

December 15, 2008

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Dates to Remember

- ◆ **Holy Hour for Seminarians and Bishop Muench in the Bishop Tracy Center Chapel - December 16, 2008, 5:00 pm.**
- ◆ **National Vocation Awareness Week - January 11-17, 2009 "CALLED BY NAME" begins.**
- ◆ **Parish Vocation Committee Workshop - January 31, 2009, 10:00 am - 12:00 noon, Bishop Tracy Center.**
- ◆ **World Day for Consecrated Life - February 8, 2009.**
- ◆ **"Come, Follow Me," Vocation Discernment Retreat - February 6-8, 2009, St. Charles Center, Lake Charles.**
- ◆ **"Come and See" Weekends, St. Joseph Seminary College - February 26-28, 2009, and April 3-5, 2009, St. Benedict.**
- ◆ **Diocesan Youth Conference - March 7-8, 2009, Catholic Life Center.**
- ◆ **Diocesan Convocation for "Called By Name" - March 29, 2009, Catholic Life Center.**
- ◆ **Chrism Mass - April 8, 2009, 10:30 am, St. Joseph Cathedral.**

Dear Seminarians and Friends,

A call to the priesthood or consecrated life takes on a slightly different form in each individual. My own vocation to the priesthood began soon after I was born when my mother offered an innocent little prayer that I might one day be a priest. Then she forgot about it and never even mentioned it until twenty years later when I told her and my father that I had decided to be a priest.

It is somewhat surprising that I even heard God's call since I do not remember ever being invited by anyone to consider a priestly vocation. I did not attend Catholic schools; I was not an altar server; I was not involved in the parish youth group; and I did not attend daily Mass. Despite all of this, my faith life contained surprisingly fertile soil and was just waiting for a vocation seed to be planted.

The immediate preparation to hear God's call began when I transferred to L.S.U. to begin my sophomore year of college. On most Sunday evenings I would walk the short distance from my dorm room in the Pentagon to attend Mass at Christ the King Chapel on the campus. At the end of one of those Masses, a student got up and spoke about his recent experience on an "Awakening Retreat," and then extended an invitation to all of the students present to go on the next retreat.

I had never attended a retreat and do not know what motivated me to sign up to attend this one, but for some reason I did. It was a retreat for college students based on the Cursillo retreat, and was staffed by other college students assisted by the priests and lay campus ministers. It introduced me to a deeper and more intimate relationship with the Lord, one which was nourished by vibrant prayer and the faith witness of a community of my peers.

My life was suddenly and permanently altered. I attended the weekly reunions on Thursday evenings when the Awakening community gathered for Mass and fellowship. I hung out at the Catholic Student Center between classes and participated in many of the service and social functions sponsored by the Catholic Student Center. I became immersed in an expression of Catholic culture at its finest.

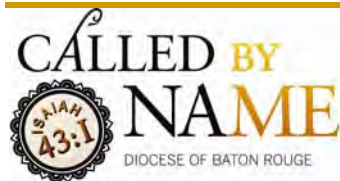
I still had no desire or thought of priesthood, but I did come to know and become known by the campus priests and many other priests who visited. Priests were no longer the mysterious beings of my childhood, but neither were they ordinary, at least not in my eyes, and so a religious vocation was not even a remote possibility for me. Plus I was having fun dating the girls I met at the Student Center.

In the middle of my junior year, the Lord finally spoke, albeit in a roundabout fashion. I was riding in a car with a friend, returning to Baton Rouge after spending the weekend at home in Metairie, when he casually mentioned that he was thinking about being a priest. To my amazement I heard myself answer, "So am I," even though the idea had never entered my mind until that very moment. But it immediately felt right. There was no fear or anxiety (those would come later) but only peace and quiet joy.

So as you can see, the preparation of the soil and the planting of seeds for religious vocations are not reserved solely to the vocation director. I did not even know what a vocation director was at the time of my call. A vocation is born of prayer, good parenting and grand parenting, an experience of community which often leads to ministry, and of course good pastoring and befriending on the part of our parish priests and lay ministers.

The "Called By Name" program begins the weekend of January 10/11, 2009 in every parish of the Diocese. Please offer your prayers and support of this important initiative to increase vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life in our Diocese of Baton Rouge. "Ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest."

In Christ,
Father Matt Lorrain



Parishioners throughout the diocese are encouraged to consider who in our midst might serve well as a priest or religious and submit their names at the weekend liturgies January 10-11 and January 17-18, 2009. At the program's heart is the belief that all of us share a common calling through Baptism, to which we are invited to respond in a variety of ways – marriage, single life, consecrated life, diaconate, or priesthood. The "CALLED BY NAME" process focuses on priesthood and consecrated life, and stresses the role of the Christian community in calling forth men and women to consider these vocations. CALLED BY NAME" is a program that invites men and women, 16 years of age and older, to consider priesthood or consecrated life. There are many good prospective priests, brothers, and sisters who are simply waiting to be asked.

Seminary Scholarship Funds

The Diocese of Baton Rouge currently has over 100 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, relatives, and groups, and provide a means for parishes, organizations, families, and individuals to remember loved ones while at the same time supporting the education of our seminarians. The scholarship funds are managed for the Diocese by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, and contributions are acknowledged in *The Catholic Commentator*. A complete listing of all funds is available on our website at www.diobr.org/vocations/scholarships.htm.

Jesuit Discernment Retreat

The Jesuit Vocation Office will host a discernment retreat December 18-22, 2008, at St. Charles College in Grand Coteau, Louisiana. Retreatants will spend part of their time with Jesuit novices who are in formation there and the remainder of the time with a Jesuit spiritual director in a silent, privately-directed retreat. For more information, call Fr. Paul Deutsch, S.J., vocation director, at 337-662-5251, ext. 253, or visit the website www.norprov.org/vocations.

Parish Vocation Committee Workshop

The Office of Vocations will host a training and enrichment workshop for all parish vocation committees on Saturday, January 31, 2009, from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon at the Bishop Tracy Center 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 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.

"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 6-8, 2009, 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.

Help Promote Vocations in 2009

The 2008-2009 Seminarian Posters have arrived and are being delivered to parishes and schools. Posters may be placed in church foyers, parish halls, gymnasiums, cafeterias, parish offices, religion classrooms, and wherever they might best be seen. Brochures and prayer cards available in the vocations office are ideal for pamphlet racks and other display areas.

Parishes have already been mailed resources for:

- ◆ *National Vocation Awareness Week*, January 11-17, 2009, observed in the first week of Ordinary Time each year; and which serves as the context for this year's "Called By Name;"
- ◆ *World Day for Consecrated Life*, February 8, 2009, observed each year on the Sunday following the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord; and
- ◆ *World Day of Prayer for Vocations*, May 3, 2009, the Fourth Sunday of Easter, also known as "Good Shepherd" Sunday.

Electronic copies of the materials are also available by calling or e-mailing Mary Layman at the Vocation Office (225-336-8778). The new Seminarian Poster can be viewed on the diocesan website at this address: www.diobr.org/vocations/08_sem_pos.pdf.

Contact Us

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Vocations to the Consecrated Life

Please pray for those pursuing a vocation to religious life. (And let us know of any others to include on this roster.)

Caleb Bernacchio (Christ the King) Jesuits

Sr. Mary Corripio (St. Aloysius) Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur

Br. Augustine DeArmond (St. Thomas, Springfield) Dominicans

Christopher Iwancio (St. Aloysius/C.H.S.) Capuchin Franciscans

Kevin Piper (St. Joseph, French Settlement) Brothers of the Sacred Heart

Weekend Assistance for Priests

The Vocation Director offers weekend assistance to the parish priests of the Diocese of Baton Rouge as he is able. Father Matt is booked for the remaining weekends of **2008**, but here are his open dates for the first half of **2009**:

◆ March 28/29; and May 9/10.

Please call him at 225-336-8778 to "reserve" a weekend.

Roster of Diocesan Seminarians

- ◆ 4th Theology: Mark Beard 47, Our Lady of Mercy, Baton Rouge
Paul Gros 26, Most Blessed Sacrament, Baton Rouge
- ◆ 2nd Theology: Peter Ai Dang 43, Sts. Anthony/Le Van Phung, Baton Rouge
Todd Lloyd 25, St. Thomas More, Baton Rouge
Brent Maher 24, Immaculate Conception, Denham Springs
- ◆ 1st Theology: Al Davidson 54, St. Agnes, Baton Rouge
Kyle Gautreau 27, St. Mark, Gonzales
Mark Gyan 54, St. John the Evangelist, Prairieville
Matthew McCaughey 24, St. Thomas More, Baton Rouge
- ◆ Pre-Theology: Tim Hedrick 26, St. Thomas More, Baton Rouge
- ◆ 4th Philosophy: Joseph Hoang Vu 21, Sts. Anthony of Padua and Le Van Phung, Baton Rouge
- ◆ 3rd Philosophy: Brad Doyle 21, St. George, Baton Rouge
Joshua Johnson 20, St. George, Baton Rouge
- ◆ 1st Philosophy: Logan Roussel 19, St. Michael, Convent

Seminary Contact Information

Notre Dame Seminary and Graduate School of Theology

2901 South Carrollton Avenue

New Orleans, LA 70118-4391

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Fax: 504-866-3119

Website: <http://www.nds.edu>

St. Joseph Seminary College

75376 River Road

St. Benedict, LA 70457-9900

Telephone: 985-867-2232

Fax: 985-867-2295

Website: <http://seminary.saintjosephabbey.com>