



# Diocese of Gary Vocation Office Newsletter

October-December 2013

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## **Pastoral Internship** By Seminarian Jordan Fetcko

Part of the program at Mundelein Seminary is a Pastoral Internship which all seminarians in their second year of theological studies participate in. Instead of taking classes, we all return to our home dioceses and live in a parish for three months in order to witness and participate in the life of the parish, minister to its members, and learn from the example of its priests.

Although I have had assignments in parishes during summer breaks, this was my first time in a parish during springtime—possibly the busiest time of the year. The school year is coming to an end; the Church journeys through the great seasons of Lent and Easter, including the Paschal Triduum; and many children receive their first Holy Communion and Confirmation. The internship gave me the opportunity to experience parish life during these hectic and exciting times.

From mid-February until mid-May I lived and ministered at St. Casimir Parish in Hammond, supervised by Fr. Bill O'Toole. I participated to some extent in nearly every area of parish life: I assisted at Mass as lector, acolyte, extraordinary minister of Communion, and cantor; I helped lead wake and cemetery services; I brought Communion to the sick and homebound; I spoke to the students in the school (my favorite!); and I participated in various meetings and events. I also put my knowledge of technology to good use, assisting the parish office with computer-related issues.

St. Casimir has the distinction of being a tri-lingual parish, with three distinct languages: English, Spanish, and Polish. Being a somewhat proficient Spanish speaker, I was able to participate in much parish life, even giving reflections and leading Communion services in Spanish. I also tried my best to respond and sing in Polish at the 8:30 Mass (with some success).

Overall, I found the experience to be enriching and affirming of my vocation to the diocesan priesthood. I love parish life, and I'm glad to call the Diocese of Gary my home. I hope that I will be a holy and capable minister to the people of our diocese for the rest of my life.

## **Clinical Pastoral Education** By Seminarian Mark Muzzillo

After completing Second Theology, I engaged in chaplaincy work in a program called Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). I participated in CPE at Mount Sinai Hospital in Chicago. It was a unique, intense, and graced experience.

Mount Sinai is one of only two hospitals in Chicago that is Trauma 1 for both adults and children – meaning that they receive the most difficult cases. I saw suffering and death in many forms. My experience with these situations happened mostly on my on-call night (Sundays) when I would be at the hospital overnight from 4:30 Sunday afternoon until 8:00 Monday morning. During those hours I would attend to traumas coming into our Emergency Room, ministering to victims and their families.

On weekdays, I was in class two days and worked as a chaplain the other 3 days. I was assigned to the Oncology unit, the Surgical Intensive Care Unit, and a less intense medical-surgical floor. I set out to be Christ to others – especially in their moments of vulnerability and suffering. Yet so often the patients ended up being Christ to me. Many that I encountered were wonderful examples of accepting suffering – sometimes even with a smile!

There were experiences I did not expect. Because the population served tends to be poor and disadvantaged – the suffering they experience has many layers. An older gentleman was at young patient's bedside. I asked if he were her father. He told me he was her uncle. When I asked about her parents, he told me her parents abandoned her and her siblings. He knew she had a brother in Milwaukee, but did not know the whereabouts of the siblings. On top of all that, the girl was malnourished and looked more like an 8 year-old rather than an 11 year-old.

No matter what I experienced, the suffering in this world is beyond our understanding and imagination. I truly became a much more compassionate man in the truest sense of the word. It was a difficult summer. But it was filled with many graces and much learning.

## Northward Bound!

### By Seminarian Roque Meraz

After finishing two years of studies in Mexico City, I packed-up and got ready to move to a different seminary. This time, I was moving to St Augustine Seminary in Toronto, Canada. As I was packing, I was thinking of all the new changes and challenges that were waiting for me. Changes are not always easy. I believe that if I had to do this on my own, I would never be able to do it. But I know I can handle what comes because God, to whom I belong, will enable me to accomplish anything by His grace.



Father Mick & Roque Meraz  
in front of a statue of Saint Augustine

So with God's help, I arrived in Toronto the last week of August. The seminary offered two weeks of orientation for the new seminarians. This year, twelve of us entered the formation program, bringing the total to fifty-five men in the house. There are also twelve priests living here helping us in our formation.

During our first days, we were trying to learn each other's names and asking a lot of questions about our dioceses, our families, etc. Since we are going to spend time together, and help each other, we have to know each other. We are all away from home and from family, so the seminary becomes our home, and the other seminarians become our family.

I am blessed to be in this seminary this year because St. Augustine Seminary is celebrating its centennial anniversary. So throughout this year, we will be having several celebrations. I am very glad to see that after one hundred years, this seminary is still forming priest to serve the Church and the people of God. God willing this will continue for many more years. I myself am looking forward to the day that, God willing, I will be back in the Diocese of Gary to minister and serve.

## Vocations Calendar

24 October	High School Discernment Day Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary (Indianapolis)
1-4 November	Discernment Weekend Sacred Heart Major Seminary (Detroit, Michigan)
11-13 January	Exploring Priesthood Weekend Mundelein Seminary (Mundelein, Illinois)
17-20 January	Discernment Weekend Sacred Heart Major Seminary (Detroit, Michigan)
21-24 March	Discernment Weekend Sacred Heart Major Seminary (Detroit, Michigan)
12-14 April	Exploring Priesthood Weekend Mundelein Seminary (Mundelein, Illinois)
TBA	Junior High Day Visit Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary (Indianapolis)

