



# Savannah Serra Club NEWSLETTER

November 2006



## ANNIVERSARY MASS HELD FOR BELOVED SEMINARIAN

Mass was offered for the repose of the soul of Dariusz Zurek at St. James Church on Saturday, November 18, 2006 on the occasion of the first anniversary of his tragic death. Mass was attended by about 150 people and concelebrated by 7 Priests: Fr Chidi Osondu; Fr Martino Nguyen, Serra Chaplain; Fr. Tim McKeown, Director of Vocations; Msgr. William O'Neill; Fr. Mark Ross; Fr. Jeremiah McCarthy; Fr. Adam Kasela; and Fr. Josef Musiol. Bishop Boland was also in attendance. Someone observed that the church is truly universal with the concelebrants coming from 5 different countries: Ireland - 3, USA - 2, Poland - 2, Vietnam - 1 and Nigeria - 1.

## For a Well-Liked Friend Dariusz's Love Never Ends.

By Father Adam Kasela

No person is ever truly alone. Those who live no more, whom we loved, echo still within our thoughts, our words, our hearts. And what they did and who they were becomes a part of all that we are, forever.

A year ago, driving in a terrible storm, my 25 year-old friend Dariusz died. When a person dies, there are many things that can be said, and there is at least one thing that should never be said. The one thing that should never be said is "It is the will of God." Never do we know enough to say that. My own consolation lies in knowing that it was not the will of God that Dariusz die; God's heart was the first of all our hearts to break.

Dariusz made others feel good to be around him. He loved life and loved other people. Behind that sometimes gruff exterior beat an exceedingly warm heart. Dariusz cared deeply for his family and for his large circle of friends. I know well — and we all know — what a treasure he was and what a treasure we've lost.

A year after this tragedy there is sadness, to be sure, but



Fr. Adam and Dariusz

there is also deep gratitude — gratitude to have known this man for the past 4 years, to have loved him and to have been loved by him.

I chose the Scripture reading from Romans chapter 8 for his funeral in Poland because of what it says about love. Love is a spiritual gift, according to the Bible. It comes from God, and, when we die, it goes back to God.

Dariusz was close to God, and I am confident he felt God's love. But love also lingers here on earth, in cherished memories.

That love is not merely rooted in the past as the stuff of memory. It lives on, and I know Dariusz's fondest wish was that his love would live on in those he leaves behind.

Henri Nouwen says that each time we experience the pain that comes with loving, we are faced with a choice — to become bitter and decide not to love again, or to let the soil on which we stand become richer and more able to give life to new seeds.

Nouwen maintains that those we love will not leave our



hearts, even when they are removed from us. “They will become part of yourself and thus gradually build a community within you. Those you have loved deeply become a part of you.”

The fruit that Dariusz's love is bearing is the love we share for one another. We continue to reach out in love.

“Never place a period where God has placed a comma.” Know that, by the grace of Jesus Christ, Dariusz's life is not ended but continues, eternally. So honor Dariusz's memory. Tell his stories. Laugh, and even cry. But most of all, continue to share his love. It's what he would have wanted for sure.



1. Fr. Chidi Osondu gives the homily.
2. Bishop Boland with Serra Club.
3. Bishop Boland with Dawid Kwiatkowski and Krysztof Szczepanik from Poland.
4. Wray Kessel chats with Dawid and Krysztof.
5. Sr. Regina Marion signs the book.
6. Frs. Chidi and Martino.
7. Dariusz memorabilia.

**Correction:** Last issue the kindergarten class with Fr. Martino was misidentified. The class was from St. Frances Cabrini.



## Commentary

Peter Paolucci

I recently read an article in *The Southern Cross*, “Priesthood Sunday prompts gratitude” written by Rachel Swenson Balducci, a freelance writer, wife, mother of four sons and a member of Most Holy Trinity Parish in Augusta. It was an eloquent expression of gratitude to our priests. What really struck me in reading this article was her willingness, as a mother, to present the option of becoming a priest to her sons. Here are some of her thoughts:

*“As I was reflecting on how we as a family could offer support and encouragement for our priests. I realized one of the best ways is to honor the office of the priesthood, to honor the priestly vocation itself.*

*As I look at my boys and listen to their dreams of who they will become some day, I realize the incredible opportunity I have to plant seeds in their own hearts about the priesthood.*

*We should make an effort in our own homes to show our children the value and relevance of the priesthood. And coming from a household with boys, it’s important for Paul and me to show our sons that becoming a priest is something worth praying about.*

*How beautiful to have the priesthood such a natural extension of Catholic life. Not every family will have a priest, but we can surely present it to our sons as a viable option.”*

We all are aware of the crisis of not enough vocations in the church. We have heard stories or even witnessed parish consolidations and church closings because there are not enough priests to serve the growing number of faithful.

The problem of not enough priestly vocations cannot be delegated to some vocations group. The fostering of vocations cannot be considered a marginal activity, but must be incorporated fully into the life and activity of the parish community. It is a vital problem, which lies at the very heart of the Church and must be at the heart of the love which each Christian feels for the Church.

A very special responsibility also falls upon the Christian family, which by virtue of the sacrament of matrimony shares in its own unique way in the educational mission of the Church — teacher and mother. The Christian family, which is truly a domestic Church, has always offered and continues to offer favorable conditions for the birth of vocations.

In building a positive climate for vocations to the priesthood and religious life, Christian parents are called to prepare, develop and protect the vocations that God stirs up in their family. They must enrich family faith life with worship and prayer as well as strong moral values and a deep religious spirit. Through witness and apostolic service, parents instruct their children after the mind of Christ who said, “I did not come to be served but to serve.”

A study done by the Knights of Columbus revealed that 75% of all Catholic young people who had seriously consid-

ered religious life felt that they were never encouraged to pursue that goal.

Additionally in a 1996 youth ministry study, 48 percent of parents interviewed admitted that they had not encouraged their children to consider a vocation to religious life, and an additional 19 percent felt strongly that a parent should not encourage vocations. Even more disturbing are reports of parents who are hostile towards a vocation to the priesthood or religious life.

Most parents generally want happiness for their children. I wonder if they know that the overwhelming majority of priests find their ministry rewarding and fulfilling and would do it all over again if they could. And the priesthood is a career for which there is a current and projected shortage, a job that offers a great opportunity to be of service to humanity and provides tremendous personal satisfaction and peace.

I would hope that more parents felt the same way Rachel does about the priesthood being a worthy vocation for their sons.

In August 2007, the Serra International Convention will be held in Atlanta, GA. The theme of this year’s convention is “Faith of the Family — The Foundation of Vocations.”

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