



Savannah Serra Club NEWSLETTER

October 2004



Priesthood Sunday

Sunday, October 31, 2004 is Priesthood Sunday, a special day set aside to honor the Priesthood in the United States. It is a call for parishioners to honor Christ as Priest and the men who are called to be his priests here on earth. We come together as a community to honor the good priests who are so important in our lives.

Catholic parishes throughout the United States will rally in support of their priests on Sunday, October 31, 2004, with prayer, celebration and dialog. "Priesthood Sunday", a one-day celebration of the American priesthood, is backed again this year by a wide array of Catholic organizations seeking to show their support for priests,

Priesthood Sunday was first observed in October of 2003 as a reaction to the shadows cast over all priests by the sex abuse crisis.

"The purpose of Priesthood Sunday is to engage every level of the church in the United States in a national conversation about the priesthood," said Rev. Robert J. Silva, President of the National Federation of Priests' Councils, organizer of the event. NFPC represents more than 26,000 U.S. Priests.

Only 4 thousand of the 19 thousand parishes in the U.S. currently have more than one priest. Some priests serve two or more parishes by themselves.

Priesthood Sunday is meant to be led by a parish's lay leaders. Last year, an estimated 10% of U.S. parishes took part in the event. Rev. Silva predicted as many as 25% of parishes may be involved in the 2004 event.

The lay faithful of each parish, school or other ministry are asked to develop their own special way of marking the day and honoring both the priesthood and their own priests. Special liturgies, celebrations and the opening of a dialog between priests and lay people are encouraged.

Despite the turmoil of the past few years, the overwhelming majority of priests have been faithful, find their ministry rewarding and fulfilling and would do it all over again if they could. It is a job that offers a great opportunity to be of service to

humanity and provides tremendous personal satisfaction and peace.

Most priests believe that it is an honor for them to be a Priest, to be present at all the special and important moments in the lives of their parishioners, such as weddings, baptisms and other sacramental milestones and to be there to comfort to those who suffer illness and loss. They consider it to be a special privilege to preside over the Eucharistic Sacrifice each day as a representative of the people to God.

Why is Priesthood Sunday so Important?

Because without a priest, no parish would be able to be a Eucharistic community. Therefore it is essential to reaffirm the importance of the priesthood of Jesus Christ and its central place in the life of our Church.

On this special day, Catholics everywhere will join together in praying for our priests, in praising God for their courage and their generosity. We must all stand up and show our support for the sacredness of Christ's priesthood and our thankfulness for good priests, who are there for us when we need them.

I hope each of you will make your appreciation personally known to our priests for faithfully serving our spiritual needs all these years.

— Peter Paolucci



A Spiritual Journey

Brother Francis Ehnat, a Benedictine brother currently working at Benedictine Military School, spoke to the Serra Club about his vocation.

Brother Francis told a humorous story about his early acquaintance with Catholic sisters in a daycare where his parents placed him. Being accustomed to being at home, he took a dislike to being in preschool and tried to escape. Since the teachers thought he was not yet ready for school, his parents took him out of preschool. Several years passed before anyone identifiable as Catholic reentered his life.

Although he wasn't raised Catholic, Brother Francis discovered as an adult that he was baptized as a Catholic. He also found out his grandfather had been a Catholic. These two facts helped urge him toward exploring Catholicism. In a quiet searching and over time, he ultimately felt led to become a monk. Tongue-in-cheek, he told Serrans that the only vision he ever recalled was escaping daycare. When discerning a vocation, he neither saw visions nor heard divine voices calling him to a vocation. Instead, through the example of others and an invitation to live in community he found a place where he encountered a sense of belonging.

Brother Francis noted several good

role models who influenced him along the way. Fr. Bertrand Dunegan became a friend as he took the youth on recreational outings. Fr. Dunegan demonstrated that a religious could be happy and have a good time. Monsignor Felix Donnelly taught Br. Francis when he decided to receive Catechetical instruction. Br. Francis was impressed with Msgr. Donnelly's deep spirituality. Sister Mary Catherine Moore demonstrated faith in action through her ministry at the Social Apostolate. Working with her to help the poor, Br. Francis observed first hand the positive impact of good works.

Along the way, people saw something in him and kept asking, "Have you ever thought about being a priest?" Recognition by others has been cited by people who embrace vocations as a key determinant leading them to commit their lives to the Lord.

Why a brother and not a priest?

Obviously, he has been asked this question many times. Brother Francis said he didn't feel he had the outgoing personality essential to serve the needs of a large number of

people in a parish community. Also, since he wasn't raised a Catholic, he felt less grounded in the faith, which was another factor that steered him to serve the Lord as a brother.

"Living in a community is a viable means of spiritual development," according to Brother Francis.

"Sometimes you want to do good but feel utterly helpless to do it. But you need to think less of yourself and more of others and let the good work through you."

Serra Club of Savannah Coming Attractions

Nov. 4 — Holy Hour 7:00 PM -
THURSDAY— Cathedral

Nov. 20 Meeting 9:00 AM
St. Frances Cabrini
Speaker Fr. Desmond Ohankwere
"Feast of Christ the King"

Dec 1 — Holy Hour 7:00 PM -
WEDNESDAY — Cathedral

Dec 11 — SATURDAY – Meeting
Christmas Party and
Christmas Card Project

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