

Reflections



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

A Newsletter from the Vocation Office

Fall 2002

Welcome to *Reflections* – the inaugural issue of our vocation newsletter!

Our goal is to improve connections within our communities of faith in order to encourage, nurture and support vocations. Vocations don't just happen – the whole community is needed to support people who are reflecting on the call of God in their lives and to encourage all Catholics to consider how they can best be a disciple of Jesus in serving others.

In the last year we have experienced two very important events which bring us hope and encouragement. In April, approximately 1,200 delegates from across North America gathered in Montreal for a Vocation Congress. The pastoral plan resulting from this congress will be an opportunity for each of us to consider our own role in nurturing vocations.

Secondly, World Youth Day 2002 in July was an outstanding success. The courageous presence of Pope John Paul II and the joyful faith of so many young Catholics from around the world were an inspiration for Catholics of all ages.

In his Apostolic Letter about the new millennium

(*Novo Millennio Ineunte*), the Pope has taken the invitation of Jesus to "put out into the deep" (Luke 5:1-11) and challenged us to enthusiastically enter into the mission of the Church with trust in the Lord.



Fr. Mark Gatto

It's our hope that this newsletter will provide information, hope and assistance to all in the Church who want the voice of God to be heard more clearly in their own life and in the lives of others.

Reflections will be distributed to Catholic educators, parish priests, chaplains, youth group leaders, Serra Club members, seminarians and others. Those who wish to receive the newsletter by e-mail will have that option in the future; we ask that you make your preference known by e-mail to frmark@vocationinfo.ca.

We welcome your comments and suggestions about *Reflections* and would be happy to publish letters to the editor in forthcoming issues.

Fr. Mark Gatto
Vocation Director, Diocese of Hamilton

One Year After Ordination "Living the Life and Loving It"

You can prepare for it, study for it and imagine what it will be like, but Father Damian Schofield says there's just no way to really know what it's like to be a priest... until you actually are one.

The 32-year-old was ordained in May, 2001, at Cathedral of Christ the King in Hamilton and has just finished his first 12 months as a parish priest at Holy Rosary Church in Milton.

"There's no course in the seminary that completely teaches you what it's like to get those calls from the hospital at 2 a.m., rush to the bedside of a dying person, and be with the family for as many hours as it takes," Fr. Damian says, noting that "it's amazing" how quickly one can wake up under those circumstances.

Far more significantly than learning what to do at a deathbed, Fr. Damian has experienced the powerful and humbling symbolism of his role. "It is your presence, overall, that means something to the dying

person and to the family. As soon as they see your black shirt and white collar, it seems to bring them something no-one else can give them."

It has been a whirlwind 12 months for the former forest ranger, who entered St. Peter's Seminary in 1995 after a decade-long inner debate about the nature of his calling. He is associate pastor in a growing and

busy parish, where new registrations flow in on a weekly basis. Milton has three Catholic elementary schools (with another planned) and one high school. There's also the maximum-security Maplehurst Detention Centre, where he and the parish's pastor, Father Dave Wilhelm, visit with inmates on a weekly basis.

Since the parish includes a mission church in a rural area, both he and Fr. Dave preach weekly homilies, taking turns between the main church and the mission. "Not many associate pastors get the experience of preaching every week. It's good to develop the routine and the discipline."

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*...the words will
come to me when
I need them.*

Fr. Damian Schofield

The Call is Being Heard

A Report on the Vocation Awareness Campaign

By Father Mark Gatto, *Vocation Director*

In February, 2001, the Catholic Diocese of Hamilton received a lot of attention – including full-page articles in major newspapers – following its announcement of a "vocation awareness campaign" to encourage men to think about the priesthood.

In seeking media attention for this campaign, we were inviting a renewed scrutiny of the priesthood. As I carried out television, radio, and newspaper interviews, I couldn't help but wonder what would happen with all this increased scrutiny if our campaign had no observable impact. Here we were, publicly inviting men ("in this day and age," as reporters inevitably said) to consider the priesthood. Were we raising expectations that we couldn't fulfill? Were we asking for another "bad news" story about priests?

A year and a half later, I'm happy to report that the outcome of the vocation awareness campaign has been extremely positive.

First, some background. Our campaign was designed to do three things:

- openly encourage men who are considering the priesthood by providing support and information
- develop resources for high school teachers, chaplains and parish priests who may be contacted by people who are interested in the priesthood, religious life or other Church vocations
- create some much-needed positive attention for the priesthood, and put it "back on the table" as a positive life calling.

We worked with a Hamilton-based public relations firm to create three thought-provoking posters, a brochure and a web site (www.vocationinfo.ca). The materials were distributed to every Catholic high school within the diocese (a huge area stretching from Winona to Tobermory) as well as to every parish church.

The posters were the most public part of the campaign. Rather than a catchy slogan, we created a series of statements designed to make one stop and think, including: "It's a noisy world out there... you've got to listen to hear the call," "Just stop for a moment... look inside yourself," and "There's a lot going on in your life... is it enough?"

Our Catholic high schools got on board immediately. I owe the principals, teachers and chaplains a big debt of gratitude – we couldn't have carried out this campaign without their enthusiastic support and I thank them for their strong commitment to the vocation awareness program. I must also acknowledge the invaluable assistance of the Serra Club members who played a vital role by distributing the materials to high schools.

The media buzz that accompanied the launch of the campaign gave us a great start and virtually all of the coverage was positive in tone.

But the most telling result of all has been the impact on potential candidates for the priesthood. Within days of the posters going up, both parish priests and I received calls and e-mails from people who had seen the materials and wanted more information. Since then, referrals from parish priests, who inform my office of potential candidates, have increased. Many young women also contact the office looking for information on religious life, missionary life and other forms of service within the Church.

Yes, we still have a widespread shortage of priests and because the process of becoming a priest is lengthy (approximately seven years), it will be some time before we can fully measure the impact that our vocation awareness campaign has on the number of ordinations in the Diocese of Hamilton.

In the meantime, we can look at the rising numbers of men in seminary as a positive indicator: in September, 2002, there are 19 men from the Diocese of Hamilton studying to be priests. In June, 1999, there were just two.

These positive results would not have been possible without the strong support of the entire Catholic community – teachers,

principals, chaplains, priests, students, youth group leaders, Serra Club members and others. Thank you and God bless!

Here we were, publicly inviting men to consider the priesthood. Were we raising expectations that we couldn't fulfill?

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A Vocation Prayer

Holy Spirit... It is You who open the heart and the mind to the Divine call; it is You who make effective every impetus toward good, toward truth, toward charity... Open the hearts and minds of people, so that a new flowering of vocations may show forth the fidelity of your love, and all may know Christ, the true light come into the world, to offer to every human being, the sure hope of eternal life. Amen

Pope John Paul II

On the Calendar

Come and See Weekend

Friday, November 29 to Sunday, December 1, 2002,
at St. Peter's Seminary, London, Ontario.

This is an opportunity for men who may be considering a priestly vocation to visit the seminary and meet seminarians.

For more information, please contact
Fr. Mark Gatto, Vocation Director, at **905-528-7988, ext. 240.**

One Year After Ordination

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Fr. Damian also celebrates daily Mass, provides counseling and spiritual guidance to parishioners, and conducts baptisms, weddings and funerals. He quickly learned that his own penchant for planning, order, and control of his weekly timetable would have to soften in the face of the reality of parish life, where a useful motto is to expect the unexpected.

"I've learned to relax a little more and get by with a little less preparation, because that's just the way it is — you can't prepare for everything that's going to happen. I've learned that the words will come to me when I need them."

Another growing realization has been that it is not his own ministry he provides — it is God's. "I've learned to let God work through me — I can't do it on my own."

With parish activities going on non-stop, and a standing invitation to each of them, Fr. Damian has to deliberately carve out time for himself — whether that's going for a long run, enjoying the solitude of a hike on the Bruce Trail, or during his own morning prayer time. He jokes that joining the parish has given him "2,000 new mothers" and while he appreciates the steady stream of invitations to dinner, he works hard at achieving a balance between "on-time" and "off-time."

Being a parish priest in a small town like Milton means Fr. Damian has grown accustomed to being recognized and responded to as a priest, whether or not he is wearing his clerical collar. "Even when I'm in a pub with a golf shirt and shorts on, someone is bound to know who I am." It's a constant reminder that being a priest means being under scrutiny at all times.

At the end of his first year, Fr. Damian believes he's growing into the role. "I love it," he says simply. "I'm learning not to focus on the mechanics of it — now it's natural for me to lead Mass... to actually celebrate Mass, without worrying about what the next step is. I'm living the life and loving it."



Fr. Damian Schofield was ordained in May 2001

Looking Back to World Youth Day 2002

By Brian Dunn

Parish Program Director, Catholic Youth Organization

After two years of planning and "cross training," we made it! What a wonderful experience to have so many different events where we could truly celebrate faith, love and our call to be disciples of Christ.

The planning process for World Youth Day could only be taken literally 'one step at a time.' Each step led to a more positive experience. From our first planning retreat at Camp Brebeuf in February, 2001, to our pilgrimage of the World Youth Day Cross in February, 2002, I think it's safe to say that our young people can go the distance when given the opportunity to do so.

These months of planning were in preparation for the incredible summer of 2002, during which our diocese hosted more than 1,400 international and diocesan pilgrims. Here are a few highlights from this past July:

- Guelph Lake 'Celebrate our Faith' — 1,700 pilgrims enjoying prayer, art, music and drama, all led by youth from our diocese and around the world. The "Searching for the Sacred" arts showcase was a highlight.
- Port Elgin 'Come Follow Me' — included a Mass by Bishop Anthony Tonno, a parade down to the beach, and much more. The northern parishes planning committee (Port Elgin, Hanover, Kincardine, Formosa) did a super job of welcoming everybody.
- The Papal Vigil, with the flickering candles of the 600,000 people in attendance.
- Seeing youth from our diocese come together with young people from all over the world — laughing, praying, singing and smiling and bringing our Catholic faith alive.

I know that many positive seeds for youth involvement in the Church were planted during World Youth Day 2002. Now we need to cultivate those relationships so that they grow and take root. And now, more than ever, we need to make it a priority to have youth-friendly parishes, where young people feel welcome and involved.



What is Discernment?

This is a process of prayer, study and reflection that enables a person to discover one's path in life or to make a decision.

Discernment is a process that frees and opens us up to God's will. It enables us to sort out which impulses and inclinations originate from God and which originate from our own ego or other influences.

Congress on Vocations an Inspirational Experience

By Martha Fauteux, SSND

More than 1,100 delegates from across North America attended the third Continental Congress on Vocations held in Montreal from April 18 to 21, 2002.

The aim of the congress was to promote vocations to the ordained ministry and consecrated life, unify efforts for the Church in North America in its commitment to identify, help and support vocations, and to welcome future workers to the harvest. The result was the formulation of a pastoral plan for North America that will be distributed and used by vocation directors, pastoral workers, priests, parents, schools, etc in developing an action plan.

The conference was structured around five keynote addresses, which helped participants gain an overall view of vocations.

In his address, Rev. Donald Senior reflected on the biblical and theological foundations for Christian vocations to ordained ministry and consecrated life. He focused on the premise that the invitation to a life of holiness and service has roots deep within the Scriptures and the sacramental life of the Church, a profound call that embraces imitation of God and discipleship in the way of Jesus.

In another keynote address, Rev. Ronald Rolheiser spoke about the fact that vocations are given by God, but they are also given in a concrete history, time and place. He challenged his listeners with the question: "What is our moment – culturally, ecclesially and biblically? How does that moment impact the question of vocations and how does one read the signs of the times?"

Sister Marie Chin, RSM, addressed culture as a sacred dwelling place where the seeds of our vocation are planted, and highlighted the need to listen carefully to the sound of God's call as it reverberates in our lives. Sister Mary Johnson SND, discussed results of a recent U.S. study of young Catholics, including their attitudes regarding vocation, religious education, and spirituality. The final keynote address, given by Rev. Gilles Routhier, pointed out that renewed approaches to vocations ministry must be preceded by a conscious reflection in each local church, on the roles, place and concrete function of the Church in society.

A highlight of the congress was the energy of the young delegates, who met apart from the regular agenda to discuss their questions surrounding the meaning of vocation and the living out of their baptismal call in the Church of today.

As each delegate prepared to leave, it was evident that life and hope are a part of our Church. We have much to be grateful for and much to hope for!

What is a Vocation?

Through the Sacrament of Baptism, each person receives a 'call' or vocation. God calls all that are baptized to holiness and service. This call is lived as a single, married, ordained or consecrated person.

Diocese of Hamilton: Seminarists as of September 2002

The following men are presently in priestly formation to serve as Diocesan priests within the Diocese of Hamilton. The program requires an initial university degree, usually a Bachelor of Arts degree, though many come to the seminary from other backgrounds such as Engineering, Mathematics and so on. A candidate who already has a university degree is normally required to take part in a pre-theology year which focuses on his philosophy requirements. The theology program is five years.

One of those years is called the Pastoral Year in which the seminarian lives and works within a parish under the supervision of the pastor. The two major seminaries used by Diocese of Hamilton seminarists are St. Peter's in London, Ontario and St. Augustines in Scarborough. Pope John XXIII Seminary in Massachusetts is designed for older vocation candidates and St. Philips in Toronto offers the undergraduate degree with a focus on philosophy.

Candidates Registered at St. Peter's Seminary:

Tim Hingston: Pastoral Year
– St. Anthony Daniel Parish, Kitchener
Duy Nguyen: 1st Theology
Brendan McGrath: Pre-theology Year
Christopher Cassidy: Arts
Michael Anderson: Arts
Cory Wege: Arts
Jacek Jucha: Culture Works Program
Artur Jiasiewicz: Culture Works Program
Jerzy Tomon: Culture Works Program
Tuan Khac Nguyen: Culture Works Program

Candidates Registered at St. Augustine's Seminary:

Wojciech Kuzma: Pastoral Year
– Holy Cross Parish, Georgetown
Jeff Bergsma: Pastoral Year
– St. Margaret Mary Parish, Hamilton
Adrian Lee: 3rd Theology
Maciej Blok: Theology
Artur Nycz: Theology
Mariusz Durbaljo: Theology
Adam Voisin: Pre-theology Year

Candidate Registered at Pope John XXIII Seminary:

Robert Love: 4th Theology

Candidate Registered at St. Philip's Seminary:

Jason Kuntz: Philosophy

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