

Claretian Volunteer Program on the Rise

In its 25th year of providing service to United States Claretian ministries, as well as opportunities for volunteers to discover and discern, the Claretian Volunteer Program is growing by leaps and bounds.

Much of the credit for the revitalization goes to Deana Brewer, hired in July 2007 as Volunteer Director. Brewer's background in direct service with the poor gives her confidence to pursue new avenues of service for volunteers, all the while exhibiting compassion for those in need.

So far, her recruiting efforts have produced four new Claretian Volunteers, who began work at Claretian ministries in January.

Chase Wall is one of the new volunteers, working as parish generalist and youth minister at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Chicago.

"I'm looking forward to giving a productive year of service," Wall says. "I know this will be a fruitful time of growth, both spiritually and emotionally."

The Claretian Volunteer website (claretianvolunteers.org) is an important piece to the program's revitalization. As the director targets volunteer candidates in their twenties, the young, fresh new look has made a tremendous impact.

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Stories of Good News and Hope

Claretians in the Island Nation

The Tsunami of December 2004 was the worst natural catastrophe Sri Lanka had ever seen. Thousands were feared dead or missing, and more than one million people were displaced when towering thirty-foot tidal waves set off by underwater tremors brought the sea roaring into the country.

As the nation united to do relief work, Claretians were among the first offering aid to survivors. The Claretian seminary at Kattuwa provided shelter to some 300 people in the immediate aftermath while Claretian priests and seminarians collected dry food for refugees, buried dead bodies, and provided counseling in refugee camps.

December 26th, 2007 marked the third anniversary of the Tsunami. Even after three years, many survivors still languish in welfare shelters, while others live in settlements lacking basic facilities. The Claretian effort to provide for the wellbeing of all God's people continues in the island nation.

In 1951, Father Peter Schweiger, Superior General of the Claretians, dreamed of planting seeds of the Claretian presence in India. Another German Claretian, Father Franz Xavier Dirnberger, then-superior of India, made that dream a reality by exploring possibilities for a Sri Lankan Claretian Mission. Thus began recruitment of vocations in Sri Lanka.

The first Claretian community began its life there in October 1992. The Sri Lanka Mission currently has 12 native priests, four priests from India, two deacons, 24 philosophy students, and 35 minor seminarians, all engaged in diverse ministries. -Submitted by Jeyaseelan Joseph, C.M.F., Sri Lanka



Forming Deacons with Claret's Vision

Service in the church takes many diverse forms. In many parishes across the United States, deacons are becoming instrumental in the sacramental life of Catholics. In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Diaconate Formation consists of a five-year program. Applicants must have at least one year of hands-on service to those in need within their own parish, or in the larger community. In each of the five years, participants develop a sense of community through shared Eucharist, prayer, ministry, shared meals and relaxation, and conversation.

Claretian Father Frank Ferrante, works in the diaconate formation program of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Here's his account of this important ministry:

"For more than 18 years I have helped prepare leaders for our Church in the spirit of our founder, Anthony Claret. The future of the church depends on the collaborative ministries of lay persons,

deacons, priests and religious who can work together creatively. In many ways there is not so much a shortage of priests as there is a shortage of vision—using the gifts of all God's people."

The role of wives is an important dimension of the deacon formation program. Many deacons' wives are involved in a variety of ministries and leadership positions in their parishes, and they often serve as models for other women and men who desire to be of service.

"The three-fold ministries of the deacon – Liturgy, Word and Service – are all important, and in my ministry I endeavor to share Claret's zeal, vision, and desire to respond to the needs of the times." -Submitted by Frank J. Ferrante, C.M.F.



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