

with those same people, both in Mass here at the seminary and at dinner, adds a dimension to our relationship that further enriches our connection to the Diocese of Arlington."

If you would like more information about becoming a Serran, please contact the Office of Vocations or visit: http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/vocations/voc_serra_club.php

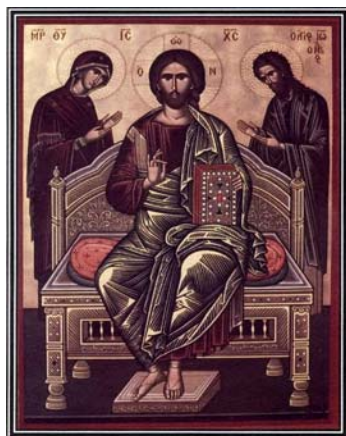
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PARISH VOCATION PROMOTERS WORKSHOP

The Office of Vocations hosted the 2009 Parish Vocation Promoter Workshop on October 24th at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Gainesville, VA. Promoters from 40 parishes gathered for the 9am Saturday Mass which was celebrated by the parish's parochial vicar Fr. Jerry Wooton and concelebrated by Fr. Brian Bashista, Director of the Office of Vocations. The Mass was followed by a welcome coffee and bagel check-in period during which the PVP's picked up their newly revised and streamlined handbooks. Father Bashista went through the handbook page by page and all agreed that they will be much easier to reference and use. Holy Trinity's pastor Fr. Francis Peffley gave the key-note address which was based on the letters in the word VOCATION and made for a memorable and encouraging talk. Afterwards, Fr. Bashista pulled up the diocesan website and reviewed the resources available on the vocation pages. The promoters were treated to lunch during which Fr. Bashista showed a brief DVD on consecrated religious life. The promoters were happy to have been present for this annual fall event at which they re-stock and re-charge for the upcoming year.

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VOCATION TALKS AT CATECHETICAL CONFERENCE



The Diocesan Office of Catechetics gives a conference for religious educators each year. Fr. Brian Bashista was invited to be among the presenters on November 14th at the Sheraton in Reston, VA and gave a session on how religious education teachers can build vocation awareness and invite their students to consider the unique vocation Jesus has planned for each of them.

Alyssa Westerman, a Level 2 sacramental preparation catechist at St. James parish, commented that "Fr. Bashista reminded the catechists to 'plant the seeds' of vocation in their students. He shared character traits to look for and gave examples of how to gently encourage and guide the children closer to Christ so that they would be open to hear His call. Father suggested that we pray directly for the ability to see the children as God sees them. He offered ideas about giving the children an exposure to religious life in the form of a visit by a sister, priest, or brother and by taking a field trip to demonstrate serving God (Christ House) and possibly to a monastery. He reminded us of the richness of our area with so many monasteries and churches. He really rejuvenated my teaching goal and he inspired my planning to reach the students more fully as they go through their journey to listen for Christ's call."

Fr. Bashista remarked that he "reviewed vocation related terminology, addressed some common misunderstandings regarding vocation discernment and hoped to encourage teachers to follow their own intuition along with the promptings of the Holy Spirit."

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2010 NATIONAL VOCATIONS AWARENESS WEEK

National Vocations Awareness Week, January 10-16, 2010 is fast approaching. The Office of Vocations sponsors the Student Vocations Awareness Week Program every other year. A packet of preparatory materials for this coming year's "**Student Vocation Awareness Week Program**" has been mailed to all the Catholic School principals and directors of religious education providing the opportunity to focus attention particularly on vocations to priesthood and the consecrated religious life. These materials include:



- x **National Vocations Awareness Week Children's Prayer Card**
- x **Suggested Opening Day/Opening Class Vocation Prayers**
- x **Diocesan 'Vocation Spiritual Olympics'**
- x **Diocesan Vocation Prayer & Drawing Contest**
- x **Grade Appropriate Planning Kit (with suggested lessons & activities)**
- x **Ideas for Vocation Related Skits (focusing on Saints and their vocations)**
- x **List of our diocesan seminarians and their mailing addresses**

Participation throughout our diocese in the **2008 "Student Vocation Awareness Week Program"** was very strong. The **Diocesan 'Vocation Spiritual Olympics'** was a big success with students amassing a considerable spiritual treasury of prayer, sacrifice and good works for the intention of vocations. The First Place School was **St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School** and the First Place Religious Education Program was **St. Philip**. Over 112,740 works of mercy have been offered for vocations since the program's inception in 2004. We look forward to an even more enthusiastic response from a greater number of schools, programs and students in 2010.

<http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/vocations/vocations.php>

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SEMINARIAN HOOPS CHALLENGE



The Seminarians of the Diocese of Arlington have challenged the members of the Quo Vadis Groups to a basketball game on January 2, 2010 which will lead up to National Vocations Awareness Week. The game will be held at Pope John Paul the Great High School Gymnasium in Dumfries, VA. Warm-ups begin at 10:00 a.m. and the Game is slated to begin at 10:30 a.m. There will be a break for lunch before the Presentation of the Trophy and Closing Prayer at 1:00 p.m.

Deacon Mick Kelly will be coaching the Seminarian team. When asked his opinion about the upcoming match he claimed that words don't mean much, but God's words do: "God shall humble the proud, his right hand upholds righteousness." May the best team win!

Come cheer on our seminarians and the Quo Vadis young men!

POPE BENEDICT XVI ON “KEEPING WATCH”

“Saint Luke’s account of the Christmas story, which we have just heard in the Gospel, tells us that God first raised the veil of His hiddenness to people of very lowly status, people who were looked down upon by society at large – to shepherds looking after their flocks in the fields around Bethlehem. Luke tells us that they were “keeping watch”. This phrase reminds us of a central theme of Jesus’ message, which insistently bids us to keep watch, even to the Agony in the Garden – the command to stay awake, to recognize the Lord’s coming, and to be prepared. Here too the expression seems to imply more than simply being physically awake during the night hour. The shepherds were truly “watchful” people, with a lively sense of God and of His closeness. They were waiting for God, and were not resigned to His apparent remoteness from their everyday lives. To a watchful heart, the news of great joy can be proclaimed: for you this night the Savior is born. Only a watchful heart is able to believe the message. Only a watchful heart can instill the courage to set out to find God in the form of a baby in a stable. Let us now ask the Lord to help us, too, to become a “watchful” people....



The coming of God to Bethlehem took place in silence. Only the shepherds keeping watch were, for a moment, surrounded by the light-filled radiance of His presence and could listen to something of that new song, born of the wonder and joy of the angels at God’s coming. This silent coming of God’s glory continues throughout the centuries.”

2008 Midnight Mass Homily by Pope Benedict XVI

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*We wish you a Blessed Christmas
And a New Year full of grace!*

MARY, MOTHER OF THE CHURCH AND MOTHER OF VOCATIONS, PRAY FOR US!

DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON
Office of Vocations
200 North Glebe Road, Suite 901
Arlington, VA 22203
(703) 841-2514
vocations@arlingtondiocese.org

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