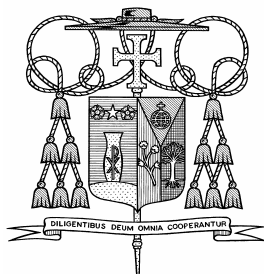


Diocese of Beaumont

Mail: Post Office Box 3948
Beaumont, Texas 77704-3948
Location: 703 Archie Avenue at Forsythe
Beaumont, TX 77701-2899



Office of the Bishop

Telephone: (409) 924-4310
Fax: (409) 838-4511
Bishop Private Fax: 409 924-4399
Email: bishop@dioceseofbmt.org

July 2009

My dear people of God,

Pope Benedict XVI declared a Year for Priests, which began June 19, 2009, on the feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Pope dedicated this year coinciding with the 150th anniversary of the death of St. John Vianney, the Curé of Ars, a 19th century parish priest who transformed people through his holiness and his priestly vocation. Pope Benedict gave as the theme for this year “Faithfulness of Christ, Faithfulness of Priests.” The purpose of the Year for Priests is to encourage “the yearning for spiritual perfection” in priests. During this year we will focus our Church on the priesthood and support and encourage our priests on their journey to “spiritual perfection” in their vocation.

I am most excited about this year because it gives us the opportunity to focus on the priesthood as a special calling for the church and for the world. This is a time when we can come to a better understanding of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, give serious reflection to the need for vocations, not only in our diocese but throughout the world, and, maybe most importantly, express love, respect, gratitude and support for those priests we have known and to our own parish priests.

During this Year for Priests, I, your Bishop, have scheduled several events with the entire diocesan family or with my brother priests. Next month, on Tuesday, August 25, 2009, I will celebrate a diocesan Mass beginning the Year for Priests in the Diocese of Beaumont. The Mass will be celebrated at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Nederland at 6:30 P.M. I would like the entire diocese to be present as an expression to our priests, through our celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy with them, of our unanimous gratitude to and support of them. A reception will follow in the parish hall, giving you the opportunity to express personally your feelings.

On Tuesday, September 15, 2009, I will celebrate a Holy Hour with my brother priests followed by a dinner with them. Each parish might consider having a similar liturgy in the evening with their priests, a Holy Hour beginning with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and ending with Benediction.

Tuesday, November 3, 2009, 6:30 P.M., at St. Anthony Cathedral Basilica, another diocesan liturgy will take place, to which all the faithful of the Diocese of Beaumont are invited and encouraged to attend. This will be a Memorial Mass to pray for all the deceased priests who have served this diocese since its inception in 1966, and for the many who have served our area for over 170 years, even prior to our becoming a diocese.

On Tuesday, March 30, 2010, at 6:30 P.M. at St. Anthony Cathedral Basilica we will celebrate the Chrism Mass. I hope that you will all consider attending this special Mass during which all the priests of the diocese concelebrate with me as the oils to be used by parishes throughout the year are blessed. Particularly inspiring is our witness to the priests as they renew their commitment to their priestly vocation.

This year in particular I would like to see all parishes represented at the Chrism Mass.

I am providing prayer cards for all parishioners in the Diocese of Beaumont. Please use this Prayer for Priests at Mass and in your parish organizations. I ask also that you, as grateful and faithful parishioners, and in collaboration with your pastors, plan activities during the Year for Priests that will highlight this year in your own parish. You might consider some of the following, and you are certainly welcome to develop your own ideas.

- A parish celebration of the anniversary of your parish priests
- Special prayers for your priests within your prayer groups, scripture study groups, youth groups and other parish organizations
- A study of the life of St. John Vianney within your parish groups, organizations, schools and religious education programs
- Group reflections on the Sacrament of Holy Orders and how we can best promote and nurture vocations in our diocese
- Presentation by the youth of a play depicting the life of St. John Vianney
- Letters by you to your parish priests and to priests who have influenced your life, expressing your thanks to them and your continued support
- Praying of rosary in October for priests
- Special intercessions for priests and for vocations at each Mass

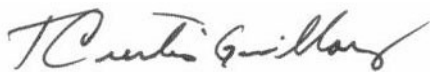
You may find other ideas by visiting our diocesan website at www.dioceseofbmt.org and in issues of the ETC.

As we continue to celebrate the Year for Priests until June 18, 2010, let us all continually thank God for the priesthood, described by St. John Vianney in this way: “The priest is not a priest for himself; he does not give himself absolution; he does not administer the Sacraments to himself. He is not for himself, he is for you.... The priesthood is the love of the Heart of Jesus.”

O Mary, Queen of Vocations, pray for us.
Saint John Vianney, pray for us.

May the Holy Spirit bless and guide your families.

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend Curtis J. Guillory, SVD, DD
Bishop of Beaumont