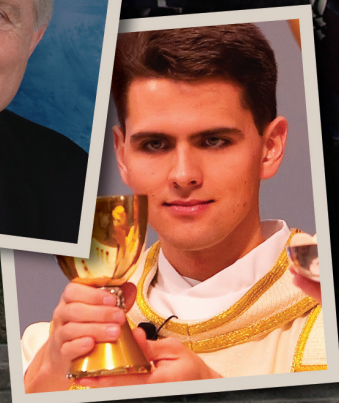




# THE BRIDGE

## A Review of The Year For Priests



# A view from The Bridge

By Very Reverend Dennis Lyle



Summer is a time for vacations. Many families pack up the minivan with kids, suitcases and snacks and head for a place away from home. The place might be a familiar destination to which we return every year or perhaps it is a new location to which we have never visited. Upon our return we bring back souvenirs, memories and pictures, lots of pictures. And as we know, the digital age has made it easy to take hundreds of pictures. When we share those pictures with others, I think it is safe to say that those with people in them are always more interesting than those solely with landscapes and buildings.

It is one thing to have a picture of the Blue Whale off Route 66 in Catoosa, Oklahoma, but it is better with kids hanging out the port holes or sliding into the pool. Giraffes at the Denver Zoo are photogenic, but a giraffe eagerly seeking food from a startled toddler tells a better story. The old historic buildings of New England are charming, but something is added when the family is eating ice cream in front of the Old State House in Boston. People make the pictures more interesting.

Since Pope Benedict XVI announced that the past year would be dedicated as a *Year for Priests*, much attention has been given to the priesthood. In his letter calling for this “Year for Priests,” the Pope presented Saint John Vianney as a model pastor who came to know his people and thus help transform their lives. The Pope presented John Vianney as a concrete expression, a lived reality of the priesthood. Rather than dwell on an abstract theology of the priesthood, Benedict offered a picture of it – a picture of a human being who had been transformed by his relationship to Jesus.

This issue of *The Bridge* draws our attention to this “Year for Priests.” But rather than talk about a theology of the priesthood – something necessary but often abstract – the editors invited seminarians, priests and a bishop to write about their vocation. It is a picture with a human being, and it makes the picture of priesthood more interesting. The human story reveals the personality of the individual and paints a richer picture of the priesthood.

*The human story reveals the personality of the individual and paints a richer picture of the priesthood. My experience has taught me that people understand the priesthood through the priests they meet. And a priest only understands his vocation when he becomes a pastor for those he was sent to serve.*

My experience has taught me that people understand the priesthood through the priests they meet. And a priest only understands his vocation when he becomes a pastor for those he was sent to serve. If you want to understand the priesthood, I encourage you to watch, listen and work with a priest.

I hope our feature articles present you with an interesting picture of the priesthood. First, I invite you to read the article by Bishop Raymond Goedert, retired Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Chicago. For 58 years, Bishop Goedert has served as a priest and bishop both in the Archdiocese of Chicago and the larger Catholic community. His insights into the priestly vocation are the fruit of many years of experience and reflection. Also, the talks delivered by Msgr. James Roche and Fr. Dan Coughlin, both priests of the archdiocese, reveal that while over the last 50 years many things have changed, priests have courageously responded to the needs of the Church and society. Finally, the reflections by seminarians who are on the verge of ordination capture the excitement and enthusiasm of a new generation of priests.

As you continue to pray for vocations and support the priests you know, I hope these stories in *The Bridge* enrich your understanding of the priesthood. I believe Bishop Goedert speaks for all of us when he concludes his article with the question, “If I had to do it all over again, would I? You bet I would!”

– Father Dennis Lyle is rector/president of the  
University of St. Mary of the Lake / Mundelein Seminary.

THE BRIDGE IS PUBLISHED TWICE A YEAR BY THE STUDENTS AND FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. MARY OF THE LAKE/MUNDELEIN SEMINARY.



Very Rev. Dennis Lyle, S.T.D.  
**RECTOR / PRESIDENT**

Rev. Patrick O'Malley  
**FACULTY ADVISOR**

Deacon Andrew Liaugminas  
**EDITORS**

Matthew Dalrymple  
Deacon Stephen Eickhoff  
Brendan Guilfoil  
Louis Krupp  
Kevin McCray  
Daniel Oudenhoven  
Marcel Portelli  
Manuel Razo  
Bob Regan  
Juan Teran-Sanchez  
Deacon Stephen Thompson  
John Whitlock  
**EDITORIAL STAFF**

Nick Greazel  
**WEBSITE EDITOR**

FAITH Catholic

Rev. Dwight Ezop  
**CHAIRMAN AND EDITOR**

Patrick M. O'Brien  
**PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Elizabeth Martin Solsburg  
**EDITORIAL DIRECTOR**

Lynne Ridenour  
**GRAPHIC DESIGNER/WEB MASTER**

Abby Wieber  
Frank Iacovella  
**GRAPHIC DESIGNERS**

Derek Melot  
Carlos Briceño  
**PROOFREADING**

*The Bridge*™ is a membership publication of the University of St. Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary, 1000 E. Maple Ave., Mundelein, IL 60060. Published twice a year by the students and faculty of the University of St. Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary. Subscription requests and address changes can be sent to Mundelein Seminary, 1000 E. Maple Ave., Mundelein, IL 60060.

[www.usml.edu](http://www.usml.edu)  
[www.chicagopriest.com](http://www.chicagopriest.com)



## 58 Years and still trying



### COVER STORY

## 12 Fifty-Eight Years and Still Trying

– By Most Rev. Raymond E. Goedert



### 2 • A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

By Father Dennis Lyle, rector/president of the University of St. Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary

### 4 • MUNDELINES

### 6 • UPCOMING EVENTS

### 7 • FROM OUR POPE

Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

### 9 • FIELD NOTES

Priest and Missionary:  
St. Damien of Molokai

– By Francis Cardinal George, OMI

### FEATURE STORIES

## 10 Reflections From the Class of 1960

– By Rev. James P. Roache

## 16 Preparing for Priestly Ministry

– By Andrew Liaugminas

## 18 Forming a Priestly Heart

– By Father Anthony Lajato

### PHOTO ESSAY

## 20 Priests of Jesus Christ

### PROFILES

## 22 A 'Seasoned' Perspective

Reflections on the Priesthood from Father Richard Wojcik, class of 1949

– By Daniel Stover

## 24 Interview with a Vocations Director

Hearing the Call in our Modern World

– By Brian Slezak

## 26 Enthralled by Christ

A Pilgrimage to Ars – By James Wallace

## 27 A Labor of Love

Working at Mundelein Seminary

– By Scott Nolan

### ALUMNI PROFILES

## 29 "As Those Who Serve"

April 14, 2010

### 31 • FROM THE EDITORS

– By Deacon Jay Atherton





## Clear Stream Project Cleans Up

In late April this year, more than 40 Mundelein seminarians and several faculty members participated in a project to improve the flow of water in Bull Creek, which comes from Loch Lomond through the seminary property into St. Mary's Lake, finding its way to Butler Lake in Libertyville and eventually the DesPlaines River. Following a plan drawn by Hey Associates and approved by the EPA, our volunteers removed numerous trees that had fallen into the stream due to the erosion of the banks, or had been felled by the local beaver population. Restoration of this stream-forest complex will improve water quality, enhance the ecological quality and diversity of both the forest and the creek, and reduce deposition of sediment in the water system. Much more work needs to be done, but a great deal was accomplished on the initial day.

## Evening of Tribute

The 17th Annual Evening of Tribute was held on April 14 at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel. Over 500 attendees honored Rev. Dan Coughlin with the Joseph Cardinal Bernadin "As Those Who Serve" Award. Also honored were Dennis and Ronnie Mudd, who received the 2010 Francis Cardinal George "Christo Gloria" Award for service to the Church and our community.

This year, through the efforts of the committee co-chairs – Mr. Richard W. Burke; Very Rev. John Canary; Mr. James C. Dowdle; Rev. Thomas Franzman; Mr. William H. McEssy; Ms. Tonise Paul; Most Rev. George Rassas; Msgr. Kenneth Velo and Rev. Jack Wall – the seminary was able to fund the annual pilgrimage to the Holy Land for the third-year seminarians. We are very thankful.

## Pre-theology Mission Trips

As part of the two-year Pre-Theology program, seminarians participated in an immersion experience with the poor. In early-to-mid February, some members of the class traveled with Dr. Kate Wiskus, associate dean of formation, to the Diocese of Tucson to work with the Native American communities of the Tohono O'odham Nation. Very Rev. Dennis Lyle, Mundelein Seminary Rector, also joined the group for part of the mission. PT-II men Matthew Dalrymple (Atlanta, GA), Connor Danstrom, Dan Folwaczny, Chris Kerzich, Francis Nguyen, and Krzysztof Szczepanik (Chicago, IL); Brian Slezak (Albany, NY); Scott Harter (Grand Island, NB); and Paul Yanzer (La Crosse, WI) made the trip to Arizona.

Other members of the PT-II class participated in a program sponsored by Catholic Relief Services Global Fellowship Program. Father Kevin

## Class of 2010 Newly Ordained

Thirty-three men of Mundelein Seminary were ordained to the priesthood this Spring representing fourteen dioceses. The Archdiocese of Chicago ordained fourteen men on Saturday, May 22 at Holy Name Cathedral. From Chicago are: Elvio Baldeon Lope, Sergio de la Torre Carrillo, Manuel Dorantes, Shawn Gould, Brian Kean, Christopher Mutuku Kituli, Andrew Liaugminas, Sergio Mena, Michael Moczko, Nathaniel Payne, Carlos Rodriguez, Stanley Stuglik, Luis Valerio, and Andrew Wawrzyn.

Other members of the 2010 class ordained to the priesthood for their respective dioceses are: Joseph Altenhofen and Nicholas Wichert (Seattle, WA), Raed Bader, Stephen Eickhoff, John Lindsey, Joshua Miller, and Jason Stone (Joliet, IL), David Gross (Grand Rapids, MI), David Hammond (Albany, NY), Paul Kala and Stephen Thompson (Springfield, IL), Aaron Kalmon (Superior, MI), Anthony Lajato (Conv. Franciscans), Carlos Martinez (Lexington, KY), Joseph Nguyen (Davenport, IA), Timothy Oudenhoven (La Crosse, WI), Luis Sanchez (Brownsville, TX), Bernard Sehr (Rockford, IL), and Scott Wallisch (Kansas City, KS). We wish them all the best in their priesthood.



Feeney, dean of formation, departed with a group of pre-theologians to go to Ethiopia. Making the journey to Africa were Desmond Drummer (Atlanta, GA); Clayton Elmhurst (La Crosse, WI); Derek Ho, Jamie Mueller, Mike Wyrzykowski, and Tom Pierzchanowski (Chicago, IL); Albert Miranda (Tucson, AZ); and Daniel Stover (Kansas City, KS).

### Seminarians Visit Parishes

During the course of the winter and spring quarter, Chicago seminarians visited four separate parishes in an attempt to explore the diversity of the archdiocese. Between 25 and 30 USML men made the trip on designated Sundays to attend Mass and celebrate the Eucharist with parishioners. St. Patrick in Wadsworth served as the inaugural parish for the visits. St. Agatha in Chicago came next followed by St. Hyacinth (Chicago) and Most Blessed Trinity (Waukegan).

### Mundelein rebounds with Shootout Title

The Mundelein Lakers defended their 2009 title during the Winter quarter by capturing the 10th Annual Mundelein "Seminary Shootout." In undefeated fashion, the host Lakers accepted the championship trophy in the event sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. USML defeated Sacred Heart Seminary (Detroit) in the title game. Kenrick/Glennon Seminary placed third. Mundelein Seminary's Phil Owen was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player.

Eight seminaries participated in the event. The "Shootout" provides an opportunity for 180 men from throughout the country to build fraternity with fellow seminarians on the road to priesthood. A special thanks to the Knights of Columbus from the state of Illinois for sponsoring the tourney.

*The "Shootout" provides an opportunity for 180 men from throughout the country to build fraternity with fellow seminarians on the road to priesthood. A special thanks to the Knights of Columbus from the state of Illinois for sponsoring the tourney.*

- Robert Regan is a first-year pre-theologian for the Archdiocese of Chicago.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

Every year, the seminary engages the community in various educational opportunities, liturgical celebration, and social justice programs. We invite you to keep these upcoming events in your prayers.

## SUMMER 2010: IMMERSION EXPERIENCES

Seminarians will be studying Spanish and Hispanic Culture in Morelia, Mexico and Costa Rica. One seminarian will be in San Antonio, TX, for a three-week intensive program covering pastoral theology with a focus on Hispanic Ministry. This will take place at the Mexican American Catholic College (MACC). Other seminarians will be studying Spanish at the MACC. Finally, five seminarians will be at Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey for the Hispanic Summer Program. They will take accredited courses in the areas of theology and religion. The Institute for Priestly Formation (IPF) will host a number of seminarians for a 10-week spiritual formation experience at Creighton University in Omaha, NE.



## JULY 8:

### ANNUAL ALUMNI PRIEST GOLF OUTING

Mundelein Seminary welcome the ordained alumni back to Pine Meadow Golf Club for the annual alumni golf outing.

## OCT 8 – 10:

### EXPLORING PRIESTHOOD WEEKEND (EPW)

► Please pray for men discerning the call of God on their lives as they come together for the first of such weekends for the academic year. There will be opportunities to hear vocations talks, receive tours of the campus, and experience the life of a seminarian.

## OCT 9 – 10: MARIAN SYMPOSIUM

► Priests, religious, and laity of the Archdiocese of Chicago and neighboring dioceses are invited to the 1st Marian Symposium at Mundelein Seminary. This seminarian initiative will help us deepen our relationship with the Blessed Virgin Mary, understand more about her life, and see how she leads us to Christ. There are two single-day conferences. The conference on Saturday, Oct. 9 will be in Spanish and will include Fathers Diego Maximino, MIC, & Claudio Diaz, Jr., as keynote speakers with Mass presided over by Bishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller. The Sunday conference will be in English and will feature keynote speakers Msgr. Stuart Swetland and Fr. Thomas Loya, with Mass presided over by Bishop J. Peter Sartain. For more information, visit [www.materfidelium.org](http://www.materfidelium.org), or contact [avemaria@materfidelium.org](mailto:avemaria@materfidelium.org).



## AUGUST 22- 27: APPALACHIA IMMERSION AND EL PASO MISSION TRIPS

Several third-year theologians will engage in mission work in the hills of Appalachia under the Christian Appalachian Project. This group will live among the poor while they minister to their needs.

## AUGUST 24 – SEPT 4:

### ORIENTATION & RETREATS

Orientation begins for new students at the seminary on Aug. 24. For returning students, fall retreats begin on Aug. 29 and run through Sept. 4.

## SEPT 6: FALL QUARTER BEGINS

Classes begin. In the evening, Father Lyle will deliver the fall quarter Rector's Address, followed by a social hosted by the Peer Ministers.

## SEPT 16:

### ANNUAL GOLF OUTING AND DINNER

The University of St. Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary is proud to host the 19th Annual Golf Outing, which will honor Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rigalli. The proceeds of this event will help fund Mundelein's English as a Second Language (ESL) program and other seminary programs.

## OCT 1-2: FAMILY WEEKEND

Families of the seminarians are invited to attend Family Weekend festivities on campus. Highlights include a special Mass, a cookout, and the legendary seminarian talent show!

## OCT 30: DIACONATE ORDINATION

Please pray for the men of the Archdiocese of Chicago, as well as other dioceses, as they are ordained to the Order of the Diaconate.

– Matthew Dalrymple is a second-year pre-theologian for the Archdiocese of Atlanta, GA.

Pope John Paul II had called the council “to open the windows and let in some fresh air.”

Aggiornamento was the watch-word ...

# FROM OUR POPE



## Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

*Opening of the Year for Priests on the 150th Anniversary of the Death of Saint John Mary Vianney*

Homily of his Holiness Benedict XVI

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In a little while we shall sing in the antiphon to the Magnificat: “The Lord has drawn us to his heart—*Suscipit nos Dominus in sinum et cor suum*”. God’s heart, as the expression of his will, is spoken of twenty-six times in the Old Testament. Before God’s heart men and women stand judged. His heartfelt pain at sins of mankind makes God decide on the flood, but then he is touched by the sight of human weakness and offers his forgiveness. Yet another passage of the Old Testament speaks of God’s heart with absolute clarity: it is in the eleventh chapter of the book of the Prophet Hosea, whose opening lines portray the Lord’s love for Israel at the dawn of its history: “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son” (Hos 11:1). Israel, however, responds to God’s constant offer of love with indifference and even outright ingratitude. “The more I called them”, the Lord is forced to admit, “the more they went from me” (v. 2). Even so, he never abandons Israel to the power of its enemies, because “my heart”—the the Creator of the universe observes—“recoils within me, my compassion grows warm and tender” (v. 8).

The heart of God burns with compassion! On today’s solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus the Church presents us this mystery for our contemplation: the mystery of the heart of a God who feels compassion and who bestows all his love upon humanity. A mysterious love, which in the texts of the New Testament is revealed to us as God’s boundless and passionate love for mankind. God does not lose heart in the face of ingratitude or rejection by the people he has chosen; rather, with infinite mercy he sends his only-begotten Son into the world to take upon himself the fate of a shattered love, so that by defeating the power of evil and death he could restore to human beings enslaved by sin their dignity as sons and daughters. But this took place at great cost—the only-begotten Son of the Father was sacrificed on the Cross: “Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (cf. Jn 13:1). The symbol of this love which transcends death is his side, pierced



by a spear. The Apostle John, an eyewitness, tells us: “one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water” (cf. Jn 19:34).

Dear brothers and sisters, thank you for responding to my invitation and coming in great numbers to this celebration with which we inaugurate the Year for Priests. I greet the Cardinals and Bishops, in particular the Cardinal Prefect and the Secretary of the Congregation for the Clergy, together with the officials of that Congregation and the Bishop of Ars. I greet the priests and seminarians from the various seminaries and colleges in Rome; the men and women religious and all the lay faithful present. In a special way I greet His Beatitude Ignace Youssef Younan, the Patriarch of Antioch of the Syrians, who has come to Rome to meet me and to recognize publicly the “ecclesiastica communio” which I have granted him.

Together let us pause to contemplate the pierced heart of the Crucified One. Just now we heard once again, in the brief reading from Saint Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians, that “God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ... raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:4-6). To be “in” Jesus Christ is already to be seated in heaven. The very core of Christianity is expressed in the heart of Jesus; in Christ the revolutionary “newness” of the Gospel is completely revealed and given to us: the Love that saves us and even now makes us live in the eternity of God. As the Evangelist John writes: “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (3:16). God’s heart calls to our hearts,

“Send workers into your vineyard, especially those studying here at Mundelein but also in seminaries throughout the world, and glorify your name among the nations.”

inviting us to come out of ourselves, to forsake our human certainties, to trust in him and, by following his example, to make ourselves a gift of unbounded love.

While it is true that Jesus' invitation to “abide in my love” (cf. Jn 15:9) is addressed to all the baptized, on this feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the day of prayer for the sanctification of priests, this invitation resounds all the more powerfully for us priests. It does so in a special way this evening, at the solemn inauguration of the Year for Priests which I have proclaimed to mark the 150th anniversary of the death of the saintly Curé of Ars. A lovely and touching saying of his, quoted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, comes immediately to mind: “the priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus” (n. 1589). How can we fail to be moved when we recall that the gift of our priestly ministry flows directly from this heart? How can we forget that we priests were consecrated to serve, humbly yet authoritatively, the common priesthood of the faithful? Ours is a mission which is indispensable for the Church and for the world, a mission which calls for complete fidelity to Christ and constant union with him. To abide in his love entails constantly striving for holiness, as did Saint John Mary Vianney.

In the Letter which I wrote to you for this special Jubilee Year, dear brother priests, I wished to highlight some essential aspects of our ministry by making reference to the example and teaching of the Curé of Ars, the model and protector of all priests, especially parish priests. I hope that my letter will prove a help and encouragement to you in making this year a graced opportunity to grow ever closer to Jesus, who counts on us, his ministers, to spread and build up his Kingdom, and to radiate his love and his truth. As I invited you at the conclusion of my letter: “in the footsteps of the Curé of Ars, let yourselves be enthralled by Christ. In this way you too will be, for the world in our time, heralds of hope, reconciliation and peace!”

To be completely enthralled by Christ! This was the goal of the entire life of Saint Paul, to whom we looked throughout the Pauline Year now ending; this was the goal of the entire ministry of the Curé of Ars, whom we shall invoke in particular during this Year for Priests; may it also be the primary goal for each and every one of us. Certainly, to be ministers at the service of the Gospel, study and careful, ongoing pastoral and theological formation are useful and necessary, but even more necessary is that “knowledge of love” which can only be learned in a “heart to heart” encounter with Christ. For it is he who calls us to break the bread of his love, to forgive sins and to guide the flock in his name. And for that reason we must never step back from the source of love which is his heart, pierced on the Cross.

Only in this way can we cooperate effectively in the mysterious “plan of the Father” which consists in “making Christ the heart of the world”! This plan is accomplished in history as Jesus gradually becomes the heart of human hearts, beginning with those called

to be closest to him: namely his priests. We are reminded of this constant commitment by the “priestly promises” that we made on the day of our ordination and which we renew yearly on Holy Thursday during the Chrism Mass. Even our shortcomings, our limitations and our weaknesses ought to bring us back to the heart of Jesus. If it is true that by contemplating Christ sinners learn from him the “sorrow for sins” needed to bring them back to the Father, this is even more the case for sacred ministers. How can

we forget, in this regard, that nothing causes more suffering for the Church, the Body of Christ, than the sins of her pastors, especially the sins of those who become “thieves and robbers” of the sheep (cf. Jn 10:1 ff.), lead them astray by their own private teachings, or ensnare them in the toils of sin and death?

Dear priests, the summons to conversion and to trust in God's mercy also applies to us; we too must humbly, sincerely and unceasingly implore the heart of Jesus to preserve us from the terrifying risk of endangering the very people we are obliged to save.

A few moments ago, in the choir chapel, I was able to venerate the relic of the saintly Curé of Ars: his heart. A heart that blazed with divine love, experienced amazement at

the thought of the dignity of the priest, and spoke to the faithful in touching and sublime tones, telling them that “after God, the priest is everything! ... Only in heaven will he fully realize what he is” (cf. Letter for the Year for Priests, p. 3). Dear brothers, let us cultivate this same amazement, in order to carry out our ministry with generosity and dedication, and to maintain the true “fear of God” in our hearts: the fear, that is, that we can deprive of so much good, by our negligence or fault, the souls entrusted to our care, or that—God forbid—we can do them harm. The Church needs holy priests; ministers capable of helping the faithful to experience the Lord's merciful love, and convinced witnesses of that love. In the Eucharistic Adoration which is to follow our celebration of vespers, let us ask the Lord to set the heart of every priest afire with that “pastoral charity” which can make him one in heart and mind with Jesus the High Priest, and thus to imitate Jesus in complete self-giving. May the Virgin Mary, whose Immaculate Heart we shall contemplate with lively faith tomorrow, obtain this grace for us. The Curé of Ars had a filial devotion to Mary, a devotion so profound that in 1836, in anticipation of the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, he dedicated his parish to Mary “conceived without sin”. He frequently renewed this offering of the parish to the Blessed Virgin, teaching his parishioners that “to be heard it is enough to speak to her”, for the simple reason that she “desires above all else to see us happy”. May the Blessed Virgin, our Mother, accompany us during the Year for Priests which we begin today, so that we can be wise and steady guides of the flock which the Lord has entrusted to our pastoral care. Amen!

*A few moments ago, in the Choir Chapel, I was able to venerate the relic of the saintly Curé of Ars: his heart. A heart that blazed with divine love, experienced amazement at the thought of the dignity of the priest, and spoke to the faithful in touching and sublime tones, telling them that “after God, the priest is everything! ... Only in heaven will he fully realize what he is.*



“My greatest happiness is to serve the Lord in these poor sick children, rejected by others.”



## Priest and missionary: St. Damien of Molokai

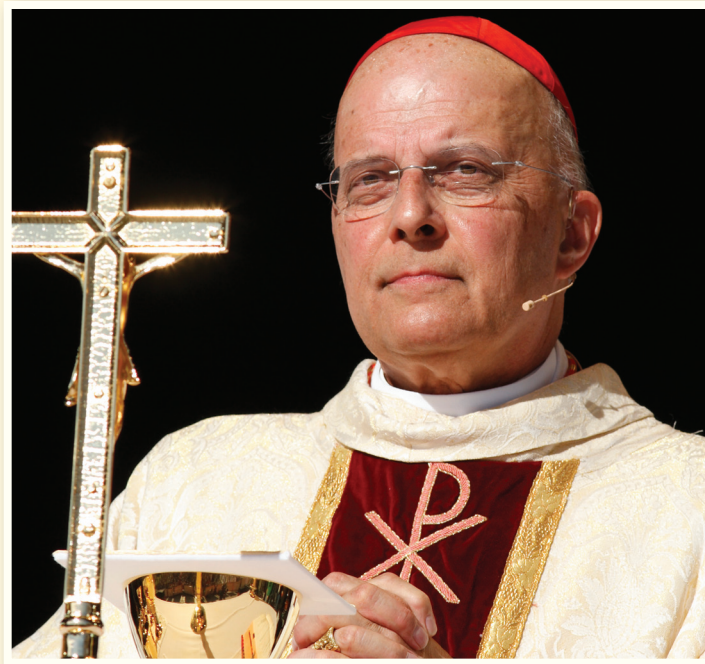
By Francis Cardinal George, OMI

Missionary zeal has always been a sign of a church's vitality. The unity of the church is forged in the preaching of who Christ is to all the people he died and rose to save. The pope explains: "It is the light of the Gospel that guides peoples on their journey and leads them towards the realization of the one great family, in justice and peace . . . . The church exists to announce this message of hope to all humankind, which in our time has experienced marvelous achievements but which seems to have lost its sense of ultimate realities and of existence itself."

A mission needs missionaries. Every baptized Christian is called to preach the Gospel, wherever they might be. On mission Sunday, however, we usually remember and pray for those who have left their own families and friends, their careers and homelands, to preach the Gospel and establish the church in cultures and countries not their own. On Oct. 18, Pope Benedict XVI declared one of them a saint of the church: Joseph de Veuster, known to us as Damien of Molokai.

Damien's story attracts and challenges many, because it is a story that makes no sense outside of Christ's self-sacrifice for the salvation of the world. As a young seminarian, Damien left his native Belgium and sailed halfway around the world to the Hawaiian Islands, where he was ordained a priest on May 21, 1864. Like elsewhere in the tropics, Hawaii was home to the disease then known as "leprosy." To prevent contagion, lepers were exiled to a peninsula on the island of Molokai, where they had to shift for themselves. The bishop in Honolulu was concerned about those who had been exiled and abandoned because of their disease, and he asked for a priest to volunteer to go and live among them. Knowing that such a life meant an early death, Damien volunteered and left for Molokai on May 10, 1873.

Damien lived 16 years among the people he served in various ways but, most of all, whom he served as a priest. He preached the Gospel, heard their confessions, celebrated the Eucharist and their marriages, baptized their children and accompanied them as they died. He accompanied them even more closely when he himself fell victim to leprosy in 1885. He died among them on April 15, 1889.



He took a constant interest in scientific proposals for a cure, and he entered into experiments on himself. He took a greater interest in curing isolation, and he provided literary and musical entertainments to help form community among those who were rejected by everyone else. He built and directed the building of houses, an orphanage, the church, a hospital and a wharf. With his help, the lepers laid a pipeline to bring fresh water to their village and began vegetable and flower gardens. He opened a store, which was provisioned when ships in the harbor managed to deliver their cargoes without docking.

Father Damien wrote, "My greatest happiness is to serve the Lord in these poor sick children, rejected by others." He befriended as well anyone, of any religion or personal persuasion, who could help those to whom he gave his own life. The source of his constancy, as he explained it, was the Eucharist: "Without the presence of our divine master in my small chapel, I would never be able to sustain my life united to that of the lepers of Molokai." He was often brusque and was frequently criticized in life. He felt abandoned as he died. In death, however, the moral heroism of his life and of his witness to Christ became evident to all. Less than two months after his death, a "leprosy fund" was established in London, the first organization devoted to helping the victims of this disease.

St. Damien's heart was a priestly heart, conformed to the heart of Christ. This is the Year for Priests. The essence of priesthood is self-sacrificing love anchored in Christ's own love for his people. When I pray daily for our seminarians, I pray that they will have hearts eager to sacrifice themselves for Christ and his people. I ask you to join me in that prayer.

– Reprinted with permission from *Catholic New World*.

Fifty years is a long time – yet it's trite but also true to say, it passed in a flash. Think of the number of Masses, homilies, the many parishes in which these priests have served ... the hurting people we ministered to, the strong people who nurtured us, represented by many of you here today.

# Reflections From the Class of 1960

*Rev. James P. Roache from the 50th Anniversary Celebration  
at Mundelein Seminary on October 23, 2009*

by Rev. James P. Roache

September – 1948! Dozens of teenagers tumble off buses on Michigan Avenue or rise up from the subway on Chicago Avenue descending on the Near North Side – Quigley Freshmen! You could recognize them by their mismatched suit coats that they would wear to class for the next five years. The jackets grew larger through the years but they never seemed to match.

1948 – that's 61 years that many of us have been together. So you can see we're as old as we look. I'm told by Herbie Meyer that there were some 240 of us, scattered through Classes 1A to 1F. Al Neuman wondered why we seemed to bond together. He thought it was because we were young people aiming toward a life of service. That's too deep for me, but I'm sure Al is on to something.

In 1953, when we came to the place we're gathered in today, we were joined by classmates from Springfield and Belleville. And in our first year here, we took part in this hallowed tradition honoring the Jubilarians, and we wondered if these old guys would make it up the stairs to the Sanctuary. But as Cy Nemecek reminded me, those were Silver Jubilarians. We've got 25 years on them!

On May 3 of 1960, our class was ordained. We went out to a variety of parishes – and a new life had begun.

Before that though, in January of 1959, Pope John XXIII had announced the calling of a council. The Vatican II Council convened each year from 1962 through 1965 – four sessions.

I'm told that some of the younger clergy refer to themselves as "John Paul II Priests." I guess by that standard that we would be "Vatican II Priests."

Pope John Paul II had called the council "to open the win-

dows and let in some fresh air." *Aggiornamento* was the watchword ... bringing things up to date ... getting in touch with the modern world.

This was a heady challenge to young priests – and to old as well. We came from a sheltered, structured world. Scholastic Thomism, a medieval discipline, was our pathway into philosophy and theology. Traditional seminary manuals were our tools. We weren't used to all that "fresh air!"

In our lectures we would deal with competing authors with an "e contra" sentence or two – throwaway lines about scholars and scholarship we barely knew. And the language of our discourse was Latin. (For some that meant dealing with two mysteries at one time.)

And here we were – called to minister in the Age of Aquarius; Woodstock; Vietnam; Civil Rights struggles; the Age of Feminism, a man on the moon; the end of the Cold War; 9/11 – a time of change in the modern world itself – from laptops to iPhone; from YouTube to Facebook; from Twitters to Tweets.

Fifty years is a long time – yet it's trite but also true to say, it passed in a flash. Think of the number of Masses, homilies, the many parishes in which these priests have served. The years of teaching, counseling, consoling, absolving, anointing. The hurting people we ministered to,

the strong people who nurtured us, represented by many of you here today.

We stood at the crossroads of people's lives – at birth and at death, speaking to them of God's love, of God's presence, of God's forgiveness.

Each one of our journeys was unique. So this can hardly be seen as a "Class Response." For some, the journey in search of God led to other paths. For some, as listed in the booklet, their lives were cut short before this 50th year. They are mourned and missed, but we are confident that they are with us today –

*And here we were – called  
to minister in the Age of  
Aquarius; Woodstock;  
Vietnam; Civil Rights  
struggles; the Age of Feminism,  
a man on the moon; the end of  
the Cold War; 9/11 – a time  
of change in the modern world  
itself – from laptops to iPhone;  
from YouTube to Facebook;  
from Twitters to Tweets.*



in our hearts and memories – and in the arms of a loving God.

We put aside our Latin studies in 1964 when the vernacular became the norm for our liturgy and breviary. We sometimes stumbled trying to be faithful to the new conciliar documents and the new emphasis on being part of the conciliar Church.

In an excellent history on the council entitled “What Happened at Vatican II?” John O’Malley writes, “The Church, the Council made clear, is in the modern world – not above it, not below it, not for it, not against it. Therefore, like everybody else in the world, the Church must assume its share of responsibility for the well-being of the world – not simply denounce what it finds wrong.”

As the years passed, the energy of the council seemed to wane. It became tucked away on the shelf of history – sometimes questioned, sometimes neglected or reversed, sometimes failing to fulfill the vision or to maintain the spirit it had put forward.

Yet in varying degrees, it shaped our lives, our understanding of the Church, the meaning of priesthood – and the need in the words of “*Gaudium et Spes*,” the document on the Church in the modern world, the need “to be in touch with the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the men and women of our times.”

We are grateful to Cardinal George for leading us in the Liturgy today and for hosting us at this luncheon, to Father Denny Lyle and the faculty for their warm hospitality – and to the seminarians who have graciously served us at table.

And a word to the seminarians ... One day some of you, all of you I hope, will gather here on an October day in 2059 – and just think, you’ll look as old as we do today.

“*In illis diebus*” – loosely translated as “Back in the day,” – there was a tradition of printing up memorial prayer cards for ordinations and anniversaries. Perhaps it still prevails. But I would like to close by reading one I’ve carried with me for many years. They are the words of one of the “*periti*” – the expert theologians who played a critical role in the shaping of the Council. The German Jesuit Theologian, Father Karl Rahner, had this to say about the priesthood:

*It shaped our lives, our understanding of the Church, the meaning of Priesthood – and the need in the words of “Gaudium et Spes,” the document on the Church in the modern world, the need “to be in touch with the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the men and women of our times.*

*The priest is not an angel sent from heaven.  
He is a man chosen from among men,  
a member of the Church, a Christian.  
Remaining man and Christian,  
he begins to speak to you the word of God.  
This word is not his own.  
No, he comes to you because God has told him  
to proclaim God’s word.  
Perhaps he has not entirely understood it himself.  
Perhaps he adulterates it.  
But he believes, and despite his fears he knows  
that he must communicate God’s word to you.  
For must not some one of us say something  
about God, about eternal life, about the majesty  
of grace  
in our sanctified being;  
must not some one of us speak of sin,  
the judgment and mercy of God?  
So my dear friends, pray for him.  
Carry him so that he might be able to sustain others  
by bringing to them the mystery of God’s love  
revealed in Jesus Christ.*

I’ve carried this card as a bookmark for Thursday Vespers. And in the spirit of Father Rahner’s comments, I would ask you to join me in prayer with the response: Lord, hear our prayer.

*Lord, our God, let your ordained ministers grow toward perfect love. We pray especially for this class of 1960 and all the alumni of Saint Mary of the Lake.  
We pray to the Lord ...  
Send workers into your vineyard, especially those studying here at Mundelein but also in seminaries throughout the world, and glorify your name among the nations.  
We pray to the Lord ...  
Welcome into the company of your saints our relatives and benefactors who have died and all the classmates listed in our program and all the deceased classmates who began that journey with us in the Fall of ’48, may we share their happiness one day.  
We pray to the Lord ...  
Amen.*

“I truly believe that my happiness in the priesthood stems in large part from my willingness to accept whatever assignment has been given to me.”

# Fifty-Eight Years and Still Trying

By Most Rev. Raymond E. Goedert

When Father Lyle invited me to write this article, he said he thought my reflections on the priesthood would be a timely contribution to this issue of *The Bridge*, as the “Year For Priests” winds down. My initial reaction was: Where did that year go? How quickly it passed! It seemed like yesterday that the Holy Father inaugurated the “Year for Priests,” and here we are already, preparing for its conclusion next month on the feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

But isn't that the way many of us feel about our own priesthood? I was ordained on May 1, 1952, at the age of 24. And now, 58 years later, I am utterly amazed at how quickly those years have slipped by. What have I accomplished in all that time? How well have I lived up to the ideals of the priesthood presented to me in the seminary? What are the high points and, yes, the low points of all those years of service to the Lord and His people? And what kind of a reception can I expect, when I finally pack it in and meet Our Lord face to face for the first time?

A vocation to the priesthood is a very mysterious thing; at least it has been for me. When I hear of other priests making altars as children and “saying Mass” for their siblings, I realize that my experience was quite different. I never played “priest,” and in fact I have no early remembrance of even thinking about priesthood until I was in the eighth grade. While I was an altar boy at St. Giles and knew the priests at the parish fairly well, I don't recall any of them directly suggesting that I should consider going to Quigley. My eighth grade teacher

did mention it to me, but no one really pressed the issue. My parents found out what I was thinking only at graduation time. The parish published the Prophecy of the Class of 1940, and we graduates had to indicate what career we wished to pursue and the high school we planned to attend. Needless to say, my parents were pleasantly surprised to learn of my decision and were most supportive from that point on. I mention all this only to dispel the notion that somehow or other a vocation comes in some dramatic fashion, or at a very early age, or at the urging of teachers, parish priests or parents. That may be the case for some, maybe most, but it wasn't for me. That's why I say that a vocation to the priesthood can be quite a mystery. Thanks be to God, I heard His call and accepted it.

When I was ordained, I honestly believed that the will of God is made known to us through the will of our superiors. Whether we were actually taught that in the seminary, or whether I arrived at that idea in some other way, I do not remember. But I believed it then, and I believe it now. Today we have Placement



Boards to assist in the assignment process, and I presume the will of our superiors is expressed only after consultation with that board. Be that as it may, I truly believe that my happiness in the priesthood stems in large part from my willingness to accept whatever assignment has been given to me. I was at St. Gabriel Parish, my first assignment, for only two years. What a great parish it was for a newly ordained priest! To the day he died in 1973, I revered my first pastor, Father Leo Devitt. I could not have asked for a finer priest and pastor to teach me what parish ministry was all about. And my two



fellow associates, Swede Peterson and Jack Kennedy, could not have been more supportive. I often wondered how I survived that assignment with so little sleep. At the end of the day, after the office calls, the wakes, the meetings and whatever, we used to sit up and talk for hours on end. We got along extremely well and I am convinced the spirit of the rectory contributed greatly to the enthusiasm the parishioners always had for their parish. I can never thank God enough for such a great assignment. I always said, if I ever became a pastor, I wanted to be like Leo Devitt. Others will have to judge whether or not I achieved that goal.

Although I have been ordained for 58 years, only 13 of those years were as a full-time parish priest. Even

though the rest of the time I was what they call "a resident," I did participate as much as possible in every parish I was privileged to serve. After two years in Rome studying canon law, I returned in 1956 to the Tribunal, with residence at St. Charles Borromeo on Roosevelt Road, just west of Damen. (It is now a parking lot.) I lived there until 1966 and enjoyed my stay very much. Like people everywhere, the parishioners were really great. It was the closest example of a truly integrated parish that I have ever experienced: African Americans,

Hispanics and Anglos of various ethnic backgrounds. Economically, I suppose outsiders looked upon us as poor. But in my mind, the wealth of that parish was in the profound faith and genuine love that was manifested in the lives of so many of the parishioners. Many of them had made a Cursillo and what an impact it had on them! They were such an example for me that I finally realized I had to make a Cursillo myself. I was supposed to be leading them, but the truth of the matter was they were leading me, as together we grew in the love of Christ and His Church.

While the majority of my years in the priesthood have been spent in non-parochial activities, I have to say that my greatest joys have been in the parishes where I have lived. Blessed Sacrament on 22nd Street and Mater Christi in North Riverside were the two other parishes I served as "a resident" and I enjoyed them both very much. I became especially attached to Mater Christi. The parishioners there were really the salt of the earth. They were ordinary people living extraordinary lives, loyal to their families, to their church and to their community. I didn't realize how attached to them I had become until I became the pastor of St. Barnabas. It took a good two years after I left before I felt I was at peace with the transfer. It wasn't that St. Barnabas was lacking in any way, but simply that my love for the people of Mater Christi was so much greater than I had realized. It was a wonderful preparation for my pastorate, knowing that the real joy in priesthood is in loving God and His people, and receiving the love of both in return.

If I were to name the most significant high point in my priesthood, it would have to be those years that I was the pastor of St. Barnabas (1976-87), especially after we became involved with the Christ Renews His Parish retreat movement. I often said that the best thing I ever did as pastor was to introduce the parishioners to CRHP. After I made the first retreat in 1980 with 18 men from the parish, I

participated from that point on in each of the weekend CRHP retreats until I left the parish in 1987, after some 30 retreats with both men and women. What a gift CRHP was to the retreatants and what a gift it was to the parish! So many of those who made the retreat became some of the most dedicated parishioners I have ever seen. As the years went on it was quite evident that Christ was truly renewing St. Barnabas parish. I can't begin to tell you what an impact CRHP had on me personally. I was able to get to know hundreds of parishioners better than I ever would have without the retreat. And they were able to get to know me, their pastor, in a way they could never have anticipated. It was a win-win situation

*Like people everywhere, the parishioners were really great.*

*It was the closest example of a truly integrated parish that I have ever experienced: African Americans, Hispanics and Anglos of various ethnic backgrounds. Economically, I suppose outsiders looked upon us as poor. But in my mind, the wealth of that parish was in the profound faith and genuine love that was manifested in the lives of so many of the parishioners.*

for all concerned, and I cherish the love and friendship I still have for so many of them, even though I left Beverly over 23 years ago.

As I mentioned before, my assignment at St. Gabriel lasted only two years and I was then sent to Rome to study for a degree in canon law. Upon completion of the course in 1956, four of us Chicago priests, Fathers Wojcik, Dolciamore, Kelly and I made the mistake of booking passage on the ill-fated Andrea Doria, the



While one must die before he can go to heaven, I have often said that going to Lake County was the next best thing!



pride and joy of the Italian Line's fleet. The Doria and we almost made it back to the States. Unfortunately, the Stockholm, a Swedish liner, had other plans and managed to collide with us some 200 miles off the coast of New York, sending the Andrea Doria to a watery grave. Fifty-one people died in the collision, but lifeboats from various ships rescued all the rest. If I were to look for low points in my priesthood, the night of July 25, 1956, would certainly be near the top of my list.

Upon returning to Chicago, Cardinal Stritch appointed John Dolcimore and me to the Metropolitan Tribunal of the Archdiocese. For the next 20 years my primary ministry was helping people in difficult marital situations. Tribunal work, at least for me, wasn't as personally satisfying as the life of a parish priest. Because my day was spent dealing more with paper than with people, I didn't have the opportunity to experience the same kinds of relationships that a parish priest enjoys. Nevertheless, I always felt that those of us who serve in the tribunal are engaged in an extremely important ministry, one that the Church cannot do without.

Probably the highpoint of my career as a canon lawyer came in the aftermath of the encyclical "Humanae Vitae," issued in 1968. My contemporaries will remember the conflicts that arose over the position that the encyclical took on the issue of contraception. A number of priests of the Washington, D.C., archdiocese found themselves at odds over the matter with Cardinal O'Boyle, their Archbishop, and severe canonical penalties were inflicted on them. Nineteen of those priests asked Father Donald Heintschel, a canon lawyer from Toledo, OH, and me to represent them in their effort to be reconciled with their Archbishop and to be returned to full priestly ministry. We agreed to take the case, not to contest the matter of contraception, but only to show that current canon law did not provide adequate due process in matters such as these. We simply wanted the Church to grant these

priests a fair and impartial hearing. We submitted the petition of the Washington 19 to the Holy Father, and the case was eventually referred to the Congregation for the Clergy. Cardinal Wright was the Prefect of the Congregation at that time and he invited Don and me, together

*While I was serving in the Tribunal (1956-76), I became involved in other activities, which changed the focus of my ministry more toward priests than lay people. During those years, I was elected as chairman of the Association of Chicago Priests and later president of the Presbyteral Council. Then, toward the end of my pastorate at St. Barnabas, Cardinal Bernardin asked me to be the Vicar for Priests (1987-91). Whether I served the priests of this archdiocese as well as they deserved, I do not know, but I certainly considered it a privilege to minister to them as best I could.*

with Cardinal O'Boyle's canonists, to come to Rome, and to bring along Father Joe Byron, one of the 19, selected by the others to speak on their behalf. Without going into a lot of detail, suffice it to say we were granted the fair and impartial hearing we requested. It was presided over by Cardinal Wright, assisted by several curial officials serving as judges. The hearing lasted several weeks and eventually ended in a pastoral decision, satisfactory to Joe Byron, which enabled the 19 to be returned to full ministry, if they were willing to accept the Congregation's findings. Joe was willing, and Don and I accompanied him when he went to see his Archbishop. The Cardinal immediately restored Joe's faculties, and not only that, he assigned Joe to establish a new parish, something which Joe had previ-

ously asked permission to do. When all was said and done, I never felt so good about the Church and so proud of how Cardinal Wright and the Congregation had handled the matter.

While I was serving in the Tribunal (1956-76), I became involved in other activities, which changed the focus of my ministry more toward priests than lay people. During those years, I was elected as chairman of the Association of Chicago Priests and later president of the Presbyteral Council. Then, toward the end of my pastorate at St. Barnabas, Cardinal Bernardin asked me to be the Vicar for Priests (1987-91). Whether I served the priests of this archdiocese as well as they deserved, I do not know, but I certainly considered it a privilege to minister to them as best I could.

In 1991, when I became an Auxiliary Bishop, I was, once again, a pastor, not just of one parish but of an entire Vicariate. I really loved being Vicar of Vicariate I. It was a joy to serve the priests and their parishioners. While one must die before he can go to heaven, I have often said that going to Lake County was the next best thing!

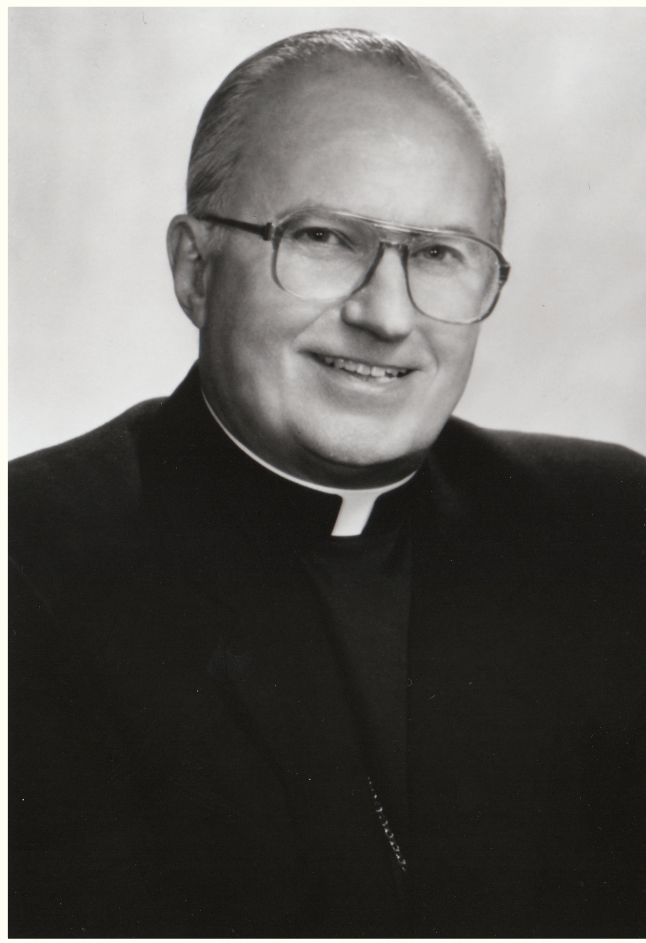
My journey as an active diocesan priest changed again when Cardinal Bernardin asked me to become his Vicar General. I left Vicariate I and went to the Pastoral Center in February, 1995. The Cardinal was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in June of that same year. I had the privilege of anointing him, at his request, at the communal anointing service at St. Barbara Church in Brookfield on Aug. 31, 1996. This was right after he had learned that the cancer had returned and was definitely terminal. He died early in the morning of Nov. 14, 1996. Living with him those 18 months and witnessing how he accepted his suffering so admirably was one of the greatest blessings in my priesthood. What better example could anyone have of a priest's total submission to the will of God?

While my retirement became official in September of 2003, I still find myself reasonably busy and not at all bored. In

fact, I cannot remember anytime in my priestly life that I would call “boring.” I think the reason for this is that I feel I did the best I could, no matter what I was asked to do, and I really believe I loved the people wherever I served. I don’t say that in any boastful sort of way. I see it as the grace of God working in me, and nothing more. If you look at my Episcopal coat-of-arms you will see that I chose as my motto: “*Sine te Jesu, nihil sum*” (John 15:5). I believe that Scripture passage with all my heart! If I have done anything of value in my priesthood, it is solely because of God’s willingness to work through me. The only things for which I can take full credit are my sins and my failure to love Our Lord as much as He deserved.

Looking back on my 58 years of priesthood, I can only say “thank you, Lord.” It has been a privilege and a joy to serve Him and His people. However, I do have some regrets, and have been trying to do what I can about them during this “Year for Priests”. St. John Vianney knew from the very beginning of his priesthood that the only way to sanctify his people was to sanctify himself. He was well aware that he would never be able to attract his parishioners to love Our Lord if he himself was not holy. He knew he had to spend hours in prayer with Our Lord, especially before the Blessed Sacrament in his parish church of Ars. Regretfully, that is something to which I feel I have not devoted enough quality time.

I don’t mean to imply that I never paid attention to my prayer life. On the contrary, I cannot remember a single day in



*All in all, I’m grateful to Our Lord for these 58 years in His service. For the most part, they have been happy and satisfying years. If I had it to do all over again, would I? You bet I would!*

my entire priesthood that I failed to recite the Breviary. I must confess that for me, when we had to say the Breviary in Latin, it was more of a duty than a prayer. It was only after we were permitted to say the Breviary in English that it became a real prayer for me. But I know there has to be more to my relationship with Jesus than what I have given Him in the past.

According to his biography, Archbishop Sheen made a holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament every day of his priesthood. I am a long way from doing

that, but that is an area where I really have tried to improve. One of the great benefits of retirement has been the opportunity to make up for lost time, as far as my friendship with Our Lord is concerned. Thanks be to God, we have an understanding and forgiving Father, so I’m not punishing myself for my failures in the past. But I do find myself praying more than ever to Our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph, asking them to help me love their Son. Several years ago, in working on an Advent homily, I came across the story of a parish priest who was preparing the school kids for the coming of the Christ child at Christmas. He taught them about Mary and Joseph looking in vain for a place to rest so that Mary could give birth to Jesus. But sad to say, there was no room in the inn. The priest told the children he wanted them to prepare a home for Jesus, so he taught them a short prayer that he asked them to say every day right up to Christmas: “Lord Jesus, Son of the living God, born of the Virgin Mary, please make your home in my heart this day.”

That parish priest, whether real or fictional, had a greater impact on me than he could ever imagine. I have said that prayer every day of my life since reading it years ago. I say it in the morning when I awake and in the evening when I go to bed and many times in between. I’ll never be a John Vianney or a Fulton Sheen, but as long as I am still breathing, I will keep on trying.

All in all, I’m grateful to Our Lord for these 58 years in His service. For the most part, they have been happy and satisfying years. If I had it to do all over again, would I? You bet I would!

– Bishop Raymond Goedert, is the retired Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Chicago.

“This is why we study in seminary: to hand on to others—namely, our future parishioners—  
—the fruit of what we have studied and meditated upon over our years of formation.”



# Preparing for Priestly Ministry

*Reflections on an Upcoming Ordination*

By Deacon Andrew Liaugminas

People love vocation stories. They remind us that God truly does have a plan for each of us and will act to guide us accordingly. They give us a window into how a divine vocation meets the human struggle to understand it. And ultimately, since it is a story of the genesis of a priest, it is a narrative that reveals God's providential fidelity to His Church in continuing to plant new seeds of vocation, and bringing them to fruition in men ready to configure their lives to his priesthood and to serve His flock.

---

As I approach ordination to the priesthood this spring, I find myself looking back in humble gratitude for all the people who helped bring the seed of my vocation to germination, and now to fruition. In this spirit, I am honored to contribute to this issue of *The Bridge* on the “Year for Priests” a few reflections on my time of transition from seminary to priestly ministry.

## Pursuing God's Call: Vocation

The fall of 2001 began a difficult season for the Church and the world. Not more than a few weeks into the autumn came the epoch-defining events of Sept. 11. Around the same time, the clerical sexual abuse scandals began to break on national news, shocking Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Naturally, it was a difficult time to be a seminarian. You got used to answering what a young man could see in the priesthood nowadays. Some people would understand, others would not. But you tried each time. And, anyhow, understanding it yourself was far more difficult than explaining it to even the most incredulous of outsiders.

This was my senior year at Quigley High School Seminary – the time we decided and announced whether we would be continuing on to the college seminary. Given the context, the choice for priesthood often felt like swimming against the stream. Some of the very people who encouraged me to think about the high school seminary now dissuaded me from pursuing it in college. Doubts began to creep in – and for the first time – right as I prepared to take the next step in my calling. Looking back, I am not sure how confident I could have been in my vocation had it not been for the experiences of the summer before.

That summer, prior to my senior year, I went on a service trip with a local youth group to Lourdes in France to serve the pilgrims who flock to the shrine in search of healing. What I saw there transformed me. Never before had I witnessed such complete faith as I saw in the sick pilgrims who approached the waters of Lourdes. Seeing grown men break down and cry while imploring the aid of Blessed Virgin struck me deeper than any





exhibit of faith I had ever seen.

And yet I was no casual spectator there. I was a volunteer, and as such, I worked in a team with three older French gentlemen at the part of the shrine where pilgrims can line up individually to dip in the Lourdes water. The volunteers would take the lead in praying with each pilgrim and then help him into the water. Naturally, the other members of the team took the lead when the pilgrims were French, and when the pilgrims were from elsewhere they would have me step in. As it turned out, few Francophone pilgrims, but many from other countries, came to the pool during my time there. So I ended up leading many pilgrims in prayer and helping them into the water at this apex of their spiritual journey at Lourdes.

This all influenced me greatly. Here, at the age of 16, I gained a new appreciation for the profundity of man's longing for God, and experienced God working through me to draw people into himself. In helping these pilgrims, witnessing their faith, and being privileged to facilitate their encounter with God, I felt deep in my heart that God was calling me to be a priest. It was with these memories and strong sense of calling that I came back to my senior year and met the difficulties that year brought for the Church, the world, and all those discerning their place in both.

## Those for Whom We Study: Formation

As a man progresses through his years of seminary formation, he envisions himself in his first parish assignment, living out the call he has long discerned and prepared for. In the Archdiocese of Chicago, our first parish assignment comes slightly earlier than most, as we are assigned as deacons to serve the parishes where we will be sent as newly ordained priests.

In the first full day of my new parish assignment, I had the chance to drop in on the "Jesus Day" retreat the second graders were having to prepare for their First Communion. When the parish DRE noticed me, he called me up to introduce myself and talk to the kids about receiving Jesus. The eyes of two dozen second graders and their parents eagerly turned to me. I greeted my young parishioners and shared with them some thoughts about the Eucharist and our relationship with God.

Our time in seminary is preparation for moments just like this, so common in the life of the parish priest. At our ordination the bishop reminds us we are called to "exercise the sacred duty of teaching in the name of Christ the Teacher." But before we can become good teachers, we must first be good students. This prepares us for a lifetime of calling upon what we have studied and sharing it with those we are called to serve.

Nonetheless, one can at times risk losing sight of the goal. I will never forget that time in college seminary late one Friday afternoon when, a good hour and a half into a modern philosophy lecture on Leibniz's theory of monads, a fellow in the next row raised his hand and asked what relevance monads could have to anything today. The teacher seemed frustrated at the underlying suggestion, but tried her best to explain. It

unfortunately did little to help. The student followed-up with another query, but I had already wandered in my mind to the crucifix hanging up front, where I simply turned the question over to Christ.

A moment or two later, a line from St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* came clearly to mind: "For even as it is better to enlighten than merely to shine, so is it better to give to others the fruits of one's contemplation than merely to contemplate." That's it, I realized. This is why we study in seminary: to hand on to others – namely, our future parishioners – the fruit of what we have studied and meditated upon over our years of formation. Ever since then, this has become a motto for me, and has reminded me time and again through seminary to orient all I do to the goal of handing on to others the best of our Church's gifts and wisdom.

## A Mystery to be Imitated and Celebrated: Ordination

The greatest gift I will hand on to others is the Eucharist. At our upcoming ordination, Cardinal George will receive bread and wine from the people, after which we will individually come before him and kneel. He then will hand the bread and wine over to us and say: "Accept from the holy people of God the gifts to be offered to him. Know what you are doing, and imitate the mystery you celebrate: model your life on the mystery of the Lord's cross." It is a truly moving moment, the fruit of many years of prayer, preparation, and sacrifices from countless individuals without whom we would not be here.

Again, we find ourselves today in difficult times for the Church and the world. But as I look back on my vocation story and I look out on all those who are present on ordination day, I realize how these beloved family members and friends who made my "yes" to priesthood possible are truly witnesses of God's providential love for me. I trust that God will provide because he has so abundantly done so for me in the past. So, I can look ahead to the years of ministry that lay before me with confidence and hope, regardless of how challenging the times may be.

Serving as a deacon in my first parish assignment, I already have begun to serve the people I will serve as a priest. With that, I can now gaze into the next frontier of God's will for me – the beginning of my priestly ministry – and see a glimmer of what shape it will take on. Once ordained, I will be facilitating my parishioners' encounters with God in the sacraments. I will be serving the sick and the poor. I will be passing on the fruit of my studies and prayer in homilies and other teaching moments. I will be talking to second graders eager to receive the Lord. And at the summit of it all, I will receive the gifts from God's people, offer them to the Father, and in Holy Communion share with them the Body of Christ.

— Deacon Andrew Liaugminas is a fourth-year theologian for the Archdiocese of Chicago. After ordination, he will be assigned Associate Pastor of Mary, Seat of Wisdom in Park Ridge, IL.

“And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. (Jeremiah 3:14)”

# Forming a Priestly Heart

*The Love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*

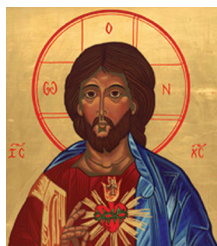
By Friar Anthony M. Lajato, OFM Conv.

Seminary formation has helped me develop a new way of relating to God, the Church and the world – in a word, it has been a transition into a more “priestly” attitude. Throughout these years in seminary there has been a growing awareness, through prayerful consideration and dialogue, of the integration of the oft-mentioned “four pillars” of priestly formation. I have gradually seen the unfolding of the program in my own experience and have been able, through the formation process and by God’s grace, to respond with an increasingly resolute “yes” to becoming more definitively and wholly consecrated to this purpose.

It has been a unique privilege to be the first Franciscan friar to attend Mundelein Seminary. There are of course differences from how a diocesan priest would live out his priesthood; however, in my experience, formation in a diocesan seminary has been marked by mutual complementarity. What I have found to be most operative in my theological and ministerial approach is the truly evangelical accent of the Franciscan charism: the joyful witness to the radicalism of Christian discipleship. Also, consistent with our master Bonaventure’s theological approach, study is not undertaken for the sake of mere academics but always integrated into the overall journey of Christian life. This has had a decisive influence on my seminary formation. Bonaventure cautions against the foolishness of those who, “think that mere reading will suffice without unction, speculation without devotion, investigation without admiration, observation without exultation, industry without piety, knowledge without love, understanding without humility, study without divine grace, the mirror without divinely inspired wisdom” (*St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, Itinerarium mentis in Deum, Prologue*).

Theology in the Franciscan tradition is for the service of piety so that it is never allowed to remain a merely intellectual pursuit; never segregated from prayer, love and practice.

Above all, I believe that the Franciscan focus on the divine attributes of the humility and the poverty of Christ has served as a secure foundation for the molding of a priestly attitude and a servant’s heart, since as Pope Benedict XVI explains: “Priests should be conscious of the fact that in their ministry they must never put themselves or their personal opinions in first place, but Jesus Christ” (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 23).



I have come to identify the root of priestly spirituality in what John Paul II referred to as pastoral charity. To be sure, this is something a man is supernaturally configured to at the point of holy orders, but seminary formation helps to dispose and prepare a man to receive and respond faithfully to this mysterious gift. “[T]o preach the Gospel worthily and wisely, to celebrate the mysteries of Christ faithfully and religiously, to observe the command to pray without ceasing, and to consecrate their life to God, thus growing closer to Christ” (*Ordination Ritual*). These activities are formative of the priest’s spirit and prayer life because, after all, a priest is not consecrated for his personal aggrandizement, but for service, so that in the doing of the mission we come to realize our own identity in the identity of the One whom we do it for, through and with. A priest’s spirituality is liturgical; everyday events are seen through a sacramental lens. His way of life is Eucharistic, caught up into the self-sacrificial love of Christ, gaining its strength and purpose in communion. His spiritual life is expressed in noble generosity, paternal solicitude and self-forgetting availability, in order to accompany the Christian faithful through the pilgrimage of life, so that, as Pius XI has said: “From the cradle to the grave the priest is ever beside the faithful, a guide, a solace, a minister of salvation and dispenser of grace and blessing” (*Pius XI, Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, 19).

During this “Year for Priests,” Pope Benedict has offered us St. John Vianney’s concise definition of priesthood: “The love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.” Pastoral charity means to become a shepherd after Jesus’ own heart; to be appropriated into Christ’s own way of loving the Father and His brothers and sisters. From the time of one’s ordination to the diaconate (if not already as a solemnly professed religious as in my situation), the obligation, or better, the free embrace of the gift of celibate chastity for the sake of the Kingdom further augments the priestly spirituality and wholehearted dedication to Christ. I have come to understand celibate chastity as a transformation and continual renewal in the Gospel vision of authentic human relating marked by disinterested love and a subordination of all things to the values of the Kingdom of Heaven, of which the celibate person becomes a living sign. It makes no sense apart from its theological significance as a participation in the virginal love of Christ, which ennobles and enables a man to relate to people in a way that is characterized by graciousness, simplicity and reverence.

A seminarian should begin to realize – in prayer, through meetings with their formation advisor and spiritual director, in conversations with peers and through the implicit and/or explicit expectations of the community – the kind of priest he is called to become. He will also be increasingly attentive to the grace of God guiding him through a certain process of maturation. Interests and motives will be purified and one’s scope of concern must gradually broaden. I believe that these are the inward signs of the formation of a priestly attitude, “Being in communion with the very sentiments and behavior of Christ the good shepherd” (*John Paul II, Pastores dabo vobis*, 57).

– Friar Anthony M. Lajato, OFM Conv. is a seminarian at Mundelein Seminary.



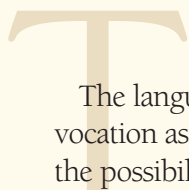
Unlike the eyes, our ears have no 'lids.'

# FEATURE ARTICLE



## Hearing the Call

By Nick Blaha



The language connected with the discovery of one's vocation associated with the idea of a "call." This implies the possibility of "hearing" on the part of the one called. In essence, the analogy of "hearing the call" refers not to a sensory utterance, but to the "voice that makes no sound," as Elijah discovered in his encounter with the Lord on Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:12). What reality stands behind this image of being addressed by another and the decision to respond or not?

Unlike the eyes, our ears have no "lids." It is far easier to look away or refuse to open one's eyes than it is to hear someone speaking to us. Yet many sounds can easily be drowned out, as is the case in the spiritual life. The word intended to find in us a receptive and enthusiastic response is lost in the myriad of mundane concerns of our lives. St. Augustine depicted this state in his *Confessions* as being caught in a kind of "spiritual hemorrhage." We can sympathize all too well with him when he laments, "I have been spilled and scattered; my thoughts, the innermost bowels of my soul, are torn apart with the crowding tumults of variety."

Prayer is thus the conscious decision to be still and allow the Lord to speak. A useful image for this process is the mixture of olive oil and vinegar served with the bread at good Italian restaurants. If stirred up, the two will mingle and become indistinguishable. Leave them alone for a few minutes, and the oil rises. Often, all it takes is a few minutes at the end of a busy day to let the presence of the Spirit "settle out" and speak. The key is to make this a fundamental part of one's day, to the point where skipping it would become unthinkable – indeed, why would we deprive ourselves of the awareness of this ongoing presence of God?

This silent prayer was a huge part of my decision to enter the seminary. During the three years in which I served as a missionary on college campuses, all four of the members of my team comprised of recent college graduates made a holy hour in front of the Blessed Sacrament each day. If we were traveling, we made time to work it in; we'd check in on one another when we were home for the holidays. It was never easy, but we held one another accountable and supported one another in the commitment we'd made. Those hundreds of hours didn't add up quickly, but there is no doubt that it was what fueled the work we were doing, and eventually allowed me to hear what the Savior had in mind for me.



However, as every seminarian knows, discernment doesn't end with the decision to enter the seminary. Discernment is a lifelong process that entails not only the discovery of the purpose of one's life, but growing in openness to the often painful but grace-filled ways in which we are being fashioned into the Lord's handiwork. This ranges from such choices as "what am I to do with my free time this afternoon?" to "is this whole

priesthood thing really what I'm supposed to do?" It is with this idea of "discernment" in mind that St. Ignatius Loyola crafted his Spiritual Exercises, which were meant to equip Christians with the tools to distinguish between the positive, saving, healing influences of God and the distracting, anxiety-ridden threats of the father of lies. As one of my favorite bluegrass bands put it: "All that there is is a slow road to freedom with heaven above and the devil underneath."

A bit simplistic, perhaps, but it sums up the situation well: each moment a choice is offered to us, a choice we are to make in freedom. We are to choose with the hope that the well-made choice will advance us further on that road to freedom.

As the years of seminary march along and the day of ordination approaches, these questions become not only more urgent, but more tangible. Now, there is content to this idea of being dedicated to the Church's ministry, in whatever form it may take, for the rest of one's life. At last, there's something in the scales with real weight; how do other possibilities measure up? These questions are natural enough, but it would be difficult to make a good judgment without reflecting upon the way in which God acts. More often than not, God allows the options to remain open, and leaves the decision up to us. Such tactics can be frustrating – sometimes it would be easier to just know!

Yet, the heart of love broken open for the world is all the direction we should ever need. It was during the Holy Land pilgrimage that the real drama of Gethsemane became clear to me. As I prayed with my brother seminarians on the rock where Christ is said to have sweat blood, I realized that it was in Jesus' anguished prayer for his Father's will to be done that the heart of the redemption was accomplished. In a sense, the rest was just details – very painful and tragic details, to be sure – but everything was a consequence of Jesus' decision to "learn obedience from what he suffered." In a flash of recognition, it was clear to me that above all, that passionate devotion to God's will was the greatest gift anyone could hope for, even if it led to the cross. To be pleasing to God, and not to people, outweighs anything on the other side of the balance – even the whole world.



# Priests of Jesus Christ

# PHOTO ESSAY



“He who sings well prays twice. – St. Augustine”



## A 'Seasoned' Perspective

*Reflections on the Priesthood from  
Father Richard Wojcik, class of 1949*

By Daniel Stover

### **How did you decide to enter the seminary?**

As I was finishing grammar school, I had to make a decision. I was studying singing with a voice coach. My parents could not support that activity along with seminary costs. My voice coach suggested I stay with the seminary until my voice changed and matured. I would then decide which road to take.

### **What was the application process like at the time?**

You got a letter of recommendation from your pastor and you registered at Quigley.

### **How would you describe your understanding of the priesthood when you entered the seminary?**

To me priesthood was parish ministry in the Chicago Archdiocese.

### **Was there a particular priest that you admired who was a role model or mentor for you?**

My pastor, Alexis Gorski, was very supportive. He even paid my tuition. He was a doctor of theology and a very strong leader besides being a fine liturgist. The parish associates also were very supportive.

### **What set him apart from other priests?**

He was a people-person and was deeply loved and respected. He supported a strong social dimension in parish life. We had many societies and a parish theater group, all in Polish. I was part of that culture in grammar school and high school.

### **You have lived through a time when many men left the priesthood. What has sustained you in your vocation?**

My work as a priest has been very interesting and rewarding, especially musically. The musician priests I most admired were Msgr. Ed Hoover at Quigley, and Msgr. Kush at Mundelein. Also important to me was the student choir I organized in theology and, of course, my three years in Rome. Add to that 30-plus years of my weekend service in a local church as priest and director of music.

### **A substantial part of your priesthood has been spent as director of music here at Mundelein Seminary.**

#### **What role has music played in your priesthood?**

Except for one year all my priesthood has been involved with the music of the Church. Just about everything in my ministry has been related to that identity.

### **How do you describe the relationship of music to the diocesan priesthood today and what role**

## *should it play in a priest's life?*

Post Vatican II has given a priority status to the music of worship. Both by leadership and example, the priest is responsible for parish worship music. Music is now more obviously an integral ingredient of participation in the liturgy. A pastorally responsible priest will try to learn as much as he can about worship music along with the secular world of music.

## *What are the most prominent or striking changes that you have seen in the focus of priestly ministry?*

A priest needs administrative skills. That means the ability to manage people in parish structures. A priest has to be involved in social action. He has to continue his education in liturgy and counseling. He should make a strong effort to study contemporary culture, especially the arts, to better understand the great influences affecting his peoples' lives.

## *Would you say that any of your seminary training has become irrelevant?*

I can't think of anything except perhaps the use of Latin. It was an esoteric language reserved to very special academic environments.

As far as seminary training was concerned, it needed to be refocused. It wasn't so much that anything became irrelevant as it was redefined. Things had to be refocused. If they weren't refocused, they simply hung around here in a state of suspended animation until somebody found the key for how they should fit together. We had to go to the Protestant seminaries to see how they were taking the pastoral approach and take that and tailor it to the Catholic situation.

## *What sort of things are priests asked to do now that you were not trained for in the seminary?*

Probably the thing that is most difficult for them is the fact that what has happened is that the parishes have become more and more like corporate structures. I don't know that we train people adequately to be CEOs; we give students some idea of management and then figure that when they get assigned to the parish that they will learn by being in the parish. But basically the pastor, this

may sound irreverent and unholy, but in many ways he has to be like a CEO. But he's got to be a pastoral CEO, and he's got to be a theological CEO. You can get people to handle the books, but you have to know how to watch them so that they don't get into trouble. This is an image in my own mind that has been growing as to what our seminarians are going to be, a CEO of an organization that runs into the millions of dollars. We can't teach all of that here, we simply don't have the time. We provide the priestly dimension and let them know that there is this world of administration, and that there will be a lot more learning later.

## *What part of your seminary experience would you say that you enjoyed most?*

Obviously, the making of music and the creation of worship music. The part that has been the most satisfying is the very high level of music consciousness that we have developed here at the seminary. Whether the guys like it or dislike music, they are very conscious of it. The most interesting thing for me actually was after 1970 when the "giant machine" began changing around. That was at times a very exciting, frustrating, and painful sort of thing but it was a most interesting thing to be a part of it, to see the seminary develop the pastoral direction. Making the music and finding people taking charge of their own musical life and prayer life with music.

## *What parts of being a priest have you enjoyed most/found to be the most rewarding?*

Obviously the seminary work. Also being with the people in the parish who have a real call and are responding to it. Being involved in that is the most enjoyable thing.

## *What would you say that newly ordained priests should be aware of that they might not expect once they are ordained?*

Somewhere along the line in the first few years the thing that is probably the most shocking to the seminarians is to realize the complete and total trust that people put in them. One of these times you are going to be hearing confessions and you are going to



hear from people something and they are going to make you a part of their lives that no one else on the earth possesses. You'll get in there and you'll realize that nobody else on God's earth knows what is going on except you. That is a very powerful and striking experience. Ennobling, and at the same time, completely and totally humiliating to realize. Within the first week of ordination you will go to a sick call, hear someone's confession, and realize, My God! You don't realize how deeply and totally you are invested in their lives. That is an extraordinary revelation unless the guy is a complete dodo and insensitive. Just to make that realization that you stand in relationship to that person like nobody else on the face of the earth. It just hits you; you can't prepare for it.

## *Do you have anything else that you would like to say to men considering the priesthood or who are in formation for the priesthood?*

I joke with the men in the vocal practicum class that they are infinitely perfectible. There is no limit to what you can learn and what you can do if you will apply yourself. The worst thing in the world is to close yourself down to more learning, growing, or developing. Be willing to experiment, to reach out, and do not be afraid of missing a couple of times. There is no limit to what you can learn and what you can do. When I was ordained I had no idea that I would be doing what I have done with my vocation, and who knows what is yet to come!

# Interview with a Vocations Director

## *Hearing the Call in our Modern World*

By Brian Slezak

**F**ather Joe Noonan, Archdiocese of Chicago Vocation Director, discusses his nine-year tenure in that position and how the call of vocations is heard in our culture today.

### **When did you first feel called to pursue the priesthood?**

Being raised in a Catholic household, it was almost expected that the boys would at least have a sense of wonder about the priesthood, in the same way that a boy dreams of becoming a doctor, fireman or any intriguing job. I certainly remember having thoughts about being a priest, but it wasn't until I was 26 that I seriously discerned that I may have a vocation to the priesthood. At this point in my life I had made certain life choices that centered my life on Christ, which made my discernment more natural. I had been working as a CPA in my parent's company with plans to take over the business. I officially entered the seminary when I was 27.

### **As vocations' director you are constantly reflecting on the gift of the priesthood. How has this affected your vocation?**

I think my vocation is stronger now than when I became vocation director. I am involved in four major retreats each year, and they provide me the opportunity to pray with these discerning men and allows me time to reflect on the joys of priesthood. In visiting the seminary grounds at Mundelein, I am drawn into a more prayerful environment. I am also involved with In Search, a six-month discernment

group, and have the chance to listen to incredible reflections by the Cardinal and other priests of the Archdiocese, who speak to the young men involved in the program. In my work, I have developed relationships with brother priests throughout the

*Although people still love and support their priests, men know that the priesthood will not be an easy life. This gives them more strength to deal with crosses that will inevitably come as a priest.*

Archdiocese, which has led to deeper sense of brotherhood. I ordinarily would have little exposure to in such an expansive Archdiocese.

### **How would you describe men inquiring about the priesthood?**

I was ordained in 1990 and became vocation director in 2001; my heart tells me they are not all that different. What has remained the same is a love for the Lord. If they don't have strong love for the Lord, then it usually means that they want to be taken care of or want to change the church. In addition, every guy that I have worked with has had a devotion to the Eucharist and usually a devotion to either the Blessed Mother or another popular devotion of the Church.

### **What are their strengths?**

Their eyes are wide open. The abuse scandal removed any veneer or privilege that has often been associated with the priesthood. Although people still love and support their



priests, men know that the priesthood will not be an easy life. This gives them more strength to deal with crosses that will inevitably come as a priest. In addition, guys are reading more and know their faith very well, and if they don't, they are looking for the answers. They are excited about the legacy of Pope John Paul II and the writings of Pope Benedict XVI, who have both had an enormous impact on them.





***Do you believe that the discerning men, who are in the early stages of formation, are given an adequate understanding of the charisma of celibacy in its personal, evangelical, spiritual, and mystical dimension?***

Celibacy is not something they're surprised by. I am edified by how much they have read. They have gone to the source documents to see what the Church actually has written on celibacy. At the same time there are men who I have not pursued as candidates because they have not had a good grasp on chastity in their own life nor have they been open to chastity or celibacy. This is part of the screening process of a vocation director. There are also men – who like St. Augustine – have lived a licentious life, but have had a conversion and have come to embrace celibacy over time. This entails having serious conversations with men. What they have to be aware of is that celibacy is not just an add-on in the priesthood; it is part of the Gospel and inseparable from Christ. Jesus said be obedient, leave everything and follow him. As priests we must be willing to leave everything and completely embrace our exclusive relationship with Christ so we can then love in a natural way, which would ordinarily feel unattractive, but since we do it out of love for Christ it takes on a new meaning.

***How has the recent media coverage of the sex abuse scandal affected vocations, and do you think this crisis will serve as a catalyst in drawing good men forward?***

I think there were candidates who did not respond because of the sex scandal, but we will never know for sure. In the long run, I think God may have called others. My biggest concern is the huge population of Catholics who are not practicing their faith or baptizing their children. Now it is quite common for Catholic families not to go to Church at all, except for Christmas and Easter. My biggest fear is what will happen when we have multiple generations that are not baptized and catechized as Catholic, who have a role in raising children. Who will pass on the faith? How will vocations be nurtured in this environment? Additionally, I believe that good Newman Centers on college campuses, will take on even greater responsibility of instructing and bringing men and women into the faith. Whereas in the past we have used them to supplement the faith at college, they are becoming crucial in helping people discover their faith and will continue to play an integral role in helping people to find their vocation.

***In your opinion, what is the single greatest thing the Church can do to promote the priesthood?***

First, by promoting Jesus Christ, they promote vocations. People that discover Christ, and build a relationship with Him, will discover their vocation. Secondly, priests themselves must invite young men to consider the priesthood. According to the USCCB, 78 percent of this year's new priests were encouraged to consider the priesthood by a priest. This is essential because

it helps men to cut through the doubts that are so common; Am I worthy? Am I gifted? Will other people see it in me, even if I feel it? A priest's invitation is unique in affirming a young man's vocation because he is actually living out his vocation and obviously loves the priesthood to the point where he wants to see others who may have a call consider it as well. If priests would make it their duty to invite, we would have more priests.

***Where do you think the Church has failed in attracting men to the priesthood?***

Although we've trained seminarians to be evangelizers and social workers, we've failed to train them to be promoters of the priesthood. In addition, the Church has not done a good job with catechesis, not only in the sacraments and teachings but also on vocations. Finally, we are only now utilizing the media better. When I first took over nine years ago, this focus was non-existent.

***What is one piece of advice you would give to newly ordained priests?***

Three things: You have to pray every single day. Your prayer life has to be non-negotiable, to be able to nurture this mutually exclusive relationship with Jesus Christ. Secondly, you must remain in contact with your brother priests and loved ones. These are the personal relationships that will be life-giving. You must develop these relationships throughout your life. Finally, you must give of yourself. Obviously you can't work 20 hours a day, but give it your all. If someone asks you to a baptism party and you have a half hour, you should go for a few minutes. If the school is putting on a play, go to show support. Give of yourself and you will get so much in return.

***What can the lay faithful do to promote vocations to the priesthood?***

Pray and invite individuals in your parish who you feel might have a vocation. Lay people can get involved by participating in programs which promote vocations. Consider being a parish contact person, who helps publicize and participate in diocesan vocation events. They encourage, invite and educate potential candidates. In addition your parish can sponsor times to pray for vocations during a holy hour event, while praying the rosary, or the weekly Chalice and Cross prayer programs. All these things will help to create a culture of vocations.

*A priest's invitation is unique in affirming a young man's vocation because he is actually living out his vocation and obviously loves the priesthood to the point where he wants to see others who may have a call consider it as well. If priests would make it their duty to invite, we would have more priests.*



## Enthralled by Christ

### *A Pilgrimage to Ars*

By James Wallace

In the footsteps of the Curé of Ars, let yourselves be enthralled by Christ. In this way you too will be, for the world in our time, heralds of hope, reconciliation and peace!” Such was the exhortation of Pope Benedict XVI in his letter proclaiming a “Year for Priests” on June 19, 2009, and what a fitting and grace-filled year it has been to be a seminarian. It was at St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome almost a year ago at the opening for this special year that I watched the Holy Father venerate the heart of St. John Marie Vianney, the humble parish priest from Ars. This marked a new chapter in my admiration and devotion to the patron of all priests.

I traveled to Ars, France, recently with my brother seminarians from the Pontifical North American College to gain special insight into the life of John Vianney. I was deeply inspired by what I witnessed: a shoddy rectory where the Curé had a steady diet of rotten potatoes and a bed that took the form of a wooden floor in his attic amidst constant torment by the devil; a confessional where he spent over 16 hours a day; a church with side chapels where he would spend hours in prayer on his knees and gaze mesmerized on the Eucharist when he celebrated Mass; and, of course, the pious town he sanctified. Everything in Ars pointed to John Vianney’s love, and as I prayed beside his body, it became clear to me that it was this parish priest’s enthrallment with Christ that made it all possible.

It is easy for us seminarians to fall into the trap of thinking the more theology we learn in seminary or the more we do, the

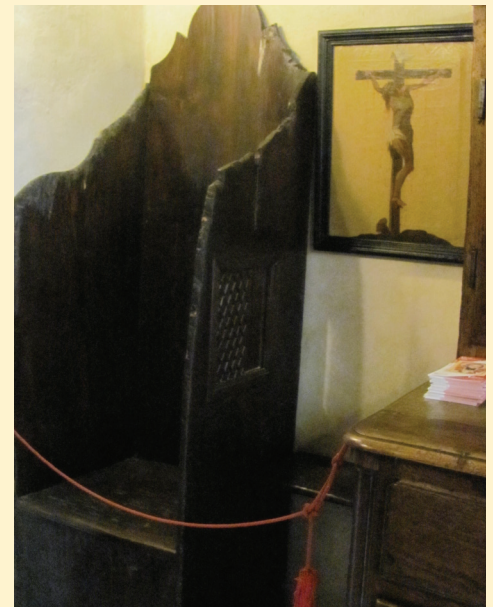
holier we will become and the more “successful” we will be when we are priests. John Vianney is the most successful parish priest of all time, if I may remain with that inadequate terminology, and proof that the path to “success” is nothing complex. It is simply the love of Jesus Christ. Vianney did not choose to go to Ars, nor did he choose to undergo those extreme acts of penance; he was called by Christ and given the graces to do so. He was able to heed that call because he completely abandoned himself to the Lord. Vianney himself said, “My secret is simple: give everything away; hold nothing back.”

Seminary is primarily a school of love. The heart of a priest is formed inside of us, as we are called to love now with the same intensity of the holy Curé as when we will be priests. “Certainly, to be ministers at the service of the Gospel, study and careful, ongoing pastoral and theological formation are useful and necessary,” said Benedict XVI in his homily at that same opening Mass last June, “but even more necessary is that ‘knowledge of love’ which can only be learned in a ‘heart to heart’ encounter with Christ.” The heart of John Vianney, under which we prayed in Ars, is the model heart for all seminarians. It has taught me about love and has given me, as a result, tremendous joy in my seminary career thus far.

My path to the priesthood started in college when I joined a group of men thinking about the priesthood. It was called “The Vianney Group” and was run by the local parish priest. At the time, I did not know who “Vianney” was or what the name meant, but the saint did his work nonetheless. Looking forward, I am confident God will work great wonders through me when I am a priest. He did it with an illiterate French peasant after all!



My lessons from the Holy Father during the “Year for Priests” and my increased devotion to the Curé d’Ars, thanks to my pilgrimage, have made me all the more excited to become a priest. I cannot help but continually think of the words of St. John Vianney: “Oh! How great is the Priesthood! It can be properly understood only in Heaven... if one were to understand it on this earth one would die, not of fright but of love!”



The remains of Vianney’s confessional. He would spend over 16 hours a day hearing confessions. By the end of his life, Vianney was famous and people came from all over France and Europe to have the Curé hear their confession.

# A Labor of Love

## *Working at Mundelein Seminary*

By Scott Nolan

*Mundelein Seminary has a small army of men and women that quietly goes about its work each day, and in the process makes possible our preparation for the priesthood. They serve as secretaries, housekeepers, receptionists, grounds crew, food service and a host of other jobs. Without their hard work and dedication, without their generosity to us and to this seminary, and without the faith that inspires them, no one would have the luxury of spending years in this privileged academic setting, whether as a member of the faculty or as a seminarian. For some of them, working here is not always easy; some travel far to get here, others have a more personal struggle. But all have said that they are happy here, and that it really is a pleasure for each of them to come in to work each day.*

Terry Briick, one of the receptionists at the seminary, is no exception. "I just like it here, I don't know what else to say ... it's a blessing to work here," she said. Terry has been working here for almost six years now. She began at Mundelein following the loss of her father, whom she had taken care of in the years leading up to his passing. When she heard about the job from her daughter, who had worked here before, she thought it would be a good opportunity. Her hopes were fulfilled when she first saw men she had known as seminarians come back as priests. They were "so fulfilled when they came back,"



she said, adding that it is "rewarding to see them happy with what they are doing." For her, this is one of the greatest parts of working at the seminary: that she is able to see the place through the eyes of the seminarians, especially the seminarians she has the pleasure of seeing become priests.

The staff in general has reported that the people here really make this an enjoyable place to work. Most staff members that were interviewed volunteered that they really enjoy the people they work with, especially compared to their previous work experiences in the for-profit world. They find that there is just a different atmosphere here, one where their co-workers really care about them and show it in the way they treat one another. Mundelein for them is "very peaceful, and feels safe." It is a "beautiful place, away from a corporate environment." Many report that there is a sense of peace they experience here on campus that is hard to find anywhere else, particularly in the business sector.

Mary Jo Incavo, the head of the refectory staff, has similar sentiments about her experience here. "It is a great place to work," she said. Mary Jo, or MJ as she is also known, has worked here full-time for 16 years, and worked part-time for a year prior to that. When asked why she works here, her response was, "First of all, I love my job, or I wouldn't be here," she said.

She continued by saying that for her and her co-workers the job is "a labor of love." For MJ one of the perks of her job is watching the seminarians grow over their years. Clearly her working in the refectory is her labor of love for all of us.

But working with priests and seminarians sometimes brings distinctive challenges. The recent clergy scandals in the Church affect them in a unique way, in large part because they are so close to many priests and future priests. Many of the staff members were personally troubled and saddened by what some priests have done. Not infrequently people outside the seminary community have trouble understanding why they would want to work here, and they are left to try to explain themselves.

Terry may have captured sentiment that many of the staff holds when she said, from the perspective of a mother, grandmother, and life-long Catholic that, "I think of all you young men as the future of hope of the Church." By and large, the staff members are aware that they hold no ordinary job, work at no ordinary place, and that by working here they are serving the Church and God we know and love.

—Scott Nolan is a seminarian studying for the diocese of Grand Rapids, MI. He is currently in his first year of Theology.

# “As Those Who Serve” Award

April 14, 2010

by Rev. Dan P. Coughlin upon receiving the 2010 Joseph Cardinal Bernardin “As Those Who Serve” Award from Cardinal George at an Evening of Tribute dinner

I never saw myself as a poster boy for recruitment to diocesan priesthood because many pastoral responsibilities and even assignments took me far beyond the territorial boundaries of parish life. Having many lay friends, some of whom were not Catholic, I never felt completely comfortable in “the clerical culture.” I enjoyed being a secular priest, not of the world but living in the world wanting to change it. Yet I love being a priest and have not had a boring day since I entered the seminary.

Always wondering why so much of Christ’s life was hidden in Nazareth, I have been attracted to ordinary people and routine. Looking back over 50 years I see my life as a series of flash photos, similar to the movie of Forrest Gump. Yes, in a sense, Father Gump of the Catholic Church:

- **I was taken by Cardinal Cody to meet the Congregation of Sacraments. I attended John Paul II’s celebration as the new bishop of Rome, and 26 years later his funeral – and a week later, the installation mass of Pope Benedict XVI.**
- **I was at Thomas Merton’s funeral.**
- **I attended the founding meeting of the National Academy of American Liturgists.**
- **I worked alongside Mother The-**

**resa at the Dispensary for the Dying in Calcutta.**

- **I was part of the 9/11 evacuation of the U.S. Capitol.**
- **And I prayed at the inaugural luncheon of President Obama.**

All flash-photo events, which invite the question, “What is he doing there?” Like Gump, I too gave up running when I settled down as a pastor.

Making one bold step after another, I have always tried to avoid Chicago arthritis – the attitude of “I can’t move.” Since the days of Cardinal Cody I was called and encouraged by older and wiser bishops, brothers priests and lay friends to take yet another step.

When hesitant, I would quote St. Paul to myself: “*In nomine domini.*” As a sick call took me into a strange place or as I approached a difficult meeting, knowing I was about to jump in water over my head as Peter did, I would leap “in the name of the Lord.”

While in the seminary and to this day, I wrestle with the balance of contemplation and action. I have always been attracted to the silent life of pots and pans as a Trappist monk. On sabbatical in 1984 I learned the Abbey of Gethsemani is a part of my life but not all of it.

I realize now that the monks there are more free than I am. God leads us to do His will, not only by our hopes and ideals but also by our limitations and self-centered desires.

I love talking to strangers, teaching, and preaching as well as organizing and planning new endeavors.

As the biblical Daniel, I am a man of



visions and dreams and unafraid at times to enter into the lion’s den.

Unlike the detached monk who is more free, I have a need to live and work “as one who serves.”

A need to make a difference.

So I am very grateful to God, who has spoiled me.

Blessed in Jesus Christ, He continues to surround me with my mother, family and friends and so many faith-filled people like Dennis and Ronnie Mudd and all of you gathered here to celebrate the “Year for Priests.”

I praise and thank the Lord for my relationship with Cardinal Bernardin. He was a model of one who lived the Paschal Mystery, and understood my need for a sabbatical.

Tonight, I am very grateful to you Cardinal George for this award and for letting me go on a mission of prayer and presence to an ever larger and a more secular world for the past 10 years – “*In nomine Domini.*”

# ALUMNI PROFILES





## Board of Advisors Honored

Denis J. Healy, Sr. and Bishop Raymundo Peña, Pictured here with Cardinal George, Father Dennis Lyle, and our Board of Advisors Chairman, William McEssy were both recently honored at our May Board of Advisors meeting.

Bishop Peña, the recently retired Bishop of the Diocese of Brownsville, Texas, was honored for nearly 15 years of service on the University of Saint Mary of the Lake/ Mundelein Seminary Advisory Board as a sending bishop of Brownsville seminarians to Mundelein Seminary, preparing them academically and formationally for service as priests in their home diocese.

Bishop Peña has been a quiet, humble and decisive shepherd to the people of San Antonio, El Paso and Brownsville. We are grateful for his many years of support of Mundelein Seminary and wish his successor, Bishop Daniel Flores, God's blessings in his new assignment as the Bishop of Brownsville.

Jim Dowdle, as Chairman of the Board

a few years back, and Mr. Healy steered the Feehan Memorial Library Campaign, which raised nearly \$11.4 million for the renovation of the library and the construction of the McEssy Theological Resource Center – the first new building on campus in 63 years. He has also helped in the sponsorship of our annual Evening of Tribute. Denis J. Healy, Sr. has been a friend and supporter of Mundelein Seminary for nearly two decades. He has recently chosen the emeritus status as a member of the Board of Advisors, which means, though he won't be required to attend Board and Committee meetings, he is always welcome and will remain particularly active, with his dear wife, Sondra, as we plan to renovate and refurbish our auditorium.

Both Bishop Peña and Mr. Healy received an American Colonial style rocking chair with the University of Saint Mary of the Lake/ Mundelein Seminary logo, as a remembrance of their dedicated service.

Please keep Bishop Peña, Denis and Sondra Healy and all of our current and emeritus Board members in your prayers, as they continue to serve the seminary with their wisdom, counsel and financial support.

### Board of Advisors 2010-2011



His Eminence Francis Cardinal George,  
O.M.I., Chancellor

William H. McEssy,  
Chairman of the Board

Very Rev. Dennis J. Lyle,  
Rector / President

Rev. Thomas A. Baima,  
Recording Secretary

Most Rev. Alexander J. Brunett

Richard W. Burke

James C. Dowdle

Hillary A. Ebach

Joseph M. Guinan, Jr.

Richard J. Guzior

Denis J. Healy (Emeritus)

Jimmy Lago

Most Rev. Jerome E. Listecky

Most Rev. Joseph F. Naumann

Rev. Donald J. Nevins

Mary L. Paluch Rafferty

Tonise Paul

William R. Quinlan

Marguerite K. Rapplean

Most Rev. George J. Rassas

Most Rev. David L. Ricken

Most Rev. J. Peter Sartain

Very Rev. Peter Snieg

James M. Valenti

Rev. John J. Wall

Rev. Kevin Feeney

Rev. Thomas Franzman

Mr. John Lehocky

Rev. John Lodge

Mr. Stan Rys

Mr. Mark Teresi

Rev. Raymond Webb

## From the Editors' Desk

By Deacon Jay J. Atherton

One of the things that strikes me as I look over the various articles presented in this issue, this admittedly *belated* issue, is the necessity of heroes in the priesthood. In particular, what I hear in the reflections of both my fellow seminarians and my seasoned priest-mentors is that other priests had invaluable, even indispensable, roles in their discernment, their formation or their ministry.

When he declared the Year for Priests, our Holy Father held up St. John Vianney as a model for us who would embrace a call to the ministerial priesthood. Saint Padre Pio also comes to us with the highest recommendations. In this issue, we also hear Francis Cardinal George suggesting St. Damian of Molekai as an exemplar of the missionary spirit. It seems to me, even though they do not use this word in their pieces, that many of our authors in this issue would regard Jesus Christ as a *hero*. Of course, we use terms in reference to our Lord like “exemplar,” “model,” “archetype,” etc., all of the time with various theological implications. However, on a much more basic human level, we have a need to be inspired, we have a need for people to ‘show us how it’s done,’ and I am edified to see evidence in this issue that Jesus Christ satisfies this need for us.



Throughout the year, one of the things we have done here at Mundelein to celebrate the Year for Priests is to display the class pictures of all of our priests on the seminary faculty. Every few weeks as we walked into our refectory, we would be greeted by the faces of our predecessors, some of whom are now our teachers. Though I do not hail from the Archdiocese of Chicago where the overwhelming majority of those men have served, I am intrigued by these pictures and what they represent to us. Over the years, hundreds of men have been formed for the priesthood and have served in various capacities in the archdiocese. Each one left some footprint on the seminary community of his day, perhaps even upon the perduring institution. Each one then went out and left some more footprints in the lives of my classmates’ parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. In many cases, the impact they had in all of these lives and on all the institutions they served was a significant influence in many of my classmates’ decision to pursue a vocation to the priesthood in the archdiocese. Now, here we all are, following in their footsteps and making our

*It seems to me, even though they do not use this word in their pieces, that many of our authors in this issue would regard Jesus Christ as a hero.*

own new footprints on each other’s lives. One day, our class portrait will join all of theirs on the halls of our faculty building. When this transition happens, my classmates and I will take on a new responsibility, the obligation to be models, heroes even, to show others ‘how it’s done.’

If there is one thing that I discern from all of the features of this issue, it’s that the

priesthood is not something that any of us can live out if the support of our peers, guidance of mentors, and inspiration of priest heroes is absent.

To become a priest, then, involves admitting this dependency in ourselves and stepping up to the plate to provide it for others. I pray that one of the fruits of the Year for Priests will be a deeper realization of this in the hearts of all priests and my brother seminarians which will, among other things, inspire a deep gratitude to Jesus Christ, not only for the gift of the priesthood itself, but also for all of the gifts he pours out upon us *through each other* to live it well.

– Deacon Jay Atherton is a fourth-year theologian from the Diocese of Albany, NY.



# THE BRIDGE

University of St. Mary of the Lake  
Mundelein Seminary  
1000 E. Maple Ave.  
Mundelein, IL 60060-1174

FIRST CLASS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
LANSING, MI  
PERMIT # 485

**Online:** [www.chicagopriest.com](http://www.chicagopriest.com)  
[www.usml.edu](http://www.usml.edu)



please recycle



**UNIVERSITY OF ST. MARY OF THE LAKE/MUNDELEIN SEMINARY**

**Men interested in the priesthood should contact Father Joe Noonan, 312.534.8298  
All it costs is a loving heart and a willingness to learn.**