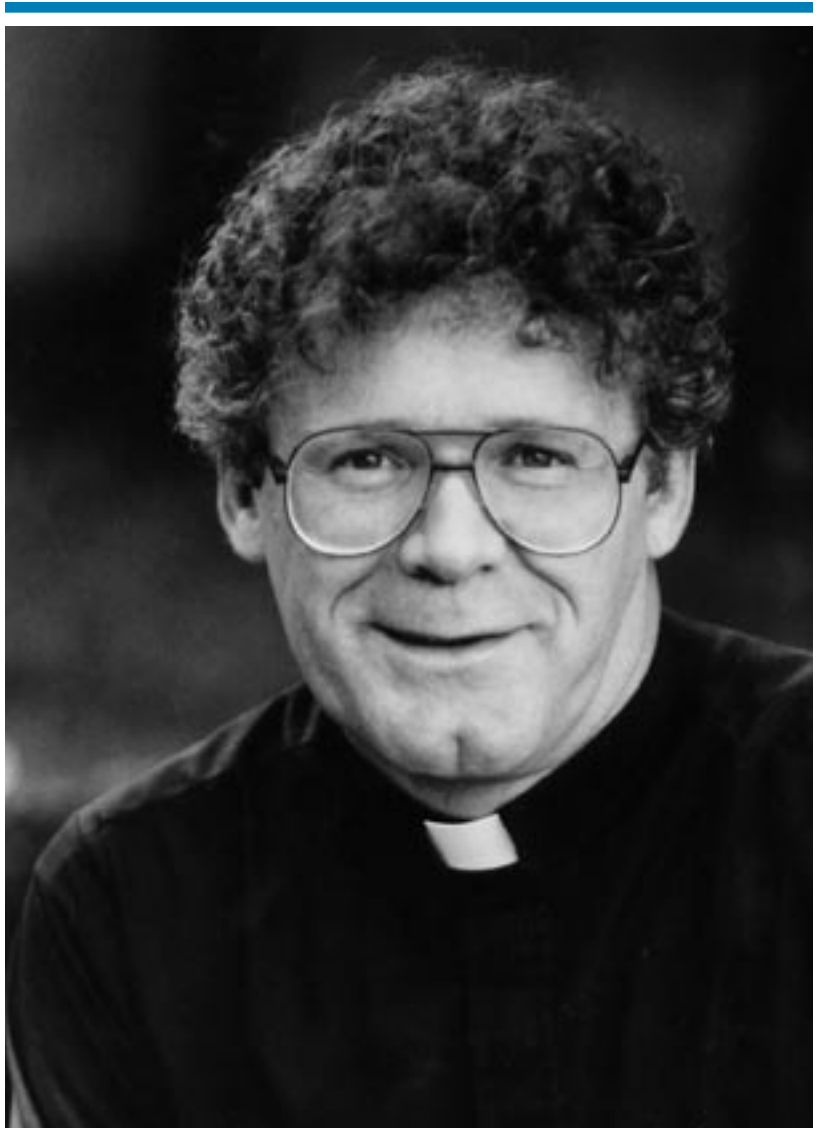


Meet
the New
Provincial
**Fr. Richard
J. Baumann**
of the
Chicago
Province



by Lisa Files

THE NEW provincial is a man who stretches, who goes the extra mile, who does what's necessary," says former Jesuit classmate, Tom Zimmerman, regarding Fr. Richard J. Baumann, SJ. "When we first entered the Jesuit Order, we played together on an intramural football team. Our quarterback would always tell Bau to go long and then throw the ball a lot longer. And Bau would stretch and get it. He would always make that catch."

Fr. Richard Baumann started his new assignment as provincial for the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus on August 22, to serve a six-year, non-renewable term. With the provincial office based in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood, Fr. Baumann is responsible for nearly 300 Jesuits in Northern Illinois, the entire states of Indiana and Ken-

tucky, and southwestern Ohio. Among other ministries, his responsibilities include two Jesuit universities, five Jesuit high schools, four parishes, and two retreat centers. Athletic prowess is not in the job description, but determination, endurance, and reliance on a gracious God will be indispensable.

Since his ordination as a Jesuit priest in 1975, Fr. Baumann's three primary assignments have given him valuable experience and, according to others, revealed a leadership style characterized by collaboration, attentive communication, humor, gentleness, and prayer.

Building Community

As vocation director for the Province from 1978 to 1984, Fr. Baumann worked with men who expressed an interest in joining the Society of Jesus. Says Fr. Baumann, "Vocation



As pastor of St. Ignatius Church in Rogers Park from 1992 to April 1997, Fr. Baumann celebrated countless baptisms. Here he holds a wary, newly baptized parishioner with associate pastor Fr. Charles Niehaus, SJ, in 1995.



Cowboy Baumann celebrated Halloween with then-novice Tony McCaffrey in 1989. From 1985 to 1991, Fr. Baumann directed novices at the Jesuit novitiate, Loyola House, in Berkley, Michigan. He considered guiding these new inductees through their first two years of Jesuit life as “generative.”

work gave me the opportunity to minister to those interested in the Society and, at the same time, to work internally for our Jesuit community.”

From 1985 to 1991, Fr. Baumann was director of novices at the Jesuit novitiate, Loyola House, in Berkley, Michigan (a suburb of Detroit). In that capacity he guided men for the first two years following their entrance into the Society of Jesus. At Loyola House they studied the Jesuit documents, prayed, and lived in a religious community. “The novitiate assignment gave me a sense

of the Society’s heritage,” he says, “because I was trying to pass on the tradition and the life of the Society. It was generative. It was personally most satisfying when the novices took their vows after two years, and I had the honor of accompanying them to that point in their new Jesuit lives.”

One novice under Fr. Baumann, Timothy Hipskind, SJ, was impressed that despite Fr. Baumann’s position as director of the novitiate, he lived in a small room, equal in size to each novice’s room: “I would have expected the director of the novitiate to have the biggest room in the house, but he didn’t. Also, it was very clear that Fr. Baumann was a man of prayer. You could just tell from his homilies and his reflections. They weren’t based on impulse.”

As pastor of St. Ignatius Church from 1992 to April 1997, Fr. Baumann polished his administrative skills at a challenging post. St. Ignatius is located in the Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago near Loyola University and has a culturally and economically diverse church community.

“There I gained a sense of the contours of church life,” he says. “There is such a mix of people in a parish, and such a mix of viewpoints and perspectives about Church and about how to live the faith.”

When he began as pastor, he conducted a needs assessment survey and then convened

“
I want to rely upon the Lord and take my lead from the Holy Spirit in all I do,” says Fr. Richard Baumann, SJ. Every provincial is appointed by Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, SJ, superior general of the Jesuit Order, based in Rome, after consultation with members of the Province.”



St. Ignatius Church parishioners Rich McMenamín and Julie Dunlop-McMenamín remember Fr. Baumann's management style as collaborative. Explains Mr. McMenamín, "That process of delegating and giving away brings back more. It is an unusual leadership style, but one that is needed more and more for the Church in the future."

the pastoral council to work together on a mission statement and goals for the parish. One need that emerged was to bring together the Spanish- and English-speaking communities in the parish. Church members responded with a few ideas, including developing a simplified, bilingual Mass that made everyone feel comfortable and welcome.

Through this effort and many other examples, Fr. Baumann showed a collaborative management style. Parishioner Rich McMenamín explains: "Fr. Baumann invited people in such a warm way to participate in the process of building community and encouraged people to participate at such a level that, in fact, his own stature was raised because he was not putting the spotlight on himself.

"He would ask, 'What are we going to do?' People would come back with, 'Here's what we can do.' So much was done that more and more people wanted to be involved. There was a real building of enthusiasm and energy and vitality in the community. That process of delegating and giving away brings back more. It is an unusual leadership style, but one that is needed more and more for the Church in the future."

"I do try to bring out the gifts that are in other people," Fr. Baumann concurs. "Whether it's in a parish or the Province, not only can you not do it all yourself but the Holy Spirit is in everybody, through gifts, through personality, through imagination, and through creativity. The more you can gauge these gifts in other people and bring them into the activity of the parish, the organization, or the project, the better."

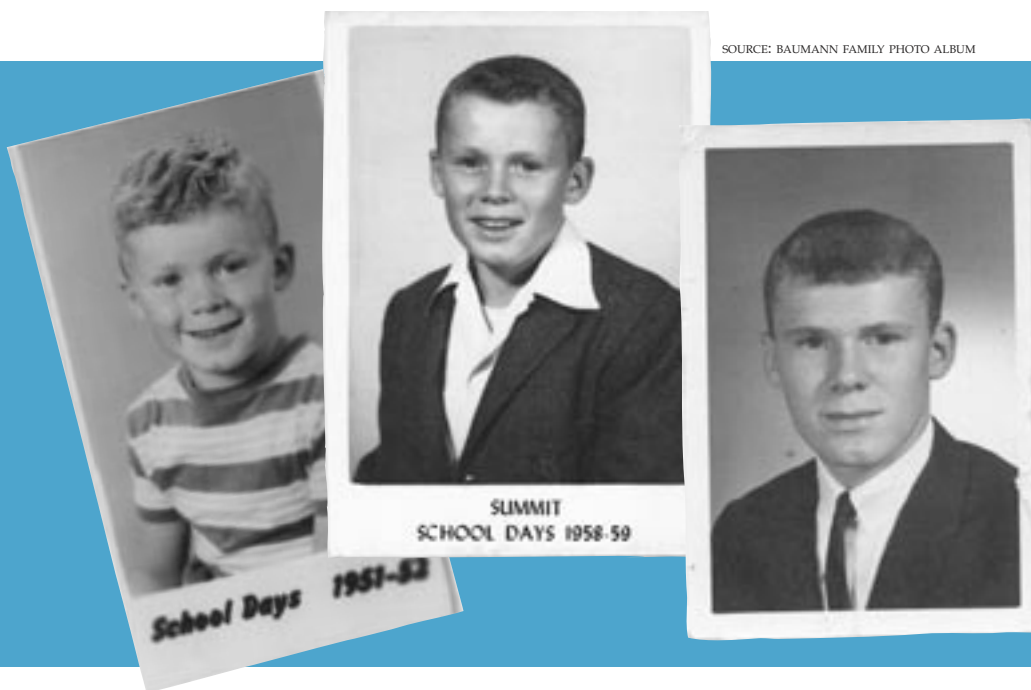
Looking for Tadpoles

Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1946, Fr. Baumann was third in a family of seven children, with six boys and one girl. His father, Bernard, who passed away in 1993, owned a wholesale business of barber and beauty supplies and equipment while his mother, Dorothea, managed their busy household. She recalls, "When I was young and my children were being born, someone said to me, 'How can you bring all these children into this world?' My answer came easily, 'Maybe what this world needs are more children who grow to know and love and serve the Lord. I am praying mine will.' I think this was prophetic because my children are serving the Lord. My husband and I never finished thanking God and praising the Lord for our family. It was our delight and our blessing."

Fr. Baumann's brother Bill, who is one year older, remembers young Dick as a cow chaser and a schoolyard kid. "A farm was right behind our house and we lived one or two houses away from our parish and grade school, St. Vivian church and school. We hung out at the farm chasing cows and looking for tadpoles, and the rest of the time we played basketball or baseball in the schoolyard down the street. We had an active childhood. Dick was always a part of that, with his trademark curly hair."

Fr. Baumann has said in jest that he was accepted into the Society of Jesus on an athletic scholarship. He did show unusual athletic ability at a young age, when he won trophies as the best tennis player and free throw shooter in basketball at Summit Country Day School, which he attended in his middle-school years. He was also a Little League knothole pitcher who threw many no-hit games. But Bill quips, "Dick was a very mediocre golfer."

Fr. Baumann graduated from St. Xavier High School in 1964 and, though he participated in typical teenage hijinks, entered the



Left: Kindergarten at Finneytown Public School.

Middle: Eighth grade at Summit Country Day School.

Right: Twelfth grade at St. Xavier High School.

Jesuit Order that same year. “At an early age he began to see what was important and how he was going to live his life,” says Bill. “The rest of us were making decisions about where to go to college for the next few years, while he was making a decision about how to live his entire life.”

Fr. Baumann’s sister Peggy, who is 1-1/2 years younger, says he taught her to put others before herself, to laugh, and to be grateful. “In a big family, when there were many needs and many things that many children wanted, it was Dick who really taught me to think of others in the family first. He has a ready laugh and a sense of humor about the everydayness of life that is delightful to be around. He also never misses an opportunity to express appreciation for the time and effort others put out to meet a goal.”

Says his mother, “Dick has been an example to all of us—me, his brothers, his sister, his friends— through his unselfish life. During his tertianship, which is the period of renewal before final vows, he lived and worked for a few months in an orphanage in Ireland. He has gone back to visit the children since then. I can’t begin to tell you how kind and loving and gentle he is. He is just a partner with the Lord. He is obedient to God in everything he does.”

After joining the Society, Fr. Baumann went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in literature from Loyola University Chicago, a master’s degree in social work from Ohio State University, and a master of divinity degree from Loyola University Chicago through the Jesuit School of Theology.



Leaning on Partners and Companions

Fr. Baumann welcomes friends and benefactors to the Society of Jesus as part of the extended Jesuit family who not only share their financial resources, but also spread the good news about the Society, pray for Jesuits, and volunteer their time and talents as advisors on committees and boards. Explains the new provincial, “The generosity of Partners and Companions helps the Society continue the works that spread the Kingdom of God. One example right now is the new high school, Cristo Rey. Friends and benefactors have made possible this newest ministry. Education will be given, and life will be given, and personalities will be influenced, and the Gospel will be preached, and those students will, in turn, pass that on to others.”

Fr. Baumann (center) performed in “The Sound of Hunting” with other “juniorate” Jesuits at Xavier University in Cincinnati in 1966 or 1967. Other thespians were, from left, Rich Brezon (deceased), Chuck Chuman, Tom Tobin (back), and Ed Lain (front).



The Baumann family celebrated brother John's wedding in 1987. Back row from left are brother Tom, brother-in-law Harry, Fr. Baumann, brother John, father Bernard, brother Bill, and brother Joe. Front row from left are sister-in-law Mary Ann, sister Peggy, sister-in-law Rosemary, mother Dorothea, sister-in-law Kathy, niece Lauren, and a family friend. Brother Bernie is not present.



During a sabbatical in 1991, Fr. Baumann served at a Jesuit parish in Benin City, Nigeria. "I wanted to work with the poor in an international context. The experience at St. Joseph's parish gave me an appreciation for another culture and a sense of perspective—a kind of broadening."



After the installation ceremony, Fr. Baumann poses with former provincials, from left, Fr. Robert A. Wild (1985–1991), Fr. Daniel L. Flaherty (1973–79), and Fr. Bradley M. Schaeffer (1991–97). Fr. J. Leo Klein (1979–1985) was unavailable at the time of the installation.

Fr. Baumann is also grateful for gifts to the Jesuit Seminary Association, to the Jesuit International Missions, and for gifts that support the health care needs of the senior Jesuits at Colombiere Center in Clarkston, Michigan. Supporting JSA assists the seminarians as they follow the course of studies first established by St. Ignatius in order to become solid ministers of the Gospel; gifts to JIM give the poorest in the international mission areas a universal Christian vision of hope; and generosity to Colombiere thanks and honors elderly and infirm Jesuits for their years of dedicated service.

Spreading the Good News

In discussing the next six years, Fr. Baumann says, "I hope we, as a Province, will listen to the action of God in our lives, because the Holy Spirit moves us all. I would like us to listen, as well, to what is going on within our apostolates and within the hearts of those with whom we work.

"My second hope would be to have some kind of continuity with all the good things that have already happened. How can we keep alive the ministries that we have with the best spirit and dynamism possible and attend to them, because they are doing so much good, and at the same time be willing to take new initiatives to serve the faith and promote justice, as our recent Congregations urge us?

"A third hope is to promote the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. In so doing, we would stir the desire in others to know, love, and serve God.

"Fourth is for us to have a morale and spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood, to live and work in consolation—that there is affection, respect, challenge, and team work with each other. This means living by the grace of God that always leads to faith, hope, and love as opposed to despair, apathy, negativity, and fear.

"As we come closer to the year 2000, we all want the Society to continue to bring Christ, the Gospel, hope, and peace to people. And finally, I personally want to rely upon the Lord and take my lead from the Holy Spirit in all I do."

Though his hopes may seem lofty, one thing is certain: Bau will stretch and do his best.