

Stages in Becoming a Jesuit

Jesuit formation prepares men to become priests and brothers who are well educated, trained in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, and skilled to minister in diverse and ever changing environments. Once accepted into the Jesuit novitiate, the ordinary course of formation will take ten to eleven years for scholastics (men who will be ordained), and seven to eight years for most brothers.

The Novitiate

During the two-year novitiate, a novice begins to live the life of the vows in community, and learns the traditions of the Society of Jesus. During this time he makes the Spiritual Exercises in a thirty-day retreat and engages in a variety of “experiments” some of which involve service to the very poor and needy.

First Studies

After pronouncing vows, a Jesuit moves on to a three year period of graduate level studies in philosophy and theology.

Regency

The three years of Regency are a time for Jesuits to be fully involved in the apostolic work and community life of their province. During regency, a Jesuit scholastic or brother might be missioned to full time ministry in any of the Society’s apostolates, including high school or college teaching, campus ministry, or social and pastoral ministries.

Theology Studies

Since the Church requires four years of theology study for priesthood, the scholastic (having completed a year of theology during First Studies), will engage in a three year period of theology studies leading to the Master of Divinity degree. Brothers will often complete a one or two year degree program in theology or religious education at this time. In addition to their studies, each man will give six to

eight hours each week to pastoral ministries. Ordination to the diaconate ordinarily occurs in the fall semester of the last year of Theology Studies. Ordination to the priesthood occurs in June of the last year of studies.

Tertianship

The Provincial usually invites men to begin tertianship after the completion of theology studies and three to five years of full time ministry. As they did in novitiate, Tertians once again study the foundational documents of the Society of Jesus, make the 30-day retreat, study the Spiritual Exercises, and participate in an apostolic experiment, usually working with the poor. After the tertianship period, the Jesuit is called to final vows in the Society of Jesus.



Bishop Eamonn Walsh, auxiliary bishop of Dublin, ordains Mr. Joseph Palmisano, SJ, on February 27, 2007, in Ireland.

Three New England scholastics are serving as deacons until their ordination to the priesthood on June 9, 2007 at St. Ignatius Church in Chestnut Hill, Mass. Andrew Downing and John Siberski, students at Weston Jesuit School of Theology, were ordained to the diaconate on October 7th at St. Peter’s Church in Cambridge, Mass., by Most Rev. Francis X. Irwin, Auxiliary Bishop of Boston. Matthew Monnig, a student at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, was ordained to the diaconate on October 21st in Oakland, California, by the Most Rev. George Murry, SJ, Bishop of St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. ✕

Reflections on Regency



Mr. Thomas J. Kenny, SJ

As a regent in Brazil, I accompanied two novices, Jardel and João Lucio, from Manaus, the capital of the state of Amazonas, to remote river villages. Our mission was to help six priestless communities celebrate Advent/Christmas and welcome in the New Year.

The people we visited are known as ribeirinho or river people. The ribeirinhos are descendants of the first Portuguese who settled in the Amazon and married into the native population. Their life is based around the river, planting crops on the flood plains during the low water and harvesting right before the waters rise.

The first community we arrived at, São João, was typical of others we would visit. Fifteen or so wooden stilt houses along two or three kilometers of river bank with a small chapel at the center of the village. Chickens, ducks, guinea fowl, cats, dogs, pigs and goats roamed freely through the village.

We spent time visiting and praying with families in the community. During these visits from home to home the flora and fauna were breathtaking.

The community gathers for liturgy in the chapel every Sunday even though they are visited by a priest only once or twice a year. João Lucio and Jardel led the liturgies of the word and the people responded enthusiastically with traditional hymns. Singing Ave Maria in the Amazon at sunset to the sound of river dolphins splashing around for fish outside the chapel is an unforgettable memory.

The faith of the ribeirinho people in the Lord and loyalty to the Church in the absence of priests and religious was inspiring. Their dependence on nature leads them to thank God for each fish caught and each fruit plucked. They appeared confident that the Lord was with them in their daily struggle to survive. The Lord, through the hospitality of the ribeirinhos, certainly filled our voyage with a bounty of warmth and kindness. ✕

Mr. Thomas J. Kenny, SJ, is a first year theology student at the Weston Jesuit School of Theology.

New England Deacons to Be Ordained in June



Mr. Andrew Downing, SJ, hails from St. Davids, Penn. After graduating from Yale University in 1995 he entered the New England Province novitiate in Jamaica Plain, Mass. Andrew then studied at Fordham University where he earned an M.A. in philosophy. Although he began his theology studies in Austria, Andrew is completing his MDiv. and S.T.L. degrees at Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Mass. As a Jesuit in formation Andrew taught undergraduate philosophy at Fairfield University, worked as a prison chaplain, and is currently serving as a deacon at St. Ignatius Parish in Chestnut Hill, Mass.



Mr. Matthew Monnig, SJ, was born in Andrews, Texas, and grew up in Oregon and Missouri. After earning his B.A. in Physics and an M.A. in Philosophy from Boston College, Matt spent a year in Poland, on a Fulbright grant, studying the relationship of John Paul II and the Solidarity Movement. During his Jesuit formation years, Matt taught math and religion at Boston College High School where he also coached basketball and track. Matt has directed diocesan seminarians on the 30-day Spiritual Exercises, taught English to Jesuit novices in Novosibirsk, Russia, and taken student groups to World Youth Days in Toronto and Cologne. Matt will be serving as a deacon at San Quentin State Prison in California.



Mr. John R. Siberski, SJ, comes from Plymouth, Penn. He attended Penn State University and Temple University Medical School, and is board certified in internal medicine, psychiatry, and geriatric psychiatry. During his formation years John served as a prison chaplain at South Bay House of Corrections, as staff psychiatrist at Massachusetts General Hospital, and as Director of Geriatric Psychiatry and Psychiatry Training at Georgetown University Hospital. He is currently Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Assistant Dean for Student Life at Georgetown University School of Medicine. John will be serving as a deacon at his hometown parish in Plymouth, Penn.