



Diocese of Gary Vocation Office Newsletter

January-March 2014

9292 Broadway • Merrillville, IN 46410 • 219.769.9292 • www.dcgary.org

Seminarians of the Diocese of Gary

From time to time, people ask me about the experiences our seminarians are having as part of their formation. Their experiences are meant to foster their spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation, as well as help them to continue discerning whether God is calling them to the diocesan priesthood.

Next month, Seminarians Jordan Fetcko and Mark Muzzillo will leave for a ten-week pilgrimage in the Holy Land with their Third-Year Class from Mundelein Seminary. They will visit places of historic and spiritual significance like Bethlehem, Nazareth and Jerusalem. At the same time, they will have professors instructing them in Sacred Scriptures where the accounts of the Bible took place, and they will have people who live and minister in the Holy Land speak to them of their experiences. Please pray for Jordan and Mark as pilgrimages often have unforeseen challenges. I'm sure they'll be praying for us.

Two other seminarians studying at Mundelein, Greg Bim-Merle and Nate Edquist, are actively engaged in parish ministry at parishes near the seminary. Greg is working with a high school youth group, and Nate is teaching the faith to grade school-aged children. In February, they will be instituted as lectors, helping people know the Scriptures as they proclaim God's Word.

Deacon Chris Stanish will begin his final semester of priestly formation at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit. Besides taking courses in presiding at Mass and hearing confessions, Deacon Chris will have a thesis to complete and final exams to take. All of this will happen as he prepares himself for a June ordination to the priesthood. Seminarian Jeff Burton will be completing studies in Pre-Theology and preparing himself to begin Theology studies. As they wind down their current formation programs, may God bless them with dedication to their studies.

Experiencing formation in Scarborough, Ontario, Seminarian Roque Meraz is continuing his theological formation while at the same time hoping to return briefly to the United States this Summer. Roque, Mark and Jordan are all hoping to be chosen by Bishop Melczek to be ordained to the diaconate in June.

Our two youngest seminarians, Junior Declan McNicholas and Sophomore Adam Antone are doing their best to learn philosophy as a precursor to theological studies. Besides taking exams, writing papers and attending classes as do all college students, Declan and Adam are busily engaged in community prayer, daily meditation, seminary events, and events that take place in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis where they live and study. Recently they participated in the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) held in Indianapolis.

As you can see, our seminarians have very busy lives. They spend their time learning in the classroom, learning in parishes and learning in the quiet of the Spirit. Please pray that they continue to understand how God is calling and gifting them, and that they will be courageous and generous in following Christ.

Save the Date! Mass and Holy Hour for Vocations

Sunday 2 February beginning at 10:30am, Holy Angels Cathedral

On Sunday 2 February, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, the Vocation Office will be sponsoring a Holy Hour for Vocations at Holy Angels Cathedral. The morning begins with the celebration of the Eucharist at 10:30am. After the Mass, there will be a Holy Hour led by Bishop Melczek.

Everyone is welcome to come together as Christ's Body in the Diocese of Gary, that God will grant us even more loving priests and consecrated religious. Please join us as we ask God for His blessings.

Pope Francis on Vocations

In a message to seminarians this past summer, Pope Francis spoke about the true nature of vocations, and what is most important in a vocation in the Church.

The Holy Father began by speaking about the importance of prayer in discerning and living a vocation. All vocations in the Church have as a mission Christ's mission, the mission to evangelize. Repeating what he heard a seminary formator say, "Evangelization is done on one's knees." Pope Francis continued, "Without a constant relationship with God, the mission becomes a job." He further explained that being a priest or a sister is not a job like being a tailor or a cook; vocations and jobs are not the same thing.

Prayer is essential in carrying out the mission of Jesus. In each moment of preparation for an important decision or event, Pope Francis reminded his audience, Jesus Himself spent time in prayer. Prayer helps us to avoid the "risk of activism, of relying too much on structures; (it) is an ever-present danger". Rather the Holy Father encouraged seminarians to "cultivate the contemplative dimension, even amid the whirlwind of more urgent and heavy duties".

Pope Francis conclude by revealing the "secret of pastoral fruitfulness". He told them to "let (their) hearts be more closely united to Christ's heart, full of mercy and love.

Vocations Calendar

11-13 January	Exploring Priesthood Weekend Mundelein Seminary
17-20 January	Discernment Weekend Sacred Heart Major Seminary
2 February	Mass and Holy Hour for Vocations (10:30am Holy Angels Cathedral)
21-24 March	Discernment Weekend Sacred Heart Major Seminary
12-14 April	Exploring Priesthood Weekend Mundelein Seminary
TBA	Junior High Day Visit Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary



Support Vocations!

As Advent quickly moves into Christmas, our thoughts are moved to the three comings of Christ: in history, some two thousand years ago, in mystery, in many ways in our own time, and in majesty, on the last day. Never far from the side of Jesus, and very present in the Gospel readings of Advent and Christmas, is the Virgin Mary.

When I was discerning my own call to the priesthood, many told me that if I wanted to know whether Christ was calling me to this vocation, turn to the Blessed Mother. I began praying her rosary, meditating on the mysteries of God's love, and asking the Lord, "How are you calling me to participate in these great mysteries of our faith?"

Mary, the perfect Scriptural model of embracing God's will, is a wondrous intercessor for anyone who truly longs to live as a disciple. Likewise, as Mother of God, Mary's intercession for the Church must certainly touch the Sacred Heart of her Son, Jesus. The late Holy Father, John Paul II, wrote, "With her example and intercession, the Blessed Virgin keeps vigilant watch over the growth of vocations and priestly life in the Church." ("Pastores Dabo Vobis", 82)

As we think about the love of God made manifest in the Child of Bethlehem, let us also reflect on the love and fidelity of His Blessed Mother. Together, we pray that Mary intercede for those who are being called to the priesthood, the diaconate, and the religious life. Like her, may they be courageous and open to saying "Yes" to the will of God.