



# Vocations and Seminarians Newsletter

December 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
- Diaconate Ordination - February 3, 2007, 10:00 a.m., St. Joseph Cathedral
- "Come Follow Me" Retreat - February 9-11, 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,

The December 4th issue of *America* magazine contained a reflection by contributing writer Margaret Silf entitled "Vacancy: Apply Within." Her thoughts on the Advent/Christmas mystery turned out to be just what I needed to jumpstart my own appreciation of the special graces offered to us at this time of year.

"Vacancy" might be another word to describe the poverty, emptiness, or neediness of the human condition. We don't normally like to spend too much time reflecting on this aspect of our humanity. We would much rather reflect on our wealth, fullness, or giftedness. Which is why I was struck by Ms. Silf's assertion that "our fullness, real or imagined, is of no more use to God than is the overflowing inn with no space left for God to enter and be born."

She continues, "Instead, God seeks out the sheds and the stables and the neglected outbuildings of our lives and lies down right there in the mud and the mess and the muddle of our living, to call us into the labor of love that will give birth in the fullness of time to all that we can become." So instead of hiding or denying that part of our lives which is incomplete or messy, we should perhaps see it as the most likely opening for God's grace to enter and take root.

Growth in spiritual living is often counterintuitive. The feelings we seek to avoid are the very ones which can lead to greater humility and trust in God's saving presence. The prophets had to endure moments of ineffectiveness and doubt before they were ready to be transformed by the message they carried. Our own desire for order, predictability, and success often stands in the way of our growth as ministers of the Gospel. Advent invites us to adopt the authenticity of Mary and Joseph who were able to allow God's Word to be born in the time and place of God's choosing.

We don't immediately understand why God calls us to a particular vocation. We might consider our personality and gifts in relation to the demands of our calling, but it takes a very long time before we are able to recognize our weaknesses as also necessary to the fulfillment of God's plan. When that occurs we begin to live our vocation in a whole new way and with a renewed understanding of the mystery of the incarnation.

The readings and prayers chosen for the final days of Advent will continue to highlight the roles played by Mary, John the Baptist, Elizabeth, and the prophets in preparing for the coming of the Lord. The retelling of their vocation stories invites us to reflect on our own vocation stories and our sense of being called to mission. I pray that we too may experience a fullness of grace as we answer God's call.

In Christ,  
Father Matt Lorrain

## 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.

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## Seminary Scholarship Funds

In this season of Christmas joy and giving, why not consider a gift to one of our Seminary Scholarship Funds? The Diocese currently has 59 named funds which exist for the purpose of educating future priests for service in our local Church. The funds are named in honor of deceased pastors, family members, and groups, and provide a means for parishes, organizations, families, and individuals to remember loved ones while at the same time supporting the formation of our seminarians. The scholarship funds are managed for the Diocese by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. Contributions are acknowledged in *The Catholic Commentator* twice each year, usually during the months of January and July.

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## Diaconate Ordination

The diocesan Office of Vocations and Office of the Diaconate together joyfully announce the ordination to the transitional diaconate of Michael J. Alello, and the ordination to the permanent diaconate of Nat Garofalo, on Saturday, February 3, 2007, at 10:00 a.m. at St. Joseph Cathedral. A reception following the ordination will be held in the main auditorium of the Catholic Life Center at 1800 South Acadian Thruway in Baton Rouge.

Michael is the son of Jeff and Diane Alello and a parishioner of St. Jude Parish in Baton Rouge. He is currently completing his Parish Internship at Immaculate Conception Parish in Denham Springs. Nat Garofalo is married to Jeanette Garofalo and is a parishioner of Holy Ghost Parish in Hammond. Congratulations to both Michael and Nat.

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## 2007 Seminarian Posters & DVD

The 2007 Seminarian Posters were recently completed and are in the process of being delivered to all parishes and schools in the diocese. Many thanks to seminarian Chris Decker for the gift of an outstanding design again this year. This will probably be the final poster that Chris designs for the office since he is scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood in May 2007.

Included with the poster is a copy of the short film "Fishers of Men" produced by the United States Bishops' Committee on Vocations. The DVD is a 17 minute presentation on the priesthood intended to be used as an aid in promoting priestly vocations in our parishes and schools. Prayer groups and parish organizations might also enjoy viewing the video.

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## Contact Us

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## 2007 Vocation Materials Sent to Parishes

Earlier this fall, parishes received hard copies of the catechetical and prayer resources for the annual observances of:

**National Vocation Awareness Week, January 8-12, 2007**, which is observed in the first week of Ordinary Time each year;

**World Day for Consecrated Life, February 4, 2007**, which is observed on the Sunday following the feast of the Presentation of the Lord; and

**World Day of Prayer for Vocations, April 29, 2007**, which is observed on the Fourth Sunday of Easter, also known as Good Shepherd Sunday.

These observances can sometimes present practical challenges for parishes and schools due to their placement on the liturgical calendar. Some parishes may find it easier to incorporate the themes into a school Mass rather than a weekend Mass. Others may wish to focus on the "Family Take-Home Page" and include it as an insert in their Sunday *Bulletin*. Please feel free to adapt the celebrations as necessary in order to better meet the needs of your particular community. Electronic copies of the materials are also available by calling Mary Layman at the Vocation Office.

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## "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.

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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 use in other parishes. All parishes are invited to send two (or more) representatives to the workshop. Please call Ms. Mary Layman at the Office of Vocations (225-336-8778) to register so we can prepare enough materials.

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## 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 available for the following dates in the first half of 2007: January 21 & 28; February 25; March 10/11, 18, & 25; May 5/6, 13, 19/20, & 27; June 2/3. Please give him a call at 225-336-8778 if he can help.

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## Roster of Diocesan Seminarians

Fourth Theology:	Howard Adkins .....60, St. Agnes Michael Alello .....26, St. Jude the Apostle Cary Bani.....48, St. Joseph Cathedral Chris Decker .....25, St. Isidore the Farmer, Baker Jason Palermo .....27, St. John the Evangelist, Plaquemine Chris Redden.....32, St. Alphonsus Liguori, Greenwell Springs
Third Theology:	Jamin David .....24, St. Ann, Morganza Andrew Merrick.....25, St. Mary of False River, New Roads Paul Yi.....33, St. Theresa of Avila, Gonzales
Second Theology:	Mark Beard .....45, Our Lady of Mercy Paul Gros.....24, Most Blessed Sacrament
Pre-Theology:	Peter Ai Dang .....41, Sts. Anthony/Le Van Phung Al Davidson.....52, St. Agnes Mark Gyan .....52, St. John the Evangelist, Prairieville Matthew McCaughey.22, St. Thomas More
Fourth Philosophy:	Todd Lloyd .....23, St. Thomas More Bryan Thompson.....26, Our Lady of Mercy
Second Philosophy:	Kevin Piper .....20, St. Joseph, French Settlement Joseph Hoang Vu .....19, Sts. Anthony/Le Van Phung
First Philosophy:	Brad Doyle.....19, St. George Joshua Johnson .....19, St. George

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