



Vocations and Seminarians Newsletter

June 15, 2007

Diocese of Baton Rouge

Dates to Remember

- Seminarian Gathering - June 18, 2007, 5:30 p.m., Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Baton Rouge
- Father Randy Cuevas' 25th Anniversary Mass - June 24, 2007, 3:00 p.m., St. Albert the Great Chapel & Student Center, SLU, Hammond
- Seminarian Gathering - July 10, 2007, 5:30 p.m., St. Michael the Archangel Parish, Convent
- Seminarian BBQ with Bishop Robert Muench - August 18, 2007, 4:30 p.m., St. John the Evangelist Parish, Prairieville
- Father Mike Collins' 40th Anniversary Mass - August 26, 2007, 11:30 a.m., Most Blessed Sacrament Church, Baton Rouge
- Parish Vocation Committee Workshop - September 8, 2007, 10:00 a.m., St. George Parish, Baton Rouge

Dear Seminarians and Friends,

The Church as a living organism is constantly growing and changing even as it seeks to be faithful to its identity and mission as revealed in Sacred Scripture and tradition. It makes sense that the priesthood also undergoes change and development as it builds on the experiences of the past and responds to the current circumstances and needs of the Church and world. Although necessary, the experience of change is not without conflict and discomfort, and therefore must be discussed and managed by all of us who care so deeply about the Church.

For example, we are currently experiencing some differences in understanding between priests who were ordained in the decades following Vatican II as compared with priests ordained in the last few years. The decades following Vatican II saw a de-emphasis of the triumphant model of the Church in favor of a more ecumenical spirit of prayer and discipleship. In terms of the priesthood, emphasis was given to being pastoral in one's ministry. Father Louis Cameli of the Archdiocese of Chicago writes: "To be a truly pastoral person means being one with those served, not claiming a higher rank, not asserting a superior expertise, not really affirming a position other than that of those ministered to." This model of priesthood gained favor partly in reaction to the past sin of clericalism.

The pendulum is now swinging back toward a definition of priesthood which emphasizes the distinctiveness of the sacramental priesthood as compared with other vocations in the Church. This model of the priesthood stresses the uniqueness of priestly identity and to their complete dedication to a lifestyle of service, especially as modeled in the liturgical roles which are proper to priests and made visible by vesture and other clothing. Emphasis is given to the priest acting in the name and person of Jesus Christ, shepherd and head of the Church.

Obviously, holy and effective priestly ministry must integrate the best of many different models of priesthood. We have to be humble, pastoral, and careful not to be seduced by élitism or the trappings of power, while at the same time confident in leadership and comfortable with our identity as witnesses to God's Kingdom. We must be respectful and supportive of lay ministry even as we try to promote and strengthen priestly ministry. We must also work to overcome suspicion and extend greater charity to our brother priests and seminarians as we share this pendulum shift in the Church.

The May 28, 2007, issue of *America* magazine contained an article entitled "Of Manners and Ministry" by Father William Graham of the Diocese of Duluth, Minnesota. In his article, Father Graham argues for greater civility, kindness, and understanding between priests holding different ideologies and ecclesiologies. He writes, "We all run the risk of confusing our own agenda with the church's agenda and of viewing our own understanding as

revealed truth. Yet priestly life is fundamentally about communion.”

Father Ronald Knott, a priest of the Archdiocese of Louisville now serving as the director of the Institute for Priests and Presbyterates at St. Meinrad Seminary in Indiana, focused on a similar concern in his keynote address at the National Federation of Priests’ Councils 2007 Convention. He said the documents of Vatican Council II and the writings of Pope John Paul II characterize a presbyterate as “an intimate sacramental brotherhood.” The early church “did not think in terms of solitary priests but of a *presbyterium*. It was a college of priests who surrounded the bishop to help him carry out his ministry.”

Since most of our parishes are now staffed by one priest, it is very easy to adopt a “Lone Ranger” approach to ministry or to view oneself as a “priest in private practice” rather than a member of a presbyterate in union with one’s bishop. A separate temptation is for like-minded priests to form ideological, competing “tribes” within a diocesan presbyterate. This approach can easily lead to mistrust, name calling, and disunity within the body of priests. Our ordination calls us to rise above these differences and become men of integrity and reconciliation. Anything less is a misguided and incomplete understanding of the priesthood.

In Christ,
Father Matt Lorrain

A Mystagogical Reflection on the Ordination of Howard, Michael, Cary, Chris and Jason

By Sr. Priscilla Lemire, R.J.M.

The First Prelude: It all began in the gathering space, around the Baptismal font, up and down the aisles...people greeting one another ...something great was about to begin! Families and friends walked to take their place eager to witness the Ordination of their loved one.

I felt that excitement and whispered a quiet “Yes” as the memory of my first profession acknowledged the spiritual journey that these five young and not so young men were about to undertake. The Church was silenced; the music echoed *Veni Creator Spiritus*.

The Second Prelude: Let the celebration begin! Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria! Gloria! The words of the Opening Prayer, once called the **Collect** gathered the sentiments of the moment, the reason for our presence.

The Liturgy of the Word: To be ministers of the Word! The rightly proclaimed words of Isaiah 61 and 1 Peter 5 by Mr. Chris Redden and Sr. Diane Heinrich entered my mind and heart once again to re-affirm my call to proclaim and witness to the Good News as the essential mission of the Church and so of mine and of yours. Howard, Michael, Cary, Chris and Jason, you are to be the ministers of the Word! I believe that you chose those particular readings because they spoke of your aspiration to put on the mind of Christ. Once again the “yes” was uttered together with a whispered prayer for those to be ordained.

Alleluia! Alleluia! A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew 20:25-28
The Gospel and the Homily captured for me the essence of ordination to the priestly ministry. “It is not a call to privilege in the sense of recognition, entitlement, aggrandizement or self glorification. Rather it is a call to

dispense grace-filled mysteries of faith." (Words taken from the Bishop's homily.)

The Election: "Let those to be ordained priests, please come forward." I anticipated each one's response: Here! Present! Their response echoed for me Abraham's response to Yahweh: Here I am! I'm ready!

The Examination of the Elect: This part of the Rite of Ordination was for me the most significant. "Do you resolve to discharge without fail the office of priesthood: to care for the flock, to preach the word and teach the Catholic faith; to celebrate faithfully and reverently the mysteries of Christ, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation. Do you resolve to implore God's mercy upon the people you serve and to develop a personal relationship with Jesus? I do! I do!

What an awesome commitment! The professed words, "Yes, I do," were spoken long before this day. My apprenticeship to the Lord began in the Novitiate and yours in the many days and years in the Seminary. The promises made today are a celebration of their solemnity. And this we do in the presence of the Community. After the Promise of Obedience, the Bishop concluded: "May God who has begun the good work in you bring it to fulfillment!"

The song that I hear as I reflect on the promise is: "We've only just begun!" My experience is that the Promise is made over and over again. I don't mean renewed at an anniversary, but rather deepened by every choice that I make. And so it will be for you.

He called and He will be faithful. He will bring it to fulfillment! It's not about me. It all starts with God. You will find your strength and courage through a deep relationship with Jesus in prayer. So call on him!

The Litany of Saints, the Prayer of Consecration, the Vesting, the Anointing of Hands called to mind the rites of Baptism: the invocation, the baptismal robe, the sacred oil and the words of the anointing: "As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet and King, so may you live always as members of his body."

The Gifts Presentation - The Chalice and the Plate: "Receive the oblation of the holy people, to be offered to God." As revealed at our baptism, we all share in the priesthood of Christ. However, Howard, Michael, Cary, Chris and Jason, you have been chosen by our God to the ordained ministry....Holy Orders. May you be faithful stewards of these mysteries so that God's people may be renewed in the waters of rebirth and nourished by the word and sacrament!

My prayer for you is best expressed by the words spoken to you at the presentation of the gifts of the chalice and plate: "Understand what you do; imitate what you celebrate *each day*, (my words) and conform your life to the mystery of the Lord's cross."

Peace be with you!

First Assignments

Father Howard R. Adkins, temporary Chaplain at Baton Rouge General Medical Center in Baton Rouge until July 31, 2007; effective August 1, 2007, parochial vicar of St. Anne Church in Napoléonville and Assumption

of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Plattenville.

Father Michael J. Alello, parochial vicar of St. Michael the Archangel Church in Convent, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Gramercy, and St. Joseph Church in Paulina.

Father J. Cary Bani, parochial vicar of St. John the Evangelist Church in Prairieville.

Father Christopher J. Decker, parochial vicar of Immaculate Conception Church in Denham Springs.

Father Jason P. Palermo, parochial vicar of Christ the King Church and Catholic Center at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.

Path to Priesthood



Catholic Life Television of the Diocese of Baton Rouge joyfully presents *Path to Priesthood: The Rite of Ordination* of Michael Alello, Howard Adkins, Cary Bani, Christopher Decker and Jason Palermo. Journey with these five new priests through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Listen to their stories of inspiration, as well as insights from Bishop Muench and others about priestly formation and the Rite of Ordination. *Path to Priesthood* can be seen on Catholic Life Television at the following times through June 30:

Baton Rouge, Cox Communications, Channel 15

Sunday, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, 2:30 p.m.

Saturday, 9:00 p.m.

New Roads, Charter Communications, Channel 44

Sunday, June 17, 11 a.m., 2:30 p.m., 6:00 p.m., 9:30 p.m.

Sunday, June 24, 11 a.m., 2:30 p.m., 6:00 p.m., 9:30 p.m.

Women's Vocation Retreat

Co-sponsored by the Diocese of Lafayette and the Community of Jesus Christ Crucified.

August 3-5, 2007

A silent retreat for women discerning a Religious Vocation will be held in St. Martinville, Louisiana, at Our Lady of the Sorrows Retreat Center. Retreat begins at 7 p.m. Friday and ends at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday.

Spiritual Directors for the Retreat are Father Jerome Frey, CJC, and Father Michael Champagne, CJC. Participants need to bring a Bible, towels and toiletries. For more information or to register, please contact the Diocese of Lafayette's Office of Vocations at 337-261-5690.

Contact Us

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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 has the following 2007 dates available: Aug. 19 & 25/26; Sept. 1/2; Oct. 13; Nov. 3/4; Dec. 1/2, 8/9, 15/16, & 22/23. Please give him a call at 225-336-8778 if he can help.

2007 Seminarian Summer Assignments

Fourth Year Parish Internship

Jamin David - St. Mark Parish/Father Joel LaBauve

Andrew Merrick - St. George Parish/Father Mike Schatzle

Paul Yi - St. Louis King of France Parish/Father Jack Nutter

Clinical Pastoral Education

Mark Beard - Florida Hospital, Orlando, Florida

Paul Gros - Christus Santa Rosa, San Antonio, Texas

Creighton University-Institute for Priestly Formation

Peter Dang – Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska

Todd Lloyd – Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska

Bryan Thompson – Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska

Spanish Immersion

Matthew McCaughey - Cemanahuac Community, Cuernavaca, México

Summer Parish Ministry

Al Davidson – St. Jean Vianney Parish/Father Tom Ranzino

Mark Gyan – St. Joseph Parish (Paulina)/Father Frank Uter

Joshua Johnson – Our Lady of Peace Parish/Father Michael Miceli

Kevin Piper – St. Albert the Great Student Center/Father Randy Cuevas

Joseph Vu – St. James Parish/Father Louis Oubre

Camp Chosatonga

Brad Doyle – Camp Chosatonga, Brevard, North Carolina