

CAST YOUR NETS

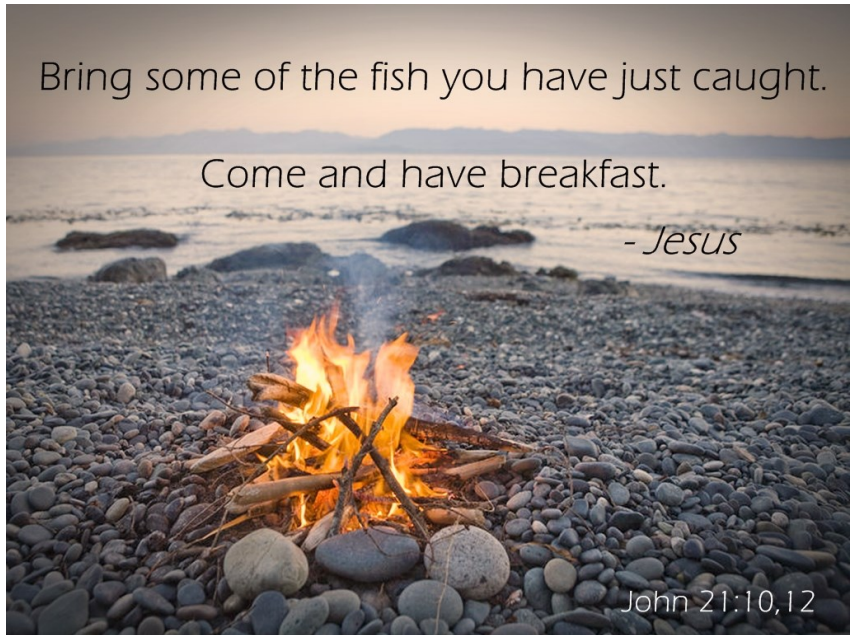
A JOURNAL SUPPORTING VOCATIONS IN THE DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG

John 21 Discernment Group

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. Everyone is welcome.

The group will meet on Saturday mornings at St. Lawrence Parish (5225 N. Himes Avenue, Tampa, FL 33614) beginning with mass at 8:30 am in the Church.

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



Meeting dates are as follows:

November 18, 2017

January 13, 2018

March 17, 2018

May 12, 2018

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

Inside this Issue:

Animus.....2

Seminarian Perspectives.....3

Around the Diocese.....5

Vocation News.....6

Calendar.....7

Our Seminarians.....7

ANIMUS

The Church teaches that there are four lifelong vocations, priesthood, religious life, marriage, and consecrated single life. All of these vocations are authentic calls from God. In other words, God has a particular call for each of us, a call that is as unique and particular to us as we are in the world. Therefore, no call or vocation is better or worse than another. They are equal in the eyes of God and He calls each and every one of us to live out our lives in one of these particular ways. Living our lives out in the way God has created and called us to live will bring complete fulfillment and joy. That doesn't mean we won't have sacrifices, struggles, and pain. But it does mean that the graces, gifts, and blessings received will far outweigh any of the negative things encountered.

Knowing that these vocations are equal and given by God is one thing, knowing which one am I called to is quite another. Figuring out or discerning our particular call is one of the most difficult things any of us attempt. This is particularly true for us in the age and culture in which we live. This age where everything is immediate can lead us to think that only immediate satisfaction brings about happiness. However, as I have said before, we confuse happiness, which is fleeting, with joy, which is lasting. That is to say, a lasting fulfilling joy is not something that is immediate. It grows as we grow and discerning how we are to live to achieve that joy is vital.

The importance and difficulty of discernment is why we put so much effort into helping our young people discern God's call in their lives. On the cover of this newsletter you can see that we begin a new discernment group that will meet under the direction of Fr. Chuck Dornquast. This group will meet for breakfast and then discuss topics that are pertinent in helping one discern their call in life. Meeting as a group of likeminded individuals is very beneficial because it demonstrates that one is not alone in discernment. It is also very important to have someone that is living out their vocation to lead and moderate the discussion. The Office of Vocations thanks Fr. Chuck very much for his willingness to moderate and lead this group.

I ask all of you to please keep all of our young people in prayer that they will hear and follow our Lord's call in their lives especially the young men that

will be attending this discernment group as well as all the young men that are not attending but discerning a call to priesthood and those young women discerning a call to religious life.

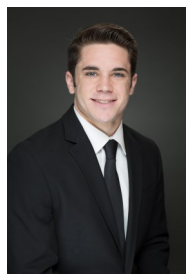
Following our Lord in our lives will no doubt lead us to a life of fulfillment and joy here in this life but more importantly, will lead us to our eternal life with Him in Heaven.

God Bless you all,



Fr. Carl Melchior
Director of Vocations

SEMINARIAN PERSPECTIVES



Mark DeSio

St. John Vianney College Seminary

I just started my second year at St. John Vianney College Seminary and can't wait to see how the year unfolds! This year I am taking less introductory courses and diving more into philosophy. It's interesting to see how people viewed the world before Christ and how western thought has shaped our world and the way we think today!

I'll never forget my first day at the seminary. It seems like yesterday I was staring at the ceiling on that first night wondering, "How did I get here? Is this God's plan for my life?" The question still finds its way back to me, but I remember when the Lord first called me, and I trust that he has led me here for a reason.

Last year I came in with my head held high. I thought seminary would be a breeze and set unreal expectations for myself. I thought that once I entered seminary, I would magically turn in to a great saint and convert the whole world! I learned quickly that the road to becoming a saint is not a one-time decision, but a daily choice. "If any man should come after me, let him deny himself, pick up his cross daily, and come follow me." Those are the words of our Lord. The seminary is a place of formation. It will break a man down and build him up over time. Not so much through submitting to a process, but to a person. If it weren't for Jesus, I wouldn't be here. In fact, this place doesn't make any sense without him. I am beyond grateful that he has called me here to discern. I've never been surrounded by so much love in my entire life. It's easy to see Christ in my brothers, in the priests and faculty, and hidden under the form of bread and wine.

I spent the past summer in Omaha, Nebraska at The Institute for Priestly Formation (IPF). It's a program led by priests to help seminarians form a devout spiritual life through Ignatian Spirituality. I had the great opportunity of serving my brothers who were going through the program by setting the tables for meals, taking priests and seminarians to and from the airport, and helping out with whatever was needed. This experience has led me to a deeper union with Christ and a greater desire to serve others.

Tomorrow I will start my apostolic assignment at Saint Louis Catholic Church. I will be teaching CCD to middle schoolers and can't wait to teach them about our faith!

A lot has happened in the past 14 months and I wouldn't change it for the world! I have grown much closer to God, I've made some of the greatest friends of my life, and continue to grow in faith, hope, and love each day.



Israel "Izzie" Hernandez

St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary

Seminary. It is a place where I have had the opportunity to grow and pray. It is a place where I have come to encounter the Lord in the everyday ordinariness of our lives. It is a place of great joy but, it is also a place of great trials and hardships. I have been challenged in ways that I would never have thought of. Challenges that have helped me grow and which continue to help me grow. It is a place where you work on turning those weaknesses that we all have, into strengths.

It has been a great place for contemplation and one on one colloquy's with the Triune God. This life is not easy, but it is only as hard as you make it. Entering into what the priests of the house have to say to us, wholeheartedly, helps transform us into the men that the Church is seeking. Men of prayer and who are willing to sacrifice for their flock. Men who are willing to go to the peripheries and seek out those who are lost. This is the man that seminary life has begun transforming me into.

What a joy it has been for me and what an opportunity it has been. I thank the Diocese of St. Petersburg from the bottom of my heart. Not just for financially helping me, but also for all the prayers. The days that are difficult, those are the days that I try to reflect on all those who are praying for me. Prayers which uplift me and remind me of who I am doing this for. Then in return, I pray for all those who support not just me, but my brother seminarians that are on the same journey as I am.

One of the greatest joys for me is, going home, and visiting all those who are praying for me. Going home and having strangers you have never met, come up to you, and tell you that they have been praying for you. Forming new bonds with those who are praying for you is such a joy. It is an opportunity that all seminarians enjoy, because a majority of the times, we do not get to meet those who take the time to pray for us. Therefore, those who I meet, I can now take the time and pray for them as well.

It is a place where I am able to grow as well as pray. It is a place where I am able to take the time to become the man that the Lord is calling me to be, for His people!

SEMINARIAN PERSPECTIVES - CONTINUED



Deacon Lou Turcotte

St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary

After being ordained to the diaconate last April alongside my classmates, I've discovered a new freedom and joy in my vocational ministry. After years of discerning, questioning, struggling, and hair-pulling (both from me and from Fr. Carl, I'm sure), to finally say "Yes" to God, to the Church, and to the desires of my own heart established such a peace in my life. And then to be able to live out the service ministry of my diaconal life at St. Ignatius Catholic Church in Tarpon Springs was such an exciting and fulfilling opportunity. I love our diocese – the faithful parishioners, the passionate and relatable priests, and the beauty and diversity of our different parishes. Truly, God has been good to me, and I'm so excited to serve as a priest back home in just a matter of months!

I must admit, however, that I was perhaps slightly less excited to return to seminary for my final year of formation. You kind of get used to living and working in the diocese you call home, and it's hard to leave to go back to yet another year of academics and formation. Fortunately, after the first month of classes, my initial hesitation and reluctance were proven to have been unnecessary. There have been so many joys already this semester – preaching to my seminary community, working together with my classmates on presentations, and even hearing my first practice confession! Things are new, exciting, and with the looming presence of priestly ordination, incredibly practical.

Perhaps most refreshing has been my pastoral assignment: every weekend, I'm assigned to help out at St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church in Boca Raton. This parish was where I was ordained a deacon, so it carries such special significance for me, but even more touching are the experiences I can share with the people in the pews – I've even met some visitors from the Diocese of St. Petersburg!

At the parish, I've been given the opportunity to preside over several baptisms, and this past weekend I had the joy of baptizing two beautiful baby girls, Emma and Emilia. Being new to this whole "baptizing" thing, it can be a little bit stressful to start out. But when it comes for the actual baptism, there is an incredible moment of grace – I can barely describe it to you. When I poured the water over those little girls' heads, they looked right at me, and I knew that from that moment forward, their entire lives were changed – they are now daughters of God, and for all of eternity, I have the privilege of sharing that moment with them.

This is what I am most enjoying about my current ministry, and what I most look forward to back home: making lifelong connections with the incredible members of this Church, and walking together with you toward Christ. There is no greater honor, no greater joy in the entire world. I can't wait for our adventure to begin...see you all on May 19th!

St. Andrew Dinner

On Tuesday, October 10, 2017, Bishop Parkes and the Office of Vocations hosted a St. Andrew Dinner at the Bethany Center. This is a discernment event for young men, invited by their pastors, to enjoy a small, casual setting. They have the opportunity to hear the vocation stories of their pastors and Bishop Parkes and then ask questions.

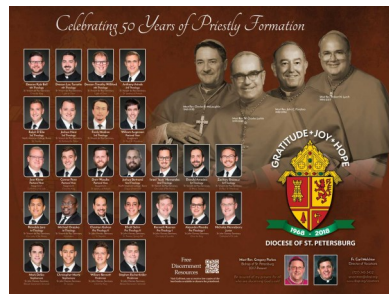


Vocation Awareness Weekend

During the weekend of November 10-12, 2017, 15 young men travelled to St. John Vianney College Seminary for the Come & See weekend. Fr. Justin Paskert and Fr. Kyle Smith escorted them on this weekend. Below is a picture of the attendees, our seminarians and Fr. Justin and Fr. Kyle, as they are about to return home on Sunday. The next Come & See weekend will be March 9-11, 2018.



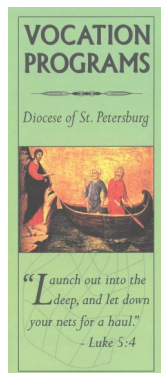
VOCATIONS AROUND THE DIOCESE



(727) 345-3452 or hlv@dosp.org

Vocation Posters
The 2018 vocation promotion posters were sent to all parishes and schools in the diocese at the beginning of November. The Office of Vocations has extra posters available. Please contact Heidi Varley in the office at

Vocation Programs Brochure
The 2017/2018 vocation program brochures have arrived! We will be sending out a supply to each parish within the next week. As always, if you need extra brochures, please contact the Office of Vocations!



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:

- November 29, 2017
- December 20, 2017
- January 24, 2018

Upcoming Events

February 3, 2018

Annual Vocation Promotion Workshop

Keynote Speaker:

Rev. Msgr. Brendan Muldoon

“Celebrating 50 Years of Vocations”

Bethany Center (9am-2pm)

The day will begin with mass at 9:00 am in the St. James Chapel.

More information will be forthcoming!

February 20-21, 2018

Focus 11 (9am-1:30pm)

St. Lawrence, Higgins Hall, Tampa

This year we welcome the Sisters of Life as our Keynote Speakers.

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)

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

November 2017

† November 10-12, 2017

Vocation Awareness Weekend
St. John Vianney College Seminary, Miami

† November 18, 2017 (8:30am-10:30am)

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

† November 29, 2017 (7:00 pm-8:00 pm)

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

December 2017

† December 20, 2017 (7:00 pm-8:00 pm)

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

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

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

William Augensen	St. Paul, St. Petersburg Cathedral of St. Jude
Jose Klever	Christ the King
Connor Penn	St. Ignatius of Antioch
Mark "Drew" Woodke	

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



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