



Regina Cleri

MEET THE NEW MEN!

FROM TEXAS, ARKANSAS, AND SOUTH CAROLINA



From left to right: Juan Manjarrez, Zachary Webb, Timothy Nolt, Fr. James Mueller O Carm., John Chambers, Eli Lopez, Jim Garcia, Ryan Higdon, David Trahan, Br. Paul Nguyen C.O., Thai Hoa Tran, Edwin Leonard, Jason Sharbaugh, Ruben Quinteros, Jorge Sanchez, Reuben Chen, Sebastine Okoye, Patrick Knippenberg, (not pictured: Alvaro Interiano and Orrin Halepeska.

Fall 2007

Regina Cleri is a newsletter written and edited by seminarians for the friends and benefactors of St. Mary's Seminary, Houston.

Inside this issue:

- Meet the New Men 2
- A New Spiritual Director Too! 6
- And Two New Residents 6
- Fr. Cahill's Vision 7
- Come Into the Fields 8
- In Brief... 10
- Around the Seminary 11

We have been blessed to welcome sixteen new men into the seminary. These men have come to us from collegiate seminaries such as Holy Trinity in Irving, St. Benedict College Abbey in Covington, and a philosophy pre-seminary program at Franciscan University. One is from a religious oratory and there are others for whom this is the first year of their seminary life, having quit their jobs to follow God's call in the pre-theology program. They all come here to follow the Lord, and we all share that in common. *Turn to page two to read personal introductions from each of our new men.*

New Vision for the Seminary

That all men and women in Texas and Arkansas hear the Gospel proclaimed

Something exciting is happening at St. Mary's seminary. The Rector, Fr. Brendan Cahill has announced a new vision statement for the seminary: *That all men and women in Texas and Arkansas hear the Gospel*

proclaimed. The vision statement encapsulates the long term dream of the seminary. Fr. Cahill first announced this vision statement to the seminarians in a rector's conference last spring. At the Opening Mass this Fall, the rector

once again stressed the bold vision as the new semester began. After the Mass, the Regina Cleri was able to sit down with the Rector to discuss his vision for the seminary. *Read the interview with the Rector on page 7*

Meet the New Men...



“I have been praying to continue on this call to holiness, to open my heart and be able to completely surrender to God’s will”

**John Chambers,
Archdiocese of Galveston-
Houston**

The call to the priesthood started midway through high school during the time I was singing in a Life Teen ensemble at St. Thomas More Catholic Church. That interest motivated me toward altar serving and to participate fuller in the life of the church. I graduated from high school in 1999 and from the University of Houston-Downtown in 2007. I entered the seminary in August of 2007 in response to the call by God to serve the church in holiness by way of the priesthood. One of my favorite scripture passages is Psalm 51. This prayer has always been close to my heart because it’s a prayer that we can all relate to; the prayer of our repentance and God’s unending grace. It was also one of the favorite Psalms of St. John Vianney, my patron saint and a true example of priestly life for seminarians. Though studies in the seminary can be time consuming, some of my hobbies include playing tennis, listening to music, spending time with friends, and watching movies.

**Reuben Chen,
Diocese of Dallas**

I believe that God has been preparing me to live a special life for Him. Ironically, He brought me into the Church through the albs that my friends wore as altar servers. I liked wearing them and enjoyed serving often. My father and mother are both devout and active members in our parish, which influenced me greatly to serve in the parish in any way that I could; without reservation. I have a younger brother, Raleigh, working in San Antonio. I graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in 2002 with a BS in Electrical Engineering. I enjoy learning and working with

technology, and I enjoy camping. With no job prospects, I wondered what God wanted me to do in life and what lay in store for me. At the request of a close spiritual friend, I prayed for my vocation. I agreed reluctantly to pray, but opened my heart willingly to God’s calling. I prayed for God to show what His desire was for me. He showed me the way with a strong voice in my heart: “Come Follow Me” and also echoed the words of our beloved late Pope John Paul II: “Be not afraid. I am with you always.” I entered Holy Trinity Seminary in 2005 for pre-theology and finished this May. I have been praying to continue on this call to holiness, to open my heart, to be able to completely surrender to God’s Will, and empty myself for Him to fill me up. I will try to humbly offer everything I can before the Lord, and He will use me as His instrument. My favorite quote is from St. Ignatius of Loyola: “Receive, O Lord, all my liberty. Take my memory, my understanding, and my entire will. Whatsoever I have or possess Thou hast bestowed upon me; I give it all back to Thee and surrender it wholly to be governed by Thy Will.”

**Jim Castro Garcia,
Diocese of Austin**

I am a fourth generation Austinite studying for the Diocese of Austin. My home parishes are Cristo Rey and San Jose. From a very early age I felt a call. It was not until later I would explore what that would mean for me. Through wonderful people that nurtured and cared for my vocation I entered the seminary despite struggling with a handicap. God’s providence and the prayers of family and friends have brought me to this point in my life. I am a recent graduate of Our Lady of Holy Cross College in New Orleans,

where I received a Bachelor of Science in conjunction with Notre Dame Seminary. One of my favorite scriptures is Exodus 4:10, it is the call of Moses by God; Moses seeming to have a “disability” said to God that he could not possibly use him due to a speech impediment. That story keeps encouraging me especially in those trying times. I am an only child so family and friends are very important to me. When I have free time I enjoy cooking with them and simply soaking up the joy and laughter we share.

**Orrin Halepeska,
Archdiocese of Galveston-
Houston**

I grew up on a ranch in Goliad County with my parents, younger sister, and baby brother. I first heard a call to the priesthood as I served Mass every Sunday as a kid through high school. I began college in Victoria but soon transferred to The University of Houston where my faith became a priority for me. As I participated in ministry, I began to wish to be more closely involved in helping the people of God. This came at a time when I wondered if being a pharmacist would satisfy this desire to serve God’s people. One of my favorite scripture quotes is Exodus 3: 11-12. It inspires me because it contains the revelation to Moses that God will be with him every step of the way as he does the will of the most heavenly Father. My favorite saint is St. Francis of Assisi because he is so devoted to the mystery of the cross and what this reality ultimately calls us to within our lives. As this year begins, I am excited to learn more about who the Triune God is to the people of God.



...In Their Own Words

**Ryan Higdon,
Diocese of Austin**

I've been gifted with two wonderful brothers by the name of Forrest and Adam. If I had to list any hobbies I would have to label them weight lifting, running, watching movies and avoiding school work. I entered formation out of High School with the diocese of Austin which sent me to study at Holy Trinity for four years. I concluded my studies there in May and I look forward to continuing my studies here at St. Mary's. The call to the priesthood expressed itself most explicitly in my life through my parish's very active and supportive youth group. My current favorite scripture verse, Psalm 143: 1-11, comes out of our night prayer and expresses, for me, my own need for a full reliance upon God.

**Alvaro Interiano,
Archdiocese of Galveston-
Houston**

I had a deep conversion experience while attending Texas A&M. I then became involved in their Awakening retreats, which further deepened my faith. Then in my senior year, while reading the "Autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila" I felt a call to the priesthood. I discerned for about two years and then began my application to the seminary. Three years later, here I am. My favorite female saint is St. Martha, male saint, St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin. More importantly, I have a great love for the Blessed Virgin Mary and her Rosary. I have recently taken up biking, something I used to do when I was younger. My favorite scripture quote is Sirach 51:30: "The Lord hath given me a tongue for my reward: and with it I will praise him."

**Patrick Knippenberg,
Diocese of Victoria**

The business I was in had me traveling to many countries. Within this travel I began to discern the calling to the priesthood. My brother, who is a priest for the diocese of Victoria, encouraged my discernment. I entered the seminary over six years ago to acquire my undergraduate degree as well as my pre-theology studies, which I acquired from the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio. I am nine hours short of my undergraduate degree which I will be finishing up here at St. Mary's. Probably my favorite scripture passage is the Parable of the Sower. It speaks to the different phases of my life, and hopefully will end with being planted in fertile soil. My favorite saint is St. Francis de Sales. I enjoy golf and I have two older brothers and two younger sisters. Both my parents are still alive and live in Ft. Worth, TX.

**Edwin Leonard,
Diocese of Dallas**

The first time I seriously felt that God might be calling me to be a priest was while I was doing missionary work with NET (National Evangelization Team). I really felt a desire to lead Catholics closer to God and wanted to do it for the rest of my life. Through prayer I began to realize that God might be calling me to the priesthood. Over the next year I felt like I should take the next step in my discernment and so joined the Pre-Theologate program at Franciscan University of Steubenville, where I had been attending school. Throughout my time there I continually felt God drawing me closer to him, so I approached my diocese and officially applied to be a seminarian. Throughout this time of

discernment and even today I continue to feel great consolation and strength through St. Paul's words in 2 Cor 12:9-10, because it reminds me to rely on God rather than myself. When I feel like I cannot complete a task, I realize that I am too weak, but God's grace is sufficient and through this I am strong enough to accomplish all he places before me.

**Eli Lopez,
Archdiocese Galveston-
Houston**

In June 2005, I went on a retreat with my pastor Fr. Adam McClosky and three other parishioners to the Benedictine Monastery of Christ in the Desert in Abiqui, New Mexico. It was a five day contemplative silent retreat. I remember praying to God and telling him that I am a single male involved in my parish, but I feel that I could be doing more. I asked, "Where is it Lord that you want me to serve?" I had been working for Al's Formalwear for 18 years. I returned home to Houston and six months later while I was at mass we had the traveling chalice being presented to a family to take home and pray for a week for vocations to the priesthood and religious life. While we were praying with this family, I had a burning in my heart and felt God calling me. He said, "This is where I would like you to serve." After much discernment and the Life Awareness retreat, I contacted the office of vocations and Fr. Clint Ressler. My journey to seminary has been incredible. God opened many doors for me and put so many wonderful people on my path. I have three older brothers and three older sisters. My favorite saint is St. Francis of Assisi. My favorite hobbies are walking and rollerblading. My favorite scripture is John 15:13: "No one has greater love than

"I have a great love for the Blessed Virgin Mary and her Rosary"



"My journey to seminary has been incredible. God opened many doors for me."

Meet the New Men...

this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." This is what Jesus did for us and is what we should do for one another if we are to live as followers of Christ.

**Juan Manjarrez,
Diocese of Little Rock**

It was in high school where I truly began thinking about the priesthood and where I finally made my decision to enter seminary. One of the things that got me thinking more seriously about the priesthood is the fact that the Spanish speaking community is growing and the number of priests that speak Spanish is not. I graduated from Saint Joseph Seminary College last spring and now I am here at Saint Mary's. My favorite scripture passage is Matthew 11: 28 because it is very comforting: "Come to me all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." I enjoy playing volleyball and I am the fourth in a family of four brothers and one sister.

**Br. Paul Nguyen, CO,
Oratory of Rock Hill, South
Carolina**

I was born into a traditional Catholic family in Vietnam, and I am an only child. When I was a child I wanted to become a priest. My grandmother made me attend Mass everyday and every night our family gathered and prayed together. Prayer life was deeply rooted in me at an early age. Once I arrived in the US, the thought of becoming a priest reoccurred to me. In fact, I stopped practicing the Catholic faith for a while. One day a friend of mine persuaded me to attend a five-day silent retreat, and during the retreat I read the parable of "the Prodigal Son" and it touched me deeply, I decided to re-practice my prayer habit and attend Mass and con-

fess regularly. The thought of becoming a priest reoccurred to me. In 2006 I joined the Oratory of Rock Hill in South Carolina. I completed my year of novitiate and they sent me to St. Mary's to study theology for priesthood.

**Timothy Nolt,
Diocese of Dallas**

I moved to Texas in 1990 to attend graduate school at UT. I had grown up in Pennsylvania, finished my undergrad at the Juilliard School in New York where I studied piano, and looked forward to working and learning in Austin. I enjoyed a variety of church experiences (all Protestant) worked in various difference capacities of ministry, and freelanced as a musician. In the late 90's I became a Catholic. Around the same time, I also landed a job that was to become a full-time job in Information Technology for the City of Georgetown. After many years of discernment as a Catholic, I realized that God was still calling me to seminary, so I quit my part-time job as director of music for St. John Vianney in Round Rock, quit my job of 10 years with the City of Georgetown and moved to St. Mary's! My current favorite passage of scripture is Habakkuk 3:17-19. I find the hope expressed in this passage a challenge to my own faith. In my short time at seminary I am finding that my hobbies include learning to play the organ and working out in the gym because I'm not yet sick of the food!

**Sebastine Okoye,
Archdiocese of Galveston-
Houston**

I first heard my vocation call to the priesthood in my final year in high school, even though it was not very clear to me what exactly God was calling me to. It first

started with the strong desire to attend daily Masses, devotion to Our Blessed Mother Mary, and an active prayer life. It was during one of my home parish's retreat in Lagos, Nigeria after hearing Bishop Ayo Maria, preach on "*Confidence in the Lord*", that I made up my mind to answer the call to the priesthood which actually took me two years of discernment. My favorite scripture passage is Rom. 12:10-13. It challenges me to be generous to everybody and to see Christ in those that I meet, also to be diligent and participate actively in the things of God. Also, it lifts up my spirit and makes me see hope and joy in my heavenly journey. My favorite saint is St. Ignatius Loyola, who says we should do everything to the glory of God "*ad maiorem Dei gloriam*." I love sports such as soccer, volleyball and tennis. I equally enjoy writing stories on the bible, which led me into publishing my first book entitled "Bible Study for Children." In my family I have four brothers and one sister and I am the second to the last child of my parents.

**Jason Sharbaugh,
Diocese of Little Rock**

As a high school student at Subiaco Academy in Arkansas, and later in college at the University of Arkansas, I would have philosophical thoughts about life and its meaning. I would ruminate upon what seemed to bring happiness. This contemplative process, I later discovered, was similar to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556). I began to draw closer to God and discover, as St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) teaches, that God is happiness in Himself. This is what He draws you to: the happiness of living our lives in Him. From this continued understand-

“One of the things that got me thinking more seriously about the priesthood is the fact that the Spanish speaking community is growing and the number of priests that speak Spanish is not.”

...In Their Own Words

ing, I felt a greater desire to be with the Eucharist and to live and learn the Gospel life more deeply. My favorite saint is St. Teresa of Lisieux. My favorite Scripture verse is Proverbs 15:15 "Every day is miserable for the depressed, but a light-hearted man has a continual feast." This verse is a reminder of the joy of living in God's grace. I enjoy most all sports, especially basketball (where I routinely crush Arthur in his weak attempts at playing the game) and Brazilian Jiu-jitsu. My brother is a law student at Pepperdine Law School and my sister is a beautician and surfing instructor in San Diego.

David Trahan,
Diocese of Austin

I first felt attracted to the priesthood at a young age, when I was living in New York. At that point, my attraction was simply to what a priest did without much understanding of what a priest was. The chaplain at West Point, Fr. Healy, was the first person to open my mind to the idea of the priesthood as a vocation and he was the first to ask me to serve at the altar of the Lord as an altar server. That experience left me with a desire that I was unable to express properly for many years. During my high school years, I was often called to defend my beliefs and to answer pointed questions from friends, most of whom could not see the attraction of a life of service—especially a celibate life. Those discussions caused me to examine my own life in a new light and helped me move to a more complete understanding of what it was that I felt. During the past four years I have been blessed with the spiritual opportunity to deepen my relationship with Christ and academic studies which inform and broaden

that relationship. In both prayer and study I have been given a new appreciation of God's hands at work within the world. I would like to thank all those who have supported me throughout these years and would ask for the grace to conform our lives to the will of Christ the High Priest and King. My favorite quote is from Jeremiah (6:16): "Stand beside the earliest roads, ask the pathways of old which is the way to good, and walk it; thus you will find rest for your souls." As St. Augustine said, "My soul is restless until it rests in Thee" It is only in fulfilling the will of the Father in our lives, in walking the road on which we have been sent in the mundane daily trials as well as the greater, more obvious struggles, that we find the rest for our souls that only God can give.

Thai Tran,
Diocese of Little Rock

The priesthood has always attracted me, but it was not until Providence arranged for my coming to Arkansas that I felt ready to respond to the call. It was not an easy decision to leave my family (especially my little sister) and San Francisco, where I lived for 15 years, to come to Arkansas, but there were little things that communicated to me what the Lord wanted me to do and that helped me to take that step. Most of my friends thought that I was nuts to leave behind so much, but looking back allowed me to see that my journey thus far is a gift. I would not be here today if it were not for grace. We have a great community here at St. Mary's, and I look forward to growing with them and to getting to know my brothers in Christ.

Zachary Webb,
Diocese of Dallas

I come from a small family made up of my parents and my brother who is four years older than me. Immediately after a radical conversion to Christ during the end of my senior year of high school, thoughts about the priesthood started stirring. However, I was not ready to take a major step into seminary and decided to go to the Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio. After one year of continuing to deepen my conversion and discerning God's will for my life, I decided to enter the Pre-Theologate program at Franciscan University. In the program over the next two years the Lord began to make it clear that he was calling me to take the next step and apply to my home diocese (Dallas). I finished my degree in Philosophy and then officially joined the Diocese of Dallas this past summer. Throughout my discernment I have been striving eagerly to follow our Lord's words to Peter in Luke 5:4: "Duc in altum" (Put out into the deep)! Christ's words call me to continue everyday to trustingly surrender more and more to his merciful love. Two of my favorite saints who have greatly impacted my life in being a catalyst for deeper conversion are Padre Pio and St. Maximilian Kolbe. I also love to play racquetball and soccer.



“Throughout my discernment I have been striving eagerly to follow our Lord’s words to Peter in Luke 5:4: Duc in altum (Put out into the deep)!”



“... when we’re not ministering or recreating then we should be contemplating the word of the Lord.”

A New Spiritual Director Too!



Catholic boys of his time, thought about the priesthood as a kid. But, it was not until his sophomore year in high school, when influenced by the assistant pastor at his church, Fr. Jim began seriously discerning the priesthood. After high school he went off to the minor seminary.

Fr. Jim says that the most important aspect of the spiritual life is to

The “new man” on the cover in the brown habit is none other than Fr. James Mueller, O. Carm. (Fr. Jim), who has recently blessed our community by serving as a spiritual director. He is a Carmelite priest and comes to us from his previous ministry in Niagara Falls in Canada. Fr. Jim is originally from Buffalo, NY where he grew up with an older brother and a younger sister. He, as many

“give oneself the permission to waste time with God.” He places great importance on contemplation, which is consistent with his Carmelite charism. Fr. Jim describes the Carmelites as having the call “to meditate on the law of the Lord when not occupied in some other apostolic activity.” He explains, “This means when we’re not ministering or recreating, then we should be contemplating the word of the Lord.”

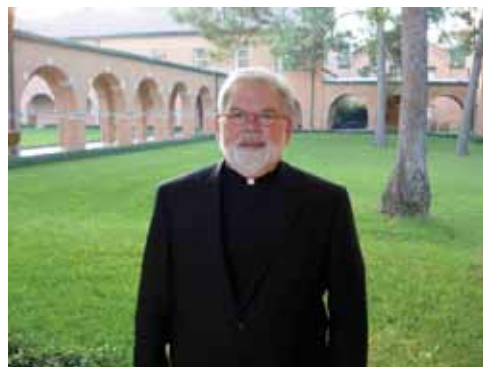
When asked what excites him about his new ministry, he mentioned the courage of the men who come to the seminary, considering how the image of the priest has suffered in recent decades. He is impressed with the quality of the men here in terms of their priorities and concern for their spiritual lives.

Fr. Jim says he likes Houston and has not found the weather as lethal as he had heard. He was surprised by the rain in July shortly after he arrived. He told us: “I was ready to build an ark...standing water all over the place, floods. I said ‘where is the gopher wood?’ Isn’t that what Noah used?” His favorite saint is Damian the Leper Priest (Damian Veuster.) He likes to spend time with small groups of friends in his leisure time. He has little complaints regarding the food at the seminary. His favorite food is domestic “American food” like hot dogs and hamburgers and he is allergic to seafood. In this respect he says that at the seminary, “Fridays can be torture.” Please pray for Fr. Jim and all his “directees.”

And Two New Residents Add To Our Community



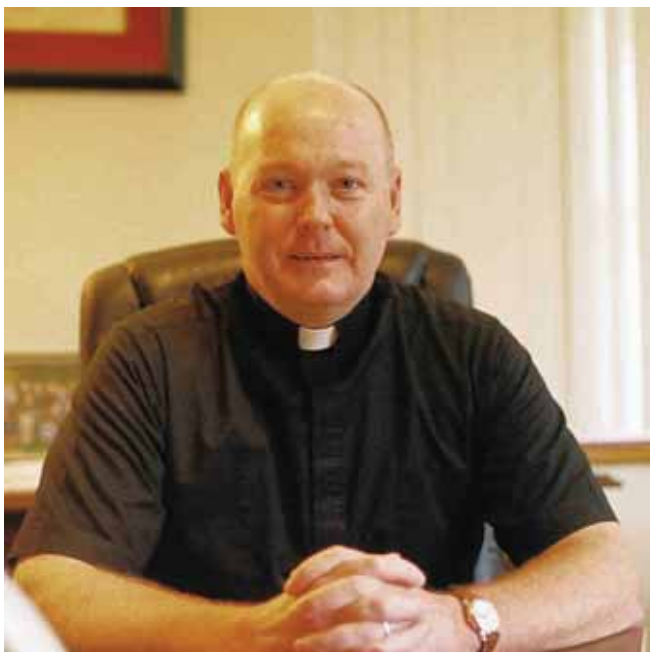
Fr. Dat Hoang, the new vocation director for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston not only took Fr. Clint Ressler’s old job, but his old room too.



Also joining our community is Msgr. George Sheltz, the Director of the Secretariat for Clergy Formation and Chaplains which includes the Seminary and the Vocations Office among other offices.

Fr. Cahill's Vision

An Interview with our Rector on the new Vision Statement



Regina Cleri: Fr. Brendan, at the opening Mass you announced to us the new vision statement. First, what gave you the idea to come up with a vision statement?

Fr. Brendan: We had been working on it. We still are. Just last year, considering all we do at the seminary I asked what our goal is. I thought... it is outward focused, a focus on evangelization. A danger for us as a seminary is to look in on ourselves. But, the goal is that every man and woman hears the Gospel proclaimed. *Fides ex auditu*. Faith comes from hearing. So, looking at Romans 10-17, it seems to summarize not only the goal of the seminary but the goal of every Christian to proclaim and evangelize. We need to keep that outward focus in the midst of all the busy details of our lives. In the seminary there is a lot of business (studying etc.), but we should never lose sight of the greater goal, and so the vision: *that every man woman and child, not just baptized, and not just Catholic hear the Gospel pro-*

claimed. There are 25 million in Texas, millions in Arkansas. Not just the ones we preach to, but the whole of humanity. In Romans, St Paul was concerned with that, faith comes from hearing. How can anyone hear if no one is sent? Evangelization is a big mission. I thought of the word "hears" and I thought how even though many hear, not everyone is converted. It is easy to get down on ourselves that people don't respond, but God's command is to preach so that they can hear. With free will they can decide to respond. In our culture, we need to create an opportunity for everyone to hear: through relationships, social action... to hear Christ, not just through preaching.

(Fr. Brendan then after a pause continued): Everyone hears the word proclaimed. How fortunate that Benedict has called a Pauline year to reflect on St. Paul his mission and his message, and also the Holy Father has set his themes for the World Youth Day to be the Holy Spirit and mission. There is a confluence in our reflection and our

prayer with the prayer of the Church, of the Holy Father that focuses outward.

RC.:What affect would you like this to have on the seminarians?

Fr. Brendan: From my role as an encourager, and trusting in the gifts and talents enthusiasm of the seminarians here, to provide an environment in which their gifts can flourish. I'll see it by all the work we do, mission trip, ministry. I hope this vision encourages them in what they are doing, to see a connection between their studies and ministry.

RC.:What do you think the biggest obstacle to the fulfillment of this mission in the Church of TX and AR?

Fr. Brendan: The devil. Evil is real. We are in a spiritual battle at times. We have to admit that there is a presence of evil in the world. On a practical level the devil does try to discourage us, tries to get us to give up hope. He will tell us that if we have failed a couple times that we have to give up. And that to me is the biggest obstacle, giving up too early too much of the time. That's why I pray for perseverance. St. Paul always persevered through all he went through. It is a spiritual battle. Also, there are so many different voices that they hear, the mass media, pop music, different things at school, so many distractions, for seminarians too.

RC: Are there any closing remarks?

Fr. Brendan: I want to thank all the people that read the *Regina Cleri* for your prayers, and let them know we pray for them every day. They can be proud of their seminarians. We could always use more. The ones we have now are good, but we could always use more.

“A danger for us as a seminary is to look in on ourselves. But, the goal is that every man and woman hears the Gospel proclaimed.”

Come into the Fields

Seminarians at work in the Hospital and in the Parish

Please pray for our Brother
Seminarians who are on
Pastoral Year

Glenn Bisquera
St. Mary's Cathedral
Austin

Ron Feather
St. Mary's
of the Assumption
West

Cesar Garza
St. Helen Parish
Georgetown

John Kim
St. Mary's Parish
Brenham

Matthew Kinney
Holy Family Parish
Copperas Cove

Wade Russell
St. Mary's Catholic Center
College Station

Luis Miguel Vargas
St. Vincent de Paul
Arlington

Most seminarians after they complete their second year of theology take a break from their studies to put some of the theology they have learned to practical use in the field. These seminarians spend the summer working as Chaplains in hospitals throughout the area in a program known as Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). Then during the following school year, they work in parishes in their home Dioceses. This is the Pastoral Year. This year St. Mary's has fifteen seminarians on their Pastoral Year working in six Dioceses throughout Texas. The Regina Cleri talked to Cesar Garza & Jose Morales about their experiences working in the hospitals over the summer.

Cesar Garza Diocese of Austin

RC: What was a powerful moment that left a mark on you?

Cesar: One that comes to mind is a baptism I did during the summer. There was an African woman, from Liberia. She had a child and they knew it wouldn't survive. They called me to do the baptism. It was tough. A woman lost her child. You could see the grief in her face, but you could tell that some peace had come knowing that her child was able to receive the sacrament of baptism. You come to realize the power of the sacraments in a hospital setting. I stayed and prayed with them afterwards.



From left to right: (Back Row) Deacon Seamus Rowland, Matthew Kinney, Ron Feather, Marco Rangel, Cesar Garza, John Kim, Victor Pacheco, Jose Morales, Michael Okuto, Wade Russell, (front row) John Szatkowski, Marc Salas, Steve Sauser, Glenn Bisquera

RC: What emotions were you feeling when you were called to administer this sacrament?

Cesar: I was uncertain and scared when I was called to do the baptism. That never gets any easier. The Holy Spirit took over and helped me out.

RC: What did you say after you baptized him?

Cesar: The image of the Virgin Mary is really helpful. You can't relate to the pain that a mother is going to feel. That's why we have the saints, the exemplar of a mother who cared for her child. She knows the pain of seeing her child die before her. I recommended the image of Our Lady as someone who can relate to and understand what a mother feels and that we can ask for her

intercession in this time of grief.

RC: What was a major challenge for you?

Cesar: Recognizing that you have to leave at the end of a shift. It is hard to leave after forming connections with the patients, sharing their life stories. You realize you don't want to leave. I had to realize it isn't abandoning the patients to leave your shift. You need to take that time to recharge, in order to better serve the next day. You have to trust also in your fellow chaplains through whom God can work just as well.

RC: What is something that you learned that will help you in pastoral year?

Cesar: A big thing that will help me in pastoral year is about the connections one forms in the ministry. They are learning experiences. Whenever you form connections you learn about other people and something about yourself. In pastoral year I can better be open to learning from others through the relationships I will make. The learning that takes place in pastoral year and C.P.E. are the same: the way you learn is in the relationships you have and the connections you make.

Cesar is currently at St. Helen's in Georgetown. Please pray for him.

**Jose Morales,
Diocese of El Paso**

RC: Name one experience of C.P.E. that left a profound mark on you.

Jose: There is one time I can think of. I was paged to go visit a patient (Spanish speaking). I walked into the room, introduced myself. Many family members were present. The patient did not seem satisfied. I asked, "Should I come back when you are by yourself." I left to visit another patient. I came back and this time it was only the patient and her husband there. They said to me, "Pray with us." I asked them first what their religious background was. The family said they were Catholic. She said she was having major surgery and was scared of the surgery. She began to talk about her faith, her religion. She was scared

about her surgery, but she wanted to make things 'straight'. She had been a Catholic all her life and seven years ago she joined an Evangelical group (church) and wanted to know if she had sinned. After talking to her, asking questions, I offered her the option of calling the priest to give her confession and the other sacraments to continue her catholic tradition. She accepted the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. It was a beautiful experience of facilitating reconciliation between a person and God. In that particular situation, I saw her honest desire to find God in whatever she was doing. Her deep desire was to be in good terms with God. She just misread the signs when she went to the Evangelical church. She said, "I was tired of not feeling anything, feeling dry, like I didn't belong. I was really looking for God and wanted to find him." It was an awesome experience to talk to a person and not impose your faith on them but allow them to be themselves. She thanked me for choosing this life (seminary/priesthood).

RC: How will this help you for pastoral year?

Jose: It helped me open my eyes to the needs of the people. To interact with them at a human level not just concerning the matters of the intellect, how God talks to them on a daily basis and He reaches them where they are. See where they are what they are searching for. There is a time for evangelization when you can illumine their minds

with some theology and meet their needs pastorally and learn from them as well, from their experiences.

RC: What was the biggest challenge of the summer?

José: The greatest challenge of C.P.E. was having a listening ear, attentive ear and at the same time being able to identify who was being honest in expressing their faith and who was just trying to pull your leg and be pious because you are the chaplain. I learned how to find that balance and not be judgmental but be able to judge correctly and be God's instrument and not a charlatan, speaking just so I could be able to speak. You realize that you are God's instrument. There were situations where you walk away and you are only able to say to God, "You're awesome. Thank you." You know that what happened was only possible with His intervention. I realized I was an instrument of God in that situation. It is a great humbling experience to know that God looks at people like me and turns them into instruments to help others.

José Morales is currently doing his Pastoral Year in Pecos, TX at St. Rosa de Lima parish. Please keep him in your prayers.

Michael Okuto
St. Paul's Church
Houston

Victor Pacheco
Sacred Heart
Conroe

Deacon Seamus Rowland
Our Lady of Sorrows
Jacksonville

Steven Sauser
St. Vincent de Paul
Austin

Marco Rangel
St. Rita Church
Dallas

John Szatkowski
Mary Immaculate
Dallas

Jose Morales
Santa Rosa
Pecos

Mark Salas
San Judas
El Paso

In Brief



Members of the barbecue committee, Will Straten, Peter Stanley, and Paul Hudson, try out the new Barbeque Pit



Seminarian T.J. Dolce tees off at the Archbishop Fiorenza Golf Tournament at Tour 18.

St. Mary's Seminary has been blessed with a new barbecue pit this last summer. The pit was donated by St. Martin of Tours parish in Tours, TX. Monsignor Isidore Rozycki who is the pastor in Tours is an Alumnus of St. Mary's Seminary class of 1969. The pit is a great gift that will allow for the seminarians to prepare food for all the seminarians, faculty and staff and then some. The barbecue committee at the seminary tries to cook once a month for the seminarians to build fraternity.

On the afternoon of September 24, the seminarians traded in their books for a set of golf clubs, as classes were cancelled so all could participate in the Archbishop Fiorenza Golf Tournament at Tour 18 hosted by the Knights of Columbus. Our prayers were answered as we had beautiful weather for the tournament.



Most Rev. Buti J. Tlhagale, Archbishop of Johannesburg, South Africa recently stayed at the Seminary when he was in Houston to speak at Rice University. The Archbishop celebrated mass at the seminary and spoke about the problem of AIDS in his country to seminarians and students from area Catholic High Schools.

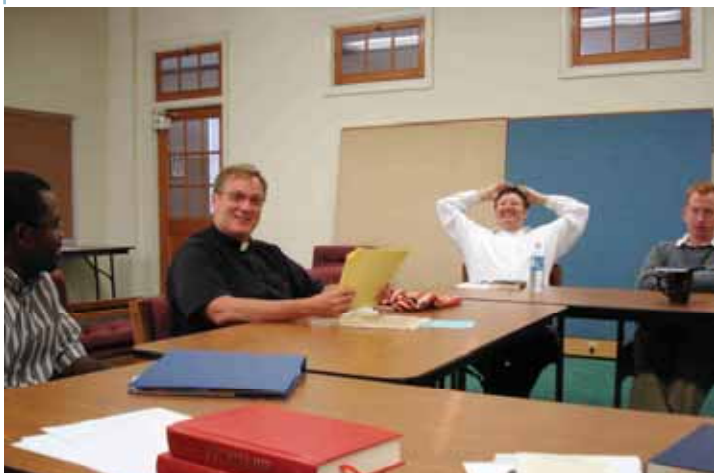


Hank Lanik was elected president of the Seminarian Community (student government). So far, his administration is currently working on plans for a new student kitchen and dining area, and getting new washers and dryers for the laundry area.



On Labor Day, The Knights of the Father Joseph Plummer Council #10872 from Christ the Good Shepherd prepared a barbecue luncheon for the seminarians on Labor Day. We thoroughly enjoyed the array of chicken, brisket, and sausage which the Knights spent the previous night preparing, not to mention the room full of sweets they brought for dessert.

Around the Seminary



Nothing like formation with Fr. Dean on a Friday Morning.



Br. Agustín is always close to the coffee in the 2nd year floor break-room.



Work order is fun for Jude and Thang who clean the "garthways."



The 2nd year guys have a little fiesta to welcome the 1st year brothers



Chris Nguyen is cherishing the free, all you can eat, dinners during his last year before he goes into the parish.



Jason cleaned his room thoroughly for this picture.



Zach folds shirts to sell at the golf tournament.



The gardeners Dcn. Luis and John take their work seriously.



Fr. Dat shares a laugh with Phong



Brian is surprised at dinner by a birthday cake on his big day.

St. Mary's Seminary

9845 Memorial Drive
Houston, Texas
77024

Phone: 713-686-4345

If you would like to visit the seminary, our Sunday Mass is open to the public. Mass is at 9:30 am on most Sundays when the seminary is in session. Call to confirm the Mass schedule.

Five Seminarians Ordained Deacon Over the Summer

Six More Seminarians Ordained Deacon on November 10



Deacon Daniel Liu promises obedience to Bishop Gregory Aymond and his successors during his ordination to the diaconate.

This summer five seminarians of our community were ordained to the diaconate. They are Deacons Daniel Liu, Nock Russell, Ramiro Tarazona, and Luis Caceres of the Diocese of Austin and Jose Luis Vidarte of the Diocese of Tyler. They have brought a new vigor to our community by serving as deacons at our Celebrations of the Mass, and Eucharistic Benedictions on Sunday nights.

On November 10, we celebrated the ordinations to the diaconate of Chris Nguyen, Chris Plant, Tom Lam, and Miguel Alvizures of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Tommy Chen of the Diocese of Victoria, and Cruz Calderon of the Diocese of Dallas. More on this in the next issue.

All of these men will be ordained to the priesthood this summer, with your prayers.