

SEMINARY NEWS



Commencement

It's sad to see them go, but this year's graduates are moving on well prepared for anything in life — theology, graduate or professional study in another discipline, or employment in the working world.

After receiving excellent formation and academic training, these new alumni would no doubt agree. On the podium in the student refectory, someone had written a final message on a note pad: "SJSC is the coolest." That is an authentic compliment from any student, especially a seminarian who knows that studies and formation can be as grueling as they are rewarding.

see more photos at
SAINTJOSEPHABBEY.COM

The Seminary College thanks Bishop Ronald Herzog of the Diocese of Alexandria for presiding over the Baccalaureate Mass; Archbishop Alfred Hughes, Chancellor of the Seminary College, for his presence at the graduation ceremony; and the evening's excellent commencement speaker, Bishop Edmond Carmody, of the Diocese of Corpus Christi.

May the peace of Christ and God's own love be with you, gentlemen.



HANNAN'S BIRTHDAY

Friends and coworkers of Archbishop Philip Hannan recently gathered at the Abbey to celebrate his 94th birthday. Archbishop Hannan retired as archbishop of New Orleans in 1989 after 24 years of service. During his distinguished years as ordinary, he served as chancellor of Saint Joseph Seminary College and chairman of the Board of Trustees. He has remained active throughout his retirement and continues to operate Focus Worldwide Catholic Network. Here he is pictured at his party with his successors in office, retired Archbishop Francis Schulte (left) and Archbishop Alfred Hughes (middle).

ALUMNI NEWS



87th Alumni Homecoming

In spite of the date, the 87th Annual Alumni Homecoming on Friday, 13 April went off without any major disasters, except that everyone stayed up way too late talking to their friends. We still made it to vigils, though!

As usual, all alumni were invited to attend Homecoming, but this year we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Class of 1957 and the 25th anniversary of the Class of 1982. The Class of 1957, led by "Mac" Charitat made a special effort to get as many classmates as they could for the gathering.

The "tumbler" also celebrated its 25th anniversary with a special commemorative edition, a copy of the original. It was only available at the registration desk, so if you missed it, you'll have to wait another five years. But don't wait, come on over next year and join us for Mass and supper. You know we always have a good time.

Thanks to everyone who contributed: Archbishop Oscar Lipscomb, who presided; Bishop Joseph Latino, who homilized; schola alumni, who harmonized; Alumnus of the Year Henry Carrige, who is always supportive; and of course, to all of you who came. We had a lot of fun.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

DEO GRATIAS 2007

Baton Rouge

9 September
6 – 9 p.m.

The Catholic Life Center
Baton Rouge, LA

This is a chance for our BR-area friends to support Saint Joseph Seminary College. Food will be graciously donated by Chef John Folse. Come meet and mingle with the seminarians and monks for a night that all will enjoy.

Covington

27 October
Follows 5:30 vespers – 11 p.m.

Saint Joseph Abbey + Seminary College
Saint Benedict, LA

This is our on-campus premier fundraiser for the seminary college. We'll have great food, music for all and wonderful raffle and auction items. It will be a night you definitely don't want to miss.

[more information](#)

Tickets for both events: \$75 per person

Sponsorship opportunities available

contact [Vanessa Crouere](mailto:Vanessa.Crouere)

985 867-2242

vcrouere@sjasc.edu

LIVE THE MONASTIC IDENTITY



by Br Jude Israel, vocations director

The vocations committee is excited to announce the beginning of "Living the Monastic Identity." The program, to be held twice a year, is a week-long experience in monastic life. It is designed for men between the ages of 20 and 45 who would like to participate in the life of the monastery and possibly discern a vocation to the monastic life. During the week, the participants pray and work with the monks as well as have seminars on topics related to monasticism. The first Living the Monastic Identity week was held from 6 July through 11 July. The next date has yet to be set.

Anyone interested in more information is asked to contact Br. Jude Israel, OSB, vocation director of Saint Joseph Abbey at 985 867-2249 or through e-mail at brjude@sjasc.edu.

Interested men are also invited to visit our web site at www.saintjosephabbey.com.



FR CYRIL'S ORDINATION

Fr Cyril Kenneth Crawford, OSB, of Saint Joseph Abbey in Saint Benedict, La., was ordained to the priesthood on Saturday, 28 April, by Most Reverend Alfred C. Hughes, Archbishop of New Orleans. Fr Cyril, a native of Shreveport, made first profession of monastic vows in 2001 and solemn monastic profession in 2004.

Fr Cyril holds a B.A. in Philosophy from Saint Joseph Seminary College and began studies for the priesthood at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans. He completed his studies at Saint Meinrad School of Theology in Saint Meinrad, Ind., and graduated 12 May with a Master of Divinity degree. In a year, Fr Cyril will begin doctoral studies in philosophy at the American College in Leuven, Belgium.



FR LAWRENCE'S 50TH



from Abbot Justin's jubilee homily

A number of years ago, a book came out entitled, *Can Anyone Say Forever?* It was a response and an answer to a prevailing attitude and belief in our society, which holds that, not only is it impossible to say forever, there is no value in saying forever.

Our celebration today of Fr Lawrence's 50th anniversary of monastic profession stands in sharp contrast to this culture of noncommitment. Fifty years of fidelity to vows, whether marriage vows or religious vows, proclaims to our culture, grown cynical about commitment, that "yes, one can say forever." We would add that it is accomplished only with God's grace and help. Without this grace and help our commitment weakens and sometimes fails.

The apostle Peter is an example of how commitments can weaken and fail, but more importantly, he is a model of how we can recommit ourselves even after great failure. Because of the infinite mercy of Christ and the abundance of His grace, Peter is able to recommit himself to Christ for the rest of his life through his three-fold declaration of love. And what does Christ promise him in return for his commitment? He promises a share in his passion. For every form of Christian commitment is a call to sacrifice, to freely give of one's self, and in that giving to discover true life. By this giving of one's self, we are molded into the pattern of Christ's death, to use an image of St Paul, a death that gives life.

St Benedict promises the same thing to the monk when he concludes the Prologue to his *Rule*: "Never swerving from his instructions, then, but faithfully observing His teaching in the monastery until death, we shall, through patience, share in His kingdom." The monastic commitment is a share in the greatest commitment of all — the cross!

On 23 August 1957, Lawrence Joseph Phelps made his monastic profession, committing himself to a life of self-offering to God, to the Church, and to this community. His life has been one of giving, of faithfulness, and of dedication, from his years as a seminary professor, registrar, academic dean, guest master, alumni director, and treasurer, to weekend parish ministry, especially at St James Major Church in New Orleans and later as Pastor of Annunciation Church in Bogalusa. These are just some of the ways Fr Lawrence has given himself in fidelity. They are the public ways and many know them, but there are countless other ways he has selflessly given of himself that are known only to God and those he helped. He did and continues to do this in a humble and quiet way. His has been a constant "yes, Lord, I love you."

Fr Lawrence, thank you for your example of fidelity to the monastic way of life; thank you for your generosity and your concern for your confreres, and for the many ways you minister to God's people; but especially thank you for answering with your own life, "yes, one can say forever!"

FR DAVID 1940-2007



Father David Leftwich, O.S.B., monk of the Abbey of Jesus Christ Crucified, Esquipulas, Chiquimula, Guatemala, died peacefully in Hospital Nuestra Señora del Pilar in Guatemala City, Guatemala on Saturday, 10 February, the Feast of Saint Scholastica. He had entered the hospital with a hemorrhage to the brain. Surgical procedures were performed to correct the problem. He died of pneumonia. He was 66 years old.

Son of the late Robert Charles Leftwich Sr. and Elsie Kohler Leftwich, Fr David was born in New Orleans on 8 October 1940. He attended Saint Joseph Seminary and entered Saint Joseph Abbey in 1960 and made his profession of vows as a Benedictine monk on 25 August 1961. He was ordained priest on 28 May 1966. At Saint Joseph's, he served in various jobs and ministries, including vocation director, Camp Abbey manager, Christian Life Center director and abbey treasurer.

In 1977 Fr David went to Guatemala and later transferred his vows to the Abbey of Jesus Christ Crucified. He worked in various jobs and ministries at Jesucristo Crucificado and was well respected in his priestly ministry and in his attentive care for those in need.



Fr David was also a very good photographer. On his last visit here, he bought a nice digital camera, which allowed him to email photos to his friends easily (the photo at top is David's). One person described Fr David very well: "What a gentle person he was!" And we don't forget his gift of humor. May he rest in peace.

A memorial Mass was celebrated at Saint Joseph Abbey on Saturday, 14 April. Fr David is survived by his sister, Lurline Leftwich Chaney of Covington.



FR MARIAN 1923-2007



Father Marian Edward Larmann, OSB, monk of Saint Joseph Abbey in Saint Benedict, La., died at Oschner Medical Center - Westbank, Gretna, La., on 6 June following a lengthy illness. He was 84 years old.

Son of the late Edward John Larmann Sr., and Marie Edna Fernandez, Fr Marian was born in New Orleans on 15 March 1923. He made his profession as a monk of Saint Joseph on 20 August 1942 and was ordained priest on 7 June 1947.

He is preceded in death by his sisters, Anna Mae Larmann Maher and Catherine Marie Larmann, both of New Orleans, La. He is survived by one brother, Alfred Louis Larmann of Delmonst, Penn., and four sisters, Marie Larmann Jacob of Baton Rouge, La., Carol Larmann Springmann of Metairie, La., Joan Larmann Drewes of Jefferson, La. and Margaret Larmann Osterhold of Arabi, La.

Fr Marian served as a professor in Saint Joseph Seminary 1946-99 and as prefect of discipline 1957-62. He was acting rector of the seminary from 1962-64, becoming rector in 1964 and rector of Saint Joseph Seminary College in 1967. He was director of the Abbey Youth Camp, 1960-62 and served as consultant to the abbot from 1964-71. He served in Saint Benedict Church in Covington as pastor and as pastor at Saint Peter's Church in Covington, La. In addition to these parochial duties he was Chaplain at Saint Scholastica Convent, 1974-78. In 2005 he was priest in residence at Annunciation Parish in Bogalusa and then retired to the Abbey.

His body was received on Monday, 11 June, in the Abbey Church followed by a vigil service. The funeral Mass was on Tuesday, 12 June, with burial in the Abbey Cemetery.



NECROLOGY

Wallace L. Conner, '51
Irma Dodd Canone, mother of Steve Canone
Fr Carl Davidson, '59
Marie Davis, mother of Ken Davis, '66
Fr. James Kinkead '49
Arlen Jude "Billy" Krieger, '57
Everett LaBauve, '63
Jessie Ladner, '71
Gustave Lapeyrouse, '79
William Jude Leaumont, son of W.F. Leaumont, '56
Ellis Ledet Sr., Father of Msgr. Donald Ledet, '57
Sr Gabrielle Mulé, DC, sister of Salvatore Mulé, '50
Capt John C. Rice, '47
Msgr Fred Swenson, '60
James Tarantino, '66
David Zeringue, '92

ABBEY YOUTH FESTIVAL



by Daniel Keding

On the web site at abbeyfest.org, the Abbey Youth Festival is formally defined as "an event that draws youth together with the communities of Saint Joseph Abbey and Seminary College in order for all of us to be evangelized, catechized, and sent out to live our Catholic faith." In short, it's a fun way for youth to experience a wide range of Catholic spirituality with their friends. Daniel Keding, a former seminarian and a long-time AYF technical supporter, blogged this about the day on keding.com. — Ed.

The seminarians are one of the most powerful elements of this whole festival. A group of young men from ALL WALKS OF LIFE — I put that in caps because it is amazing who God calls to his priesthood — bring their talents with servant's hearts and lay them at the table before the community. For example, there is a seminarian band, Covenant 7, that formed a few years ago and they performed for the festival. They blew peoples' minds away when the teens realized that they were seminarians. They're good and they have released two full-length CDs written, performed, recorded, mastered and designed by the seminarians themselves. It gives me so much hope to know that the future of our Church is in their hands.

And of course, who could forget the presence of the Benedictine monks? This year's theme was from the *Rule of Saint Benedict*: "Prefer Nothing to Christ." I was so pleased that the seminarians brought back the beauty of the Benedictine charism. We chanted vespers and incorporated chant into the liturgies. And seeing monks in full black habits walking around and hanging out with the youth is inspiring.

The amazing power of God takes a small football-sized field on 1200 acres of a Benedictine monastery and seminary and envelopes it in his love for a day. He pours his grace upon thousands of people and presents his Son to us in the Eucharist. He moves the hearts of youth and calls forth a new generation of people to his love. He uses the media of this time by exalting his life through TV, sound and lighting. His life flows through the Abbey Youth Festival in a way that I have never seen from a retreat or youth conference ever before.

May God continue to bless the Abbey Youth Festival and the monks and seminarians of Saint Joseph Abbey and Seminary College.

FACULTY NEWS



Josette Beaulieu-Grace, senior professor of language, wrote an article entitled "We Are the Crossroads: What Direction Shall We Take?" for the Spring 2007 edition of the Louisiana Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages newsletter. The article is an account of efforts by the National Council of Teachers of English to address needs of students who are non-native speakers of English. In gathering information for this article, Ms. Grace attended NCTE meetings and conferences in Nashville, Tenn., in November 2006, and New York, N.Y., in March 2007.

Fr Thomas Gwozdz, SDB, Ph.D., Malachy Burns alumni professor of philosophy, attended the Bernard Lonergan Workshop scheduled for 17-22 June 2007 at Boston College, in Boston, Mass. The workshop focused on Lonergan's legacy, as two of his major works — *Insight* and *Method in Theology* — celebrate their respective 50th and 35th anniversaries of publication.

Dr Russ Pottle, academic dean and senior professor of literature, co-organized three panels and was chair for one panel on travel writing at the annual meeting of the American Literature Association. As president of the Society for American Travel Writing, Dr Pottle co-organized two panels on the topic "Bodies of Knowledge/Knowledge of Bodies: Depictions of the Body in American Travel Writing." With the Ernest Hemingway Society and Foundation, Dr Pottle co-organized a joint SATW-Hemingway Society panel on the topic "Hemingway and Travel Writing." He chaired a session entitled "Transatlantic Travels: Coming to America" for the International Society for Travel Writing. The ALA meeting was held in Boston, Mass., in May 2007.

In other activities, Dr Pottle will present a paper entitled "On the Rails: Conversation, Travel, and Allegory in Ernest Hemingway's *Hills like White Elephants*" at Viageros y Literatura de Viages: "Tras Sus Huellas," an international conference on travel writing sponsored by the Facultad de Filologia of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, in Madrid, Spain, scheduled for September 2007. The paper is an analysis of Hemingway's short story through allegories of travel and tourism.

Dr Pottle will also be a discussant at a round table entitled "Travels in the American South: Towards a Canon," at the annual conference of the South Atlantic Modern Language Association, scheduled for November 2007 in Atlanta, Ga. The round-table panel is organized by the International Society for Travel Writing.



THE ABBEY VOICE

volume 24: summer 2007

Saint Joseph Abbey + Seminary College
Saint Benedict, LA 70457

Saint Joseph Seminary College Mission Statement

Saint Joseph Seminary College is a community of faith and learning, rooted in the Benedictine tradition, that promotes the development of the whole person. Its academic and formation programs foster the commitment of seminarians to the Roman Catholic priesthood in accordance with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Program of Priestly Formation. The Seminary College also supports preparation for service in lay ministries through the Religious Studies Institute, and makes available its educational and other resources to the local community.

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

PERMIT #98
Mandeville, LA

ABBOT'S LETTER



Abbot Justin Brown, OSB

A few months ago during Lent, I was visiting Fr Marian in the hospital. I told him that I was on my way to a parish to give a talk on suffering and I asked him, as one who had not only reflected and pondered the meaning of suffering but was also living it, what he would say about suffering.

As he was apt to do, he went on at great length about the meaning of suffering and how he had come to accept it in his own life. Once again Fr Marian was teaching not just from his sharp and keen intellect, but from his heart and his own personal struggle to make sense of life's greatest question, "Why suffering?"

From his hospital bed, Fr Marian told me of how suffering strips us of everything we think we possess, we think is ours, in order to teach us that all we have, especially our lives, belongs to God. Suffering takes away everything so that all we have is God. Suffering can make us either better people or bitter people and he admitted that it is a struggle not to become bitter when one is suffering. His deep faith enabled him to find redemption in suffering and to hold on to the promise of St Benedict that by patiently sharing in the suffering of Christ we may deserve to share in his kingdom.

Suffering certainly took away much that Fr Marian cherished in life: driving the back roads of St Tammany Parish, traveling, being a pastor, giving homilies, reading, intellectual pursuits, but it never took away his faith. How many times especially in his last weeks did he call out in faith to Jesus and Mary for help. In his darkest moments, he never lost faith and he never lost hope in God's mercy. This was the greatest lesson he ever taught.

I believe the foundation of Fr Marian's faith in the midst of suffering was formed long ago in deep and intimate moments with God in prayer. Since my first days in the monastery, I have been inspired by Fr Marian's fidelity to personal prayer as he spent time alone in the Abbey Church every day, even after he was assigned to St Peter's and St Benedict's. When he returned to the monastery, he was often before the Blessed Sacrament in the infirmary chapel. Prayer sustained him throughout his life and in the end, all that he had to hold on to was prayer.

He loved teaching and preaching, and generations of seminarians were influenced by his passion and love of knowledge. On the Sunday afternoon he was brought to the hospital, his sister Joan and I were with him trying to keep him from getting out of bed. Finally I asked him where he wanted to go and he answered "on the streets." I then asked him what he was going to do on the streets and he said, "Teach the good news."

Teaching, like prayer, was a part of the fiber of Fr Marian's life. He taught for more than 50 years and is thought to be the last teacher many of us ever had. What I remember most about his

philosophy class besides the opening line, "What struck ya?," was his desire not so much that we understand, but that we struggle and desire to understand. He inspired this in students, which was truly the mark of a great teacher.

His final lesson to us was on how to struggle with sickness and death. How to accept this stripping of all we have come to love and possess, how to face the precariousness of life without losing hope, without losing faith, without becoming bitter and how to endure it all because of faith in a fuller and greater life to come.

He did not have to go on the streets to teach the good news — he taught us from his bed.

RECTOR'S LETTER



President-Rector Gregory Boquet, OSB

Growing up I always felt sorry for the kids picked last for games. You know what I'm talking about. Maybe some of you were those kids. I'm not even sure they do it this way anymore, but here is how it usually went. Two guys would be picked as captains because of their athletic ability, then they would get to alternate picking boys to be on their team for whatever game they were playing. Naturally, boys were picked in descending order of ability. The taller kids got picked earlier for basketball; the boys with good throwing arms were high in the pecking order for baseball.

Some kids never got picked. Maybe that's not the right word. They were always last. Always. No matter what the sport. Last. Last. Last. I don't know what the effect of that can be over a lifetime, but it can't be good.

This childhood story came to mind as I reflected on today's gospel reading. It is from what is called the Farewell Discourse. Jesus is saying goodbye to his disciples. It's important to remember that the Last Supper has already taken place and Jesus is headed for the Garden of Gethsemane, where he will be arrested and then crucified. What we just heard were some of the last words that Jesus told his disciples before he died. Jesus, knowing the end of his earthly life is near, uses these precious few hours to say what he has to say, that is, what he feels is the most important message to convey to those closest to him. It is this: "It was not you who chose me, but I chose you." (Jn 15:16)

I just love that verse. It reminds all of us that God is the initiator of our relationship with him. It is God who chose us, not the other way around. In the beginning of time God chose us. From the moment of our conception, God chose us. You could rightly say that from the beginning of time, God has been whispering that choice in our ear. God has been quietly singing that choice to us in a love song that speaks quietly to our hearts. All of these things are designed to lead us to say "yes" to God's choice and say "yes" to God.