

May 15, 2009

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Dates to Remember

- ◆ **Notre Dame Seminary Graduation – May 20, 2009, 7:00 pm, Francis Schulte Auditorium, New Orleans**
- ◆ **Priesthood Ordination – May 30, 2009, 10:00 am, St. Joseph Cathedral, Baton Rouge**
- ◆ **Deo Gratias benefit for St. Joseph Seminary – August 30, 2009, Main Auditorium of the Catholic Life Center, Baton Rouge**
- ◆ **Seminarian Mass and Dinner with Bishop Muench - August 29, 2009, 5:00 pm, St. Isidore the Farmer Parish, Baker**
- ◆ **Parish Vocation Committee Workshop - September 12 2009, 10:00 am, St. Patrick Parish, Baton Rouge**
- ◆ **Fr. Than Vu's 25th Anniversary Mass - September 20, 2009, 2:30 pm, Christ the King Church & Catholic Center, Baton Rouge**

Dear Seminarians and Friends,

Every year the priests of the Diocese of Baton Rouge set aside one week in May for continuing formation. The theme of this year's study days was "Pastoral Ministry in Vibrant Parishes: Challenges and Opportunities." Our discussion was facilitated by Father Robert Duggan, a priest of the Archdiocese of Washington, DC, and Dr. Mary Gautier, a senior research associate at the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University. Father Duggan is well known for his work in parish ministry and especially the RCIA, and Dr. Gautier is equally well respected for her analysis of Catholic demographic trends in the United States. Dr. Gautier also is a Louisiana native, having served many years ago as a pastoral associate at St. George Parish in Baton Rouge.

Our facilitators made use of recent statistical data and a parish evaluation instrument to frame our discussion. Much of the information could be used by parish pastoral councils and other consultative bodies to aid in pastoral planning and development. Overall, the priests of the Diocese feel very blessed with the current vitality of our parishes, even as we recognize ever-present room for growth and improvement. A study of Catholic trends and "best practices" gleaned from parishes around the country provides encouragement for growth in pastoral leadership.

I did notice one glaring omission in the comprehensive list of "best practices" for parishes. The list contained 520 characteristics divided into such areas as prayer and worship, catechesis, evangelization, stewardship, justice and charity, pastoral care, and community. Unfortunately, support for vocations was completely absent from the list. Obviously, we still have much work to do in order to help pastors, parish leaders, and all concerned Catholics rediscover the joy of promoting vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Support for religious vocations does not have to be at the expense of good liturgy, spiritual formation, lay ecclesial ministry, or any other criteria by which healthy parishes are measured. I am very proud of the growth which has occurred in the Church over the last forty years, including an expansion of liturgical ministries and involvement, more opportunities for adult faith formation, increased commitment to stewardship of prayer, ministry, and finance, and greater priority given to safeguarding the sanctity of life. I only pray that vocations to the priesthood and religious life can be allowed a modest but visible place on the list of parish values and priorities.

Baton Rouge Seminarians Elected as Student Government Officers

Congratulations go out to two of our seminarians for being so respected by fellow seminarians that they were selected for leadership positions in their respective seminaries next year. Not only were they honored by their peers: they continue a tradition of excellence in leadership in our diocesan Church.

- ◆ Seminarian Joshua Johnson was elected as the President of the Student Government Association of St. Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict, Louisiana, for the upcoming 2009-2010 school year.
- ◆ Seminarian Matthew McCaughey was elected to serve as Vice President of the Student Government Association of Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans for the upcoming 2009-2010 school year.

How Can I as Young Person Listen for God's Call?

- ◆ 2009 Serra Club Essay Contest Winning Entry
By Madelyn Ledoux
Holy Family Homeschool, 8th grade

How can I as a young person listen for God's call? There are countless ways, but there are three main ones that I strive to practice. These are attending Eucharistic Adoration, offering the sacrifice of the Mass, and spending quiet time daily listening to God.

The first way to help me listen for God's call is going to Adoration. The first Sunday of every month, the religious sisters at my parish church hold Eucharistic Adoration and invite the children who will be confirmed that year, as well as their families. Since my older sister will be confirmed, I have the opportunity to attend. Gazing at Jesus, I ask that He tell me what He wants of me. Being so close to Him, truly present in the Eucharist, makes me want to hear His voice. I have another opportunity to adore Christ at youth group retreats. As I listen to soft guitar music and slow songs of worship, I try to clear my mind of unimportant thoughts and just focus on Jesus. As I adore Him in the midst of so many other people, it turns my thoughts to spreading my knowledge of Him throughout the world. This helps me grasp the importance of listening for His call so that I know the way He wants me to spread his love.

Secondly, I find times in my busy schedule to stop whatever I am doing and meditate on the voice of God. I like to go and sit on my bed, holding onto my miraculous medal or a small crucifix, and just listen. Other times, I imagine that God is sitting right beside me, and we are having a conversation about what He wants me to do with my life. This aids me in discerning His call.

The third way I listen for God's call is by participating in the per-

fect sacrifice: Mass. It is such an awesome way to listen for His call, because Jesus Himself instituted it. It has a time for singing and speaking, but it also has times for just listening. Sometimes, I believe that the Holy Spirit has inspired the priest to write his sermon on a subject that has been diverting my attention from Christ, so that I can correct it and better listen for my vocation.

I realize that it is very important for me, as a young Catholic, to listen for God's call. Through adoring Christ in the Eucharist, offering to God the sacrifice of the Mass, and spending quiet meditation time with Him daily, I hope to better hear and have the strength to follow God's call for me.

College Seminary Graduation

Congratulations are in order for Joseph Vu, who received his Bachelor of Arts degree from St. Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict, Louisiana, on May 8, 2009. Joseph has spent four years in the program of priestly formation at St. Ben's.

Weekend Assistance for Priests

Father Matt offers weekend assistance to the priests of the Diocese of Baton Rouge as he is able. Please call him at 225-336-8778 to reserve a weekend. Here are his available weekends remaining in **2009**:

- ◆ August 22/23, and 30; September 5/6, and 12/13; October 3/4, 18, and 31; November 1, 7/8, and 28/29; and December 5/6, 12/13, and 19/20.

Vocations to the Consecrated Life

Please pray for those who are in formation pursuing a vocation to religious life. (And please let the Vocations Office know of any others to include on this roster.) Father Matt can provide more information on religious life and the general charisms of specific religious orders, and put inquirers in touch with the appropriate Vocation Directors for them.

Caleb Bernacchio (Christ the King) Jesuits

Sr. Mary Corripio (St. Aloysius) Sisters of Notre Dame
de Namur

Br. Augustine DeArmond (St. Thomas, Springfield)
Dominicans

Lacey Flores (Christ the King) Carmelite Sisters of the
Most Sacred Heart of Los Angeles

Christopher Iwancio (St. Aloysius) Capuchin Franciscans

Kevin Piper (St. Joseph, French Settlement) Brothers of the
Sacred Heart

Contact Us

- ◆ Office of Vocations
Diocese of Baton Rouge
P.O. Box 2028
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-2028

Telephone

- ◆ 225-336-8778

Fax

- ◆ 225-242-0342

E-mail

- ◆ vocations@diobr.org

Website

- ◆ www.diobr.org/vocations

2009 Seminarian Summer Assignments

Father Matt has made the following assignments of seminarians for the summer months. Even while seminaries are closed priestly formation cannot end!

Clinical Pastoral Education

- ◆ Todd Lloyd – Baptist Health Care, Pensacola, Florida
- ◆ Brent Maher – Florida Hospital, Orlando, Florida

Institute for Priestly Formation

- ◆ Joseph Vu – Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska

Summer Parish Ministry

- ◆ Peter Dang - Our Lady of Peace Parish, Vacherie, where Father Michael Miceli is pastor
- ◆ Al Davidson - St. John the Evangelist Parish, Prairieville, where Father Eric Gyan is pastor
- ◆ Kyle Gautreau – St. Isidore the Farmer Parish, Baker, where Father Fred Youngs is pastor
- ◆ Mark Gyan – St. Louis King of France Parish, Baton Rouge, where Father Jack Nutter is pastor
- ◆ Matthew McCaughey – St. John the Evangelist Parish, Plaquemine, where Father Cleo Milano is pastor
- ◆ Joshua Johnson - St. Jean Vianney Parish, Baton Rouge, where Father Tom Ranzino is pastor
- ◆ Logan Roussel - St. Albert the Great Chapel and Student Center, Hammond, where Father Randy Cuevas is chaplain

Spanish Immersion and Pastoral Life

- ◆ Brad Doyle – Bayamón, Puerto Rico
 - ◆ Tim Hedrick – Bayamón, Puerto Rico
-