



VOCATION CORNER

Hearing the call



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As a priest, people often want to know about the point in my life when I heard “the call.” The truth is that I heard the Lord calling at different times throughout my life, but I did not decide to heed His call until my last year in college.

It was, of course, exciting to start following God’s path for me in my life, but it was also scary at times. One of the things I was most scared of was not knowing how my friends would react when I told them what I was going to do. I was scared they might make fun of me or maybe even not want to be friends anymore. As it turned out, most of my friends were very supportive and happy for me.

However, there were a few times when people did not understand and said hurtful things. It was painful at the time, but I can look back now and see even those painful moments were part of God’s plan for me.

In Luke’s sixth chapter, Jesus reminds us that we will indeed have times when we have to suffer because we are His disciples. But we

should not shy away from those moments.

Rather, Jesus tells us that we should see ourselves as blessed in those times when we can carry the cross with Him. We should always remember that we are His disciples, and the disciple is never greater than the master.

People mocked Jesus, and we may have to suffer mockery at times as well. We can always be comforted by the fact that Jesus never abandons us in our suffering.

If you are afraid of following God’s will for you because of what others might think, be comforted by Luke’s message. Do not shy away from suffering for the name of Jesus. Count yourself as blessed when you are treated poorly because you are His disciple. Be faithful to Jesus Christ, and He will never let you go.



(Photo provided)

Can’t top them

Juniors Alexander Yakisan (left) and Benjamin Riner of Marmion Academy in Aurora both earned the highest possible ACT composite score of 36.

EAST MEETS WEST

Boylan CCHS students host guests from their Chinese sister school

By SHARON BOEHLEFELD
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On Feb. 8, Chinese language students at Boylan Central Catholic High School in Rockford welcomed 28 students from their sister school, Wenling Experimental Middle School.

The school is in the city of Wenling China in Zhejiang Province. (See map on page 1.)

The Chinese ninth-graders were assigned Boylan host students and shadowed them throughout the day. They also joined them for activities in the Boylan Mandarin Chinese classes.

It was the Chinese school’s fourth visit to Boylan.

In each of the day’s Mandarin Chinese classes, Boylan students and their guests chatted using both English and Chinese.

Their teacher, Tracy Cannell, urged them to try both languages during a brief “interview” of the visiting students.

Elaina Hills, a Boylan sophomore and second-year Mandarin student, huddled with her “shadow” student, Xi Han “Amy” Mao from China, and Kim “Kimmy” Yeonwoo. Yeonwoo is one of two South Korean foreign exchange students at Boylan this year.

Hills is taking Chinese because “my brother took it and he loved learning about the culture.

“I’m not very good at

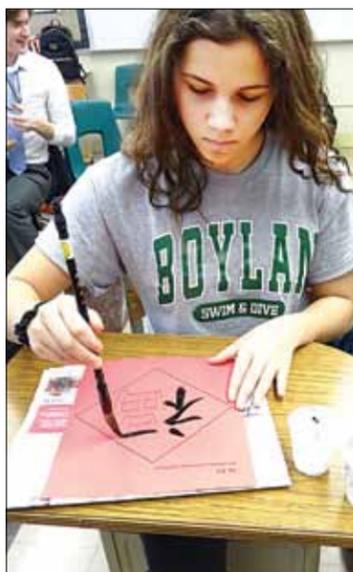
Chinese,” she said, but added she enjoys the class. Her interview with Mao, she said, was “mostly in English.”

Both of the Asian students were comfortable speaking in English, so they filled the short interview form quickly.

Mao’s hobbies include dancing and singing. She likes pop music and basketball and has a 6-year-old brother. This was her first visit to the U.S.

Yeonwoo studied Chinese in middle school in Korea and was happy to learn she could pursue the language while at Boylan.

Later in the second-year class, Boylan students practiced Chinese calligraphy by tracing the symbols for the word “fu.” Chinese students who wrote the symbols



Boylan CCHS sophomore Nhia Caras traces the Chinese symbols for “fu.” Fu can be translated as “happiness” or “good luck.”



(Observer photos/Sharon Boehlefeld)

Xi Han “Amy” Mao (left), 15, from China was the guest student of Elaina Hills (center), a Boylan CCHS sophomore, on Feb. 8. Joining them for a conversation during the second year Mandarin Chinese class was Kim “Kimmy” Yeonwoo who is an exchange students from South Korea and a student of Mandarin Chinese.

freehand showed them how to hold the brushes and make the symbols.

When they finished writing on bright red paper, they watched a Chinese-language video

about the new year, or spring festival, which was Feb. 5.

They learned, “Where there is ‘fu,’ there is family.”

The Wenling students were hosted by Rockford families

during their stay.

They spent the weekend exploring Rockford, including field trips to the Burpee Museum and the Discovery Center.

When they left Rockford, the Chinese students were to spend five days in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

This summer, six Boylan students will have the opportunity to visit Wenling during a one-month service trip. After visiting Wenling, they will volunteer at an elementary school English camp in Jiaxing, China organized by WeLearnUSA. They will also travel to Beijing, Shanghai, and Xian.

Among the Boylan travelers will be Santiago Whistler, a sophomore studying Mandarin.

He expects trip highlights to be “meeting friends, having a good time and experiencing a new culture.”



Chinese visitor Zhu Jiacheng writes the first of two symbols for the word “fu.” Next to his red paper is a red envelope prepared by a Boylan student to wish him happy new year. Traditionally the envelopes hold money, but the students’ envelopes contained notes of good wishes.