



# Diocese of Gary

## Vocation Office Newsletter

### JULY - SEPTEMBER, 2008

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## A Day of Gratitude for the Diocese of Gary

More than 800 people crowded the Cathedral of the Holy Angels on a hot, humid late spring morning on June 7, 2008, to participate in a Eucharistic celebration during which Bishop Melczek ordained three men for service as priests in the Diocese of Gary. The capacity crowd expressed their approval and support of Father Richard Holy, Father Michael Kopil, and Father David Link with thunderous and prolonged applause as the Vocation Director, Fr. Kevin Huber, presented them to Bishop Melczek for ordination. The celebration capped a day of gratitude for the Diocese of Gary.

Following the ordination, the newly ordained priests met their families in the school cafeteria to impart their first blessing. About 400 people followed them to the cafeteria to greet Fr. Rick, Fr. Mick, and Fr. David, to wish them well, and to receive a blessing.

On Sunday, June 8, 2008, the newly ordained priests celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving for the first time in a variety of churches. Fr. Richard Holy celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Casimir Church in Hammond; St. Michael the Archangel Church in Schererville was the location of Fr. Mick Kopil's Mass of Thanksgiving; and Fr. David Link celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend.

The newly ordained priests will begin serving in parishes in the Diocese of Gary effective June 16, 2008. Fr. Richard Holy is the Associate Pastor at St. Thomas More Church in Munster. Fr. Mick Kopil is the Associate Pastor at St. Michael the Archangel Church in Schererville. Bishop Melczek appointed Fr. David Link Chaplain at Indiana State Prison in Michigan City. †



*Deacons Richard Holy, Mick Kopil, and David Link presents themselves to Bishop Melczek and to the people of the Diocese of Gary for ordination to the priesthood. They were received with fervent acclamation by the people gathered at the Cathedral of the Holy Angels.*

*As priests, they share in the ministry of the Bishop and offer their lives in service to the Roman Catholic Church.*

*Photograph by Tim Hunt.*

## Achievements and Opportunities Abound for Seminarian Benjamin Ross

The year our Lord 2008 has been filled with many achievements and opportunities for Gary seminarian, Benjamin Ross. On April 29, 2008, Ben participated in an album release party for a CD that he helped record, and for which he composed songs, entitled, "Behold Your Mother." On Saturday, May 10, 2008, Ben graduated from Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary with a Bachelor of Arts Degree from St. Mary's University in Winona, Minnesota. On May 16, 2008, Ben received a letter of acceptance from the Rector of the Pontifical North American College in Rome, Reverend Monsignor, James F. Checcio. On June 22, 2008, Bishop Dale J. Melczek received Ben as a candidate for the Order of Deacons and the Order of Priests in preparation for theological studies.



Ben's next opportunity will begin on July 20, 2008. He will travel to Rome, Italy to meet other men at the North American College. He will then journey to Assisi, Italy where he will study Italian for four weeks. He will return to Rome in August to begin his formal study of theology at the Angelicum (The Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas) and participate in the priestly formation program at the North American College. With perseverance, Ben will complete his Bachelor of Sacred Theology (STB) degree in three years and then he will spend at least one more year of studying Rome in a specialized program of theology. Upon his completion of the formation program at the North American College, Ben will be ordained to the priesthood in 2012. Ben is a vivid example of the effectiveness of God's grace for those who cooperate with God's plan.

Ben is the oldest of seven children born to Thomas and Rose Anne Ross. He is a resident of Highland and member of St. Stephen the Martyr Church in Merrillville.†

## Formation and Work Fill Summer Days for Seminarians

The summer months do not provide a respite from priestly formation and work for the Diocese of Gary seminarians. Typically, Gary seminarians spend their summer break engaged in ministry at parishes throughout the diocese or find employment in order to build up their financial reserves for the impending school year. This summer, the seminarians are engaged in a variety of work and ministry experiences.

**Mark Cregger** lives at St. Thomas More Church in Munster, is working at Pollution Controls Industries, and fulfilling various ministerial roles at the parish.

**Jordan Fetcko** is living in Crown Point and working in the fast food industry for the summer.

**Mark Kurowski** is living in Munster and retains his ministry as Pastoral Associate at St. John the Evangelist in St. John.

**Roque Meraz** is living in Calumet City, Illinois and working in the steel industry during June, July, and August.

**Jaime Perea** is living and ministering at St. Joseph Church in La Porte and working part time in the restaurant industry.

**Ben Ross** is living at St. John Vianney House of Discernment, informally studying Italian, and preparing for his studies at the North American College in Rome.

**Christopher Stanish** and **Tom Oram** are living at Seminario Hispano de Santa Maria de Guadalupe in Mexico City and studying Spanish at the Pan American University.†





## View from the Vineyard By Fr. Kevin Huber, Vocation Director

Dear Friends in Vocation Ministry, I want to offer an apology to the readers of *View from the Vineyard*. In the last edition, I made a poorly-worded comparison between men who leave priestly formation and the person of Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus. Readers interpreted my article to say that men who leave priestly ministry betray Jesus and walk away from the vocation that God has chosen for them. My intention was to say that we need to trust that God will continue Jesus' earthly ministry in the manner that God envisions. The apostles and disciples did not always understand Jesus' teachings or the meaning behind his proclamation that the Kingdom of God is at hand. Yet, after the resurrection, Jesus sent them out to continue his mission. To the men and women who have discontinued priestly or religious formation and to anyone else whom I offended, I extend a profound apology.

If you have any questions or comments to share with me, I welcome your phone call, letter or e-mail message. You can contact me at 219-769-9292, [khuber@dcgary.org](mailto:khuber@dcgary.org), or at the Pastoral Center address.

I also want to share with you the excitement and anticipation that accompanied the priesthood ordinations on June 7, 2008. The Pastoral Center was besieged with phone calls from local newspaper reporters. The Diocese of Gary received excellent coverage from the Northwest Indiana Catholic, the Times, and the Post-Tribune. In these days when people wonder about the future of the priesthood, the ordination of three men was a powerful symbol of God's providence and care. We have every reason to be grateful for God's watchful concern for the human family.

Yours in the Lord Jesus,

*Fr. Kevin Huber*

## Vocation Director Welcomes Stephen Kolodziej

With the recommendation of the Vocation Assessment Team, the Vocation Director, Fr. Kevin Huber, recently accepted Stephen Kolodziej as a seminarian in priestly formation for the Diocese of Gary. He will enter the priestly formation program at Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary in Winona, Minnesota this Fall.

As a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in St. John, Indiana, Steve has been actively involved in the Church from an early age. He has functioned as an altar server at his home parish since the age of 10 and graduated from St. John the Evangelist School in 2002. Steve is also an alumnus of Andrean High School Class of 2006. His parents, Ken and Shari Kolodziej, are actively involved at St. John the Evangelist Parish. Ken is a 4th Degree member of the Knights of Columbus and Shari is the parish bookkeeper. Steve also has one sister, Karen, who is a student at Andrean High School.



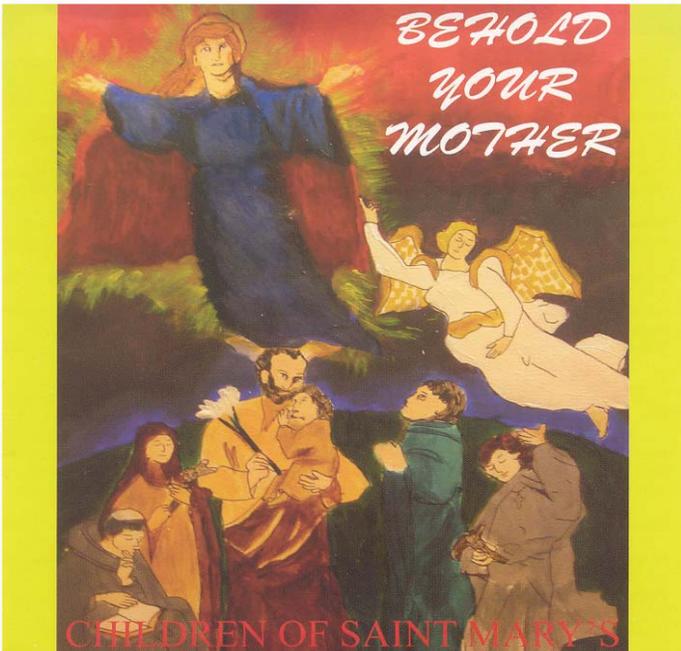
When he first began serving, Steve's pastor recommended that Steve begin to consider a priestly vocation. Since then the thought never left his mind. After graduating from Andrean High School in 2006, Steve attended Purdue University for three semesters. During that time, he experienced a call to the priesthood and decided to respond. He contacted the Vocation Director in January, 2008 and began the application process in February 2008. He slowly began to inform his friends of his decision to discern a priestly vocation and he has received their support and encouragement. †

## Seminarian Writes Songs and Records CD for Project Rachel

Three and a half years ago, Gary seminarian Ben Ross could not play the guitar. After countless hours of practice, he not only taught himself to play the guitar, he also learned to sing and compose music. In his final year of college, Ben met students at St. Mary's University in Winona, Minnesota who shared not only his love for music but also his devotion to Mary. Last Fall, Ben and his music mates collaborated on a project to produce a compilation of original songs honoring the Blessed Virgin Mary. After many hours of recording and digital mastering, the group of musicians who call themselves *Children of St. Mary's* (pictured below on right) released their first CD entitled, *Behold Your Mother* (jacket pictured below on left).

On April 29, 2008, *Children of St. Mary's* held their release party to highlight tracks from the CD and sell their new product. All proceeds from the sale of the CD go to support Rachel's Vineyard, a Catholic non-profit organization that seeks to help men and women heal spiritual and emotional wounds that follow abortion.

If you would like to purchase a copy of the CD for \$10.00, please contact the Vocation Office at [khuber@dcgary.org](mailto:khuber@dcgary.org) or call at 219-769-9292 ext. 235. †



Pictured are Mary and the following.  
Top Row: P. Ryan Briscoe, Jason Kern, Jonah Lippert, Hannah Waterfield, Benjamin Ross, Alex Theis, Jessica Evers, Brandon Wanless, Carlos Villanueva.  
Bottom Row: Mary Moses, Daniel P. Gifford, Rebecca Collins, Jeff Austin, Lisa Frank, Janelle Krzmarzick, Katie Schares.

Front Cover Art by: Joshua D. Gardner  
Back Cover Photo by: Charlie Richmond  
Above Photo by: Diane Matheson  
Special thanks to: Mary Moses, P. Ryan Briscoe, Zachary Barry, Brandon Wanless, Austin Quick, Joseph Kritzeck, Kyle Frank, Lisa Frank, and Jessica Evers for assistance with promotion and presentation.

## Vocation Office Prepares for Discernment Weekends

The Diocese of Gary Vocation Office is making preparations for the discernment weekends offered at Mundelein Seminary in Mundelein, Illinois, Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, Michigan, Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary in Winona, Minnesota, and Theological College at Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Men who want participate in these discernment experiences need to be at least in ninth grade.

Discernment weekends typically begin on Friday night and end on Sunday afternoon, allow men to meet seminarians, attend classes at the seminary, and experience the daily academic, spiritual, and priestly formation exercises offered at the seminaries. These experiences have been very helpful for our current seminarians and many other men.

For more information and to sign up for a discernment weekend, please contact Fr. Kevin Huber at 219-769-9292 or [khuber@dcgary.org](mailto:khuber@dcgary.org). †

