

Seeking and Finding God in All Things

by Mr. Eric M. Studt, SJ

One important grace of my novitiate was that, through prayer and the time I spent working in El Paso and Jamaica, I came to see Christ in the poor. I pronounced first vows in August 2008 and was missioned to Munich for my First Studies assignment, which includes learning German and working toward a degree in philosophy.

The hope is that, by studying philosophy in Germany, I will acquire a greater facility at reading the great German philosophers in their original language. Due to the new context in which I find myself, I now feel Christ calling me to look for him not so much in the poverty of others, but in my own poverty as a foreign scholastic struggling to learn a language while being completely immersed in that language and culture. I have become completely dependent on others when it comes to doing basic things for myself and expressing simple needs, wants, and feelings. This poverty is a daily source of frustration and exhaustion, but also of tremendous grace.

I came to Munich with enough German with which to greet people, introduce myself, and to say something pleasant about the weather, presuming the weather was indeed pleasant. The remainder of my conversation consisted of a tight grin that attempted to stave off the blank expression that would unfailingly expose my bewilderment. I threw in short, insignificant filler statements such as, “Ach so,” “genau,” and “interessant.”

I have been touched by the constant and eager willingness of Jesuits here to help me with whatever I need, from essential things to simple acts of kindness. On my second day, the rector spent the morning helping me register my new place of residence at the police station. When the weather started to turn cold, an older Jesuit offered me a warm sweater.



Eric Studt with his family after professing perpetual vows on August 16, 2008.

Sometimes, however, I just want to do things for myself, with sometimes embarrassing results. The best example of this was my recent attempt to buy airline tickets on a German website. Because I did not entirely understand what I was reading, I checked a box and accidentally donated over 150 euros to a non-profit that is lobbying against carbon emissions! Luckily, I was able to reduce the donation substantially.

As my German improves, I am increasingly able to interact with those around me. Now my Jesuit brothers are showing the depth of their charity as they listen patiently and attentively as I slowly

piece together sentences.

With the help of grace, these conversations and all my experience in this fantastic city are becoming less causes of frustration and more occasions for gratitude. I am grateful for this opportunity to be stretched and formed and to experience the Society of Jesus in this different cultural context. “*Gott suchen und finden in allen Dingen*. Seeking and finding God in all things.”

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