



PRAYER FOR **VOCATIONS**

Heavenly Father, Bless your Church with an abundance of holy and zealous priests, deacons, brothers, and sisters. Give those you have called to the married state and those you have chosen to live as single persons in the world, the special graces that their lives require. Form us all in the likeness of Your Son, so that in Him, with Him, and through Him, we may love you more deeply and serve you more faithfully, always and everywhere. With Mary we ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRIESTS FOR TOMORROW



WINTER 2019-2020



3710 East Avenue South | La Crosse, WI 54602-4004
Phone: 608-791-2667 | diolc.org/vocations



DIOCESE of LA CROSSE



Father Alan Wierzba
Director of the Office for Vocations



Dear friends of our seminarians,

Thank you for your support of our seminarians and for the future Church in the Diocese of La Crosse. This fall, 23 seminarians began their studies and formation, along with three men from the diocese discerning in our Journey Program. The richness of the blessing they are, and the generosity of our benevolent God in calling so many from our area, is seen in their joy and appreciation of all that they receive from the good people of the Diocese of La Crosse. We pray daily for our benefactors and supporters.

It is hard to follow Jesus, sometimes, and it seems our society makes it ever more difficult each day. With all the sad news around us, we felt there was a need to build hope for our future Church, not just in the La Crosse Diocese, but throughout the state of Wisconsin. Three days, at the beginning of August, saw a gathering of nearly 100 seminarians from the five dioceses of Wisconsin (Milwaukee, Green Bay, Madison, Superior, La Crosse) at the Diocesan Center in La Crosse. We wanted to show the people of Wisconsin that the Catholic Church is not dying, that there is great hope for our future Church found in the men discerning the priesthood. We also wanted to build the camaraderie and brotherhood of support among the seminarians. I believe that we succeeded in accomplishing all we set out to do, and much more. You can read below what several of the bishops thought about the gathering. Peace.

— Father Alan Wierzba

BIRTHDAYS

December 3 - David Nowicki

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

May 2, 2020

Diaconate Ordination

June 22, 2020

2nd Annual Golf Outing

June 27, 2020

Priestly Ordination

July 26, 2020

Priests For Tomorrow

What seemed an impossible dream became a historic reality during the first weekend in August as 100 seminarians, five bishops, vocation directors, and support staff from all the Wisconsin dioceses gathered at the Holy Cross Diocesan Center for what became memorable in so many ways.

Building the Church in this age requires a strong and reliable presbyterate. Priest must not only be intellectually proficient and possess a spiritual depth and character; he must also be reliant on a band of brothers who share his vocation and his love of the One who calls. Training in the fraternity of the priesthood is part of a man's formation for his future ministry among the People of God.

Our historic summer gathering was as much a demonstration of future ministerial cooperation and spiritual support as it was an amazing display of Frisbee tossing, roasted pig eating (among other delights), and reflection time on contemporary issues in the Church and the histories of our dioceses that opened minds and hearts. Not to mention valuable time

spent with our bishops—all spent under a big white tent in the Center's parking lot.

The celebration of Holy Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours and other devotions, celebrated in the Holy Cross Chapel and at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe gave direction and purpose to our gathering. It was an epic moment for sharing and becoming more aware of the future of the work of the future priests of the Church in Wisconsin. We are very grateful to the Knights of Columbus, the Councils of Catholic Women, and so many of the wide array of benefactors who support the Priests for Tomorrow. God bless you.

— Bishop William P. Callahan



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— Bishop William P. Callahan, Bishop of La Crosse





Bishop James P. Powers, Diocese of Superior

Excerpts from September 2019 Catholic Herald Diocese of Superior

Seminarians from across the State of Wisconsin gathered during the first weekend of August in La Crosse. In total, seven bishops were present, seven vocation directors, and 97 seminarians.

“It is the first time that anybody can remember that all of the bishops and seminarians from the province gathered in one space,” Bishop James P. Powers said.

“More than anything, it was a social gathering to help get to know everybody, spend some time together, share faith stories, and pray together.”

The men were bussed back and forth between where they were staying and the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe for fellowship events and joint prayer, as well as Mass. Saturday

afternoon included a bishop’s forum, where questions that had been presented by the seminarians were addressed.

It was an opportunity for those who are just entering and those beginning their fourth year of theology to gather together as brother seminarians discerning the priesthood.

Seminarian Daniel Tracy said, “The gathering was really a remarkable experience for me to recognize and appreciate that there is a very visible and dynamic unity that has been fostered among the bishops of our state. This unity has had and will continue to have an impact on both clergy and laity throughout the state for many years to come.”

Bishop Powers commented on how important it was for the Diocese of Superior men to have the chance to see “the cup being half full rather than half empty.”



There are certain events, celebrations or occasions in our lives when the good feelings and rightness of actions are intermingled with the powerful interactions of those involved. This presents a situation which is so tangible that one uses the expression, “I wish I could bottle this.” The expression emphasizes that, at some time in the future when things are not so great, we could use a shot of this emotional vitamin to aid us in our sense of dismay.

On Saturday, August 3, close to 100 seminarians from the state of Wisconsin joined with priests and the seven active bishops – Bishops James Powers (Superior), David Ricken (Green Bay), Donald Hying (Madison),

William Callahan (La Crosse); Jeff Haines, James Schuerman, and myself (Milwaukee) – in a day of prayer, discussion and camaraderie. Hosted by Bishop William Callahan and the Diocese of La Crosse, there was an abundance of hospitality, goodwill, faith — and hope.

As an archbishop looking at these men who are discerning a vocation to the priesthood, I couldn’t help but swell with pride, hearing their

aspirations and stories. It was obvious that the hardworking vocation directors harvested the best from among Catholic young men to consider the priesthood. I wish that I could have taken these men, their stories and hopes, and shared them with all of the faithful Catholics throughout Wisconsin. A vocation-friendly environment has been created in our state.

Archbishop Jerome Listecki,
Archdiocese of Milwaukee

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— Archbishop Jerome Listecki, Diocese of Milwaukee



Faithful Supporter

Rita Bauer



Father Alan Wierzba was our pastor at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish in Wisconsin Rapids. He became a good friend to my husband, Herb, and me. When my husband passed away in October of 2010, Father was a great support to me. In 2011, Father moved to La Crosse and eventually became Vocations Director. It was very hard on our parish to see him leave us.

Back then, there were always seminarians around the parish; sometimes as many as four seminarians living at the rectory, one even had to sleep on the couch! Because I stayed in touch with Fr. Wierzba, I got inspired to get involved with seminarians. I attended my first Priests for Tomorrow dinner in Wausau. After

seeing Father Wierzba, Bishop Callahan, and many of the seminarians at the dinner that did it for me! I knew I wanted to do everything I could to support these men. Father Wierzba and the seminarians are now like family to me.

Ever since then, I have gotten to know the seminarians and correspond with them regularly. My friendship with them is a great joy.

I joined our Serra Club in Wisconsin Rapids. I enjoy the luncheons, prayer time, and discussions regarding the seminarians and religious vocations. We are always looking for new Serra members if you are interested; contact our President Phil Parker at pparker@wctc.net.

On my birthday, July 26, 2015, at Priests for Tomorrow in La Crosse, Fr. Wierzba announced that I was the first Spirit of Light award recipient. What a big surprise! He explained that the award is given by Bishop Callahan to someone who reflects the "Light of Christ" for the Diocese. Father said I was given the award because of my faithful support and loyal friendship. This award is a real honor for me. I keep the seminarians in my prayers daily, and they do the same for me. They are my joy!

God's Blessings, Rita Bauer

You are encouraged to write to our seminarians as a way of showing your support and prayers throughout the school year using the addresses provided below.

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES SEMINARY
3257 South Lake Drive | St. Francis, WI 53235

PONTIFICAL NORTH AMERICAN COLLEGE
Via del Gianicolo, 14 | Rome, Italy 00165

MUNDELEIN SEMINARY
1000 East Maple Avenue | Mundelein, IL 60060

IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY SEMINARY
750 Terrace Heights | Winona, MN 55987

ST. JOHN VIANNEY SEMINARY
2115 Summit Avenue | St. Paul, MN 55105



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*Check out
our website*

