

Viri Ecclesiae Newsletter

A monthly newsletter for high school "Men of the Church"
Sponsored by the Vocations Department of the Diocese of Green Bay

Issue 11 - March 2009

Dear Brothers,

Having the great privilege of studying this semester in the heart of our Church, and thought I would share a little with you. Welcome to Rome. As I arrived, I quickly noticed all that was foreign to me. A new lifestyle awaited me. But then as I settled in, I noticed something peculiar stirring within my soul. It was a longing to encounter our Lord in a way unlike any prior; a desire to "go off into the desert" to get to know him better, so that "by coming to know him more clearly, I might love him more dearly, and follow him more nearly."

I believe this desire is triggered by the recognition of the many places I have at my fingertips, making such encounters possible. St. Peter's Basilica a twenty minute walk; St. John Lateran, the Pope's Cathedral, and the church of all Christianity, twenty five minutes; the tombs of many saints and martyrs, all buried in churches within the city's walls; and not to forget cities such as Assisi, Siena, and San Giovanni Rotondo, all close enough for a day trip. Stepping foot in the very places these saints walked, grew up, and were killed for their faith is very moving to say the least. From the house of St. Catherine's youth in Siena, to the place of St. Peter's martyrdom in the Vatican, a new depth of the heart is awoken and spoken to by the Lord. These are not just characters in a story; they're real testimonies of the faith from one generation to the next, all the way to our present day. Who will be the saints of our time? Perhaps you and I. God calls each of us to sainthood, and coming to know the saints puts you a lot closer to accepting this call. I pray your year is going well and that Lent is a fruitful time in your relationship with Him.

May God Bless You,
Ryan Starks
Seminarian



What's Ahead?

Project Andrew Dinner March 26

Are you a junior in high school or older? Meet Bishop Ricken on this day as he invites young men who are open to the

possibility of the priesthood, to dinner at 5:30 PM at his

home. Bishop will celebrate Mass, and after supper he will talk about what it means to be a priest. Contact your pastor, parish director, or Fr. Tom Long at 920-272-8293 or vocations@gbdioc.org

Teens Encounter Christ TEC Retreat March 27-29

TEC is a retreat for high school juniors and older. It's a 3 day retreat focused on Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection. For more information visit the website: www.anchorofhopetec.org



Lives of the Saints

St. Patrick
Memorial: 17 March
Patron Saint of Ireland

The life of St. Patrick carries many legends and stories. In our country he is attributed to a day of celebrating all that is thought to be Irish, namely pubs, shamrocks, and corned beef hash. But in Ireland, the day carries a deeper meaning; it is a day of great remembrance for this dear patron of their land.



Patrick was born in Scotland during the year of 385. At the age of 14 he was captured in a raid, and taken to Ireland as a slave. At the time Ireland was a land of pagans. Patrick learned to pray during this time, as it was his source of strength day and night. At the age of 20 he escaped and returned to Ireland, where he reunited with his family. Soon after, he had a strong calling from God, in which he envisioned the people of Ireland crying, "We beg you, holy youth, to come and walk among us once more." With this call remaining persistent, he began his studies for the priesthood, and was later ordained by St. Germanus, the Bishop of Auxerre. Later Patrick was ordained a bishop, and sent to Ireland. Here he preached the Gospel throughout the land and together with his disciples converted thousands and built churches all over the country. Kings, their families, and entire kingdoms converted when hearing his message. Through Patrick's years of living in poverty, traveling and enduring much suffering while preaching the Gospel, Ireland became a Christian land. He died on March 17, 461. It is because of Patrick's great love for the Irish people, that they remember his dear life on this day. As for the shamrocks, they were used by Patrick to explain the Holy Trinity.

† St. Patrick, Pray for us.