

For immediate release

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Diocese celebrates its priests

Celebrate the Year for Priests with the Diocese of Beaumont!

A Mass celebrated by Bishop Curtis Guillory, SVD, to open the Year for Priests for the entire Southeast Texas community will be at **6:30 p.m. Aug. 25 at St. Charles Borromeo, Nederland.**

As announced by Pope Benedict XVI, the Year for Priests began June 19 and will conclude June 19, 2010. Bishop Guillory is proud to announce the diocese's plans for a year of prayer, events and celebrations honoring area priests, their vocations and the work they do.

The Diocese of Beaumont is host to an eclectic group of priests, 71 in total.

Of those priests, 49 are diocesan priests and 23 are from religious orders.

Of the 71 priests, three are from the Philippines, three from Spain and six from Vietnam, one from Germany, one from Poland, six from India, and five from Nigeria.

The average age of the priests in the diocese is 65. The youngest active priest is 34 years old and the oldest active priest is 87 years old.

In addition to the opening Mass Aug. 25, the diocese will have a second event Sept. 15 when Bishop Guillory will celebrate a Holy Hour with his brother priests. Another Mass will be celebrated at 6:30 p.m. Nov. 3 at St. Anthony Cathedral Basilica, Beaumont, to remember deceased priests of the diocese. The final event will be the Chrism Mass, celebrated during Holy Week, at 6:30 p.m. March 30 at St. Anthony Cathedral Basilica.

In honor of Year for Priests, the diocese is also giving the priests a gift. The priests are receiving classes from the Good Leaders/Good Shepherd program specifically designed to help Catholic priests overcome the challenges of a diminishing number of priests and more complex circumstances for priestly ministry. The goal of the program is to minimize the frustration and energy spent on their administrative roles and maximize the joy and time spent on the pastoral duties for which they were uniquely ordained.

Four priests will be available for interviews:

- Father Neil Arce- Parochial Administrator at Our Lady of Light, Anahuac, Father Arce is one of the younger priests working in the diocese and is from the Philippines.

- Father Martin Nelson- Priest-in-Residence at Our Lady of Victory, Sour Lake, Father Nelson is a convert and former Episcopal Priest.
- Father Luong Q. Tran, J.V.,- Pastor at Our Lady of Sorrows, China, Father Tran escaped horrible circumstances in Vietnam to come to the United States.
- Father Sinclair Oubre- Pastor at St. John the Evangelist, Port Arthur, Father Oubre has a Southeast Texas perspective. He was born and reared in the area and attended local Catholic school. Father Oubre, who rides a Harley, also rides the waves through his ministry to those of the sea as president of Apostleship of the Sea U.S.A. He is also a United States Merchant Marine.

The media is also welcome to attend a class of the Good Shepherd program at 9:30 a.m. Aug. 24 at Holy Family Retreat Center, 9920 N. Major Drive, Beaumont. Please contact the communications department at (409) 924-4302 to schedule an interview with the listed priests or to attend the Good Shepherd program.