United States*.

At the program's heart is the belief that all of us share a common calling through Baptism, to which we are invited to respond in a variety of ways – marriage, single life, consecrated life, diaconate, or priesthood. The "CALLED BY NAME" process focuses on priesthood and consecrated life, and stresses the role of the Christian community in calling forth men and women to consider these vocations.

Parishioners throughout the diocese are encouraged to consider who in our midst might serve well as a priest or religious and submit their names at the weekend liturgies January 10-11 and January 17-18, 2009. There are many good prospective priests, brothers, and sisters who are simply waiting to be asked.

2008 Seminarian Summer Assignments

Fourth Year Parish Internship

Mark Beard – St. Thomas More Parish (Baton Rouge) / Father Tom Duhé

Paul Gros – St. Jean Vianney Parish (Baton Rouge) / 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 (Baton Rouge) / Father Mike Schatzle

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

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

Brad Doyle – St. John the Baptist Parish (Brusly) / Father Matt Dupré

Specialized Ministry

Joshua Johnson – Mission Program, El Paso, Texas, and Sierra Tarahumara, México

Joseph Vu – Work/Study, St. Joseph Seminary College, St. Benedict, Louisiana

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 still has December 6/7 and 13/14 available in **2008**.