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GRANTS TOTALING \$450,000 AWARDED TO ASSIST VOCATIONS
Organization Assumes Student Debts for Those Making Vows of Poverty

The *Mater Ecclesiae* Fund for Vocations (MEFV) of Arlington, VA announced March 1, 2011 that it has awarded grants to two men and 14 women under its St. Joseph Student Debt Relief Grant Program and two additional men under its St. John Vianney program. The program exists to allow individuals to begin their formation for the priesthood or religious life by relieving them of their outstanding student debts.

St. Joseph grants were awarded to men and women aspiring to a variety of religious communities in the U.S. and abroad. Among the St. Joseph grant recipients were:

- Two New York women, Jessica Castillo and Gloria Morales, will enter the Carmelite Monastery of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and St. Joseph in Brooklyn.
- Genevieve Cunningham of Blythewood, SC will enter the Monastery of Our Lady of Angels (founded by Mother Angelica) in Hanceville, Alabama. Genevieve's younger sister is already a novice in that community.
- Stephanie Daudelin of Milton, VT will enter the Sisters of Life in New York in September. The Sisters of Life work for the protection and enhancement of the dignity of human life.
- Br. Marcin Czechowicz, a native of Poland, has begun his formation with the Conventual Franciscan Friars in Libertyville, IL. The Friars staff the Marytown Shrine in Libertyville.
- Two women have entered the postulancy of the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Michigan: Leyden Rosa-Rovelo of New York City and Stephanie Stanley of Mission, KS.
- Sr. Jordan Henneberry is a postulant with the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration in Mishawaka, IN. Sr. Jordan's hometown is Mexico, NY.
- Ashley Recupito, of Kokomo, IN, will enter the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia in Nashville, TN.
- Katherine (Katie) Harris of Eltopia, WA is a reporter for the Tri-Cities Area Journal of Business in Kennewick, WA. This summer she will enter the Franciscan Sisters of Penance of the Sorrowful Mother.

- Erin Mone of Utica, IL will travel to France to enter the Apostolic Sisters of the Community of St. John.

The two St. John Vianney grants were awarded to two men in formation for the priesthood at Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary in Denton, NE. The Seminary is operated for the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter (FSSP).

The MEFV will make monthly payments on the eighteen grant recipients' total student debts of over \$450,000 throughout their years of formation, with a guarantee that the debts will be fully paid by the fifth anniversary of their ordination or final vows. If any of the recipients were to leave formation, the grant would be cancelled.

The MEFV is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, founded in 2006 to remove the serious obstacles that student loans present to individuals who seek to answer God's call to consecrate themselves in the priesthood or religious life.

Because of the vow of poverty, men and women entering religious life must be free of all debt. Additionally, Societies of Apostolic Life such as the FSSP also require that men be free of debt in order to proceed with their priestly formation. However, the high cost of a college education means that many young people must take student loans to attend college, and the difficulty of paying off these loans -- often tens of thousands of dollars -- can delay or in some cases prevent many qualified individuals from responding to their vocation to religious life.

For its 2011 application period, the MEFV received 34 applications, but was able to issue only 18 grants, due to limited funds. "We wish we could have awarded grants to all our candidates. The Church needs these young men and women serving in the priesthood and religious life," said Corey Huber, president of the MEFV. "Unfortunately, there were not enough funds available for all."

Additional information can be obtained by visiting MEFV's website at <http://fundforvocations.org/>.

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