For the past several years we have been saying the Diocesan Prayer for Vocations every day asking the Lord of the Harvest to provide many priestly and religious vocations for His Church. As we put our faith into action and fulfill our responsibility to call forth vocations, it is natural for us to wonder if the Lord of the Harvest will really hear and answer our prayers.

On Saturday June 20, 2009, we saw our prayers answered in a big way as Bishop Boland ordained four young men as priests for the Diocese of Savannah. Coming on the heels of the ordinations of ten new priests over the past four years, our diocese has been truly blessed. The Cathedral of St. John the Baptist was filled to capacity with people from all over the Diocese who came to witness this wondrous event, as Matthew Ericksen, Luis Fonseca, Pablo Migone and Scott Winchel joined the ranks of the diocesan priesthood and became priests according to the order of Melchizedek. This was truly a blessed event for their families and those members of our diocese who attended to witness fulfillment of the work of the Holy Spirit.

The celebration began with the beautiful entrance hymn “O God Beyond All Praising.” The choir sang:

“You are a priest forever within God’s church on earth,
In the order of Melchizedek, a priest before your birth,
Called out to be our pastor, the flock of Christ to serve;
From the humble to the haughty, the Word of God make heard,

To celebrate the sacraments in fitting praise proclaim,
In the love of the Holy Trinity, give honor to God’s name.”

Continued ➤
After the homily, Fr. Tim McLKeown, Director of Vocations, called each priestly candidate by name; they responded, “Present,” and stepped forward. The bishop then asked for testimony that the candidates have received proper training and are worthy of ordination. Fr. Tim asked the people in the parishes where the candidates had worked to attest that they were worthy and they did so. The bishop then said: “We rely on the help of the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ, and we choose these men, our brothers, for priesthood in the presbyterial order.” The people responded “Thanks be to God” and also gave their approbation by a hearty round of applause. The ceremony continued with the Promise of Obedience, the Laying on of Hands, the Investiture with Stole and Chasuble, the Anointing of Hands, the Presentation of the Paten and Chalice and the Kiss of Peace. After the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the ceremony concluded with Bishop Boland announcing the following assignments for these new priests: 

**Reverend Matthew Ericksen**: Appointed Parochial Vicar of St. Joseph Church, Augusta.

**Reverend Luis Fonseca**: Appointed Parochial Vicar of St. John the Evangelist Church, Valdosta.

**Reverend Pablo Migone**: Appointed Parochial Vicar of Sacred Heart Church, Warner Robins.

**Reverend Scott Winchel**: Appointed Parochial Vicar of St. Anne Church, Columbus. With the ordination of four new priests and the potential enrollment of up to 8 young men into the seminary program for the Diocese of Savannah, surely the Lord of the Harvest has heard and answered our prayers.

—Peter Paolucci
The Diocese of Savannah honored Bishop J. Kevin Boland for his 50th anniversary of ordination as a priest. The celebratory Mass of Thanksgiving took place at 5:30 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, June 10, 2009. The Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus honor guard, led the entrance processional, followed by 14 Bishops and Abbots along with 80 priests and masters of ceremony. Special guests included his brother, Bishop Emeritus Raymond J. Boland and nephew, Kevin Boland.

Father Boland served the People of God in the Diocese of Savannah for 36 years, assigned to 5 parishes. On February 7, 1995, Father J. Kevin Boland was appointed the thirteenth Bishop of Savannah. Bishop Boland was ordained and installed on April 18, 1995, at the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Savannah. He took as his motto, Christus in Corde (Christ in the heart), an echo of the Breastplate of Saint Patrick: “Christ be in the heart of each to whom I speak, in the heart of each who speaks to me.”

Archbishop Emeritus Donoghue from Atlanta gave the homily. Concluding Rites included remarks from Archbishop Wilton Gregory from Atlanta. He first read a letter from Pope Benedict giving thanks and praise for the gifts bestowed on Bishop Boland. Archbishop Gregory praised Bishop Boland’s labor for vocation, for the Spaniards and family life…One Faith - One Family.

Bishop Boland took the pulpit thanking everyone for this special occasion. He told the story about being assigned to
The Year for Priests Proclaimed

Pope Benedict inaugurated the Year for Priests on June 19, 2009 presiding at Vespers in St. Peter’s Basilica, where the relics of the ‘Cure of Ars’ were brought for the occasion by Bishop Guy Bagnard of Belley-Ars, France. The year will close June 19, 2010, with Pope Benedict presiding at a “World Meeting of Priests” in St. Peter’s Square. The Pope also stressed the importance of priestly formation which must maintain “communion with unbroken ecclesial Tradition, without pausing or being tempted by discontinuity.” In conclusion, the Holy Father stated that without priests, “there would be no Eucharist, no mission, or the Church.”

The Mass of Chrism, celebrated each year on the Tuesday of Holy Week at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, is one of the most solemn and significant liturgies of our church. This year Bishop Boland concelebrated the Mass on April 7, 2009, along with about 80 priests from all over the Diocese of Savannah, who renewed their commitment to priestly service. The Gospel for the Chrism Mass was taken from St. Luke. In this reading, Jesus enters the synagogue in his hometown on the Sabbath and reads a passage from the prophet Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me…” (Luke 4: 18).

In his homily, Bishop Boland highlighted that the Holy Father had recently announced that the Church will celebrate a special Year for Priests. In his address, the Pontiff emphasized the constant struggle for moral perfection that dwells “in every truly priestly heart.” In support of this tendency toward spiritual perfection, the Holy Father announced that he has “decided to call a special ‘Year for Priests’ which will run from June 19, 2009 to June 19, 2010.” The year will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the death of St. Jean Vianney, the saintly ‘Cure of Ars’, a true example of a pastor at the service of Christ’s flock. During the course of the Year, Benedict XVI will proclaim St. Jean Marie Vianney as the patron saint of all the priests of the world.

Georgia. Emotionally, Bishop Boland said, “I am deeply grateful for the embrace of your love – great and wonderful people and never will understand how I am the recipient of that love.”

The recessional was just as majestic as the procession...only now, we felt the love and call from God bestowed on The Most Reverend J. Kevin Boland.

On this occasion of the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood in the Diocese of Savannah, 90 counties and 37,000+ square miles and 73,000 Catholics, we offer congratulations and thanks to John Kevin Boland as a good and faithful priest. And as Bishop Boland said, “it has been a marvelous and enriching experience.”
All of us aware that there is a crisis in the church today! It is a serious crisis of not enough priestly and religious vocations in the church to carry on Christ’s ministry. Each of us needs to accept the idea that we are all responsible for encouraging priestly and religious vocations. The duty of fostering vocations falls on the whole Christian community. Did you know that there is an organization, the Serra Club of Savannah, which promotes and affirms vocations to the priesthood and religious life? It is named after Fr. Junípero Serra, the founding father of San Diego and the man who helped forge a new civilization in the American West where he established nine Franciscan Missions in California. Not to be confused with the environmental group, The Sierra Club, we in Serra believe that everyone needs to do their part to insure that there will be enough priests and religious to serve the growing number of faithful.

Pope John Paul II called upon us all to create a culture which encourages and supports vocations. The existence of a Serra Club, acting as a vocation resource, can help every parish community establish what Archbishop Dolan calls a *Culture of Vocations* in their midst.

The Serra Club of Savannah, formed seven years ago, is made up of about 30 members from several Savannah churches. According to our Mission, “Serra is dedicated to fostering and affirming vocations to the ministerial priesthood and vowed religious life and to further Catholicism by encouraging its members, in fellowship, through education, to fulfill their vocations to service.”

Since our formation we have promoted the saying of the Prayer for Vocations throughout the Deanery. We also hold a monthly Holy Hour for Vocations to express gratitude for the new and soon to be ordained priests as well as to ask Jesus, present in the Holy Eucharist, to bless our diocese with many priestly and religious vocations. In addition we have undertaken various affirmation activities which encourage and affirm our existing priests and religious as well as enhance the common Catholic faith of our members.

Here is an opportunity to work promoting vocations as well as grow in your faith. We meet twice a month and would welcome your attendance at any of our upcoming meetings or Holy Hours. Anyone interested in learning more about the Serra Club should contact Peter Paolucci @ 912-231-1868 or via e-mail, petepalu@aol.com.
The Christian Service Committee thanks you very much for the large amount of food collected during the March Social Apostolate Food Drive. “The overwhelming generosity of the Cathedral Parish in donating food and money every week during the Food Drive was much appreciated,” said Bill Wade. Food and wonderful Easter gifts were picked up several times a week and carloads have been taken to the Social Apostolate.

Sister’s eyes just light up when she sees the cases of canned meats, jars of peanut butter and jelly, canned vegetables, boxes of pasta and bags of rice. Similac and Enfamil continue to be donated. “The variety made our clients very happy. Over 120 families received grocery assistance with the help of the food drive from the Cathedral.

The families are so appreciative for this assistance, especially during these hard economic times with the increasing cost of food. This is wonderful help for families who are dealing with all the other rising costs. You have made a difference in the health, nutrition and hope for some of the city’s poorest families,” said Sister Pauline O’Brien.

Our service has assisted not only the Social Apostolate but has also been an inspiration to other communities. The CSC received a letter from Elizabethtown, PA. While visiting the Cathedral, Mrs. Wentling saw our March Food Drive announcement a couple years ago and thought this was a great idea for her church. They collect peanut butter and jelly the first and second Sundays of each month. A worker at their food bank told her many do not have a stove to cook on and these items were always welcomed. She thanked us for inspiring a most successful project.

And Mrs. Mortensen from Ohio saw our February “Toiletry Drive” appeal. She called to say she was traveling for several weeks and would collect toiletry items. We received a box full of items via UPS.

Recently The Christian Service Committee also enlisted the support of the Landings residents running an article entitled “Landings Toiletry Drive” in the TWATL. In the article we described the ongoing project of preparing “Personal Hygiene Packets” for the Social Apostolate Center. Since our parishioners have cleaned out their bathroom closets, we are in dire need of small toiletry items to make the packets each month.

During the month of April, Landings residents were asked to donate any travel size packs of soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, razors, and white wash cloths. The Landings Company, just beyond the north gate, has graciously agreed to use the sales office as a drop off for the desperately needed travel size toiletry items. We were overwhelmed with the response. The Landings residents indeed were very giving and we thank them so much for their support of this worthy cause.

You all know the quote, “Whatsoever you do for the least of my brothers, that you do unto Me.” Let us also be mindful of the words to the hymn, Christ. Be Our Light: “Longing for food, many are hungry; longing for water, many still thirst; make us your bread, broken for others; share until all are fed.”

Thank you once again for your generous hearts. God bless you.

It is not what you gather but what you scatter that tells what kind of life you have lived.
One thing is clear. People know very little about the Savannah Care Center and what it does. And that is why I decided to tell you a true story about what the Holy Spirit did through us and with the help of the Savannah Care Center.

About three weeks ago, a contingent of Christians, three men and four women (two representing the Cathedral as we do every week) were walking and praying in front of Savannah’s only abortion mill on Thursday morning. We have about 15-20 seconds to speak to the young women arriving for their abortions. This particular morning we told them that God loved them, but what they were about to do was an offense to God who gave us children as a gift. We asked them to reconsider. Most of the women ignore us, and this day was no exception.

Perhaps 30 minutes later, however, a young woman in her twenties emerged. There were tears streaming down her face. She walked up to me and said, “I just couldn’t do it. When I saw you out here and listened to you, I went inside but I couldn’t go through with it.” She continued to cry and her eyes were wide, as if she was astonished at her own decision. As I threw my arms about this young woman, I couldn’t help thinking how wonderful God is that he sends his Spirit to speak to the hearts of those he chooses; maybe what WE say is not even as important as our willingness to speak for Him. So I told the young woman that the Holy Spirit had spoken to her heart through us. He wanted her to know God loved her and wanted her to have this child. Then I asked her to come with me across the street to the Savannah Care Center where there would be help for her. And she said, yes.

Her name was Martene. She was from the Dominican Republic. Getting pregnant was the last thing she wanted to do. But she could not kill her child. And now she needed reassurance and support.

So Martene walked across the street with me, where she met the caring ladies in the center. Center director, Gwen Jenkins took her into her office to help her sort out what had happened and to reassure her. I found out only later that Mrs. Jenkins put Martene in touch with a Center counselor from the Dominican Republic, someone who would guide her through the difficulties her decision would present. Someone who will be there for her during the hard times that will surely come.

As I returned to the waiting group on the other side of the street, I proclaimed what God had done. How privileged we had been to see the Holy Spirit work through us, his most inept children. It does not happen very often like this. And how fortunate we are that the Savannah Care Center is located right there, across the street from the abortion mill…a place of life and light in a world of darkness. Then, we said a Rosary in thanksgiving for the work we had all witnessed.

And that, dear friends, is why we have a Baby Bottle Campaign at the Cathedral every year, because God needs places like the Savannah Care Center to help work His will in the world and bring young women to repentance and to life. Thank you for your generous donations this year! You helped raise $4,000 for God’s work!
Plans are well underway for a spectacular event to be held this fall. The Cathedral Heritage Ball Committee is working hard to provide an evening worthy of your support. This year’s Ball is scheduled for Saturday, November 21, 2009, and will begin with the 5:30 PM Liturgy celebrating Christ the King and our stewardship of this magnificent, iconic structure that we call home as parishioners. Following the Mass, guests will stroll or catch trolley rides to the Hilton Savannah DeSoto Hotel where the celebration continues with cocktails, dinner and dancing.

Hearts will be renewed as the traditional Silent and Live Auctions have been restored. Upscale travel packages, exquisite wine and fine art will be available for bidding as well as customized baskets of gifts that are being specially made by our Deanery CCW groups. Most excitingly, to benefit the Live Auction, Bishop Boland has again offered to host a dinner at his home on Isle of Hope for a party of 12 and he and his brother have donated a stay at a Boland property in Ireland. Couples and individuals alike should begin now planning “bid teams” on these lifetime opportunities.

Proceeds from the Cathedral Heritage Ball grow the Cathedral Endowment Fund which was established following the “2000 Major Restoration of the Church”. Once the Fund reaches one million dollars, the parish may use interest earned from this endowment for capital improvements and repairs on the cathedral. It is hoped that by upholding the mission of this endowment another major restoration will be prevented.

Through the support of this event, more than $600,000.00 has been raised. Last year’s Ball alone raised $60,000.00 which was placed in a CD, a responsible investment for these unprecedented economic times. Participation in the Cathedral Heritage Ball and Auction is greatly appreciated. It ensures the preservation of this cathedral which is a legacy that has been entrusted to us and it is our responsibility to preserve it for generations to come.

Please mark your calendars for Saturday, November 21, 2009. As this year’s committee takes advantage of our assets and traditions as Catholics, we hope you will join us and feel honored as we celebrate you!

Mary Lawrence Kennickell, Chairperson
2009 Cathedral Heritage Ball Committee