



# Savannah Serra Club NEWSLETTER

August 2006



## FROM HOME TO ROME

By Aaron Killips

As my last summer as a seminarian comes to a close I am grateful for the opportunity to share with you some of my thoughts on life as a seminarian. I must admit that growing up I never thought that I would become a seminarian, much less a priest. My dream job was always anything that involved sports, especially coaching. Now I can say that I am truly happy in the vocation that God has called me to.

My first thoughts of becoming a seminarian came when I worked for the vocation office after finishing college with a degree in biology. I wanted to take a year off before going to graduate school and was unsure what I would do in that year when I received a phone call from a certain priest whom I had only met once asking me if I was interested in taking a job as his assistant and running the youth group at his church.

The phone conversation went something like this: "Hey buddy! This is Fr. Brett calling."

Two years later I became a seminarian for the diocese. The two years I spent in Macon were very enriching years. For the first time in my life I had a nagging question answered—how does a priest spend all of his days off after Mass on Sunday? I didn't have any idea what the life of a priest was like outside of Sunday and holy days of obligation.

Those two years allowed me to witness firsthand what life as a priest is really like. I worked with Fr. Brett every day at St. Peter Claver and lived in the rectory at St. Joseph with



Msgr. Cuddy and Fr. Tim McKeown as well as Fr. Desmond, Fr. Daniel Melaba (Nigeria) and Fr. Fabian Muelenga (Zambia). Living and working with these priests I saw what an incredible blessing it is to be called by God to become a priest.

Upon my acceptance as a seminarian for the diocese I was sent to Mt. St. Mary Seminary in Maryland to study philosophy. I didn't think that my stay there would be for more than a year. I figured that I would give seminary a shot and realize that God was not calling me to be a priest.

My biggest fear in life was always not following God's call for my life. In the two years I spent working for the vocation office I met many people in many different places who would come up to me and tell me that God had called them to

become a priest and they were too afraid to follow that call and I knew they spent the rest of their lives wondering. I didn't want to spend the rest of my life wondering and I figured that nine months without a date would be worth it as opposed to spending the rest of my life in uncertainty. Plus I



figured it was an added bonus to spend a year studying the Catholic faith which I loved so much.

Needless to say I lasted more than a year at the Mount. At the end of my second year I was sent to the North American College in Rome, Italy to study theology.

Many people ask me what it is like studying in Rome and my first response is always—it is both a blessing and a curse. It is a blessing having the opportunity to walk the streets where so many saints and martyrs walked before me spreading the faith. It is a curse in that I am separated from family and friends.

Seminarians at the North American College don't come home until after their second year of theology and they are not allowed to come home for Christmas and Easter. Because we finish the school year in June we also miss most of the ordinations of our diocesan brothers. My first year at the NAC I was blessed to have two db's (diocesan brothers) with me, (Fr.) Dan Firmin and (Fr.) Justin Ferguson. Fr. Dan told me that the NAC is designed to break you from all of your comforts until you realize that the only way you can survive is through an intimate relationship with Christ. How true those words are. My first year was the toughest of my life. I was challenged in ways that I didn't even think were possible. I survived that year and experienced a tremendous amount of growth in my life.

Now after five years of seminary formation I am preparing for my last year in seminary. Looking back on these last five years I can see how abundantly blessed my life has been. Every time I thought I was making a sacrifice for God I was blessed tremendously. The phrase God is never outdone in generosity has become very evident to me. I have met so many wonderful people and been to so many incredible



Aaron in procession at Ordination of Fr. Justin Ferguson

places and experienced so many indescribable events that I never would have had I not said yes to God's call for my life.

As my experience of the universal Church has grown so has my love for the faith of the universal Church. I am greatly looking forward to my ordination as a transitional deacon on October 5<sup>th</sup> at St. Peter's and to my (God willing) ordination as a priest of Jesus Christ at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist on June 23<sup>rd</sup> with Johnny Johnson, David Koetter and Stephen Pontzer.

I want to express my special thanks to all the Serrans for their prayers. Please continue to pray for me and all the seminarians.

A bit of Humor from Graham Crawford...

"I was giving out communion this morning when a young mother with her small son came up to receive the host. After giving her communion, as they walked away I heard her son say, 'Mom. Can I have a bite?' Took a lot of restraint to keep from laughing out loud."

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