

April 14, 2008

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Dates to Remember

- ◆ Serra Club Crawfish Boil – April 27, 2008, 3:00 pm, St. Jude the Apostle Parish Hall
- ◆ St. Joseph Seminary College Graduation – May 9, 2008, Baccalaureate Mass at 5:00 pm & Commencement at 8:00 pm, St. Benedict, LA
- ◆ Notre Dame Seminary Graduation – May 20, 2008, 7:00 p.m., Seminary Chapel, New Orleans, LA
- ◆ Priesthood Ordination – Jamin David, Andrew Merrick and Paul Yi – May 31, 2008, 10:00 am, St. Joseph Cathedral
- ◆ Transitional Diaconate Ordination – Mark Beard and Paul Gros – June 21, 2008, 10:00 am, St. Joseph Cathedral

Dear Seminarians and Friends,

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI makes his first pastoral visit to the United States beginning with an afternoon arrival tomorrow at Andrews Air Force Base just outside of Washington, DC. His five day visit will be physically limited to the two Archdioceses of Washington and New York, but his pastoral and spiritual concern will be extended to the entire Catholic population of our country.

It is very appropriate that the Pope's visit follows on the heels of the Fourth Sunday of Easter, also designated as World Day of Prayer for Vocations, or Good Shepherd Sunday. In his message released prior to this past Sunday's celebration, Pope Benedict chose as his theme: "Vocations at the service of the Church on mission." He went on to note, "Christian communities that live the missionary dimension of the mystery of the Church in a profound way will never be inward looking."

The Holy Father encourages us to look outward, beyond our personal wishes and desires, to the needs of others. His message included the example of the multiplication of the loaves when Jesus said to the Apostles: "You give them something to eat" (Mt 14:16). Missionaries and all ambassadors for Christ are to anticipate the needs of the crowds to whom Jesus wishes to offer nourishment. In this way we can help others discover the food "which endures to eternal life" (Jn 6:27).

I recently ran across a holy card with Pope Benedict's photograph and a wonderful excerpt from one of his homilies. I find his words inspiring, and I hope you do too:

"If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great. No! Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation. And so, today, with great strength and great conviction, on the basis of long personal experience of life, I say to you, dear young people: Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ and you will find true life."

Pope Benedict celebrates his 81st birthday on Wednesday, April 16, the first full day of his pastoral visit. He was 78 years old when elected pope in 2005, markedly different from his predecessor, Pope John Paul II, who was a relatively young 58 at the time of his election. For this reason, Father David O'Connell, president of The Catholic University of America, has suggested that Pope Benedict is seen as a "wisdom figure" by many Catholics. The Pope's age and wealth of lived experience

inform his pastoral outreach in a manner no less important than that provided by his impressive and life-long study of theology.

The theme selected for Pope Benedict XVI's apostolic journey to the United States is "Christ our hope." In a preparatory message addressed to Catholics and all Americans, the Pope stated: "Following in the footsteps of my venerable predecessors, Paul VI and John Paul II, I shall come to the United States of America as Pope for the first time, to proclaim this great truth: Jesus Christ is hope for men and women of every language, race, culture and social condition." What better way to strengthen and encourage the faith in America than to emphasize the virtue of hope as essential to one's happiness and right relationship with God? May the doors of our lives be opened wide in anticipation of his visit.

In Christ,
Father Matt Lorrain

Serra Club Crawfish Boil

Each spring the Baton Rouge Serra Club sponsors a crawfish boil for the men and women from our diocese who are in formation for the priesthood or religious life. The date for this year's event is Sunday, April 27, 2008, beginning at 3:00 pm in the Parish Hall located adjacent to St. Jude the Apostle Church at 9150 Highland Road.

The Serra Club was founded in 1934 in Seattle, Washington, by a group of Catholic businessmen and friends who gathered for lunch and discussion. The organization takes its name from Blessed Junipero Serra, the Spanish Franciscan missionary who founded nine California missions beginning with San Diego in 1769. The Serra Club's mission is to foster and affirm vocations to the ministerial priesthood and vowed religious life, and through this ministry, further our members' common Catholic faith.

There are two chapters in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, which are currently led by presidents Michael Olinde and Fred Bahlinger. Both chapters meet twice each month for Mass and discussion, and membership is open to both men and women. Please call the Office of Vocations if you are interested in attending a meeting or joining.

Ordinations Upcoming

Please mark your calendars now for two ordinations to take place later this year in the Diocese of Baton Rouge!

- ◆ **Priests** – On Saturday, May 31, 2008, three seminarians are scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Robert Muench. Deacons Jamin David, Andrew Merrick and Paul Yi will become priests in a special 10:00 am concelebrated Mass at historic St. Joseph Cathedral in downtown Baton Rouge.
- ◆ **Deacons** – Three weeks later, on June 21, 2008, we will celebrate the ordination of two men to the transitional diaconate. Seminarians Mark Beard and Paul Gros are scheduled to be ordained deacons at another special 10:00 am Mass by Bishop Robert Muench, also at St. Joseph Cathedral.

- ◆ 1st Theology: Peter Ai Dang..... 42, Sts. Anthony/Le Van Phung,
Baton Rouge
Todd Lloyd..... 24, St. Thomas More, Baton Rouge
Brent Maher..... 24, Immaculate Conception,
Denham Springs
- ◆ Pre-Theology: Al Davidson 54, St. Agnes, Baton Rouge
Mark Gyan..... 53, St. John the Evangelist,
Prairieville
Matthew McCaughey24, St. Thomas More,
Baton Rouge
- ◆ 3rd Philosophy: Luke Ordogne23, Our Lady of Mercy,
Baton Rouge
Kevin Piper 21, St. Joseph, French Settlement
Joseph Hoang Vu..... 20, Sts. Anthony of Padua
and Le Van Phung, Baton Rouge
- ◆ 2nd Philosophy: Brad Doyle20, St. George, Baton Rouge
Joshua Johnson.....20, St. George, Baton Rouge

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It is right for us all to encourage our seminarians in their decision. Consider writing a brief note to tell one how much you respect him for his choice to explore priesthood!

Father Lorrain and each of our seminarians will also willingly write notes of encouragement to those *you* think might have a vocation! Personal invitation is so very important – let the Vocations Office know if someone you know would benefit from such one-on-one contact.