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Dear <<Salutation>>,

May the Lord give you Peace!

We are now beginning Holy Week, an extraordinary and sacred time in the Church year. For us Catholics, we solemnly contemplate the Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Lord; also, we also reflect on the institution of the sacraments of the Holy Eucharist and the Priesthood. The call to the priesthood, like any vocation, is a call answered with faith, hope, and love. The endurance of the clergy rests on quality preparation and formation of men in mind, body, and soul.

For the past nine years, we have been resolute in our Diocese to do whatever we can to maintain the Church's reputation and provide concrete measures to avoid the types of failures that are coming to light today. Throughout the years, we have instituted one of the most rigorous Safe Environment programs in the church. Our curricula go beyond standard best practices for the protection of children and the vulnerable. We have transformed and enriched our seminarian formation program, along with the addition of two new programs to ensure that we promote healthy and committed future priests.

- The *Journey Program*, a first of its kind, allows young men to experience a pre-seminary period of discernment without the challenges of a full college class load.
- The *Regency Program* is now in its fourth year. This very successful program allows a seminarian to suspend his college course work to focus his efforts on any specific spiritual or psychological formative needs.

I am truly inspired by all the good works our Church in Western and North Central Wisconsin does, living out the mission of Jesus Christ each day. I am grateful for your past investment in the Diocesan Annual Appeal, and I sincerely hope that you will reinvest in this year's Appeal-*Endurance in Hope*. Your sacrificial gifts enable hope to become a reality in the many lives that are weakened by a world of sadness and discouragement by helping the Church do better in its response. Candidly, without your donations, the 38 apostolates of our Diocese – our hope-inspiring works of mercy -- could not occur.

Thank you for your generous spirit and consideration of participation. May God reward you and bless you and your family.

Yours in the spirit of Divine Hope,

Most Reverend William Patrick Callahan  
Bishop of La Crosse