

Auxiliary bishop is St. Bernard's alum

Father Robert F. McNamara

St. Bernard's Seminary in Rochester was closed in 1981. But many of its priest-alumni are happy to hear good news about their fellows of "The Rock" (as they call their alma mater, not without affection).

On Easter Friday, April 25, 2003, Pope John Paul II appointed Msgr. Dominic Luong, a member of St. Bernard's Class of 1966, and a priest of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, to the post of auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Orange in California. The bishop-designate is the first native of Vietnam and the 28th St. Bernard alumnus to be promoted to the U.S. hierarchy.

A priest, not ordained head of a functioning diocese, is given the title of a suppressed diocese. Msgr. Luong has received the titular diocese of Cabarades, a see in North Africa. Titular Bishop Luong is to be consecrated on June 11, in the Church of St. Columban, Garden Grove, Calif. Bishop Tod D. Brown of the Diocese of Orange will be the principal celebrant and consecrator. The preacher will be Paul Loverde, bishop of Arlington, Va., who was one of the new bishop's classmates at St. Bernard's.

The bishop-designate could have chosen no better place for his ordination than the one-county Diocese of Orange. Orange County is the home of 130,000 Vietnamese, the largest community outside of Vietnam itself.

The Vietnamese are a highly intelligent people, but they have been victimized again and again, not only by their fellow citizens, but by many external nations. Bishop Luong has shared many of their trials during his 62 years.

Dominic Mai Thanh Luong was born on Dec. 20, 1940, to a prominent citizen of Ninh Cuong in the far north of Vietnam. Well over half of the Vietnamese people are nominal Buddhists. Catholicism first contacted them in the 16th century, but evangelization began seriously a century later. As the church grew, persecution also intensified. Today, Catholics

form a sturdy minority of one-tenth of the population. The Luong family was among the leaders of this minority. Young Dominic was able to complete both elementary and secondary education in his homeland.

Then came 1954. Backed by Red China, the Vietnamese Communists took over the northern half of the country. Their president, Ho Chi Minh, launched a campaign of "ethnic cleansing," largely anti-Catholic in character, that culminated in the flight to South Vietnam of some 900,000 exiles. One of these impoverished fugitives was Dominic Luong himself. In 1958, he joined his countrymen who were emigrating from South Vietnam to the United States in search of a better life. His own purpose was to enter a seminary in the United States, receive Holy Orders and return home to the South Vietnam Diocese of DaNang.

Diminutive Dominic, 18 and a newcomer to English, spent two years (1958-60) at the seminary of the Diocese of Buffalo. In 1960, he and some Buffalo seminarians shifted to St. Bernard's Seminary for their philosophical and theological studies. The seminary had trained Asian priests for the Philippine Islands, but Luong was the first from continental Asia.

At the outset, his skill at handball won admiration, but it became clear quickly that he was also a solid, talented and deeply compassionate young man.

The candidate for DaNang was ordained on May 21, 1966, by Bishop James A. McNulty of Buffalo in the handsome Basilica of Our Lady of Victory in Lackawanna, N.Y. How eager the new priest must have been to return to his home diocese without delay. He was unable to go back to his native land until 1996 when, ironically, he was no longer a priest of DaNang nor a citizen of Vietnam.

He spend the years 1966-76 working in the Diocese of Buffalo. Father Luong's contacts with the Vietnamese in America increased. As a result, in 1976, Archbishop Philip M. Hannan invited him to head the Vietnam Apostolate in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Two years later, he



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Msgr. Dominic Luong, a 1966 graduate of St. Bernard's Seminary, has been named auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Orange, Calif.

became an American citizen. In 1983, he became pastor of the New Orleans Church of Mary, Queen of Vietnam. In 1989, already a papal monsignor, he was promoted to director of the new National Center for the Vietnam Apostolate. Rumor had it that every Vietnamese person in the U.S. was a cherished personal friend of Msgr. Luong! In 2000, the U.S.

Conference of Catholic Bishops bestowed on him its first Archbishop Silvano Tomasi Award for Ethnic Ministry.

Msgr. Luong was asked what motives the pope might have had for appointing a native of Vietnam to the American hierarchy. He gracefully suggested that it might simply have been to thank the Vietnamese among us for their contribution to our American Catholic Church, a contribution which, over the last half century, has included 500 religious, 600 priests and 400,000 faithful!

Bishop Luong:

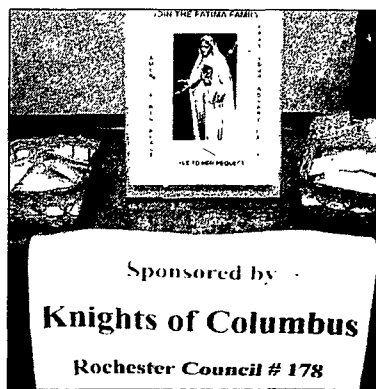
The professors and peers of your Rochester seminary days salute you with a breviary passage that describes you well.

"This is a man who loved his brothers and ever prayed for them. Alleluia! He spent himself in their service. Alleluia, Alleluia!"

We acclaim your good works thus far, we invoke God's blessing on your future good works. May you continue to teach others, as you have taught us, that for a Christian the only reply to hatred is love.

Father McNamara, retired diocesan archivist, is a frequent contributor to the *Catholic Courier*.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS Urges Everyone to "Say Rosary for Peace"



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For the past 85 years the message of Our Lady of the Rosary, expressed at Fatima, has essentially been ignored. The continuing disharmony of nations demonstrates that the sincerest efforts of governments to effect a lasting peace have been failures.

It is only by fulfilling the request of the Immaculate Heart of God's Most Holy Mother, as explained in the apparition of Fatima - Pray The Rosary - that a catastrophe can be avoided. The achievement of a true and lasting peace can only be accomplished through devotion to Mary's sinless heart and through daily prayer.

Recognizing the responsibility of the laity to meet this challenge, Rochester Council #178 of the Knights of Columbus is promoting and distributing rosaries to all of its affiliated churches so that parishioners may join in the campaign to pray for world peace.

This initiative is intended to call to action every Knights of Columbus Council in New York State and across the country to promote prayer and to distribute rosaries to their area churches. This would mean that thousands of prayers would storm heaven daily. Perhaps then the spirit of peace can spread worldwide. We implore God to again forgive humanity for its sinfulness and prepare this world for peace and for Christ's coming.

Please join us in this goal. Begin today by demonstrating devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by praying the Rosary daily for peace.



Celebrate Father's Day Brunch

Sunday, June 15th, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm

Egg & Omelet Bar, French Toast, Cheese Blintz, Hash Browns, Sausage, Fresh Fruit, Pastries, Soup & Salad Bar, Assorted Bread & Rolls, Stuffing, Veggie, Salt Potato, Pasta, Roast Turkey, Baked Ham, Prime Rib, Desserts & More Including Beverage!!! \$14.95 adults \$7.50 Children under 10

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