Kokensparger looks forward to Elephant Man's opening night

By Kristin Moore

Brian Kokensparger, S.J., who received the part of Merrick in the upcoming play, "The Elephant Man," says he is looking forward to playing the role and that he believes with the intelligent cast, the play has much potential.

Kokensparger says the role of Merrick is challenging. The character is a beautiful person on the inside, but is also very ugly on the outside, he says.

"Great test"

Taking on this characteristic is a great test for him, Kokensparger says. He says he must reveal the character's inner beauty by his words and how he relates to others, but at the same time, must also suggest the physical ugliness.

Kokensparger says he feels Merrick dramatizes a human characteristic that is present in all of us.

"We all have something about us that we consider very ugly and as much as we try to hide it, it's impossible," he said. He said he feels that every person has an inner beauty that needs to be expressed and recognized by others as beautiful.

Various productions

Kokensparger's pursuits in drama began in high school, where he participated in several productions. In addition, he played in a community theater in Ohio. His college performances are varied, including a performance in last fall's "Taming of the Shrew."

Kokensparger says that he finds drama very exciting and a deeply humanizing endeavor. He said drama allows him to discover himself and his relationship with other people and to come to terms with the problems that face today's world.

Kokensparger says he enjoys being involved in drama at Creighton because of the "great sense of community among the theater people here."

Relationship with religion

He thinks a direct relationship exists between religion and performance, he says. Characterized as ritual, he said that in many Eastern cultures, prayer is a meaningful part of theater. Kokensparger says acting allows him to develop his inner potential and gives him empathy, or an affective perspective on a relationship.

Originally from New Lexington, Ohio, he has been a college student for about seven years. He attended Ohio University and studied electronics and nuclear power in the U.S. Navy for two years.

Kokensparger, who is in the Jesuit Humanities Program, says the program

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