



Diocese of Gary Vocation Office Newsletter JANUARY - MARCH 2010

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Baptized in the Spirit Theme Rings in the New Year

“Baptized in the Spirit” is the theme chosen for National Vocation Awareness Week, which begins on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, January 9, 2010 and continues until January 16, 2010.

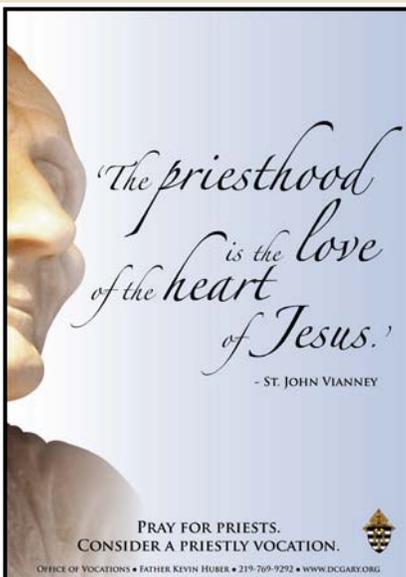
Cardinal Sean O'Malley, O.F.M. of Boston, Chairman of the Bishops' Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations describes the focus of the week. "This week provides the opportunity for parishes across the country to promote vocations through prayer and education. It is our responsibility to encourage young people to be generous in their response as they discern the possibility of a call to service in the Church. We must also ask parents, families and our parish communities to assist with this work, vocations are everyone's business. As we pray for an increased number of seminarians and candidates for religious life, we recognize the importance of safeguarding the gift of vocations."



Vocations are inclusive; every person has one and every Christian has the responsibility to discern their vocation. Above all, the Fathers of Vatican II articulated that every baptized Christian has a personal call to holiness. Christian men and women are created for communion with God and to live in accord with God's will and design. Discerning a vocation with intentionality and focus will lead men and women into an awareness of God's plan for them and will enable them live a life of freedom and fulfillment.

During Vocation Awareness Week, the Diocese of Gary Vocation Director, Fr. Kevin Huber, will be celebrating Masses at St. Andrew the Apostle Church in Merrillville and St. John the Evangelist Church in St. John, speaking to students in the schools and religious education classes. A variety of vocation promotion ideas and activities can be found at the National Coalition for Church Vocations website, www.nccv-vocations.org or you can Google “vocation awareness week 2010.”†

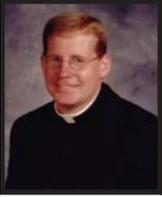
Vocation Poster Takes on New Look for Year for Priests



Since 2006, the annual vocation awareness poster produced by the Vocation Office has featured photographs of the Gary seminarians. This year, the poster highlights the Year for Priests, promulgated by Pope Benedict XVI. The poster features a half-silhouette of St. John Vianney, patron saint of priests, and an eloquent quote from the saint. “The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus.”

The posters, printed in English and Spanish, are displayed on the home page of the Vocation Office website, in many parishes, Catholic schools, and religious education buildings throughout the Diocese of Gary. The Vocation Director hopes that the poster will arouse prayerful consideration of a priestly vocation. The vocation awareness poster is another medium that contributes to the culture of vocations and raises awareness of the priestly vocation.

Copies of the vocation awareness poster can be obtained by contacting the Diocese of Gary Vocation Office.†



View from the Vineyard

By Fr. Kevin Huber,
Vocation Director

Dear Friends,

As a man who is very task-oriented, I do not often take time to reflect on the past; I just keep moving into the future. However, as part of my new year resolution of grateful remembrance, I invested time in the important task of remembering the activities and events in the Vocation Office throughout 2009 and I was surprised by the many graces I discovered.

I see growth. Four new men from three parishes stepped forward to begin priestly formation, which brought the total number of seminarians to 13, up from nine the year before. The number of men in the database continues to grow as I travel from parish to parish asking people to send names of men and women whom they think have the vocation to priestly or religious life. While numbers are not everything, they provide indicators for the future.

I see expansion in the diocesan vocation program. This past year, with the invaluable help of Jo Anne Rosenow, I initiated a Parish Vocation Ministry Program, which empowers people in parishes to raise awareness of priestly and religious vocations and invite people into dialogue and discernment. If more parishes adopt this program, the ministry of promoting vocations will have a far greater reach.

I see hope. The men who are currently in the seminary are prayerful, hard working, service-minded, and deeply invested in discerning God's will, which bodes well for the future and encourages other men to consider a priestly vocation. I am convinced that God has blessed us with these men.

We have had disappointments, as well. Two men discontinued priestly formation and others have terminated the application process. These are always painful occasions for me but confidence in divine providence keeps me moving forward.

Above all, I am grateful to you who have been faithful companions in this crucial ministry. I am sure that God sees many blessings in the months ahead. Wherever God leads us, I have confidence that it will be in a direction that is good for the local Church of Gary.

God bless you in this new year,

Fr. Kevin Huber

Save the Dates!

February 20, 2010: Discernment Evening with the Gary Seminarians

March 6-8, 2010: Information Weekend at Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary

April 23-25, 2010: Source and Summit Retreat in Merrillville

Seminarian Mark Cregger Requests Pastoral Year



During their time of study, seminarians *learn* about the ministry that priests perform each day, such as caring for the sick and the homebound, providing spiritual guidance, teaching, bereavement, parish leadership, preaching, and sacramental care.

Occasionally, a seminarian requests a pastoral year to embrace a *lived* experience of parish ministry and the daily challenges that priests meet to balance prayer and ministry with personal, social, and physical health needs. This opportunity often enhances a man's vocational discernment without academic demands.

A pastoral year is also a time of sharpening an awareness of God's call to the priesthood. A man who has a call to the priesthood finds fulfillment, peace, and confidence in the abiding presence of God in the midst of the demands of pastoral ministry. If he begins to experience a lack of fulfillment and peace in the midst of pastoral ministry, then he needs to consider the possibility that God is calling him to a vocation other than the priesthood.

Since September 2009, Mark Cregger, a seminarian of the Diocese of Gary and a student at Mundelein Seminary, has been engaged in a pastoral year at St. Thomas More Parish in Munster. As Mark visits the sick and homebound, assists at nursing homes, facilitates marriage preparation, ministers to family members of deceased persons, sits on parish committees and councils, teaches sixth grade students in the parish religious education program, participates in the parish RCIA team, and lives the daily rhythm of a priest's life, he is gaining greater clarity and a deeper realism about priestly life and ministry. †

Jaime Perea Begins Pastoral Internship in February 2010

As part of his priestly formation at Mundelein Seminary, Jaime Perea will enjoy a pastoral internship at St. Paul Parish in Valparaiso under the supervision of the pastor, Fr. Joseph Pawlowski. The pastoral internship will begin on Sunday, February 28, 2010 and conclude on Sunday, May 28, 2010.

The aim of a pastoral internship is to offer a seminarian models of ministry and practical experience in parish ministry that will be his assist him after he is ordained to the priesthood. During his internship, Jaime will have the chance to observe and discuss Fr. Pawlowski's pastoral style and leadership skills. He will also have opportunities to minister to the Hispanic members of the parish community, teach the students in the parish school and the religious education program, visit parishioners in nursing homes, hospitals, and hospice centers, and participate in the Parish Pastoral Council meetings and commission meetings. During his internship, Jaime will reside at St. Paul Parish rectory.



Several difference distinguish a pastoral internship from a pastoral year. Pastoral internships are shorter in duration, normally 10 to 12 weeks rather than the 12-month experience of a pastoral year. Pastoral internships are integral components of the curriculum used in priestly formation unlike pastoral year experiences, which are voluntary. The pastoral internship program is directed by Fr. Raymond Webb, D. Min, the Academic Dean at Mundelein Seminary. During his internship, Fr. Webb will visit Fr. Pawlowski and Jaime to evaluate Jaime's progress. While the pastoral year experience is supervised by the pastor of the parish where the seminarian resides, he is not evaluated by the seminary faculty since the seminary does not sponsor the program nor is a pastoral year taken for academic credit. †

Parish Vocation Ministry Momentum Builds



As the new year begins, God is inspiring parish communities to adopt a fresh and creative way to promote priestly and religious vocations and to raise up men and women from the community to answer the call. The Parish Vocation Ministry Program sponsored by the Diocese of Gary Vocation Office continues to build momentum as a positive force that raises awareness of priestly and religious vocations in parishes and invites and encourages Catholic men and women to open their hearts to God's call to the priesthood and consecrated life.

At the moment five parishes have inaugurated the ministry or are in the process of forming the team necessary for the ministry to begin. In May, 2009, St. Paul Parish in Valparaiso piloted the program and has since established a healthy and active team of fifteen men and women to facilitate this ministry. The parishes of Sacred Heart in Wanatah, St. Mary in Otis, and St. Martin in La Cross have gathered people who are interested in this ministry and they began their Parish Vocation Ministry Team formation on December 8, 2009. The parish pastoral council at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Valparaiso has expressed their interest in this ministry and an introductory meeting for members of the parish will be scheduled for February 2010.

In the Parish Vocation Ministry, teens, young adults, parents are empowered to create a culture of vocations in the parish community that invites men and women of every age to discern priestly and religious vocations with intentionality and intensity. Above all, the parish vocation ministry is predicated on an understanding of vocations, which John Paul II taught in his apostolic exhortation, *I Will Give You Shepherds*. "The whole Church receives the gift of vocations from God and is responsible for promoting and discerning vocations" (#34).

If you would like more information about the Parish Vocation Ministry, please contact Fr. Kevin Huber at the Diocese of Gary Vocation Office.†

St. Paul Parish Adopts Unique Vocation Cross

Vocation Crosses are used in parishes throughout the country to raise awareness of priestly and religious vocations and encourage individuals and families to pray for an outpouring of strength and courage upon women and men whom God calls to religious life and priesthood. However, the vocation cross recently adopted by St. Paul Parish raises the bar on vocation awareness and uses the seminarians studying for the Diocese of Gary as an example and focus.

Designed by Jo Anne Rosenow and crafted by Jim Thiel of the Thiel Cabinet Shop in St. John, Indiana, the vocation cross employs unique a system that allows photographs of the seminarians to slide into the cross. When families are praying for vocations to the consecrated life and priesthood, they are focused by specific men who are engaged in priestly formation.

St. Paul Parish began using the Vocation Cross on September 21, 2009. Each week a family receives the vocation cross and assumes the responsibility of praying for religious and priestly vocations throughout the week. If you have interest in beginning this ministry in your parish, please contact the Vocation Office.†

