

March 16, 2009

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Dates to Remember

- ◆ **Abbey Youth Festival – March 21, 2009, St. Joseph Abbey.**
- ◆ **Diocesan Convocation for “Called By Name” – March 29, 2009, Catholic Life Center.**
- ◆ **Chrism Mass - April 8, 2009, 10:30 am, St. Joseph Cathedral.**
- ◆ **World Day of Prayer for Vocations – May 3, 2009.**
- ◆ **Serra Club Crawfish Boil – May 3, 2009, 4:00 pm, St. Jude the Apostle Parish Hall.**
- ◆ **Priesthood Ordination – May 30, 2009, 10:00 am, St. Joseph Cathedral.**

Dear Seminarians and Friends,

The Catholic inmates in our state prisons do not always receive the same opportunities for spiritual growth or access to the sacraments that most of us take for granted. Security concerns, a shortage of priests, and even travel distances make normal pastoral ministry somewhat more difficult. So I felt very fortunate to participate in a penance service organized for the Catholics at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola last Thursday.

Prisoners at Angola live in various camps which are spread throughout the sprawling property. It can be very complicated and tedious to obtain permission for the Catholic inmates to gather for a service in the main chapel, but somehow the Catholic Ministry managed to complete the necessary paperwork for Catholics from different camps to come together for a “Lenten Day of Reflection” led by their pastor, Father Charlie Landry.

Weeks earlier, Father Charlie had also worked the phone lines to find several priests (and one bishop) who were available and willing to participate in an evening penance service. Bishop Muench, Brother Ray Hebert, S.C., Brother Will McCue, S.C., Father Andrew Merrick, Father Paul Yi, and I arrived around 6:00 pm and heard confessions for about two hours. Deacon Zeke Nola and lay chaplains Bill Gipson and Jay Jackson were also present to provide logistical and moral support.

Naturally I was touched by the faith, sincerity, and gratitude of the penitents, but I also was touched by the spirit and personality of the priest confessors. We had one bishop, one 60-something priest, one 49-something priest, two ordained Sacred Heart brothers, and two newly ordained priests. I suspect that we agreed to participate as much for our own spiritual good as for the benefit of the penitents. Grace moves in all directions when Catholics gather to celebrate forgiveness and reconciliation.

I was especially proud of our two newly ordained priests. I know from experience that visiting a prison is well beyond the comfort zone of most priests and even lay Catholic ministers. No one would criticize a new priest for wanting to wait a few years before agreeing to say Mass or hear confessions at Angola. However their youthful appearance and piety added something special to our service.

The diocesan and religious priests working in this diocese are an exceptional group of men. Is God calling you to join them?

In Christ,
Father Matt Lorrain



Diocesan Convocation

A diocesan wide gathering of the candidates identified through the parish-based "Called By Name" campaign has been set for Sunday, March 29, 2009, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm in the main auditorium of the Catholic Life Center. The keynote speakers for the gathering are Father Mark Thibodeaux, S.J., the Director of Jesuit Novices in Grand Coteau, and Sister Noel Toomey, O.P., who is the Director of the Archdiocesan Spirituality Center in New Orleans. The schedule of activities will also include separate breakout sessions for men and women led by panels of priests, sisters, brothers, and seminarians.

Video Profiles

Various inspiring "CALLED BY NAME" video segments are now available on YouTube, including those profiling seminarian Joshua Johnson, Deacon Paul Gros, Father Matt Dupré, Father Than Vu, Father Michael Thompson, S.S.J., Father Gregory Boquet, O.S.B., Sister Renée Daigle, M.S.C., Sister Adele Lambert, C.S.J., Sister Georgeann Parizek, R.S.C.J., Sister Uyen Vu, O.S.F., and Brother Chris Sweeney, S.C. View them at <http://www.youtube.com/user/CatholicLifeTV>.

"Come and See" Weekend

St. Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict, Louisiana (north of Covington) is sponsoring a "Come and See" Weekend on, April 3-5, 2009. The weekend runs from Friday evening through Sunday, and is open to all interested young men in 10th grade through college. The weekend is hosted by the seminarians and the Benedictine monks of St. Joseph Abbey. Participants experience the prayer and community life of a seminary community, and also get to know some of the men who are studying to be priests. Arrival at the seminary takes place between 4:00 and 6:00 pm on Friday evening, and the weekend concludes with 11:00 am Mass on Sunday. Please contact Father Matt or Ms. Mary Layman at the Vocation Office (225-336-8778) for more information or to register.

"Search Your Heart" Retreat

The Brothers of the Sacred Heart are sponsoring a weekend discernment retreat on April 3-5, 2009, at the Rosaryville Retreat Center in Ponchatoula, Louisiana. The retreat is open to men ages 17 to 35.

The retreat will provide time for reflection, listening to God's voice, and discerning where God is calling you at this time. You will also meet other Catholic men who are at important, decision-making points in their lives. For more information or to register, contact Brother Chris Sweeney by calling 504-352-9940, or by sending him an email at brochris66@hotmail.com. Also, visit the Brothers' website at www.brothersofthesacredheart.org.

Contact Us

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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 55, St. Agnes, Baton Rouge
Kyle Gautreau 28, St. Mark, Gonzales
Mark Gyan 54, St. John the Evangelist,
Prairieville
Matthew McCaughey 25, 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 21, St. George, Baton Rouge
- ◆ 1st Philosophy: Logan Roussel 19, St. Michael, Convent

Weekend Assistance for Priests

Father Matt offers weekend assistance to the priests of the Diocese of Baton Rouge as he is able. Please call him at 225-336-8778 to reserve a weekend. Here are his available weekends remaining in **2009**:

- ◆ March 28/29; May 9/10; July 25; September 5/6, 12/13; October 3/4, 17/18, 24/25, & 31; November 1, 7/8, & 28/29; December 5/6, 12/13, & 19/20