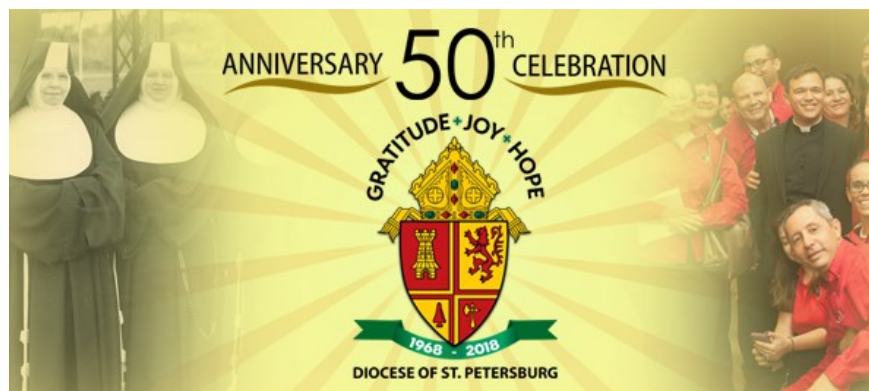


CAST YOUR NETS

A JOURNAL SUPPORTING VOCATIONS IN THE DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG

Annual Vocation Promotion Workshop



Celebrating 50 Years of Vocations

Location: Bethany Center

18150 Bethany Center Dr.

Lutz, FL 33558

Date: Saturday, February 3, 2018

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

(Mass begins at 9:00 am, followed by check-in.)

Cost: Free (lunch provided)

**Keynote Speaker: Rev. Msgr. Brendan Muldoon,
Pastor Emeritus, St. Jerome Catholic Church**

**Please RSVP by Wednesday, January 24, 2018:
Heidi Varley, Assistant Director, Office of Vocations
hlv@dosp.org OR (727) 345-3452**

Inside this Issue:

Animus.....2

*Seminarian
Perspectives.....3*

Around the Diocese.....5

Vocation News.....6

Calendar.....7

Our Seminarians.....7

ANIMUS

A new year always brings a great deal of anticipation and excitement. 2018 will, without a doubt, not be an exception. We anticipate the Ordinations of three men to the Transitional Diaconate. Additionally, we anticipate the Ordination of Deacon Kyle Bell, Deacon Lou Turcotte, and Deacon Tim Williford to the Sacred Priesthood on May 19, 2018 and, of course the excitement of their first parish assignment.

The Church of St. Petersburg also greatly anticipates the celebration of our 50th anniversary of the establishment of our Diocese. Please check our Diocesan website for a list of events being planned in celebration.

In the life of the Church, 50 years makes the Diocese of St. Petersburg still a baby, but how far we have come in a very short period of time. We have been blessed to have had and continue to have great leadership in Bishop's McLaughlin, Larkin, Favalora, Lynch, and now Bishop Parkes. All of these men helped lead and are leading a very vibrant, healthy and growing Church.

Looking back on the past 50 years we can see how the Diocese has matured especially in the area of vocations. Prior to the Diocese being established we were under the pastoral care of the Diocese of St Augustine so many of our priests were, obviously, priests of St Augustine but we also benefited from "missionary priests" from the Northeast, Ireland, and Spain, to name just a few. However, over the last 50 years the Diocese of St Petersburg has been blessed with a tremendous number of "home grown" priests, as this Diocese has, over the last 50 years, ordained 120 men for priestly service. Doing the math that equates to an average of 2.4 ordinations a year. When one thinks of the vocation crisis hitting the U.S. Church over the last 50 years we have done quite well. In fact, over the last few years we have seen some of the largest Ordination classes in some 20-25 years, a direct result of your prayers and support of the Office of Vocations and our young people. Though we can always improve our numbers these statistics clearly give us hope.

On February 3rd, 2018 will we hold our annual Vocation Promotion Workshop. This year our keynote speaker will be Msgr. Brendan Muldoon, who will speak on the history of priestly vocations in the Diocese of St. Petersburg. Additionally, in the afternoon session we will have three Religious Sisters

speaking, in a panel discussion, on the history of their orders and the work those fine women have done in service to the Church of St. Petersburg. It will be a very informative and fun day. For more information and to RSVP please contact the Office of Vocations.

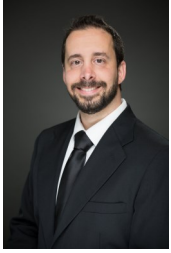
As we celebrate this milestone and look forward to the next 50 years let us take a moment and thank the Lord for all the blessings He has bestowed on the Diocese of St. Petersburg especially in the great priests, sisters and religious brothers that have served and are continuing to serve our local Church.

God Bless you all,



Fr. Carl Melchior
Director of Vocations

SEMINARIAN PERSPECTIVES



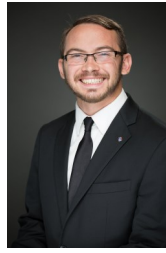
Donald Amodeo

St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary

As I write this, my first semester at St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary is rapidly drawing to a close. The last few months have been a blur, and yet so much has happened! I've made the move to a beautiful new campus, transitioned from philosophical studies to the realm of theology, and met a whole new group of brothers, priests and professors. These months have given me much for which to be thankful.

"Don't lose that sense of gratitude," said our rector, Monsignor Touns, upon the outset of this academic year. Such advice ought to be common sense, but past experience reveals that it's all too easy to lose sight of our blessings – many though they may be – once the grind of everyday life kicks in. Staying on top of one's studies can prove stressful, and other duties such as apostolic assignments often add to the feeling that there aren't enough hours in the day. It's a challenge. However, amidst all the bustle, there is also peace, a peace born of the conviction that where you are is exactly where the Lord wants you to be. During the decade I worked as an entrepreneur, I frequently enjoyed a surplus of leisure time, yet seldom was I at peace. While the momentary satisfaction of setting a goal and accomplishing it could prove a powerful distraction, in the wake of every accomplishment lingered the question: "What now?" Separated from that ultimate goal for which we were made, life's bright patches can begin to suffer from a case of diminishing returns.

This year has given me the opportunity to spend some time each week teaching at a local Catholic high school. The religion classes that I visit range in subject matter from biblical studies to Catholic social teaching on issues such as euthanasia and birth control, but inevitably questions arise about my own calling to the priesthood. Such a call is seen by many as an alien concept, dramatically at odds with what the world says will make us happy. "Do you ever wish you were still an entrepreneur?" students often ask. Certainly, there are mornings when I would rather sleep in, weekends when I wish I didn't have papers to write. But I wouldn't change this road that the Lord has set before me. Whenever it seems that things are especially hard, God reveals another reason to be grateful. It might be a kind letter in the mail, a bond of friendship with a brother seminarian or simply the arresting beauty of a vivid sunset. Most of all, Christ's presence in the Eucharist is a constant reminder of both his peace and the battle we're called to. How can a seminarian not be thankful? The greatest of adventures lies ahead and the people of God are ever there to support us, armoring us with their prayers.



Zachary Brasseur

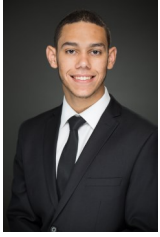
***St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary
A Place Called the Wilderness***

On August 15, my classmates and I arrived at St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary in Boynton Beach, otherwise known as "the major". In our days at St. John Vianney in Miami, or "the minor", we were told that St. Vincent's was a place flowing with milk and honey. Everything we disliked about the other seminary was done away with, and the overall quality of life was simply far superior. We could not wait to leave Miami and head north to the greener pastures of Palm Beach County.

Now, in many ways my new home is somewhat more agreeable than my old one. The living space is certainly an upgrade and the food is better. Traffic in Boynton Beach is no comparison to the constant gridlock two counties to the south. But if the "minor" seminary is Egypt, the "major" is not the Promised Land. Shortly after arriving here I was reminded of a few wise words that more than one priest has shared with me: "you are not called to be a seminarian". Wait a minute: did God not call me here? Is it possible that I misheard him? As a matter of fact, I did hear God, loud and clear. And if memory serves well, I heard him call me to be a priest. Seminary is a crucial and necessary part of answering that call, but it is not the last stop. The seminary and being a seminarian are at the service of a higher good. Realistically I've only taken a couple of steps on a very long path that leads to heaven.

I don't want to leave a poor impression of life at the seminary. In truth, it is a good place to be with the Lord, grow in holiness, and be formed into a man of God who will serve God and his people as a priest. But it is school, after all. And from what I hear priestly ministry is way better than being in school. I think a better nickname for the major seminary is "the wilderness". It was in the wilderness of the desert after leaving Egypt that Israel discovered who they were as God's chosen people called to be a "light to the nations". God used that time to mold and shape Israel, solidify their identity as his own people. In the wilderness, Israel realized who their God was. We can't forget that Jesus himself went into the wilderness to be tested and confirm to himself that he was the Son of God, sent on a very important mission. The seminary is far from perfect. We are all broken and sinful people, but we are doing our best to love and serve the Lord who has called us for reasons only he knows. It is because of this imperfection that we are open to the work that God wants to do in us.

SEMINARIAN PERSPECTIVES - CONTINUED



Christopher Marte **St. John Vianney College Seminary**

The year 2017 was a good year, though it was quite crazy at times. The spring of 2017 was the end of my last school year. I didn't get the best grades ever, but I am grateful to God for them because of the journey, and challenge it gave me for the rest of the year. Some of my friends left the seminary, which saddened me, but God had plans for me to meet new people in the upcoming year.

I had a relaxing summer. In June I visited my family in New Jersey with my younger brother for the month. This was the first time I had ever traveled without someone supervising me. It was a big responsibility. I'm glad everything went well. My brother had a good time. As for me it was stressful, but fun. What I had learned from traveling alone is that planning and communication is key. After I had returned I had stayed at my home parish for the month of July and a little bit of August. Ralph, a seminarian who studies in Rome, was also staying at St. Cecelia. I was able to get to know him better, as well as my new pastor, Fr. Bob. Ralph taught me a couple things about cooking, and we even made dinner one night. I thank God for the time I spent with Ralph and Fr. Bob. Near the end of August, it was time to return to St. John Vianney. When I arrived there I was excited to start another year. I looked for my room and met my roommate, who is a Miami seminarian. The returning seminarians had a 2 day silent retreat, which began the weekend we arrived. The following Monday we began classes. I struggled to get back into shape to write essays. After about two weeks of classes Hurricane Irma hit. I became distressed because of how the hurricane disrupted the school schedule, and by the distressing information of how Irma was a category 5 hurricane. The rector told us to evacuate Miami when it was predicted to hit Miami. After returning home the prediction changed to go towards where I lived. Luckily it did not hit my home hard, and even became a category 3 as it neared us. After Irma I had to get back into the mood of writing papers, just like the beginning of the year. The rest of the year felt normal, but then mid-terms came. Mid-terms made everyone busy. Luckily, I passed all of my midterms. I praised God for being able to pass them. Halloween came, Thanksgiving followed. As for Thanksgiving, I was thankful to spend it with my family. I pray that I may be able to pass all of my upcoming finals. I am so thankful and pray for the people of God that support me and I am looking forward to another great year here at St. John Vianney College Seminary.

Focus 11

This year we are excited to welcome the Sisters of Life as our keynote speaker.

Founded in 1991 by Cardinal John O'Connor in New York, The Sisters of Life are consecrated to protect and enhance the sacredness of human life. Living intimately with Jesus in Eucharistic prayer, the Sisters share in a vibrant community life and seek to imitate the Blessed Mother, bringing the consoling presence of Christ to every person they meet, especially those whose lives are hidden, weak, or wounded.

The two sisters that will be joining us are Sr. Mercy Marie, S.V. and Sr. Maria Laetitia, S.V. Below are the biographies.



Sr. Mercy Marie, S.V. grew up on a farm in Illinois and remembers having no thoughts of becoming a Sister when she was in 6th grade. She majored in Business Marketing in college and spent her young adult life in Denver, Colorado where she enjoyed hiking in the Rocky Mountains. In God's tender goodness and mercy, He called her to His own Heart, and Sr. Mercy entered the Sisters of Life in 2014 in the Bronx, New York. After professing her first vows in 2017 she was missioned to the new Visitation Mission in Philadelphia where she currently serves vulnerable pregnant women and their unborn children and seeks to share the Charism of Life with all those she encounters.



Sr. Maria Laetitia, S.V. grew up near Los Angeles, CA. She graduated from San Diego State University with a B.A. in History. It was in her junior year of college where the Lord of Life called her to be loved by Him alone. She later graduated with a M.A. in Education for the University of La Verne. Before entering the Sisters of Life in 2008, Sr. Maria Laetitia taught sixth grade. She professed her Final Vows in 2016. She currently serves as the Coordinator of the Graphics Mission, where she shares the beauty of the Charism of Life through graphic design and photography.

VOCATIONS AROUND THE DIOCESE



John 21 Discernment Group St. Lawrence Parish, Tampa

John 21 is a discernment group for young men who are reflecting on God's call in their lives and are considering the possibility of priesthood or religious life. Just as the disciples gained clarity of their call while eating breakfast with the Lord, so too will we. The group is open to anyone high school age and older. All are welcome!

The group meets on Saturday morning at St. Lawrence Parish in Tampa (5225 N. Himes Avenue) beginning with mass at 8:30 am in the Church.

Fr. Chuck Dornquast, Parochial Vicar, is the leader of this discernment group. After mass, the group will gather for breakfast and conversation, followed by scripture reflection and question and answer session.

Meeting dates are as follows:
March 24, 2018 (new date!)
May 12, 2018

Please RSVP to Heidi Varley in the Office of Vocations (727) 345-3452 or hlv@dosp.org.

Holy Hour for Vocations Cathedral of St. Jude

Sponsored by the Serra Club

Every 4th Wednesday of the month (with a couple of exceptions) the Serra Club hosts the Holy Hour for Vocations from 7:00 pm until 8:00 pm at the Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle. Please consider attending one of these holy hours to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Upcoming dates are as follows:
January 24, 2018
February 28, 2018
March 21, 2018

Upcoming Events

February 20-21, 2018

Focus 11 (9am-1:30pm)

St. Lawrence, Higgins Hall, Tampa

Registration is open for Religious Orders to attend by following the link on the vocations website, www.dosp/vocations

March 9-11, 2018

Vocation Awareness Weekend

St. John Vianney College Seminary, Miami

April 15, 2018

Altar Server Appreciation Mass (3pm)

Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle
(reception to follow)

April 22, 2018

World Day of Prayer for Vocations

May 19, 2018

Ordinations to the Priesthood
Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle

More information on all of the above events will be forthcoming on the vocations website or by contacting the Office of Vocations at (727) 345-3452.



Calendar of Upcoming Events

January 2018

† January 13, 2018 (8:30am-10:30am)

John 21 Discernment Group
St. Lawrence Parish
(5225 N. Himes Ave, Tampa)

† January 24, 2018 (7:00 pm-8:00 pm)

Diocesan Holy Hour
(Sponsored by SERRA Club)
Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle

February 2018

† February 3, 2018 (9:00 am-2:00 pm)

Vocation Promotion Workshop
Celebrating 50 Years of Vocations
Bethany Center, Lutz

† February 20-21, 2018 (9:00 am-1:30 pm)

Focus 11 Vocations Rally
St. Lawrence Parish, Higgins Hall, Tampa

† February 28, 2018 (7:00 pm-8:00 pm)

Diocesan Holy Hour
(Sponsored by SERRA Club)
Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle

March 2018

† March 9-11, 2018

Vocation Awareness Weekend
St. John Vianney College Seminary, Miami

† March 24, 2018 (8:30am-10:30am)

John 21 Discernment Group
St. Lawrence Parish
(5225 N. Himes Ave, Tampa)

† March 28, 2018 (7:00 pm-8:00 pm)

Diocesan Holy Hour
(Sponsored by SERRA Club)
Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle

Our Seminarists

St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary

Donald Amodeo	1st Theology
Anthony Astrab	3rd Theology
Zachary Brasseur	1st Theology
Deacon Kyle Bell	4th Theology
Joshua Hare	3rd Theology
Israel Hernandez	2nd Theology
Reinaldo Jara	1st Theology
Fredy Medina	3rd Theology
Michael Orajaka	1st Theology
Deacon Louis Turcotte	4th Theology
Deacon Timothy Williford	4th Theology

Pastoral Year

Jose Klever	Cathedral of St. Jude
Connor Penn	Christ the King
Mark "Drew" Woodke	St. Ignatius of Antioch

Pontifical North American College-Rome

Joshua Bertrand	2nd Theology
Ralph D'Elia	3rd Theology

St. John Vianney College Seminary

William Bennett	Freshman Year
Mark DeSio	Sophomore Year
Stephen Eschenfelder	Freshman Year
Christian Galvan	Pre-Theology II
Nicholas Henneberry	Junior Year
Kenneth Keenan	Pre-Theology I
Christopher Marte	Sophomore Year
Alejandro Posada	Pre-Theology I
Khalil Selim	Pre-Theology II



2017/2018 Diocese of St. Petersburg Seminarians



Contact Us:

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(email: spvocation@dosp.org)

Heidi Varley, Assistant Director

(email: hlv@dosp.org)

P.O. Box 40200, St. Petersburg, FL 33743

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Website: <http://dosp.org/vocations/>