



Savannah Serra Club NEWSLETTER

October 2006



Father Ray Levreault Speaks to Serrans

A little over six years ago, Father Ray knelt in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament and offered up the prayer, "If this is what you want, Lord, then You make it happen."

The story could begin from that point and move into the future. But Father Ray told the Serra Club that his journey to Holy Orders began during his childhood. A great aunt predicted that Ray, the youngest of five children, would become a priest. After joining the Presentation Sisters religious order she did her part to make that happen by praying daily for 20 years that Ray would embrace a priestly vocation. Prior to ordination, Fr. Ray worked in 19 jobs ranging from cross-country truck driver to cemetery custodian to retail sales. Eventually, his vocation began to evolve when he took a job as a Youth Minister, a job he enjoyed. All the while, his family joked that Ray would become bored with any job in three years or less and made bets on how long he would last in any given occupation. However, he has found the priesthood to be anything but boring. Father Ray described some of the rewards and challenges of his first year after ordination by relating his involvement with the church's sacraments.

Reflecting on his experience during the Mass in which he was ordained to the Diaconate, Fr. Ray said he felt unworthy to serve God in his calling, but he has found humble assurance in God's grace and love. This passage into Holy Orders opened the door for Fr. Ray to experience other pivotal moments through the remaining Sacraments.

During his first experience with Reconciliation, he encountered a scenario straight out of his seminary training. Because of his solid prepara-



tion, he found the confidence to live up to the roles as confessor, consoler and teacher. He attests to the belief that the Holy Spirit prods his memory and inspires him to instruct through appropriate Gospel stories, accounts of saints, and other advice which pop into his thoughts as the moment dictates.

He witnessed how presenting a child for Baptism re-energizes the faith of parents and godparents when they request the Sacrament for children. He prompts honest discussion and examination by asking adults to answer the question, "Why do you bring a child to be baptized?" In many cases, dialog ensues which aids in the development of the adults as well as the children.

He finds confirmation to be frustrating, probably as much as many parents. He expressed concern with teaching young teenagers who do not seem to be motivated to understand the spiritual significance of the Sacrament.

While ministering to the sick, he has witnessed how the Rite of the Anointing of the Sick can soothe a grieving family and bring hope in a heavenly eternity to the dying.

Lastly, Fr. Ray gave a humorous description of events leading up to the first wedding where he officiated. Working with the couple before the wedding convinced him that the engaged couple were both mature



and ready for the commitment. However, the night before the wedding, due to no fault of the couple's, paperwork had been misplaced and the wedding was in danger of being cancelled. Quick thinking and support from fellow priests smoothed the way for the nuptials to be completed. But the nerve-wracking experience underscored for Fr. Ray why many priests profess a strong dislike for weddings.

Fr. Ray offered the paradox of



the Sacraments as food for thought. He reminded us that God does not need the Sacraments, but we, followers of Christ, rely on Sacraments for comfort, strength, and preparation for the eternal. Because of the tremendous treasure found in the Sacraments, we should equally treasure the priests who stand in as Christ to provide access.



The Vocations Monstrance, blessed by Pope John Paul II for the United States, made a stop in Savannah and visited our local parishes during September. Here Father Martino explains the monstrance and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament to the children of St. Frances Cabrini kindergarten.



Mariusz Fuks and Dariusz Zurek

MARIUSZ FUKS REMEMBERS HIS FRIEND

Editor's note: Dariusz Zurek was killed in an automobile accident on November 22, 2005.

I do not know what the perfect definition of a best friend would be, but although I cannot give this definition, I know that Dariusz would fit perfectly in it.

I met Dariusz in the Seminary in Krakow. He was one of many colleagues I had at that time. I never imagined that the future would bring us both to a foreign land to study and work as seminarians. We

knew only a few things about The Diocese of Savannah; that the Diocese is big, and that the diocese needs more priests and seminarians. Coming to the Diocese of Savannah we were not sure what to expect: different culture, different language, different everything. We totally entrusted ourselves to God's providence. All the thoughts and concerns in my head were somehow silenced by the assurance that I would not be going through this alone. I knew that I had a person I could rely on, Dariusz, and this thought brought me peace.

Dariusz was like an older brother, uncommonly patient with everything and especially with me. Many times we fought and argued over ridiculous things, most of the time the fault was mine. Dariusz did not know how to be angry or resentful; it was not his nature. He had no problem making friends, was always accessible, nice, smiling, always ready to help. His personality and sense of humor attracted people. He really looked forward to a future ministry in the diocese. Many times he shared his ideas about being a priest with me.

Soon it will be one year since this horrible tragedy happened.

Even though I saw the coffin, even though I participated in the funeral, I still cannot believe Dariusz is not with us anymore. His death came so unexpectedly. It was so unfair. We were not prepared for that.

The only hope I have is that now he is in a better place with God, the place we all hope for, heaven, and that one day we all are going to be there united with Christ.

*"Let us rush to love people, they depart so quickly,
leaving behind their shoes and phones no-one picks up
only what's unimportant is slow like a beast of burden
the most important is so fast, it stops you all of a sudden,
silence then follows - so normal and so hard to bear,
like purity of despair born in the simplest way" (Ks. Twardowski)*

Anniversary Mass for Dariusz Zurek

November 22 is the 1st anniversary of the tragic death of Dariusz Zurek. To commemorate this anniversary, the 9:00 Mass at St. James on Sat. Nov. 18th will be a Memorial Mass and Tribute to this beloved seminarian.

Father Chidi has offered to help with the Liturgy and Helen Beddow, the music director at St. James, will provide suitable music and the choir members will participate. The Serra Club of Savannah will host a reception in the Narthex after the Mass. A program plus a memorial book for signatures will be sent to his family in Poland.

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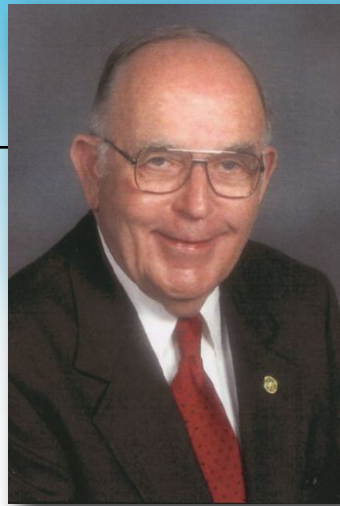
Jackie, We Hardly Knew You

You don't really know a person until you learn all about his life by reading his obituary. I've known Jack Pierce, as a member of the Cathedral Parish, principally as an Adult Altar Server, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and a member of the Adoration Chapel.

A few years ago, Jack attended the informational reception about forming a Serra Club in Savannah, answered Bishop Boland's call to join our effort, and we all got to know him a little better as a fellow founding member of our club. He was a loyal member promoting vocations to the priesthood and religious life by attending Holy Hours and Masses over the past 5 years. Upon closer examination Jack had led a very rewarding and fruitful life.

The son of the late Arthur E. Pierce, Sr. and Julia Barter Pierce, he grew up in Sacred Heart Parish and attended Benedictine Military School, where he developed a calling to serve his country in the U.S. military. Following his graduation in 1951, he entered Spring Hill College where he joined the ROTC. He was selected as a Distinguished Military Graduate and upon his graduation accepted a Commission in the Regular Army and embarked on a career of proud service to his country.

While on various assignments around the world, he made certain to learn as much as possible about the area in which he was serving. When he retired in 1975, as a Colonel from the US Army, he had received Bronze Star Medal (Vietnam), Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal (two



awards), Meritorious Unit Citation, Vietnamese Defense Service Medal, and the Distinguished Member of the Transportation Corps Regiment.

When his military service came to an end he returned home to Savannah. In 1981 he left briefly to attend the Walter F.

George School of Law (Mercer University) where he received his Juris Doctor Degree in 1984. He returned to Savannah and practiced law here for the next fourteen years.

He was most proud of his efforts which led to the establishment of the Cathedral Committee. This was one of the early endeavors to save the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist and its contents from the ravages of time. He received the Bishop Francis X. Gartland Award in 2004 for service rendered to the Cathedral Parish as an adult altar server.

He also participated in various community groups, as exemplified by his service for many years on the Board of Directors of the Citizens Crime Commission. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus Council 631, and was honored to be a member of the Hibernian Society of Savannah, serving in various capacities including Committee Chairman. At the time of his death he was Assistant Secretary of the Society. Jack died on Sept. 24, 2006 at his residence under the care of Hospice Savannah. As previously mentioned, he was also a founding member of the Serra Club of Savannah and we will miss him very much.

—Peter Paolucci

Dear Walt and Peter,

Well the two apostles for vocations have struck pay dirt again! What a headline story in this edition! About Fr Martino: what a "grand" story, as my mother would have said. Fr Martino is the exact kind of person who will fill the original fishermen's shoes...it takes all kinds, but his call was unmistakable!

I just love the enthusiasm of these young ordainees—may it last their lifetimes! Imagine if he'd not been born! And God bless his parents! Keep up the good work, fellas!

Love,
Peggy O'Brien

