



# CALLINGS

A NEWSLETTER ABOUT VOCATIONS

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## Jesuit formation is rich in many gifts

By Casey Beaumier, SJ

**M**y commute to work is about five seconds—the time it takes to open my bedroom door and walk into the hallway at Creighton Prep. We Prep Jesuits have been the practitioners of a "walk to work" program for years. I cannot describe exactly the feeling I have during this morning commute, but it very much reminds me of the feelings I had early Christmas morning year after year when I was a youngster. It was difficult for

students here each day. The brilliance of Jesuit formation, I believe, is the three-year period in between philosophical and theological studies called regency. Traditionally, a Jesuit will go to one of our high schools for three years to teach. I'm nearing the completion of three years at Creighton Prep and it has been absolutely fabulous. I approach the students and faculty members I encounter as gifts that I have received from God, and I love them and cherish them because they are reflections of a God who believes in the future and it is a privilege for me to have the opportunity to participate in the formation of that future. These young men are indeed the bearers of Jesus. My prayer, and one that I know has been answered by God, is that I have the opportunity to help them grow even more Christ-like during their time with us.



CASEY BEAUMIER, SJ (top left) STANDS AT THE BOTTOM OF A 10-FOOT HOLE HE HELPED DIG WITH A PICK AND SHOVEL IN A RURAL MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC WHILE ON A TRIP WITH THE INSTITUTE OF LATIN AMERICAN CONCERN. HE'S JOINED BY HIS WORKMATES, CREIGHTON PREP STUDENTS JOHN CIACCIO, NATE WURTZ, AND ANDREW MCCAWLEY. THE HOLE WAS DUG FOR A COMMUNITY SANITATION PROJECT THEY WORKED ON.

As I often tell my students, mostly without words but rather through my interactions with the students, I absolutely love being a Jesuit and I positively love being a Jesuit teacher for them. I feel most like Jesus as a teacher and I believe that teaching is the vocation within the Jesuit vocation to which I am called. It has been very consoling to share this work with so many others. I am inspired by the Jesuit community here. It is a fabulous group of men to work with—a magnificent

inspiration for me, a young man who is growing in his Jesuit vocation. Part of the joy I experience each day is knowing that we Jesuits are greatly needed in the formation of the

me to sleep as I was filled with giddy anticipation, waiting to see what gifts Santa had managed to squeeze down our old brick fireplace at our home in North Dakota. When the appropriate time arrived, usually when there was some sunlight to speak of, my eight brothers and sisters and I would rush down the steps to begin the celebration.

The parallel that exists between the celebration of the birth of Christ and the life I experience as a Jesuit teacher is filled with meaning. I often experience that birth of Jesus as I encounter the

young people who will be the future of our Church and of the world. A Jesuit high school is a wonderful place for this formation to take place and I especially enjoy being a member of such a generous community of Jesuits and colleagues who seem to approach the ministry of teaching with an indefatigable energy that inspires my heart to serve.

Each day I teach five sections of freshman and junior English. I start the year with an explanation of the prologue to John's Gospel, that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. →

Our approach to literature is to encounter Jesus through the written word and I train my students to find God in this way. I believe that God has been working through me in the classroom and my knowing this brings me the energy needed to capture the attention of the young people who enter room 221 each day.

While I believe the life of teaching could be enough to keep me content, I have discovered what is most satisfying is having so many chances to work with students outside of the classroom. A hallmark of Jesuit education is the care of the whole person—his body, mind and spirit. One way I contribute to this Cura Personalis is through coaching. I coach cross country and soccer and I find that some of the best conversations I have with students occur while we are running together through the many streets and parks of Omaha. Encouraging our runners and supporting our players is indeed a way to help them build and strengthen character.

I am discovering that kids love having the Jesuits around. There is always something to be a part of at the school and there is always a need to have us working with the kids. It has been a pleasure for me to work with the campus ministry programs at our school. We have a large Christian Life Community program at Prep and I have had the privilege of accompanying several



CASEY BEAUMIER, SJ (front row center) POSES WITH HIS TWO SENIOR CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY GROUPS AT THE CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY RETREAT CENTER IN GRISWOLD, IOWA. THE GROUPS GET TOGETHER EVERY WEEK TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF FAITH, FRIENDSHIP, AND VOCATION.

groups of our students on their journey of encountering Jesus through CLC. I have been working with one CLC for the past three years and it has been a tremendous time of growing with these young men. I believe that leading these CLC groups is one of the most important things that I do at Prep because it provides our students with a real opportunity to talk about God and how He is working in and through them each day.

Each year I have worked with other teachers in various service experiences. One of my favorite experiences has been taking a group of students to the Dominican Republic to work on public

sanitation projects in the rural communities there. It has been very consoling to accompany our young men as they encounter the poor of that nation and to watch our students become transformed as they grow in love with the people they meet. It has also been a great deal of fun to watch them encounter a new culture and to share these experiences with different colleagues each year.

I am quite certain that this time of regency is indeed forming me into the kind of priest a Jesuit can become for the Church. It seems to me that the clearest message that I am receiving from God during these past years is that there is a

tremendous need for us in the world and that there is much work to be done in the building of God's Kingdom. Creighton Prep is a tiny little piece of a great big Church and this little taste of the ministry of Jesus has filled me with such hope and energy that it overwhelms me. I am reminded each day of that familiar scene in the Gospels where Jesus takes a little bit of bread and some fish and is able to feed many through a miraculous multiplication that takes place in front of many hungry people. I often feel like we Jesuits at Prep are like bread and fish. I believe that God has indeed produced a miraculous multiplication of our lives and ministry. I believe the purpose of our lives is to give our lives joyfully to others—we are feeding the people of God. This Jesuit vocation enables me to do this very well.

Sometimes students who don't know me have asked if my life as a Jesuit is lonely or deprived of love. I can with all honesty say that I have never experienced more love in my life than I have as a Jesuit. Indeed, there are periods of loneliness as there are with all human lives—loneliness is part of our human existence. What I do feel is missing from my life is you. I am filled with hope whenever I encounter a young person who feels called to the Society of Jesus. It is my hope that you have such a call and that you will join us in this very important work of God. •

## Jesuits in formation gather together in friendship, faith



All Wisconsin Province Jesuits who are in their time of Jesuit formation met at the Jesuit Retreat House in Oshkosh, Wisconsin recently for a four-day gathering designed to help them grow more deeply in their commitments to Jesuit life, each other, and their desire to serve God's people.

The group included Jesuits at all stages of formation, from the Novitiate in St. Paul, Minnesota to those in their final year of theology studies, which precedes ordination for priesthood candidates and prepares Jesuit Brother candidates for their next active ministry.

The 30 Wisconsin Province men in formation were joined by Fr. John Fitzgibbons, SJ, province novice director, and Fr. Mike Harter, SJ, novitiate superior and Missouri Province novice director. Novices from the Missouri and Upper Canada Provinces, who share the St. Paul Jesuit Novitiate, also attended, along with Fr. David Haschka, SJ, who helped facilitate the gathering.

JIM MCDERMOTT, SJ (left) AND CHRIS COLLINS ENJOY A LIGHT, RELAXING MOMENT DURING A GATHERING OF MEN IN FORMATION AT THE JESUIT RETREAT HOUSE IN OSHKOSH, WISCONSIN.

"We have a province tradition to meet every other year for a gathering like this one, and in alternating years make a retreat together," says Fr. Rick Abert, SJ, Wisconsin Province formation director. "Most provinces have a similar program of gathering the men during their formation time. It's often a source of strength for them to gather and hear how the Lord is working in their lives and hear what kinds of experiences are sparking their zeal or challenging their peace.

"It's also an important way to deepen the commitment we make to each other, and a good way to stay in touch with the spirit of our province and build foundations for future ministry. It's helpful to hear one another reflect,



A GROUP OF JESUITS SHARE A MEAL AND CONVERSATION.

react, and dream. In the process, the men get to know and support each other better," Fr. Abert added. "And it is always important for the Province as a whole to hear the collective voice and spirit of the younger men."

Fr. Jim Grummer, SJ, Wisconsin Province provincial, attended the last day of the gathering and led the final reflection session, as did Fr. John Paul, SJ, assistant provincial. •

## ANSWERING THE CALL

# False Fears: How evil can undermine God's call

Fr. Warren Sazama, SJ

DIRECTOR OF VOCATIONS – WISCONSIN PROVINCE



discernment process helps enlist people on the side of Christ and the Reign of God, it is not surprising that the evil spirit will do all in its power to undermine the generous, open response of people trying to discern God's call.

What are the weapons for sidetracking people in their vocational discernment process? A master observer of the interior movements of the spiritual life, St. Ignatius believed a common ploy is to tempt a person, especially someone young in the spiritual life, into fearing that the cost of following God's call is too high to bear. The focus shifts to all the problems and difficulties of responding to God's call to religious life. The evil spirit rouses a false sadness for things that will be missed and instills anxiety about personal weakness and the inability to persevere in response to God's call. In this dim light, all the obstacles to joyfully saying yes to the call are deviously highlighted and the rewards obscured.

All this is powerful ammunition which our American culture strongly reinforces, making the path to religious life clearly counter-cultural.

By contrast, Ignatius observes that the Holy Spirit works to strengthen, encourage, console, inspire, and give inner peace to the person who is trying to respond generously and openly to God's call. Personal resolve strengthens with a sense of joy and a feeling of rightness about the choice being contemplated. By focusing on the rewards of religious life, the discernor grows in the courage of his or her convictions and trusts that all obstacles can be overcome with God's help.

Commonly a person in a vocational discernment process who feels drawn over a significant period to respond openly and generously to God's call will falter when the time for

When I see bright, well rounded, gifted young men with all kinds of attractive options before them feel called by God to a life of evangelical poverty, chastity, and obedience in the Society of Jesus, I can only understand this as the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. In fact, I've never experienced the Holy Spirit working as clearly and directly in people's lives as I have in my current ministry as vocation director.

On the other hand, I have also never experienced the work of the evil spirit as palpably as I have in vocation ministry – most likely because the stakes are high when a young adult experiences God's call to serve as a religious.

The Synoptic Gospels portray the Reign of God, which Christ introduced on earth, as a cosmic struggle between the forces of good and evil. In his *Spiritual Exercises*, St. Ignatius, in the meditation on the Two Standards, similarly portrays the Reign of God as a cosmic struggle between the forces of Christ and those of Satan. And in the meditation on the Kingdom of Christ, Ignatius invites us into total service of Christ, to live according to Christ's values and to work in spreading the Reign of God – a noble endeavor indeed.

As Christians, we believe this cosmic struggle between good and evil is at the core of the spiritual life. And since the vocational

see SAZAMA on back page →

making the decision approaches. This is the time when the evil spirit especially tries to discourage the discerner with false fears. In order to remain true to God's call, the discerner must work to recognize these temptations for what they are – discouragement coming from a negative force that is trying to tempt him or her away from God rather than toward God's peace.

Ignatius offers some very practical advice to discerners in the grips of such discouragement and desolation.

- Avoid making new decisions or reversing old ones during such periods.
- Continue to pray, go to Mass regularly, and prayerfully reflect on your experiences.
- Don't be tempted into keeping your doubt secret. The best way to address doubt is to explore it and bring these temptations into the light of day by sharing them with one's spiritual director, confessor or some other spiritual person. This helps counter the power of these temptations with sources of personal support.
- Be aware of your points of habitual temptation. Since the evil spirit attacks areas of greatest weakness, it is important

to be vigilant and pay attention to these vulnerable areas. It takes a certain amount of spiritual maturity to have this level of self-awareness, but it is clearly very helpful in recognizing various temptations for what they are.

- Cultivate an attitude of patience during times of spiritual desolation and discouragement. It is helpful to recall that everything has its time and that the consolation experienced in the past will again be God's gift in the future. All you need to do is patiently, prayerfully, and faithfully wait.

As I remarked earlier, given the high stakes for the Reign of God,

the most negative of influences are bound to be present during the vocational discernment process. The evil spirit will do all in its power to prevent someone from responding generously and openly to God's call – particularly to religious life.

If you are in discernment, your challenge is to stay strong during these tempting times of discouragement and anxiety and seek all the help you can to persevere in responding to God's call. The key is to use all available resources to help you determine your true path.

Doubt is an enemy of any important personal journey, especially the path to religious life. •

## Hosking ordained as deacon



▲ ARCHBISHOP ELDEN F. CURTISS OF OMAHA CONGRATULATES MARTY HOSKING, SJ AFTER ORDAINING HIM TO THE DIACONATE AT CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY'S ST. JOHN'S CHURCH IN NOVEMBER. MARTY AND GREG O'MEARA, SJ WILL BE ORDAINED TO THE PRIESTHOOD AT GESU CHURCH IN MILWAUKEE ON JUNE 7. MARTY IS CURRENTLY TEACHING SPANISH AT CREIGHTON PREP. GREG IS IN HIS THIRD YEAR OF THEOLOGY STUDIES AT THE WESTON SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY IN CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

## Ongoing Vocation Discernment Groups

We have three discernment groups for men considering the Jesuits in Milwaukee, Omaha, and the Twin Cities. For information about the group in Milwaukee, contact Fr. Tim Lannon, SJ at Marquette University (414-288-7434, timothy.lannon@marquette.edu). For the group in Omaha, contact Fr. Dick Hauser, SJ at Creighton University (402-280-3010, hausersj@creighton.edu). For information about the Twin Cities group, contact Fr. Pat Malone, S.J. at the IHM Jesuit Community in St. Paul (651-645-0136, pjm890@aol.com)

## UP COMING EVENTS

FEB. 15 - 18

DISCERNMENT RETREAT AT THE JESUIT RETREAT HOUSE NEAR DENVER.

This retreat, which takes place at our retreat house in the beautiful foothills of the Rocky Mountains, is on the long Presidents' Day Weekend. It starts on Friday afternoon and ends with lunch on Monday. This is a silent, prayer retreat on which you will have daily conversations with a young Jesuit in training. The retreat will include some presentations on Jesuit life.

APRIL 5-7

COME AND SEE WEEKEND at the Jesuit house of studies at Loyola U. in Chicago: This weekend is for all inquirers who are interested in learning more about Jesuit life and training. You'll spend the weekend with young Jesuits in training who will share their vocation stories and experiences of Jesuit life and formation. We'll begin with Mass at 5 p.m. on Friday and end with lunch on Sunday.

JUNE 21 - AUG 4

SIX WEEKS A JESUIT PROGRAM in New York City. This is an opportunity to live in a Jesuit Community and work in a Jesuit ministry with other men considering the Jesuits. It is an excellent way to get a better feel for what it might be like to be a Jesuit.

JULY 16-27

CANDIDATE PILGRIMAGE to World Youth Day in Toronto. There will be men in discernment with the Jesuits from all over North America converging on Toronto for World Youth Day. We'll have a Jesuit outdoor retreat from July 16-23 at the (North American Jesuit) Martyrs' Shrine; some may travel by foot or canoe to Toronto carrying the World Youth Day cross. The Pope arrives on July 25th. The age range for World Youth Day is 16-35.

DISCERNMENT RETREATS

Individually directed, silent discernment retreats based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius available upon request. Please see Fr. Sazama if you are interested in making the Spiritual Exercises in a three to eight day retreat.

### PLEASE NOTE:

There is no charge for any of these events, and we are happy to help men with travel costs to and from these events if needed.

Please contact Fr. Warren Sazama, SJ, vocation director for the Wisconsin Province, if you are interested in any of these events.

## THE JESUITS CALLINGS

A NEWSLETTER ABOUT VOCATIONS

FR. WARREN SAZAMA, SJ

Jesuit Vocation Director for Upper Midwest and Great Plains

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