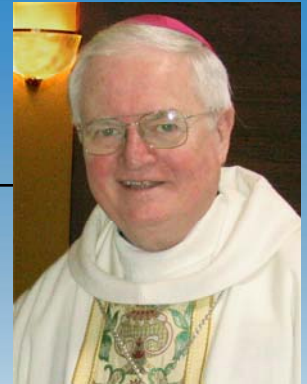




Savannah Serra Club NEWSLETTER

February 2004



Operation Andrew Meeting Held at BC

On January 23, 2004, an Operation Andrew Meeting was held at Benedictine Academy. The meeting was named after Andrew because he was the first apostle to see and hear Jesus. Like Andrew, Bishop Boland and several priests recounted how they had heard the Messiah and asked the cadets to come hear Him too.

World Day for Consecrated Life

World Day for Consecrated Life is celebrated each year around the feast of the Presentation of the Lord. This year it is observed on February 8, and the readings for that day remind us that God initiates the call and offers us the grace to follow like Isaiah, Simon, James and John. God continues to call women and men to dedicate themselves through profession of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. Hopefully those called can respond generously: "Here I am, send me!"

That day is an opportunity to recognize and give thanks for those who have consecrated their lives to God, to learn more about the consecrated life and to pray for future vocations to this life. For many the consecrated life is not familiar and perhaps a bit mysterious. It is a viable choice for living out the baptismal commitment. World Day for Consecrated Life is the perfect occasion to promote this vocation choice.

Consecrated life has a variety of forms. Religious sisters, nuns, brothers, priests and monks all consecrate their lives to God and the Church. Single lay people may choose to be part of a secular institute or may profess the evangelical vows privately to the local bishop. The whole church is blessed through those who consecrate their lives in these various vocations.



"Each of us is called to a vocation by God," said Fr. Brett Brannen, Director of Vocations. "God is calling each of you to do important work, to be like Jesus and to be holy. Most people are called to be married which is an ordinary vocation. But some are called to be priests,

brothers or sisters, which is an extraordinary vocation. We are not here today to try to persuade you to become a priest. We are all called to do the will of God. God has a plan for each of you. Don't try to figure what you want to be when you grow up but rather find out what God wants you to do with your life. Becoming a priest was the greatest decision of my life and I would do it again if I could," said Fr. Brett.

Next, Fr. Tim Donahue gave a few perspectives on his discernment process and views toward the priesthood. "I did





everything I could to run from my call. Just like Jonah, I ran from God, was afraid of making a commitment,” said Fr. Tim. “I had a good job as a Manager of Wendy’s, was engaged to three different girls at different times, but was not fulfilled. God is a mystery and he reveals himself to us in different ways. You have been created for a special purpose and you will only be happy when God reveals your special purpose to you. You must keep asking, God, what do you want me to do? You never know what will become of the seed we plant today. This morning we are asking you to listen to hear what Christ has planned for you. If he wants you to be a priest then I can promise you two things, your life will have meaning and you will live forever.”

Fr. Ron Gatman recounted the story of his vocation journey. “Some people think that God will just announce to you in a loud voice, “I want you to be a priest.” It doesn’t happen that way. The call is very different from that. It is more subtle, a gentle coaxing that doesn’t go away. Like Elijah, the call was quiet and insistent. God calls all of us to a vocation, but we do not have to accept that call. If a person ignores the gentle calling, they will not have feeling of comfort or peace in their life. I am very happy with my life as a priest. I feel privileged, fulfilled and blessed that God has let me serve him in that way.”

Bishop Boland shared a few of his personal perspectives on how he became a priest and came from Ireland to serve the people of the Diocese of Savannah. He credited his parents, who often had priests and religious in their home, as being a strong influence on his decision to become a priest.

“Being a priest is very enriching as you deal with people on a meaningful level. Today I hope you gained a better appreciation for the priesthood today. Most of you are not called to be priests, but several are called. You can’t be forced into it by the church but rather it is up to you to embrace it. The church is there to endorse the call from God. I would ask you to put the priesthood on the menu. Give God the chance to call you, and yourself the opportunity to consider his call.

Graham Crawford got this note recently:

Dear Graham:

Peace and Grace In Christ!

Thank you for the Christmas card. What a blessing you and the Serra Club are to the diocese and the Church. Thank you so much for your prayers and support.

May the Lord bless you and your loved ones over this year.

Peace in Christ,

Deacon Daniel Firmin

Dear Mr. Kessel,

Thank you for sending me your newsletters. Thank you also for all your prayers and support! It is such a blessing for our diocese to have the Serra Club doing so much to promote vocations.

God bless,

Pablo Migone

Walt,

Thanks for sending the Serra Club newsletter. Also, many thanks to you and the club for all that you do. Your work is greatly appreciated and does not go unnoticed. May God bless you in all that you do, and I look forward to your newsletters in the future.

Sincerely,

Scott Winchel