



MOUNT ST. MARY'S SEMINARY

Seminary News



Strong Enrollment Continues

Fifty-one new men entered the seminary this fall, coming from 23 dioceses.

By Bryan W. Jerabek, *Second Theology, Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama*

Mount St. Mary's Seminary continues to maintain strong, virtually full enrollment with a total of 157 seminarians for the 2005-06 year. Fifty-one new men entered the seminary this fall, coming from 23 dioceses. A total of 32 dioceses, including two from foreign countries, are sending men to the Mount this year.

This year brings many exciting enhancements to the Mount's diverse student population. The Archdiocese of Granada, Spain, chose to send two of its seminarians to finish their education and formation at the Mount. Ildefonso Fernández Figares and David Alcalde Morales entered the Second Theology class and are benefiting from the Mount's English as a Second Language program. They join the growing ranks of seminarians from foreign dioceses (last year, the Diocese of Cajamarca, Peru sent two men), marking the first time the Mount accepted seminarians from a non-U.S. diocese.

As with the men coming from Peru, Ildefonso and David were sent to Mount St. Mary's in part because of its reputation for solid formation and academic excellence. Archbishop Francisco Javier Martínez Fernández, Ordinary of the Archdiocese of Granada, also desires to introduce the Knights of Columbus into his archdiocese. Since the Mount participates in a Knights Council he saw it as an opportunity for his seminarians to gain experience and help facilitate the introduction process when they return home. After Ildefonso and David complete their formation at the Mount, Archbishop Martínez plans to send them for further studies at the

John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family in Washington, D.C., before they return to Spain,

The number of native Spanish speakers in the seminary has increased to 19 this year. These men bring different cultural backgrounds with them and enhance the seminary culture through Hispanic-themed social functions, liturgies, and opportunities for non-native speakers to practice their Spanish with brother seminarians. Through interaction with these seminarians and participation in the Mount's Hispanic Ministry offerings, men studying at the Mount have ample opportunity to be well prepared for ministry to the growing Hispanic populations throughout the United States.

The Mount's enrollment truly embraces the universality of the Church. In addition to the strong presence of men originally from Hispanic countries—Spain, Colombia, Argentina, Peru, Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras—there are men from Poland, Vietnam, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Canada. With the exception of the four men from Peru and Spain, all of them are preparing to serve dioceses in the United States.

Get a quick glance at the seminarians of Mount St. Mary's on the back panel.

This six-day celebration had a tremendous impact on the Mount seminarians that attended. Dallas St. Peter (third theology, Diocese of Burlington) spoke of the humbling experience of prayer during the week. “The sharing together in Eucharistic Adoration of more than one million people with the pope was incredible. This experience expressed most concretely and personally the universal nature of the Church— how the Church unites all people.”

Jon-Daniel Schnobrich (third theology, Diocese of Burlington) was struck by the work of the Spirit in the hearts of the youth attending. “Above all else, the experience of being with that many young Catholics in one place with the Holy Father was a great sign of hope. Many of these teenagers profoundly experienced the love of God and the love of the Church, which was seen so clearly in the joy shining from their faces.”

World Youth Day activities included a Mass for all the attending seminarians celebrated by Pope Benedict XVI. In his homily, the Holy Father offered an encouragement and an inspiring exhortation to seminarians present and to those unable to attend. “This is what a seminary is: More than a place, it is a significant time in the life of a follower of Jesus ... The seminary years are a time of journeying, of exploration, but above all of discovering Christ ... Dear seminarians! One day, God willing, by the consecration of the Holy Spirit you too will begin your mission. Remember always the words of Jesus: ‘Abide in my love’ (John 15:9). If you abide in Christ, you will bear much fruit. You have not chosen him, he has chosen you (cf. John 15:16). Here is the secret of your vocation and your mission!”

YEAR OF THE EUCHARIST CONCLUDES

NOTED ALUMNUS RETURNS TO LEAD OPENING DAYS OF RECOLLECTION

By Rev. Mr. John L. Lavorgna, Fourth Theology, Archdiocese of Hartford

Within the bustle that marks the opening of the year, the seminarians of the Mount once again gathered for a weekend of recollection, seeking communion with Jesus in silence. This time of extended prayer and spiritual exercises was held August 26-31. It was particularly solemn as it coincided with the seminary’s annual Forty Hours Devotion.

For the new seminarians, it was also a chance to meditate on the graces of vocation as well as their arrival at the Mount, following a busy orientation program. “It is a great way to start off the year,” remarked David Wells, pre-theology, Archdiocese of Washington. “Coming in with all these expectations and worries, the retreat was a perfect opportunity to put these things aside and focus on who really brought us here and who will sustain us throughout our time in formation.”

“The simple gifts we offer at the altar are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit into Jesus Christ, so that may receive Him. If we yield to the power of the Eucharist we are transformed into Him”

—Msgr. Stuart Swetland, S’91,
Chaplain and Director of Saint John’s
Catholic Newman Center, University
of Illinois

The seminary community welcomed back as retreat master Msgr. Stuart Swetland, an alumnus of the Class of 1991 who currently serves as Chaplain and Director of Saint John’s Catholic Newman Center at the University of Illinois. Msgr. Steven Rohlf, Rector at the Mount, has known and collaborated with Msgr. Swetland as his vocation director, pastor, and vicar general in the Diocese of Peoria, and was especially pleased to extend the invitation. “When we needed someone to preach the Forty Hours Devotion, I could think of no one better than Msgr. Swetland. The Eucharist is the center of his spiritual life, and few people I know can more intensely preach the Good News to those preparing for the priesthood.”

Msgr. Swetland’s dynamic persona and compelling conferences left a powerful impression. The seminarians appreciated his discussion of the sacraments and the necessity to boldly strive for personal holiness. “Our goal should be to become saints, to be the people we are called to be,” explained Msgr. Swetland. “In order to do so, we need a love relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The people of God want to know about the Lord that has spoken to your heart, and so allow the Lord to speak to you.”

The Eucharist rightly was a focus of the weekend’s reflections. “The simple gifts we offer at the altar are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit into Jesus Christ, so that may receive Him. If we yield to the power of the Eucharist we are transformed into Him,” exhorted Msgr. Swetland to those who filled Saint Bernard’s Chapel to capacity. The retreat ended with the celebration of Sunday Mass followed by a procession with the Blessed Sacrament to the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception for Benediction and Reposition.

David Hasser, third theology, Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana, observed that “As seminarians of the “John Paul II generation,” Monsignor Swetland left us with a fitting tribute to our fatherly shepherd by emphasizing the call of John Paul II in his final Letter to Priests to live lives shaped by the Eucharist—to be taken, blessed, broken and given for the life of the world.”

MOUNT ALUMNUS SUCCUMBS TO CANCER

SEMINARY REMEMBERS FR. DARIN DIDIER 'S05

By Peter J. Sharpe, First Theology, Diocese of Fargo

When God chooses a man to be priest, he also marks out an allotted time of earthly ministry. For Fr. Darin Didier, 'S05, this span was less than 100 days. Ordained on June 22, 2005, Fr. Didier passed away in Fargo, North Dakota, on September 6, after a long struggle with cancer, at the age of 32.

"His passing came as a shock because the end really happened so quickly. For his cancer to progress so rapidly was a surprise," said Fr. Terry Dodge, a classmate and fellow Fargo ordinand. "What was inspiring was that even though he was sick he still threw himself fully into his work. The Saturday before his death he was celebrating Mass in his parish and he had to stop midway through his homily and go sit down because he was so weak. That's how much he wanted to give himself to do the Lord's work."

A native of St. Paul, Minnesota, Fr. Didier studied at the University of North Dakota and received a master's degree in physical therapy in 1997. He was accepted as a seminarian for the Diocese of Fargo, North Dakota, and came to Mount St. Mary's in 2000. His studies were interrupted by the onset of non-Hodgkins lymphoma cancer, which forced him to miss the spring 2004 semester. With strong faith and

perseverance, Fr. Didier underwent treatment, fulfilled the necessary academic requirements and ultimately was called to Holy Orders.

At the Mount, he was president of the Legion of Mary and served as a chaplain for the university track and field team.

"He was a great example of priestly humility," said Christopher Vaccaro, third theology, Diocese of Arlington. "He was inspiring to me in his zeal for spreading the Gospel." Deacon Jamie Workman, fourth theology, Diocese of Arlington, reaffirmed this: "He had no reservation about speaking to complete strangers anywhere about Christ and Mary."

The seminary community celebrated a Memorial Mass for Fr. Didier in Immaculate Conception Chapel on September 12.

Fr. Peter Ryan S.J., seminary professor of moral theology, was one of the Mount's representatives to attend the Requiem Mass in Fargo. "It was the most beautiful funeral I had ever been to," he recounted. "Fr. Didier's parents have a really strong faith. His father walked out of the church giving the victory sign."

Indeed. Requiescat in pace.



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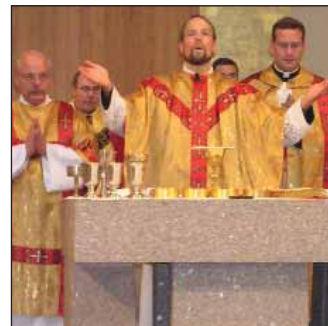
—Christopher Vaccaro, third theology, Diocese of Arlington

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—Fr. Terry Dodge, a classmate and fellow Fargo ordinand



APOSTOLIC VISITATION AT THE MOUNT

The Holy See has mandated an Apostolic Visitation of all seminaries and houses of formation in the United States.

Most Rev. John M. D'Arcy, bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, served as chairman of the team that visited the Mount in October. They interviewed Seminary Rector Msgr. Steven P. Rohlfis and all members of the faculty, as well as each of the seminarians. The team was specifically interested in learning about the seminary's admission standards, evaluation procedures, fidelity to the Magisterium (especially in the area of moral theology), and the program of priestly formation in matters of celibacy.

NEW SEMINARY FACULTY AND STAFF

By By Thomas J. Doyle, Jr., *Second Theology, Diocese of Rockford*



Fr. Brett Brannen, Vice Rector

Totally Catholic, Totally Kind

To walk into Fr. Brett Brannen's office is to walk into your own father's hallowed study. The wood paneling is covered with photographs and sporting trophies, alongside bookshelves full of books and folders. In the corner sleeps peacefully the trusted canine companion. And behind the large oak desk sits the man himself, as comfortable and as welcoming as if he were sitting in his front porch rocker inviting someone over for lemonade.

Fr. Brannen stirs such images. His genuine smile and sincere attentiveness reveal his southern roots: born in Louisiana but raised in Georgia; ordained a priest of the Savannah Diocese in 1991; served as vocations director in Savannah for 10 years; and great lover of home cooking—although he considers the cafeteria food here at the Mount just as wonderful.

As a former student of the Mount himself, Fr. Brannen offers a glimpse of the seminary from both sides of ordination.

"I'm seeing the seminary from an entirely different perspective. When you're a seminarian here you don't see everything you see as a faculty member. I'm amazed at what a big enterprise it is and how much there is to keep it going. I always felt that the Mount was a very stable place, an excellent seminary. I've come to see it's even better than I thought it was. And the men are very high quality, which is encouraging to see."

He has high hopes for his new position. "The first thing is, I don't want to be seen as, 'That's the vice rector and he's the disciplinarian; you can't be yourself around him.' I want guys to feel like they can come talk to me. I want them to believe that I really want them to be ordained very badly. I want them to be good priests."

Not everything is formation and paperwork, though. Fr. Brannen likes to fish and hunt, as testified by his trophies on the wall. "But," he smiles, "I really love to jog. I'm a cross country runner with my dog Bridget." Bridget is nine years old and has quickly become the house mascot and pet.

"When Monsignor Rohlf's offered me the job I said to him, 'Now I have one final question. It's not a deal breaker but it sure would be a heart breaker. Can I bring my dog?' " Msgr. Rohlf's laughed, and said, 'Yes, bring her. We need a dog here to liven this place up a little bit.' Once he said that I knew it was God's will for me to be here."



Fr. Frederick Miller, Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology

"In te misericordia, in te pietate, in te magnificenza"

The seminary community recently had the honor of welcoming Fr. Frederick Miller, S.T.D., who returned to the United States after spending three years at the North American College in Rome leading seminars on spirituality and giving spiritual direction.

With his home diocese in New Jersey and his recent travels in Rome, one would think that the slightly slower pace of the Mount would be a bit disappointing. But, Fr. Miller does not think so. "I'm somewhat taken by the contrast with Rome. Living at the North American College, we were in a big city: bustling and busy, noisy, fast moving. It's been very pleasant to come to a quiet, much simpler environment."

Fr. Miller is no stranger to seminary work. Now in his 15th year of involvement with seminary education, he previously taught at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Overbrook (where he was Academic Dean of the

Religious Studies Division and involved with the Spirituality Year program) and as an adjunct professor at St. Joseph's in Dunwoodie. In fact, one of the more rewarding aspects of his seminary career came from passing his knowledge onto the laity at St. Charles, where he was able to teach graduate-level courses to catechists, religious education directors and youth ministers.

"Teaching in a seminary is one of the most important things one can do as a priest. It's a great privilege, but with a serious responsibility. I see my mission in terms of helping the seminarians to think with the mind of the Church," says Fr. Miller. "My responsibility is not simply to expose the students to various theological positions, but rather to help them think with the mind of the Magisterium of the Church and then to be able to live their priestly lives out of that."



Philip McGlade and S. Renee Miller, Office of Seminary Development and Alumni Relations

It's Not the Buildings, It's the People

All too often, the only time most people hear from the Office of Seminary Development involves a call asking for money. The problem with such interaction is that the names and faces of those who work hard at keeping the seminary afloat get lost.

Take the new Executive Director of Seminary Development and Alumni Relations, Philip McGlade, and his Assistant, Mrs. S. Renee Miller. While Phil is relatively new to the seminary, he has been working in the Mount's Alumni Relations office and fund-raising since 1976—not to mention that he is an alumnus of the college himself, Class of 1970. And Renee has actually been working in the Seminary Development office for almost a year.

Talking with Phil and Renee unmasks the many myths surrounding fundraising and alumni relations: they are not bean-counters, hunched over

calculators, devising new strategies for squeezing as much money as they can out of successful graduates. Instead, they are people genuinely concerned for passing on the truths of the Church and fostering community.

“Every time I come to work it’s like I’m coming home or going to Mass,” Renee says. Phil responds, “When I first was hired at the college, I said to myself, ‘I’ll give it five years.’ ” But, he is still here and some would ask why. Phil has an immediate response: “Mount St. Mary’s is not the buildings, it’s the people. And now I’m fortunate enough that I know students whose parents were also students during my early years at the Mount.”

The Office of Seminary Development has been around for several years, but now Phil and Renee are energetically integrating the new alumni component. “When you used to come back as an alum, there was no reference or signs pointing to alumni relations within the building where you could say, ‘Hey, can I change my address?’ or ‘Did you hear what so-and-so is doing now?’ ” Now, with the combination of development and alumni relations, the seminary can better facilitate communication. What we want to do is create a synergy between development and alumni relations.”



Paula Smaldone, Executive Assistant to the Rector

Other-Oriented

A seminary cannot function for very long without a rector and a vice rector. But, few realize that a rector and vice rector cannot function very long without the aid of others who help them handle the workaday details.

That’s where Paula Smaldone comes in.

As Executive Assistant to the Rector, Paula is the one who takes the phone calls, sets the meetings for the rector, and retrieves any information needed for the proper functioning of the seminary.

“I knew when I applied and interviewed for the job that this position would be the mother of multi-tasking jobs,” she says with a laugh. “It’s an unbelievable job,” she reflects, “in that I see just about everything that goes on in the seminary, which is wonderful because then I understand the mission ... I see how critical it is to our Church’s future, to have well-formed young men. I like being a part of that future.

My desk is all sorts of little things, but all the parts put together make one, big important picture.”

Paula comes to the Mount from New York, where she worked for both Random House and IBM. In addition to these positions, she also was intimately involved with Cursillo. She recalls, “It took my faith life in a totally different direction, being a part of a Cursillo community: a wonderful, refreshing experience.” Now, she lives in Emmitsburg with her husband, Paul and four daughters— Maria, Rosalyn, Veronica, and Raphaela.

“We’re called to be other-oriented; that’s every Christian’s calling not matter what vocation you take. People are miracles. I think that, being close together in the seminary, God is asking us to notice the miracle in each of us. And it will help us feel more balanced in what we do, be better at our jobs, treating others with more consideration,” she says.

Thank you FOR YOUR SUPPORT

The Mount St. Mary's Seminary community is thankful for the generosity and support of its programs by Mount benefactors. The Seminary Annual Fund reached \$300,145 during the 2004-05 academic year—its most successful to date—and well over the \$200,000 goal. These important contributions are used to meet annual operating budgets. *Be assured that all gifts to our venerable seminary are truly appreciated!*

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At the Mass in Bonn, Deacon Andrew Royals proclaimed the Gospel to more than 100,000 pilgrims. (Seen above on the jumbotron.)

Seminary Participates in World Youth Day in Germany

By Deacon Gregory Stowe, Fourth Theology, Diocese of Providence

On August 16, three Masses began simultaneously in the German cities of Cologne, Bonn, and Dusseldorf to commence World Youth Day activities and Mount St. Mary's Seminary was well represented.

At the Mass in Bonn, Deacon Andrew Royals (Archdiocese of Washington) assisted the celebrant, Bishop Franz-Josef Bode, as the Deacon of the Word. Proclaiming the Gospel to more than 100,000 pilgrims was a powerful experience for Deacon Royals.

"Proclaiming the Gospel at the opening mass at Bonn was a great privilege. To look out over the mall area in front of that magnificent university and to see it packed with flags from all over the world and people waving is an image I will never forget. It caused me to consider God's own majesty and how privileged we are to be at His disposal as instruments of His message of salvation."

"World Youth Day" continued on page 4.

Mount St. Mary's Seminary At A Glance

Total Dioceses: 32	Granada, Spain (2)
Total Religious Communities: 3	Harrisburg (3)
Total Seminarians: 157	Hartford (6)
Total New Men: 51	Kalamazoo (2)
Average Age: 29	Lafayette-in-Louisiana (3)
Oldest Seminarian: 50	Lafayette-in-Indiana (7)
Youngest Seminarian: 21	Lincoln (6)
Native Spanish Speakers: 19	Newark (1)
	Norwich (1)
	Omaha (2)
	Peoria (9)
Dioceses—Includes Religious Orders (Number of men) *	Providence (2)
Arlington (9)	Rockford (10)
Atlanta (19)	Santa Fe (2)
Baltimore (8)	Savannah (8)
Birmingham-in-Alabama (4)	Washington (13)
Birmingham/Franciscan Missionaries of the Eternal Word (1)	Wheeling-Charleston (1)
Boston/Franciscans of the Primitive Observance (1)	Wichita (6)
Bridgeport (4)	Worcester (2)
Burlington (9)	Missionaries of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (1)
Cajamarca, Peru (2)	* Two men are co-sponsored by the Military Archdiocese
Charlotte (1)	
Columbus (4)	
Dodge City (2)	
Fall River (4)	
Fargo (2)	

Read about this year's new men in "Strong Enrollment Continues" on the front cover.