



PRIESTS FOR TOMORROW



Diocese of LA CROSSE
Office for Priestly Vocations

March 2016



SEMINARIES

You are encouraged to write to our seminarians as a way of showing your support and prayers throughout the school year at the following addresses:

Mundelein Seminary
1000 East Maple Ave.
Mundelein, IL 60060

Pontifical North American College
Via del Gianicolo, 14
Rome RM,
Italy 00165

Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary
750 Terrace Heights
Winona, MN 55987

St. John Vianney Seminary
2115 Summit
Avenue, #3496
St. Paul, MN 55105

Greetings from Father Wierzba

Lent, more or less, is a time of more and less. We are encouraged to engage in more prayer, more fasting and more fasting, while partaking in less of something (like meat on Fridays) or something that we have “given up”. The practice of more and less is helpful for our spiritual growth and well-being. We learn to get along with less in order to give God more.

The idea of “more or less” has encouraged me this Lenten season is to try to be a little more kind, loving, prayerful and forgiving each day than I was the previous day; while also trying to be a little less hard, uncharitable and judgmental than I was the previous day. You know, it’s

working...more or less. Slowly I feel the shift and can tell that I am more or less being formed spiritually into the man Christ is calling me to be. Imagine a world where everyone tried to be a little more holy today than they were yesterday. Or how different things would be if we

all tried to be a little less sinful today than we were yesterday?

Our seminarians are engaged daily in varying aspects of formation, among which are their spiritual formation and intellectual formation. Formation is that process of forming them into a man after the likeness of Christ. In this issue of the Priests for Tomorrow Newsletter you will read about their intellectual formation, a serious subject. They will also tell you what makes them laugh.

Lent is a time of formation for Christians. Why not engage Lent more or less.



DIACONATE ORDINATION

Please keep Peter Kieffer and Juan Pedro Baltazar in your prayers. God willing they will be ordained Deacons on May 7th at St. Joseph the Workman Cathedral in La Crosse at 10:30 AM. All are invited to attend.



WHAT IS THE MOST INTERESTING THING YOU ARE STUDYING NOW AND WHY?

STEVEN WELLER - Epistemology, the study of knowledge. The class is interesting as I study philosophers who think we can know a lot, a little, or nothing at all. Sometimes, ironically, I don't know what they are talking about.

PETER KIEFFER - Canon Law of Marriage. It is interesting to me because I enjoy learning about how the Church is structured and how it helps people in various situations

MICHAEL IWANSKI - Epistemology--the study of knowledge. I enjoy it because our professor is a really cool, down-to-earth type of guy who makes the topic fun and interesting.

AARON BECKER - The Eucharist. As Catholics Jesus gives us such an amazing gift in the Mass, His very own body, blood, soul, and divinity. It is remarkable to discover anew and in greater depth how the fact of His real presence in the Mass is revealed in Scripture and preserved throughout history.

BRANDON GUENTHER - The Trinity. I find it interesting because it is really the base and form of all theology. It also deals with the greatest mystery, the inner life of God Himself. What an incredible gift it is to get to know Him through my studies!

TIMOTHY REITHER - My Tolkien seminar class. I am learning what role truth, myth and mystery play in our world and in our Catholic faith. It is exciting to see the world alive and flowing with the power of God in a whole new way.

ERIC MASHAK - Spanish: This is most interesting because I really like seeing how different languages attempt to convey the same meanings and concepts with different words and expressions.

JARED CLEMENTS - Computer Architecture. I am learning how languages compile, like Java or C++, and how to optimize the code for speed. I like this because I really enjoy programming computers. I have been doing that since I was in 7th grade.

ETHAN HOKAMP - Hebrew. It is interesting because it is the original language of most of the Bible and because it has a completely different alphabet than any Latin-based language.

LEVI SCHMITT - In my Pastoral Care and Counseling class I am studying how to speak one-on-one with people that are facing different life situations. It's my most interesting course since I'm learning

from my experience with people rather than with books.

MATTHEW BOWE - Humanities. Thus far, most of the short stories and the movie that we watched have been powerfully gloomy, touching upon a unique aspect of the human nature.

KYLE LAYLAN - I would say "Ecclesiology", a.k.a., the study of the Church. It answers questions such as, "Why do we have the Church?", "What role do people play in the Church?", "What is the mission of the Church?", etc... The reason I find this subject the most interesting thing I am studying right now is because it looks like I'll be spending a lot of time with this Church!

CHRISTIAN RUF - The philosophy of J.R.R. Tolkien at St. Mary's University in Winona. I was really excited to see that one of the classes that was offered for philosophy this semester was about J.R.R. Tolkien and was even more thrilled when I was able to get in before it was full. We have been reading about Tolkien's life and about his myth making in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* and how all of that relates to how we look at myth and storytelling. It is really great to go back and reread and look again at the books that I grew up reading and it makes them come more alive for me.

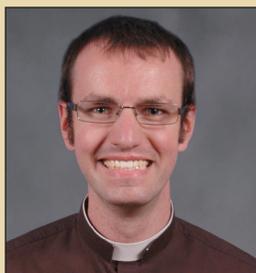
SAM MCCARTY - Right now I'm taking a class on the history of Catholicism in the U.S., and it has provided very interesting insight into the ever changing and often tense relationship between America and the Church.

DANIEL SEDLACEK - St. Augustine of Hippo's understanding of prayer. In his Letter to Proba, a widow, he explains what it means to "pray always." "What else does that mean but, 'desire without ceasing the happy life,' which is none but eternal life, and desire it from him who alone can give it?" Let us always desire this and always pray for this from the Lord God.

JOSEPH RICHARDS - Right now my favorite academic work is on a master's in philosophy thesis. I'm writing about religious belief and what we need to have in order to say belief is true. It's a good dive into epistemology- the philosophy of knowledge.

ARTURO VIGUERAS - The Christology of Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI). One of the books that I love for this class is Romano Guardini's *The Lord*. This book is a series of homilies given by Guardini and it has helped me a lot to better understand my spiritual life. Here is a quote from the Book: "[The Incarnation]

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SEMINARIAN SPOTLIGHT PETER KIEFFER

As I am approaching ordination to the diaconate, I am beginning to take certain courses that are geared toward the ministry of deacons. For example, I am taking classes this semester in canon law of marriage, in preaching, and in how to serve as a deacon at

different liturgies (Masses, baptisms, weddings, etc.). These classes have made my excitement to be a deacon increase more and more. What has me the most excited about becoming a deacon is being able to serve as a deacon at the Mass, particularly being able to give homilies and to assist as a deacon at the altar.

The part that has me a bit nervous about becoming a deacon is the awareness of the responsibility that I am preparing to receive. Deacons act in the person of Christ the Servant, which is a pretty lofty responsibility.

Acting in the person of Christ the Servant as a deacon it will be common to see me wearing a collar. In the times that I have worn a collar since declaring candidacy I have not noticed people treating me that differently. However, I think that people do look upon those who wear a collar as someone who represents God, in one way or another. I pray that, by God's grace, I may not only represent God well, but also serve others well and lead them closer to Him.



PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

LORD of the Harvest,

BLESS young people with the gift of courage to respond to your call. Open their hearts to great ideals, to great things.

INSPIRE all of your disciples to mutual love and giving—for vocations blossom in the good soil of faithful people.

INSTILL those in religious life, parish ministries, and families with the confidence and grace to invite others to embrace the bold and noble path of a life consecrated to you.

UNITE us to Jesus through prayer and sacrament, so that we may cooperate with you in building your reign of mercy and truth, of justice and peace. Amen.

— Pope Francis

CONTINUED....

WHAT IS THE MOST INTERESTING THING YOU ARE STUDYING NOW AND WHY?

is the fulfillment of revelation, in which the unknown God makes Himself known, the remote God suddenly steps into human history. Incarnation is literally what the word says: the living, actual Word of God, the logos, Son in whom the mystery of the Father is gathered becomes man through the Holy Ghost.”

PHILIP GRYGLESKI - Right now in English class I'm learning about the Cristero War in Mexico. We're reading a story about a priest who's on the run from a lieutenant wanting to kill him.

AUSTIN KLEMEN - Psychology of Success: How to motivate people and yourself to become more accomplished and successful

JUAN PEDRO BALTAZAR - ENGLISH IS MY CHALLENGE - I am able to understand more, but pronunciation is still difficult for me. I am learning that it takes time and I need patience. But I have a personal and strong motivation: learning English is the key to understanding the hearts of American people.

DANIEL WILLIAMS - In being on pastoral year I have the opportunity to study different things on my own. What I have been diving into lately are the papal encyclicals or documents from the Vatican - either from previous popes or Pope Francis on mission and the new evangelization which is the prominent subject of our time. It has been a joy to read what the popes have had to say on what they see the Church and the faithful need in a modern world we encounter everyday

TYLER RIESE - I am currently taking a class titled “Musical Acoustics” where I am learning about the

physics behind music's. I really enjoy learning how musical instruments work and why they sound the way they do.

LUTHER DIAZBANUELOS - Ecclesiology, Mary and Mission because we're learning about the nature of the Church, it's foundation and inseparability from its founder, Jesus Christ and how Mary as the mother of Jesus, is fundamental to the Catholic Church.

JOHN ZWEBER - The book I am reading for my formation class which gives advice from the church doctors on how to live a life of holiness

ZECHARIAH KITZHABER - I have always enjoyed school and loved learning. My favorite class is Spanish. I had the opportunity to learn Spanish during a foreign exchange in Mexico, and now I am refining my skills in the classroom. I love speaking Spanish and I find languages really interesting. I know it's something I'll be able to use throughout my life.

NICHOLAS MCNAMARA - my Logic class

ANDREW DUSHEK - Summa Theologiae in my St. Thomas Aquinas Seminar

MATTHEW CANTER - The Catholic Epistles and how they can applied even to the modern day, especially the letters of St. John and the theory that they relate to a church in schism

BARRY SAYLOR - Fundamental Preaching. The class allows us to experiment with different forms of preaching and pushes us to think outside of the box. This in turn gets us more comfortable with the material while making us more confident in presenting it! ✝



SEMINARIAN SPOTLIGHT JUAN PEDRO BALTAZAR

A WONDERFUL PATH: I want to say one more time that I will not recognize enough the mercy and the patience God has granted to me during my whole life. The vocation is indeed an undeserved gift from God. I am not the most perfect man, but God gave this wonderful vocation, which is the best treasure for me. Priestly vocation is, I will always say, a gift a man received from God, but I also believe that he has been giving me his grace every time I need it. Sometimes, I felt that it seemed difficult to walk, but at the same time, I have discovered that God was answering in many ways such as when I see many brothers and sisters who, with their life, example, faith and works, tell me the Lord has made marvels for them and in

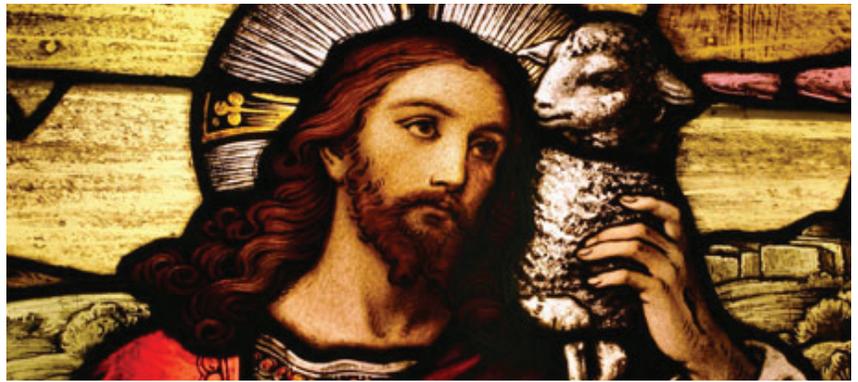
them. God has perfect plans but His ways are not ours.

When I try to pray, I say “My God and my all. If this is in your plans, I am here. I put all my trust in You and I know You will be with me in order to help me say, with my life and my words, how much you love me and my brothers and sisters.” And I also want to say something to you, my brothers and sisters who have always led my way towards priesthood. I beg you to keep praying for me. I know your prayers have supported me and I have been strengthened by your spiritual help. Your invaluable support help me go on in this lovely and undeserved vocation. Que Dios los bendiga a todos. God bless you all.



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Vocations La Crosse Diocese



WHAT MAKES YOU LAUGH?

STEVEN WELLER - Jokes. Most of my professors love to teach with humor and jokes since funny important information is easier to remember.

PETER KIEFFER - Different things. Some of these include a funny joke, a funny movie, or when something humorously does not go according to plan.

MICHAEL IWANSKI - Good jokes. Mainly the jokes with a longer story involved (otherwise I would share a shorter one).

AARON BECKER - "Just about anything"

BRANDON GUENTHER - Slap-stick humor; like America's Funniest Home Videos or other silly things.

TIMOTHY REITHER - A lot of things, quick wit is what makes me laugh the most.

ERIC MASHAK - I laugh at almost every attempt at humor and oftentimes even when someone is trying to be very serious. Laughing when you are not supposed to is a habit of mine!

JARED CLEMENTS - A harmless joke or prank.

ETHAN HOKAMP - Reminiscing on my parents' attempts to punish me as a child. Usually I would either not be able to take it seriously or one of my siblings would come to my rescue.

LEVI SCHMITT - I love to laugh at a good joke!

MATTHEW BOWE - Being around good company and having a good time.

KYLE LAYLAN - I have a friend who is phenomenal at impersonations. He can do a variety of characters (usually ridiculous characters). Just the other day he randomly sent me a video of him doing Woody and Buzz Lighter from the movie "Toy Story." Considering that "Toy Story" is one of my favorite childhood movies and he impersonated Woody and Buzz flawlessly, I was dying with laughter

CHRISTIAN RUF - People and things that make me laugh: my siblings, a good joke or prank, times I realize I made a stupid mistake (like not turning the microphone on and the camera when filming until I have gotten the scene almost done), Studio C and cat videos on YouTube and just having a good time with friends.

SAM MCCARTY - I'll laugh at just about anything except a pun. My feelings towards them? Unadulterated loathing.

DANIEL SEDLACEK - One thing which makes me laugh is hearing about the antics of my niece and five nephews. They say and do the funniest things.

JOSEPH RICHARDS - My classmates make me laugh on a regular basis.

ARTURO VIGUERAS - Minions!

PHILIP GRYGLESKI - Silly humor. My uncle thinks of bizarre scenarios, and I find that unusual silliness funny.

AUSTIN KLEMEN - When I hear a really good joke or see a reaction to something

DANIEL WILLIAMS - I have been serving at Mary, Mother of the Church Parish in La Crosse for the past eight months. The biggest thing that makes me laugh is what kids either in the religious education program or at the Catholic schools say or how they ask questions. Children don't have filters like we adults do and so they say the funniest things. One time I was telling the Kindergartners the story of David and Goliath and how David used a slingshot to take down Goliath and one of the kids said, "My dad uses a sling shot also...to kill birds in our yard!" Sometime we just have to laugh at the many things kids say or the ordinary events of parish life that is God bringing us all joy.

TYLER RIESE - One of the things that is a joy for me is simply shooting the breeze with one of brother seminarians while playing a game of pool (or 3 or 5 games).

LUTHER DIAZBANUELOS - When I was home in December, I realized that anything my nephews do makes me laugh. Especially the new one I had just met who had been born a few months earlier.

JOHN ZWEBER - Fr. Wierzba often does because he has a great sense of humor.

ZECHARIAH KITZHABER - I am an easy person to make laugh. I enjoy corny jokes and bad puns, especially ones I haven't heard before. I do have a dark sense of humor, so I tend to like jokes that might push some limits. But I can laugh at just about anything, especially my own mistakes.

NICHOLAS MCNAMARA - card tricks because I like to play mind games.

ANDREW DUSHEK - slapstick comedy, especially wordplay



March

- 1 - Barry Saylor
- 3 - Matthew Canter
- 13 - Eric Mashak
- 17 - Christian Ruf
- 25 - Kyle Laylan
- 27 - Zechariah Kitzhaber

April

- 11 - Joseph Richards

May

- 2 - Nicholas McNamara
- 2 - Tyler Riese
- 3 - Steven Weller

June

- 5 - Levi Schmitt
- 28 - Juan Pedro Baltazar