

SOLT ROME

NEWSLETTER

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AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US



This year we placed before us Fra Angelico's fresco, *The Annunciation*, so as to make Mary's generous response to God's Word our own.

St. Augustine observed that "she conceived the Word in her heart and then conceived Him in her womb"; we strive to do the same. Pondering the wondrous moment when the Word becomes flesh is like looking at a Magic Eye picture: by gazing deeply we suddenly behold a hidden new life. Can we learn to see the world with Angelico's eyes? In Rome it is not at all uncommon to walk down a cobblestone alley and pass by a rather ordinary door which, when opened, reveals a secret garden cloister. We wish to step inside, to discover the life 'annunciated' in this GK Chesterton Christmas poem:

Here is the Little Door, lift up the latch, o lift!
 We need not wander more, but enter with our gift. . .
 Bend low about his bed, for each He has a gift . . .
 Gifts for his children terrible and sweet;
 Touched by such tiny hands and oh, such tiny feet.

Our focus on the Word who became flesh and dwells among us has revealed to us ever more clearly the "Little Door" – Christ himself – through which immense vistas open to us. So many times this year all of us were offered occasions which required perseverance, and were simply left in awe and wonder when the Word deeply penetrated our spirit. This year, Christ invited us into this secret garden of grace. Each of us in our own way have experienced God's presence abiding within. With Mary our Mother, our souls magnify the Lord.



THE RECTOR'S CORNER



Studying theology at the Angelicum is certainly a major part of formation at the House of Studies in Rome. But what would this be if it didn't flow into the spiritual life and into works of charity? In this issue of our newsletter, we wish to acquaint you with some of the apostolates our seminarians are involved in as well as to present the exciting events that have lifted our spirits. -Fr. Brady

CELIBACY: THE SUPERNATURAL PATH TO LOVE



Living Celibacy with Joy

Pick up a newspaper or engage someone in a conversation about clerical celibacy in the Catholic Church today and you are bound to see or hear the discussion continually bounce around words such as “unfair,” “unhealthy,” “requirement,” “pedophilia,” “antiquated,” and “restriction.” But if you had been a fly on the wall in the SOLT House of Studies in Rome from February 22 – 24, you would have heard a radically different outlook and approach to the topic of celibacy from men who are not just talking about it, but living it with joy and generosity.

The Gift of Celibacy

In this house men view celibacy preeminently as a gift from God and as a unique reflection of the resurrected life in heaven, where the children of God “neither marry nor are given in marriage...” (Mt 22:30) It is with this conviction that the SOLT formators and seminarians welcomed into their midst Msgr. Ross Shecterle, Rector of the

American College at Louvain (and licensed psychologist), who had travelled to Rome to speak to the men on a full gamut of topics concerning priestly celibacy.

A Gift for Others

Prior to his position in Louvain, Msgr. Shecterle, who hails from the Diocese of Milwaukee, had served the seminarians at the North American College here in Rome for several years as the in-house psychologist. To say the least, this House of Studies was excited to learn more profoundly from him the psychological, emotional, and spiritual dynamics behind a healthy and fruitful life of celibacy. What is more, the talks offered a step forward in pastoral savvy for the men, as much of what was learned is applicable to the universal call to holiness and chaste love. Msgr. Shecterle’s visit definitely marks one of the high points in this year’s in-house priestly formation program, and everyone here is looking forward to his next visit this coming May.

Msgr. Shecterle:

“Celibacy isn’t about what you’re being asked to give up; you are an incarnate reminder that God has entered our world and that there is something greater than what society tells us.”

Msgr. Ross Shecterle, a licensed psychologist, is Rector of the American College at Louvain in Belgium and is former in-house psychologist at the North American College in Rome



Topics Included...

● *Analysis of the First 5 Years of Priesthood*

● *Paradigm of Self-Awareness: Experience, Reflection, Insights, Change*

● *Relational Skills*

● *Our Need for Communion: Personal and Pastoral Approaches*

● *7 Elements for Living Lifelong Celibacy*

● *4 Markers of a Healthy Celibate Life*

APOSTOLATES TO SERVE AS CHRIST SERVES

Ordinary Witnesses

It is my view that when a Christian is sincerely trying to live his life according to the Gospel and the example of Christ, many things that he would normally see as 'extraordinary' become 'ordinary'. In my experience working with the Missionaries of Charity sisters at a house for homeless men here in Rome, I believe I see constant examples of extraordinary love that happen so often they are considered 'ordinary'.

Extraordinary Love

It is not uncommon, for example, to see how at one moment a sister and one of the men will be in a playful and humorous exchange of words, both laughing and enjoying themselves, and yet, only some short while later, the same sister will be scolding that man for not eating his dinner, because without food in his stomach he will be prevented from being able to take the medication he needs that evening. Real love opens our eyes to the good for ourselves and others, and impels our hearts so that we can act to possess and give that good. The sisters give themselves in this real love to these men, these men who have no where else to go, and whom the world in general has dismissed as 'too much of a problem'. And so it is that when people see the sisters caring for these men they say, "How extraordinary!", and yet to these sisters, such a response to these men's needs are nothing but.....ordinary.

- Br. Patrick

SEMINARIAN APOSTOLATES IN ROME



"Prayer in action is love; love in action is service"

-Mother Teresa

◆ **Casa d' Accolienza--Missionaries of Charity**

-Brs. Francis, Michael and Patrick

◆ **Centro Astalli--Jesuit Refugee Center**

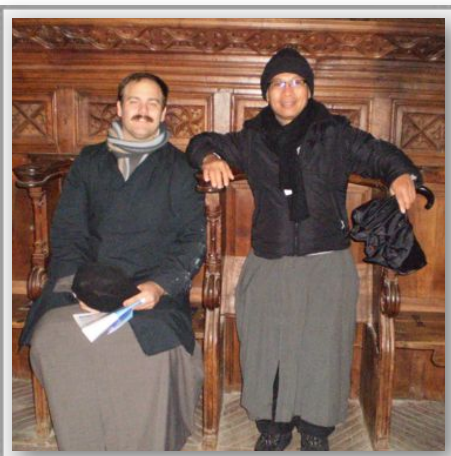
-Br. Beau

◆ **Divine Word English School**

-Br. Tristan

◆ **Filipino Center Chaplaincy**

-Br. Al



Brothers Michael and Al await summer service in Thailand and The Philippines.

My Journey Home with Br. Michael

I would call this an integration of Br. Michael to the people in our islands and mainland missions that have been in place for the last 34 years. We will be immersed in the islands. We may get to meet with fisher-folks, farmers, homemakers and spend time at the school both elementary and secondary, serve at daily/Sunday Mass and provide communion services for the 'home bound.' Also, we may be teaching catechism to the youth and college students.

In the mainland, we will visit our SOLT seminary in Asia. I will take Br. Michael to the office I helped organize for 26 years while I was a lay member of SOLT and show him its services for poor families in the city and rural areas. We will make a side trip to Thailand to visit our Drug Rehabilitation Programs in Ratchaburi and Bangkok. I look forward to sharing with him the ministries of SOLT in the Asian Region.

-Br. Al

ACADEMIC LIFE

Fr. Derek's New Vineyard



Father Derek will continue to share his passion for Christ and the Church at St. Paul Inside the Walls, a Catholic Center for the New Evangelization in the Diocese of Patterson, New Jersey. We thank God for Father Derek's service to our House of Studies and invite you to pray for his labor in a new vineyard of our Lord.

*Above: Fr. Derek Anderson, SOLT
Right: Fr. Derek's ordination by Pope John Paul II
Below: St. Paul Inside the Walls*



Arrivederci Roma

A variety of sentiments drifted through my heart upon learning of my new assignment to the House of Studies in Rome as Academic Dean. There was a sense of excitement that accompanied the new challenge, but also a sense of hesitancy, as I would miss the day to day life of the Roman parish in which I was stationed. Now, three years later, I am preparing to leave for a new mission - but not before expressing gratitude for the bountiful blessings received here in the House of Studies.

As foreseen, the quiet, persistent life of formation work carried on within the walls of a House of Studies has indeed proven to be vastly different from the vivacious rhythm of life found in an Italian parish. But as I move back outside these walls and enter directly

into the work of the "New Evangelization", and catechesis in particular, I do so with much gratitude to the Most Holy Trinity, and to my brother priests, for these past three years.



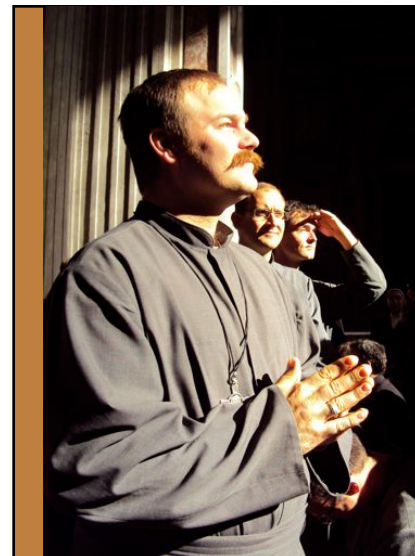
It has also been a wonderful grace from God to have had the opportunity to know and personally work with each seminarian that has passed through our formation program. My reward has been to see the men undergo a steady and progressive transformation in Christ, and to know that all our work to form, encourage, and inspire them will build up the hundreds of thousands of people these men will eventually serve as priests. God bless you all!
-Fr. Derek

ANGELICUM UNIVERSITY CHOIR



Brothers Al, Francis and Michael lend their voices to the Angelicum University Choir

**We congratulate
Br. Michael
(pictured at right)
whose book review
will be published in a
forthcoming issue of
Homiletic & Pastoral
Review.**



TRIP TO THE VATICAN OBSERVATORY

The Fowl Universe

Astrophysicist Fr. David Brown, SJ met us at the entrance to the Castel Gandolfo grounds and led us up to the Observatory offices. On the way he pointed out the lands of the papal farm from which are harvested most of what the Pope eats. It was dusk so it was not possible to see much, but I did get a really good look at the papal chickens, which I must say were a fine looking bunch.

Astronomy and the Church

Arriving at the offices, Fr. Brown presented a brief history of astronomy in the Church. He noted that from the early Middle Ages it was common for Benedictine monasteries to be involved in astronomy. Later, at the great European universities, astronomy was a natural part of the curriculum. In the 1500's Pope Gregory XV asked for a more precise calendar in order for the Church to establish its principle feast days with

greater accuracy. This initiated the Church's pioneering move into the field of astronomy. Since that time, the Catholic Church has continuously been involved in formal astronomical research. When electricity brought light to Rome, the Vatican Observatory moved from Roman rooftops to Castel Gandolfo. By the 1990's, technological innovations necessitated new telescopes to perform cutting-edge research. A new visible light telescope was built at Mount Kitt in Arizona. Castel Gandolfo remains the headquarters of the Vatican Observatory and their local equipment still permitted us a grandiose glimpse of Saturn.

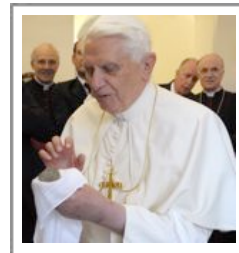
God and the Heavens

The motto of the Vatican Astronomical Observatory gives us some insight into why the Church remains involved in this field: "Come, let us adore God the creator." The work done at the observatory both at the offices here in Rome and at Mount Kitt is

pure science; it is not an act of worship as we typically think of it. However, Fr. Brown linked his work to the 'transcendentals'; it is worthy work because it is an investigation of the truth, which is always a manifestation of God in some way. God is present in His creation as St. Paul tells us in Romans 1:20. The truth, the incredible beauty and grandeur of the universe, which is studied in astronomy, causes the heart and mind to rise to God. We are made such that these 'transcendentals' point us beyond ourselves and in faith we know that it is God at work "who makes all things well". This realization moves us to "adore God the creator".

-Br. Tristan

Pope Benedict XVI holds a meteoroid from Mars which landed in Egypt and is kept at the Vatican Observatory.



The Human Spirit Rises

Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know

the truth – in a word, to know himself – so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves.

– Pope John Paul II

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN

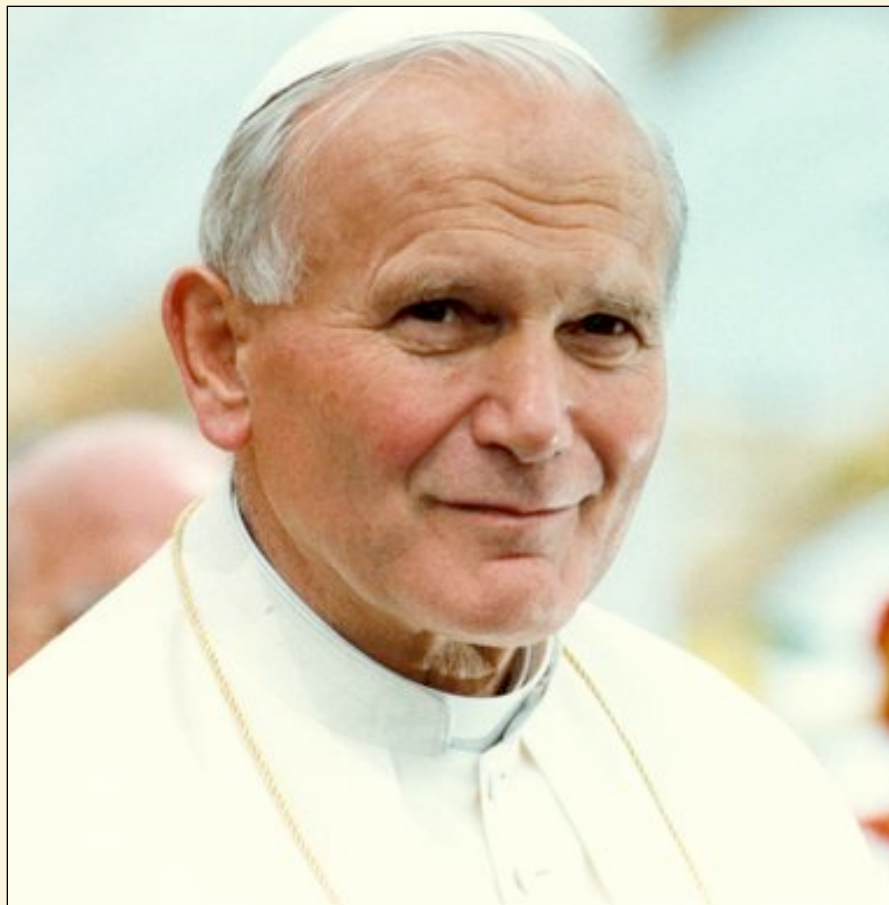
I cried because he spoke to me...



...the words I longed to hear, the words of Jesus Christ. My life changed at World Youth Day in Toronto. At the Beatification, tears of gratitude lined my cheeks as I recalled these words that gave me courage to live for Jesus:

"It is Jesus that you seek when you dream of happiness; He is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you; He is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is He who provoked you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise; it is He who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it is He who reads in your heart your most genuine choices, the choices that others try to stifle. It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be ground down by mediocrity, the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal."

-Pope John Paul II, Toronto, 2000



THE BEATIFICATION OF JP II

He Believed.

Blessed John Paul II believed. He showed us that a life penetrated by faith will be singularly magnificent and unrepeatable. At his funeral people chanted ‘*Santo Subito!*’ - canonize him now! His successor, Benedict XVI, waved the normal 5 year waiting period and started the process of beatification posthaste. His beatification is the fastest on record. But what is it that made people all over the world feel that they knew him and he them? Why did the youth erupt in joy when he passed them at the WYDs? How come the Spirit surged within so many like a fountain of living water, a cleansing bath of truth, causing tears of gladness to flow from eyes and sounds of joy to emanate from lips when they encountered him?

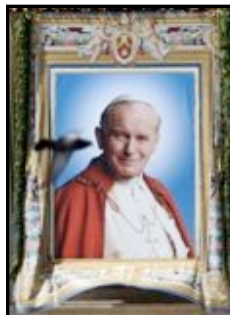
**HE AFFIRMED JESUS’ YES
TO MANKIND, A YES WHICH
HE MADE HIS OWN.**

What did he hold out to us? Why do we love him and feel so close to him? His life, like his beatification, was an *affirmation*. He affirmed Jesus’ *Yes* to mankind, a Yes which he made his own. He promoted the value and dignity of each person. He knew that ‘man is the way of the church and Christ is the way of man.’ He made himself the servant of mankind. In the face of totalitarian regimes, secular and atheistic ideologies, ‘he gave us courage not to fear truth, for truth is the guarantee of liberty.’ He believed, like Peter, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. That Jesus Christ *is* the answer. That Jesus Christ alone knows what is in man. Like Peter, he confirmed the faith of his brethren. He confirmed *our* faith. Many, following his example, have let themselves be embraced

by truth. This is why we loved him, and love him now more than ever.

Be Not Afraid!

200,000 kept vigil at the Circus Maximus, that ancient site where many martyrs trampled death. We heard testimonies from some of those who knew him best. We listened to Sr. Marie Simon-Pierre who was healed of Parkinson’s disease through his intercession. We watched footage from his pontificate, including his first homily as Pope when he proclaimed those famous words, “Be not Afraid. Open wide the doors to Christ!” We saw him addressing peoples of different countries who gathered to witness light shining in darkness. Particularly moving was his last public appearance when from his study window, crucified with Parkinson’s disease, he found himself unable to speak. His love, unable to find expression in word, erupted in the sign of the cross made in broad gesture. We prayed the Mysteries of Light with five Marian shrines via satellite. Going forth from this event many thousands met the Risen Lord on the altars of eight churches in Rome, during the White Night of Prayer. Gathering in these places we offered hearts full of thanksgiving, and boldly opened ourselves to the gift of his grace. We were as children fearlessly splashing and exalting in the waves of Divine Mercy.



Open Wide The Doors!

Spalancate le porte a Cristo! Open wide the doors to Christ!--the words, writ large, on one arm of Bernini’s colonnade of St Peter’s square. On the other, a series of banners tracing each year of his remarkable pontificate. 1.5 million had gathered in the wee morning hours. The gates opened. We poured in, flooding via di Conciliazione, and beyond. We were a universal family gathered to celebrate the blessedness of our papa. Hundreds of Polish flags rose from our ranks, as well those from lands near and far, Brazil, Australia, USA. Together we beseeched God’s mercy through the Chaplet. Mass began. JP II’s biography was read. Benedict

XVI pronounced the official formula. Joy erupted. Two sisters carried in the reliquary containing a vial of JP II’s blood for the Pope to venerate. The image of the new blessed



was unveiled. The *Gloria* gathered and focused our excitement. The homily proclaimed faith as the reason for JP II’s blessedness; told of how he gave us strength to believe in the Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of man; and how following the light of Vatican II he ‘led the People of God across the threshold of the Third Millennium, which thanks to Christ he was able to call the ‘threshold of hope.’ At Holy Communion the Pierced One came personally to each one of us. Peace reigned. Veneration of JP II’s remains followed and did not cease for two days. Bl. John Paul II opened wide the doors to Christ, and left us an example to follow.

-Br. Francis

SOLT ROME NEWSLETTER



Thank You for Your Generous Support

Our mission of forming men to the Priesthood in the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity greatly depends on the generous donations of people like you. Thank you for supporting us with your prayers, encouragement and contributions. We could not give the gift of our lives to the service of God and His people without you. Please continue to support our seminarians.

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