



Vocations and Seminarians Newsletter

December 15, 2005

Diocese of Baton Rouge

Dates to Remember

- National Vocation Awareness Week - January 9-15, 2006
- World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life - February 5, 2006
- World Day of Prayer for Vocations - May 7, 2006

Dear Seminarians,

During the time of my own vocational discernment while a student at L.S.U., I ran across the life of Charles de Foucauld, the French priest and hermit who spent the final years of his life exercising a ministry of presence among the Muslims of North Africa. I remember reading "Letters From the Desert" by Carlo Carretto, now available in an anniversary edition, and "Cry Out the Gospel With Your Life," by a biographer whose name is lost to me. I even flirted for a brief time with the idea of going to Algeria to join the community known as the Little Brothers of Jesus, founded by René Voillaume & companions after the example of Foucauld.

I mention this because Charles de Foucauld was recently beatified on November 13, 2005. The November 14, 2005 issue of *America* magazine contained a beautiful article on the enduring witness of Foucauld written by Robert Ellsberg, editor at Orbis Press and author of several books including one on the selected writings of Foucauld. Conscious of the tense situation in Iraq and a threatening divide between Christians and Muslims, as well as our own feelings of material and social loss in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, I found a reflection on the life of Charles de Foucauld to be both healing and inspiring.

Foucauld was born in Strasbourg, in the Alsace region of France, in 1858. He was orphaned at the age of six and eventually chose a military career on the advice of his grandfather, and was posted to Algeria. The Catholicism of his childhood had been completely abandoned until the piety of the Muslim population began to awaken within him a desire for faith and God. The humble practice of his Catholic cousins in France and the wise guidance of a parish priest also helped to restore his right relationship with God and neighbor. He later wrote that his desire for a religious vocation was instantaneous with the rediscovery of his faith.

Charles made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and sometime later entered Trappist monasteries in France and then Syria. After six years, he left monastic life to become a domestic servant to a convent of Poor Clare Sisters in Nazareth. He worked in this capacity for three years with the growing insight that Jesus had also been a poor man and a worker. He finally sought priesthood and was ordained for the Diocese of Viviers in France. He then returned to Algeria and settled in Tamanrasset to practice a model of ministry and evangelization based on mutual respect and charity. He was killed there by Tuareg rebels on December 1, 1916.

Ellsberg notes the apparent failure of Foucauld's life. He had not published any writings; he had not attracted followers; and he was not responsible for a single conversion. "And yet his witness endured." May hope endure in our own lives during this time of Christmas celebration.

In Christ
Father Matt Lorrain

Writings of Blessed Charles de Foucauld

"Jesus came to Nazareth, the place of the hidden life, of ordinary life, of family life, of prayer, work, obscurity, silent virtues, practiced with no witnesses other than God, his friends and neighbors. Nazareth, the place where most people lead their lives. We must infinitely respect the least of our brothers...let us mingle with them. Let us be one of them to the extent that God wishes...and treat them fraternally in order to have the honor and joy of being accepted as one of them." (Written shortly before his death.)

"Father, I abandon myself into your hands; do with me what you will. Whatever you may do, I thank you: I am ready for all, I accept all. Let only your will be done in me, and in all your creatures. I wish no more than this, O Lord. Into your hands I commend my soul; I offer it to you with all the love of my heart, for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into your hands without reserve, and with boundless confidence, for you are my Father." (Prayer of Abandonment)

Holy Hour for Bishop and Seminarians

It has become a tradition for Bishop Muench and the seminarians to gather over the Christmas break to spend an hour together in prayer on behalf of Church vocations. Their annual holy hour is scheduled for Thursday, December 22, 2005, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at St. Joseph Chapel of the Catholic Life Center. The holy hour will be followed by supper with Bishop Muench, Father Matt Lorrain, and Sister Lucy Silvio, C.S.J.

Seminarians are kindly asked to communicate **regrets only** to Father Matt Lorrain or Ms. Mona George.

2006 Vocation Materials Sent to Parishes

The Office of Vocations recently transmitted electronic copies of the catechetical and prayer resources for the three most popular national and international observances in support of Church vocations to all parishes and schools in the Diocese. These observances are:

National Vocation Awareness Week, January 9-13, 2006, which coincides with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord (observed on a Monday this year), and which is intended to promote all Catholic Church vocations;

World Day for Consecrated Life, February 5, 2006, which is observed on the Sunday following February 2, the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, and which gives special emphasis to vocations to the consecrated religious life; and

World Day of Prayer for Vocations, May 7, 2006, which is observed on the Fourth Sunday of Easter, also known as Good Shepherd Sunday, and which includes all Catholic Church vocations.

These observances can sometimes present practical challenges for parishes and schools due to their placement on the liturgical calendar. Some locales may find it easier to incorporate the themes into a school Mass rather than a weekend Mass. Other parishes may wish to pray the suggested vocation prayer at all parish meetings during the week; still others may wish to focus on the "Family Take-Home Page" and encourage families to spend time together at home during the evening hours. Please feel

Contact Us

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

Phone

225-336-8778

Fax

225-242-0342

E-mail

vocations@diobr.org

Website

www.diobr.org/vocations

free to adapt as necessary to better meet the needs of your particular community. The Vocation Office can also provide hard copies of the materials to any parish or school having difficulty downloading the information.

Ordination Dates

Dates were recently chosen for the upcoming ordinations of deacons and priests in 2006 and 2007 in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. These dates have been set this far in advance in order that St. Joseph Cathedral and the main auditorium of the Catholic Life Center might be reserved, and also to allow the priests and deacons of the Diocese to make notations on their personal calendars. However, the individual candidates preparing for ordination have yet to be formally called to holy orders by Bishop Muench.

2006

Saturday, June 3, 2006, 10:00 a.m. – Permanent Diaconate Ordination

Saturday, June 10, 2006, 10:00 a.m. – Transitional Diaconate Ordination

2007

Saturday, May 26, 2007, 10:00 a.m. – Priesthood Ordination

Saturday, June 9, 2007, 10:00 a.m. – Transitional Diaconate Ordination

Roster of Seminarians

Third Theology: Howard Adkins..... 59, St. Agnes
Michael Alello..... 25, St. Jude the Apostle
Cary Bani..... 47, St. Joseph Cathedral
Chris Decker..... 24, St. Isidore the Farmer, Baker
Jason Palermo..... 26, St. John the Evangelist,
Plaquemine
Chris Redden..... 31, St. Alphonsus Liguori,
Greenwell Springs

Second Theology: Jamin David..... 23, St. Ann, Morganza
David Dawson..... 23, St. Patrick
Andrew Merrick..... 24, St. Mary of False River,
New Roads
Paul Yi..... 32, St. Theresa of Avila, Gonzales

First Theology: Mark Beard..... 44, Our Lady of Mercy
Paul Gros..... 23, Most Blessed Sacrament

Fourth Philosophy: Brent Maher..... 21, Immaculate Conception,
Denham Springs

Third Philosophy: Todd Lloyd..... 22, St. Thomas More
Bryan Thompson..... 25, Our Lady of Mercy

First Philosophy: Joseph Hoang Vu..... 18, Sts. Anthony/Le Van Phung
