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The Institute for Priestly Formation Foundation
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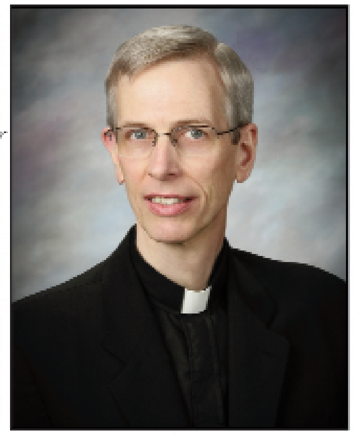
Executive Director

From Our Executive Director ...

Dear Friends,



In this year celebrating St. Paul, Pope Benedict XVI has been offering teachings on the life of this great preacher of the gospel. Recently, commenting on St. Paul's encounter with the Risen Jesus, Pope Benedict stated:

"We can also encounter Christ in the reading of sacred Scripture, in prayer, in the liturgical life of the Church. We can touch Christ's heart and feel him touch ours. Only in this personal relationship with Christ, only in this encounter with the Risen One do we really become Christians."

The mission of The Institute for Priestly Formation focuses on helping seminarians and priests "touch the heart of Christ" so that they in turn may help others do the same. Here are some highlights of the ways in which that mission has been experienced in recent months and ways in which the mission will be carried forward in the months ahead:

A record number of seminarians attended this summer's program; they were assisted by the intercessory prayers of over 200 women in the greater Omaha area who "adopted" seminarians and promised to pray for them over the course of the ten-week program. These "mothers" met their "sons" during our July Friends Night attended by over 300 local supporters. Our new publication, ***Reclaiming Our Priestly Character****, was distributed to over 2,000 individuals at World Youth Day in Sydney, thanks to the generosity of Cardinal Pell, Archbishop of Sydney.*

Looking to the future, Father John Horn, S.J. and Kathy Kanavy will travel to Denver to offer a presentation at the annual convention of the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors. Priest retreats in the Dioceses of Evansville, Wichita, Owensboro, and Pembroke (Canada) will be the focus of travel for Father George Aschenbrenner, S.J. Deacon Jim Keating will offer programs at the following seminaries: St. John Vianney College Seminary (St. Paul, Minnesota); St. Meinrad (Indiana); St. Charles (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania); and Conception Seminary (Missouri).

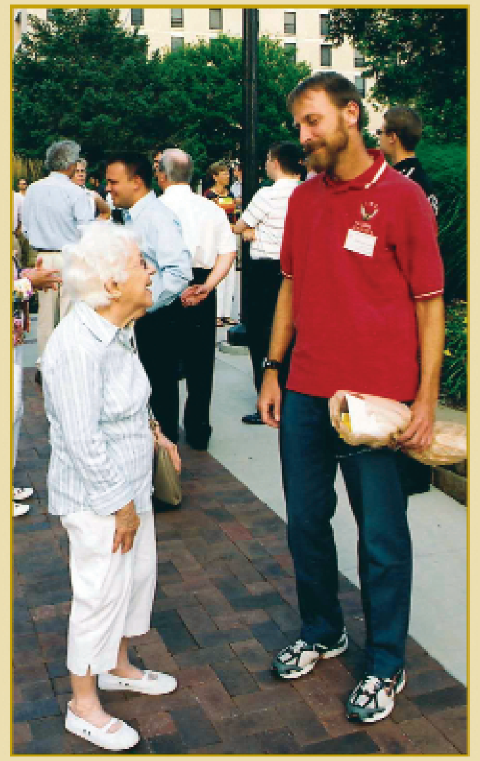
We are delighted to announce that our Sixth Symposium on the Spirituality and Identity of the Diocesan Priest will be held at the North American College, Rome, from February 26 through March 1, 2009. The keynote speaker will be Father Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap., preacher to the Papal Household.

We thank all of our friends and benefactors who pray for us, and offer their "time, talent and treasure" so that we can continue to help seminarians and priests grow closer to the heart of Jesus. May the Lord help us all to encounter him more deeply and so live more boldly the faith we profess.

Sincerely in the Lord,

Richard J. Gabuzda
Rev. Richard J. Gabuzda, Executive Director

Spiritual Moms Meet Their Sons at Friends Night



The idea sprang from a luncheon conversation where women associated with IPF's Mission Advancement Council had gathered to celebrate IPF becoming a Public Association of the Faithful in the Archdiocese of Omaha. The conversation focused on Pope Benedict XVI's call for spiritual mothers for all priests and seminarians. Why not adopt the 150 seminarians scheduled to arrive in Omaha for the upcoming summer program?

Those in attendance asked friends, fellow parishioners and members of their prayer groups to agree to pray one Hail Mary a day for their adopted sons and invited them to attend Friends Night in July to meet their sons in person. Within days every seminarian had a "mom" and many had more than one.

Mothers were given the name, age, seminary and home diocese of their son. The seminarians were told there would be a woman praying for them from the minute they arrived in Omaha until the final day of the program. Weekly emails were sent to the moms outlining specific prayer intentions and letting them know what their sons would be focusing on in their coursework. Many of the women recruited their entire family to pray and expanded the prayer commitment considerably, including attending daily Mass and weekly adoration, often with their seminarian sons. From the very beginning of the summer, the faculty began to comment on the fact that there was something very special happening during the summer program.

"A 'dome of grace' was present this summer unlike any past summer," Fr. Richard Gabuzda commented. "The prayers of the Spiritual Mothers definitely had an effect on the seminarians' receptivity to the Holy Spirit."

On Friends Night, July 16, over 300 Friends of IPF gathered for Eucharistic Adoration. The church was filled with joy and anticipation. Following Adoration, the seminarians were asked to line up alphabetically along the mall between St. John's Church and the Student Center so their mothers could find them more easily.

The Spiritual Moms came pouring out of church to meet their Spiritual Sons for the first time. What a beautiful sight! The mall was filled with laughter, hugs, introductions, gratitude, love and joy of every kind. At the dessert reception, stories and email addresses were exchanged, enabling future contact between mothers and sons.

Many of the Spiritual Moms have continued praying daily for their "sons" who have returned to their seminaries to continue preparing for the priesthood.

Favorable Tax Provision Extended by Congress

The favorable tax provision which allows individuals to transfer funds from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to a charity was extended by Congress.

Here is a quick overview:

- Donors must be age 70 ½ and over.
- Gifts to charity can be made in any amount up to $100,000.
- Gifts must be made directly to the charity from an IRA.
- Gifts from a 401(k) are not eligible but it may be possible to roll funds from a 401(k) to an IRA and then to the charity.
- Gifts are tax free to the donor.

This provision can be advantageous to an individual if there are funds in a retirement account that will not be needed for retirement. Generally, at age 70 ½ one is obligated to start taking the required minimum distributions from an IRA or 401(k), even if the money is not needed. Making a donation to a charity will satisfy the required minimum distribution (up to the maximum limit of $100,000) and avoid adding such distribution to taxable income.

As the end of the year approaches, please keep the Institute in mind as you make charitable donations. The Institute relies on the generosity of donors to help fund its work. It is not possible to pass along all costs of its efforts, so donations help fill the void.

For Nebraskans there is added incentive for charitable giving in the form of an annual tax credit of up to $5,000 for planned gifts to endowments of charities based in Nebraska. Planned gifts are tricky and donors should consult their attorney or accountant. The Institute has created the IPF Foundation, a Nebraska not-for-profit entity which has received 501(c)(3) designation, so all gifts to the Foundation are tax deductible. The Foundation was created to hold endowment funds for the long-term benefit of the Institute. A donor on his/her Nebraska tax return can take either an income tax deduction of the gift or obtain a tax credit equal to 15 percent of the gift. A donor should check with his or her tax advisor. Corporations paying Nebraska income taxes are also eligible to make similar donations.

Thank you for your support of this vital work in the Church. If you have questions about this provision, please call Tom Pogge at 402-546-6384 or email him at ipf@creighton.edu.

Mini Retreats Offer A "Taste" of IPF

Once again this fall the IPF staff will be inviting local supporters to join them for three "mini-retreats". The purpose of these gatherings is to offer a "taste" of the gifts IPF has been given to help form the diocesan seminarians and priests who participate in IPF programs. "This opportunity arises from a desire in the staff's hearts to offer a gift to those who generously support the Institute's mission," commented Fr. John Horn, S.J.

The format is simple: On each of three Saturdays (October 18, November 1 and December 6), participants will gather at St. Robert Bellarmine Church in Omaha for the parish's 8:30 a.m. Mass. Following Mass, participants will move to a community room where light refreshments will be available. Fr. Richard Gabuzda, Fr. John Horn, S.J., Kathy Kanavy, and Deacon Jim Keating will present short reflections that guide participants in their personal prayer, followed by an opportunity for silent contemplation. The time of listening, praying, and sharing concludes at noon.

A similar desire for a "taste" of IPF was placed in the hearts of supporters living in the Lancaster, PA area and a presentation is being planned there for November.

Fr. Horn added, "The IPF outreach in Pennsylvania is very encouraging, as the sponsors of the event hope to expand the spiritual family of IPF friends and associates."

To register for the Omaha or Lancaster events, call Linda in the IPF office at 402-280-3901 or email her at ipf@creighton.edu.

SEND US YOUR UPDATES!

If there have been ordinations, changes in assignments, or you have moved, let us know so we can celebrate with you. Please send updated contact information, including your email address, to IPF in order to keep your information current in our database. Thank you!

CMYK

CENTER FOR PRIESTLY SPIRITUALITY UPDATE

In the Institute's last newsletter, plans for the Center for Priestly Spirituality were unveiled. As previously noted, the Institute has signed a long term lease with St. Cecilia's Cathedral Parish and the Omaha Archdiocese. An adjoining piece of property has been purchased and the Institute was successful in obtaining the necessary zoning and other City approvals to build the Center. The Institute continues to work with the architects on the details of the building.

At the April meeting of the Mission Advisory Council, the members paused to inspect the site of the proposed Center in great anticipation of what is to come. The site was blessed as the members prayed together. The Institute will remove the abandoned convent, which for many years housed the Dominican Sisters who faithfully taught children in St. Cecilia's Cathedral grade school and high school. A council member holds an architectural rendering of the new building.

The Center will provide space for seminary faculty, spiritual directors, bishops, and formation personnel who will come for training, seminars, retreats and sabbaticals to strengthen their own interior growth and deepen their unique mission in priestly formation. The building will also serve as the center of all activities of the Institute, the Public Association of the Faithful and the growing publishing initiative. The heart of the center is the chapel, which will be used for Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, study, *lectio divina*, and personal and intercessory prayer for the mission of IPF and for priests world-wide.

A national campaign is being initiated to raise the necessary funds to build and endow the Center. Prospective donors are being invited into a partnership with the Institute to make the Center a reality. We invite you to prayerfully consider providing financial support to help the Institute build a one-of-a-kind, international facility to provide a place to assist those responsible for priestly formation to realize the vision of making spiritual formation the heart of all priestly formation.

For more information about the building and the fundraising efforts, or to discuss a gift to the Institute, please call Fr. Richard Gabuzda or Tom Pogge at 402-546-6384 or email IPF at ipf@creighton.edu.

Five Honored with Our Lady of Guadalupe Award

IPF presented the 2008 Our Lady of Guadalupe Award medallions to Larry and Karen Dwyer and Fr. Vinnie Fortunato, O.F.M. Cap. They are pictured here with IPF Founders Fr. John Horn, S.J., Kathy Kanavy, Fr. George Aschenbrenner, S.J., and Fr. Richard Gabuzda. Two additional individuals, who wish to remain anonymous, were also award recipients. The award is presented annually to men and women who have given witness with their lives to the efficacy of listening for and responding to Mary's call to live Jesus' own life in our day through exercising in practical ways the great gift of humble faith. Larry has served for several years as the local IPF Mission Advancement Council president. His wife, Karen, serves on IPF's national Mission Advisory Council. Fr. Vinnie, a Capuchin Franciscan from New Jersey, helps conduct the IPF Seminar for Seminary Spiritual Directors each summer.

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We invite you to visit our website at
www.creighton.edu/ipf/whygivetoipf

Mission Statement

The Institute for Priestly Formation (IPF) was founded to assist bishops in the spiritual formation of diocesan seminarians and priests in the Roman Catholic Church. The Institute responds to the need to foster spiritual formation as the integrating and governing principle of all aspects of priestly formation. Inspired by the biblical-evangelical spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola, this spiritual formation has as its goal the cultivation of a deep interior communion with Christ; from such communion the priest shares in Christ's own pastoral charity. In carrying out its mission, the Institute directly serves diocesan seminarians and priests, as well as those who are responsible for diocesan priestly formation.

The Institute for Priestly Formation Mission Advisory Council

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Fr. John P. Horn, S.J.
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The Institute for Priestly Formation

A Public Association of the Faithful in the Archdiocese of Omaha

Summer Programs at Capacity Attendance

A record number of seminarians-150-attended this summer's ten week Spiritual Formation Program for Diocesan Seminarians. These seminarians came from 63 dioceses and put IPF over the 1,000 mark for seminarian participants since the program's inception. The formation program began in 1995 with six seminarians and has grown steadily each year.

Other summer spirituality programs experienced equally high numbers. Deacon James Keating led the second Retreat for Seminary Theologians which was at full capacity. Twenty-nine priests and others participated in the 30-day Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola and another 13 gathered for the three week Seminar for Spiritual Directors.

While the numbers are impressive, the positive impact the experiences will have on the future priesthood is even more remarkable. God continues to work through the mission of IPF to grow the spirituality of present and future priests by challenging them to be open to God's love and mercy in deep, abiding ways.

As one seminarian wrote, "This summer has completely transformed me, opening me up to God's presence. I thought I knew how to pray, I didn't. I thought I was living well, I wasn't. I thought I was free, I wasn't. I thought I was unwounded, I wasn't. I thought the summer would be easy, it wasn't. But, it has been one of the best in my life, showing me the depth and breadth of God's providence, guidance, and love."