



Vocations and Seminarians Newsletter

November 15, 2006

Diocese of Baton Rouge

Dates to Remember

- Holy Hour for Seminarians with Bishop Muench at the Bishop Tracy Center - December 21, 2006, 5:00 p.m.
- National Vocation Awareness Week - January 8-12, 2007
- World Day for Consecrated Life - February 4, 2007
- Parish Vocation Committee Workshop - February 24, 2007, 10:00 a.m., Our Lady of Mercy Parish Activity Center
- Chrism Mass - April 4, 2007, 10:30 a.m., St. Joseph Cathedral
- World Day of Prayer for Vocations - April 29, 2007
- Serra Club Crawfish Boil - April 29, 2007, 4:00 p.m., St. Jude the Apostle Parish Hall

Dear Seminarians and Friends,

I recently finished reading the book *"An Infinity of Little Hours"* written by Nancy Klein Maguire, and subtitled *Five Young Men and Their Trial of Faith in the Western World's Most Austere Monastic Order*. The book offers a personal and fascinating account of the Carthusian religious order based upon the experiences of five young men who entered the novitiate during the period 1960–1961, just prior to the Second Vatican Council.

The Carthusians are a religious community founded by St. Bruno and six companions in 1084 in the Chartreuse region of the French Alps. The symbol of the order is an orb surmounted by a cross set in a constellation of seven stars. Beneath the orb are the words: *"Stat Crux dum Volvitur Orbis"* ("The cross stands firm while the world moves on" – or alternatively, "Stands the cross, still point of the turning world.")

The monks live in individual houses or hermitages where they pray, work, eat and sleep. These hermitages or "cells" are connected to one another and to the church, chapter house, refectory, and library by a series of covered passageways called cloisters. The monks gather in the church three times each day to pray in common, but the rest of the Liturgy of the Hours are prayed in solitude, as are their meals and work.

Once a week they take a two hour walk together and visit in pairs, switching companions every thirty minutes. I am not sure of the current practice, but up until the 1960s the monks did not eat any meat or poultry, and many of the Charterhouses still did not have electricity or central heating. Night Office is usually said between 11:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m., meaning that the monks have to adjust to interrupted sleep at night.

The book begins with a quote from Søren Kierkegaard: *"Of this there is no doubt, our age and Protestantism in general may need the monastery again, or wish it were there. The "monastery" is an essential dialectical element in Christianity. We therefore need it out there like a navigation buoy at sea in order to see where we are, even though I myself would not enter it. But if there really is true Christianity in every generation, there must also be individuals who have this need..."*

Like Kierkegaard, I believe that monasteries play an essential role in both Church and society, and even in the lives of diocesan priests. I find great encouragement and comfort in knowing that monasteries exist, and that the prayer of hermits and monks has continued uninterrupted for hundreds of years. I had a similar experience during a recent visit to Notre Dame Seminary, which happened to coincide with the visit of about ten hospital chaplains who were interviewing the second year seminarians in advance of their summer CPE (clinical pastoral education) assignments.

When we gathered for Evening Prayer in the seminary chapel, the presence of the mostly Protestant visiting chaplains allowed me to experience anew the comfort which I derive from participating in the very rich prayer tradition of our Catholic Church. Even though there are periods in my life

when the routine of prayer can be boring and mechanical, I am encouraged by the stability and witness of my brothers and sisters in the Church who have made prayer the central element of their life's work. The cross, leading to union with Christ, is without doubt the "still point" around which the world revolves.

So to you our seminarians studying and praying at St. Joseph and Notre Dame Seminaries: please know that you are being introduced to a lived tradition of prayer which has meaning well beyond your own specific time and place. The effects of this practice will slowly unfold throughout the duration of your lives as priests. You are discovering a reference point from which you will be able to navigate all of life's twists and turns, and always be able to find your way to Christ.

In Christ,
Fr. Matt Lorrain

P.S. – Please remember to pray during this month of November for all of our deceased priests and family members, and in particular for John A. Bani (the father of Deacon Cary Bani) who died on October 20, 2006.

Holy Hour for Seminarians and Bishop

The annual "holy hour of prayer" led by Bishop Muench with the seminarians of our diocese is scheduled for Thursday, December 21, 2006, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in St. Joseph Chapel at 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 or Ms. Mary Layman.

New! Catholic Community Radio

New to the Baton Rouge area, *Catholic Community Radio* recently began airing Monday – Friday, from just 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at first, on KKAY 1590 AM. "Catholic Answers Live" airs during the first hour and features topics that touch on nearly every aspect of Christian living. This "call-in" radio program offers discussions on just about everything the Church teaches, including family concerns, political issues, evangelization, and ethics.

The second hour from 12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m. is a local show hosted by David Dawson and contains interviews with priests, religious, and laity from throughout our Baton Rouge Diocese. For more information and a more detailed schedule of programming, please visit their website at www.catholiccommunityradio.com.

"Come Follow Me" Retreat

The Diocese of Baton Rouge is joining with our sister Dioceses of Lafayette and Lake Charles to offer a discernment retreat on February 9-11, 2007, at the St. Charles Center in Lake Charles. It is open to all interested men in high school, college or professional life who are considering a call to the priesthood. Transportation will be provided to and from the retreat. Please contact Father Matt or Ms. Mary Layman at the Vocation Office (225-336-8778) for more information or to register.

Contact Us

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Parish Vocation Committee Workshop

The Office of Vocations will host a training and enrichment workshop for all parish vocation committees on Saturday, February 24, 2007, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the Our Lady of Mercy Parish Activity Center (located directly across Marquette Avenue from the parish church) in Baton Rouge. This workshop is designed to offer training for both new and existing committees, and will include opportunities for participants to share success stories and ideas for duplication in other parishes. All parishes are invited to send two representatives to the workshop. Please call Ms. Mary Layman at the Office of Vocations (225-336-8778) to register so we can prepare for the day.

New Vocation Curriculum for Junior High

Junior High School has historically been a time when Catholic religious educators teach about the vocations of priesthood and religious life. It is a time when students are mature enough to ask questions about their future and explore their inclinations without being as inhibited by the social pressures of adolescence and high school. *"What is My Vocation?"* is a newly-developed vocation curriculum which has been taught with great success to students in grades six through eight, depending upon the preference of the individual educator or religion department.

The *"What is My Vocation?"* curriculum consists of 15 lessons that discuss such topics as Christian Discipleship, Prayer, Marriage, Single Life, Priesthood, Life in the Seminary, and Religious Sisters, Brothers, & Priests. For more information, especially if you would like to explore using it in your parish's religious education program or school, please visit their website www.whatismyvocation.com. A few sample copies of both the student edition and teacher edition are also available from the Vocation Office.

Weekend Assistance for Priests

An important role of the Vocation Director is to offer weekend assistance to the parish priests of the Diocese of Baton Rouge. As of this writing Father Matt is still available for the following dates in 2006: November 25; December 2/3, 16/17, & 23. Available dates for the first half of 2007 are: January 13, 21, & 27/28; February 25; March 10/11, 18, & 24/25; April 28; May 5/6, 12/13, 19/20, & 27; June 2/3. Please give him a call at 225-336-8778 if he can help.

Roster of Diocesan Seminarians

Fourth Theology: Howard Adkins60, St. Agnes
Michael Alello26, St. Jude the Apostle
Cary Bani.....48, St. Joseph Cathedral
Chris Decker25, St. Isidore the Farmer,
Baker
Jason Palermo26, St. John the Evangelist,
Plaquemine
Chris Redden.....32, St. Alphonsus Liguori,
Greenwell Springs

Third Theology:	Jamin David24, St. Ann, Morganza Andrew Merrick.....25, St. Mary of False River, New Roads Paul Yi.....33, St. Theresa of Avila, Gonzales
Second Theology:	Mark Beard45, Our Lady of Mercy Paul Gros.....24, Most Blessed Sacrament
Pre-Theology:	Peter Ai Dang41, Sts. Anthony/Le Van Phung Al Davidson.....52, St. Agnes Mark Gyan52, St. John the Evangelist, Prairieville Matthew McCaughey.22, St. Thomas More
Fourth Philosophy:	Todd Lloyd23, St. Thomas More Bryan Thompson.....25, Our Lady of Mercy
Second Philosophy:	Kevin Piper20, St. Joseph, French Settlement Joseph Hoang Vu19, Sts. Anthony/Le Van Phung
First Philosophy:	Brad Doyle.....19, St. George Joshua Johnson18, St. George

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Have you encouraged a seminarian lately? Why not write one or more of them a note of support?

Our seminarians will also be glad to write a note of encouragement of their own to someone you think might have a vocation! Don't be shy about suggesting names to them or to the Vocations Office!