

THE

BRIDGE

Spring 2016

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SAINT MARY OF THE LAKE/MUNDELEIN SEMINARY



BY BEAUTY AND THE SPOKEN WORD

Parishioner Spotlight

*An interview with
Mrs. Susan Gray*

Faculty Profile

*From Lawyer to Pastor
to Professor*

On Campus

*New Campus Visitors' Center
will provide a place of welcome*



EVER ANCIENT, EVER NEW

BY VERY REV. JOHN KARTJE

“I am the one who is, and who was, and who is still to come” (Rev 1:8). With those words in the Book of Revelation, Christ forcefully asserts his transcendent power over the tyranny of time. Everything else comes and goes, but his presence is eternal. This truth drives home the point that if a priest is to serve in the person of Christ, an *alter Christus*, then he is somehow to serve as a temporal bridge: helping his people to intimately experience the presence of Christ across the entire arc of their lives, over the entire span of their lifetimes.

As I write this near the end of the spring semester, there are many reminders of the passage of time to be found around the seminary campus. First-year pre-theologians look back over a year that seems to have encompassed a lifetime of change and transition. Third-year theologians continue to try to process all that transpired for them in just 10 short weeks in the Holy Land, even as they anxiously look ahead to their impending diaconate ordinations. The deacons anticipate and try to imagine what their lives as priests will look like — the moment fast approaching for which they have been preparing themselves for years. And just before all these men depart Mundelein to head back to their home cathedrals for the ordination celebrations, the 25- and 50-year priest jubilarians return to campus to celebrate their anniversary Masses with our entire community — powerful reminders that the priestly identity is not diminished by the passage of years.

Every seminarian serves as a bridge in time for the men who came before him and for those who will follow him; every man at Mundelein is an apprentice. And yet, the journey to priesthood is an apprenticeship unlike any other. It is not only human wisdom and experience that a seminar-

ian shares with his brothers, but also the timeless truth that only the Holy Spirit can impart. The means by which such truth is conveyed take on myriad forms amid very diverse circumstances.

In this issue of *The Bridge*, you will encounter some prime examples of how the timeless process of spiritual apprenticeship unfolds. You'll read about how, for many years now, the people of St. Mary of Vernon Parish (just down the road from Mundelein Seminary) have been providing support and hospitality to our students. But they have also been providing much more than that: they have been helping to form our men into competent, joyful and holy priests. A critical part of diocesan seminary formation can only take place within a parish community. If such formation is to be done well, it requires careful mentoring from wise pastors and parishioners — St. Mary's excels in providing both. You'll also read about other parishes across the Archdiocese of Chicago, as students recount their experiences of grace from interacting with various congregations. Although a given seminarian may only encounter a parish for two or three years, he becomes part of the life history of that faith community, which long preceded him and will long continue after he leaves.

Another, more poignant reminder of the

eternal presence of Christ in the midst of the constant rhythm of change that characterizes diocesan priesthood can be found in the departure of Fathers Jim Presta and Chris Ciomek from our community. Their combined service to seminary formation numbers more than 30 years. They have given so much of their lives to the education of future priests, with men entrusted to their care for but a few years. Now, as they transition to serving as parish pastors, they will continue to give of themselves to people of all ages, and the breadth of that ministry will extend across generations. Even as they leave, new faculty arrive at the seminary, such as Father Dave Olson from the Diocese of La Crosse, whom you'll meet in this issue.

Finally, our cover story reports on the widespread use of social media to spread the Good News of Christ to the world.

The media might be new, but the message is timeless. What is podcast, tweeted or blogged today is what was shared along the road or by the fireside 2,000 years ago. The beauty of Christ remains as St. Augustine once described it: “ever ancient, ever new.” ■

VERY REV. JOHN KARTJE is the Rector and President of Saint Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary.



8 PAPAL VISIT



13 PROFILE

FROM THE ARCHIVES:

1926
EUCCHARISTIC
CONGRESS

14

On the cover

» Cover Story:

Deacon Peter Steele and his brother Dan set up a shot to film along Saint Mary's Lake this winter. Story, p. 16.

THE BRIDGE
PUBLICATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SAINT MARY OF THE LAKE/MUNDELEIN SEMINARY

The magazine of



Spring 2016

Very Rev.
John Kartje
RECTOR / PRESIDENT

Gideon Barr
Michael Lewis
EDITORS

Michael Berndt
PHOTO EDITOR

Deacon Matt Litak
ART & POETRY EDITOR

Michael Berndt
Patrick Gorman
Deacon Matthew Litak
Noah Thelen
EDITORIAL STAFF

Sarah Jane vonHaack
MANAGING EDITOR



FAITH Catholic

Patrick M. O'Brien
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Elizabeth Martin
Solsburg
VICE PRESIDENT/
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Rachel Matero
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

2 RECTOR'S NOTES

BY VERY REV. JOHN KARTJE

4 PARISHIONER SPOTLIGHT

An interview with Mrs. Susan Gray
BY DEACON JOHN BOSCO LUTAAYA

6 FIELD NOTES

Seminarians in Parishes

8 PHOTO ESSAY

El Paso – Ciudad Juárez Papal Pilgrimage
BY MICHAEL L. LEWIS

10 IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Gerry Girdaukas
BY DEACON KEITH WOLFE

11 PROFILE

Meyer Lecturer: William Lane Craig
BY PATRICK GORMAN

12 STUDENT PROFILE

A Sacred Theology Doctorate First
BY DAWN EDEN

13 FACULTY PROFILE

From Lawyer to Pastor to Professor
BY FATHER DAVE OLSEN

14 FROM THE ARCHIVES

1926 Eucharistic Congress
BY MICHAEL L. LEWIS

16 COVER STORY

By Beauty and the Spoken Word: A look into two seminarian media initiatives
BY DEACON MATT LITAK

20 SEMINARIAN POETRY SELECTION

- Why? Or Why
BY JUSTIN T. AGBIR
- The Beautiful Fruit
BY DEACON VALERY AKOH
- To the Gatekeeper of Immortality
BY DAVID BANAUCH

22 SEMINARIAN ART SELECTION

24 ON CAMPUS

New Campus Visitors Center will provide a place of welcome
BY MICHAEL L. LEWIS

26 DEVELOPMENT OFFICE NOTES

"With great power comes great responsibility."
BY RYAN BUTTS

27 FACULTY PROFILE

Leaving Mundelein
BY FATHER JIM PRESTA

28 MUNDELINES

BY NOAH THELEN

31 FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

A Peculiar Heart
BY GIDEON BARR



AN INTERVIEW WITH MRS. SUSAN GRAY

BY DEACON JOHN BOSCO LUTAAYA | 4T, DIOCESE OF KASANA-LUWEERO

Truly, “it takes a village to raise a child.”

This African dictum holds true in the life of a seminarian. Many good people come our way to help us, to support us and to guide us on our way to the holy altar of the ministry of the Lord. Some of these God-sent angels

are the members of St. Mary of Vernon seminarian ministry, a local parish not far from the seminary. Deacon John Bosco Lutaaya, one of the beneficiaries of this ministry interviewed Mrs. Susan Gray, one of the key figures of the seminarian’s ministry.

There are many things you do for us through St Mary's seminarian ministry; how did it come about?

The ministry was started in 2010 by the former associate pastor, Father Eduardo Martinez, and a group of parishioners, with the blessing of the formation staff at the seminary. Father Martinez came to Mundelein through Casa Jesus and remembered the challenges these students face in a new culture far away from their families. So from the beginning, the intention was to reach out to these international students, specifically the men studying for Chicago from the international countries. The plan was to provide an opportunity for the men to meet families from our parish.

The ministry then evolved to include other seminarians who come from foreign countries to study and who then will return to their home diocese after graduation (like you). Because SMV is so close to the seminary, we have been blessed with many seminarian interns and field education students. These men were also included because, as we like to say: "Once you come to SMV, you are ours forever."

Who is involved in the ministry? Seminarian ministry currently consists of a great team of 15 parishioners who work together to organize the events. Our pastor, Father Joe Curtis, supports our efforts and allows the ministry to hold a special collection to fund the ministry. This is another way for the parishioners to show their support for vocations.

What are the some of the projects you do for the seminarians?

The ministry is constantly evolving as we meet more and more men and hear their stories. For example, we learned that the international men usually arrive with only their clothes and very little resources; so we help fill the gap by providing baskets of "necessities" for them to show that we appreciate and understand their courage to leave their countries to come here to study.

We host two parties a year for the entire student body. The back to school party is held at the parish and parishioners are invited to attend and socialize with the

seminarians. Our end of term party has been held at the seminary to accommodate the students' busy schedules. At all of our parties, we have food and prizes! We have given away televisions, computers, mini-refrigerators, coffee pots, new pillows, gift certificates to the seminary book store, dozens of home-made cookies and plenty more.

We send congratulatory notes to the men for each milestone the seminarians reach on their way to ordination: acolyte, reader, deacon and priest. We also make prayer cards with the individual name of each seminarian and distribute them on seminary appeal weekend so the entire parish has the opportunity to pray for a specific seminarian. We also invite seminarians to our parish social and liturgical events.

What suggestions can you give to other parishes to help support the seminarians?

First, pray for the seminarians and for more vocations. Write them short notes of appreciation; anybody can do that! If your parish is blessed to have a vocation, let that student know you support his decision to become a priest. Contact the archdiocesan vocations office for more ideas.

Do you have any messages to the seminarians?

I hope the men know that people are praying for them and that we appreciate that they are following their vocation to become our future priests. The more men we meet, the more we are amazed by how smart they are, the depth of their faith



DEACON JOHN BOSCO LUTAAYA

is a fourth-year theologian and deacon studying for the Diocese of Kasana-Luweero, Uganda.

and their conviction to follow God's call to serve him and us. They are the future of our Church. Seminarian ministry is just our way of thanking them for embracing their vocation. Personally, being part of seminarian ministry has increased my faith and the faith of the parishioners. Thank you for giving us this witness. Like Psalm 16 says: "Show me the path of life." You have done this for us. That is why we are here for you. ■

ST. MARY OF VERNON PARISH

In 1978, Father John Finnegan founded St. Mary of Vernon in the Chicago suburb of Vernon Hills. Father John served as pastor of the community for 20 years before handing over the reins to Father Joseph Curtis in 1998. Today, Father Joe is still serving as the pastor, alongside seven deacons, including Deacon Aaron Junge, a fourth-year seminarian at Mundelein Seminary. Together, along with an outstanding staff, they have cultivated a vibrant faith community engaged in a variety of evangelization and ministry efforts.

In addition to their seminarian ministry, the parish serves Mundelein Seminary in many ways. Seminarians serve alongside parishioners in the Sharing Hands furniture ministry and the PADS homeless shelter. The parish Knights of Columbus council and Men's Club provide support for vocations. Parishioners open their homes to international seminarians during breaks. Seminarians are regularly invited to attend events at the parish, including lenten fish fries and the parish mission. The parish held a clothing drive to support the seminary's Peace and Justice/Gospel of Life Apostolate's Day Laborers ministry.

Altogether, St. Mary's supports vocations both directly through their many ministries and indirectly by inspiring us through their example of what a healthy, vibrant and mission-focused parish looks like. They are doing what us seminarians hope to do some day in our own parishes.

SEMINARIANS IN PARISHES



‘WHAT A BLESSING IT IS TO BE THAT WITNESS TO HOPE’

MICHAEL BERNDT is a second-year pre-theologian studying for the Diocese of Springfield, Ill.

■ I remember a moment when I was attending a Sunday Mass back in Quincy, Ill., right around the time my calling to the priesthood was starting

to bud. It was just a regular Sunday Mass in Ordinary Time. At a certain point during Mass, perhaps during the intentions, I remember standing with everyone, and, looking around the congregation, I was bothered by the thought, “Where are all the young people? Why am I the only young male here? This is the truth. We need to hear this more than anyone else.”

Not long after this moment, I found where they’ve been hiding: at Mundelein Seminary. Not only are these men attending Mass on a regular basis (an accomplishment in itself), but they are actually looking to be priests. I found it so refreshing. My call was galvanized after visiting Mundelein’s campus and seeing all the seminarians. There are more than 200 high-caliber men studying to be priests of Jesus Christ here at the seminary, and now we are trying a new experiment — placing groups of us in the parishes a few times in the semester.

There are four of us who attend St. Joseph Parish in Wilmette, Ill., in the Archdiocese of Chicago. The building itself is gorgeous, and the parish has been a part of the community since the mid-1800s. I can understand the archbishop’s thought regarding how this all started: there is a concentration of young men in formation on the campus of Mundelein, why not send them forth? Perhaps we can be that witness to hope that there are young men who exist who are seeking the will of God and true fulfillment in their lives.

I believe this can appear to someone in the ordinariness of life. Meeting families after Mass, and seeing the face of a mother worried about her daughter’s path in life and her seeking prayers from me are a few of the graces that I have experienced in the times I’ve gone to St. Joseph’s. How many young men are out there thinking they may have a call to the priesthood, but are worried that there is nobody else who has this strange, and simultaneously wonderful, calling to be a priest? Some are in the pews, some are in our churches. What a blessing it is to be that witness to hope.



‘OUR FORMATION IS NOT JUST BOOK WORK, BUT PREPARATION FOR THE WORLD OF PARISH MINISTRY’

GRANT WILSON is a first-year pre-theologian studying for the Diocese of Springfield, Ill.

■ After visiting Prince of Peace Parish in Lake Villa, Ill., a few weeks ago, a number of things inspired me. For one, Father Adam Blatt, a recently ordained Mundelein alum, celebrated the holy Mass. I realize that Mundelein seminarians *are eventually ordained*, but seeing someone who had gone through all the years of study and prayer celebrating Mass was exciting. After a certain number of Masses at Mundelein, I start to forget what a “normal” parish is like. The last-minute families rushing in, the babies crying, the parishioners wearing everything from black suits to blue jeans. It’s chaotic and crazy and exactly what I want to be a part of. After the Mass, Father Adam showed us around the parish school. The kids weren’t there, but you could see signs of life everywhere: drawings hung outside the classrooms, a gym stocked with sports equipment, even a miniature town of clay that a class had made (including a miniature version of Father Adam).

Being present for all of this — the priest celebrating Mass, the people worshipping, the signs of students learning — reminded me of why I came to seminary. The parish visit helped me to put more time and energy into praying and studying because I can see that our formation is not just book work, but preparation for the world of parish ministry.

“ The parish visit helped me to put more time and energy into praying and studying because I can see that our formation is not just book work, but preparation for the world of parish ministry.



‘IT WAS EXTREMELY HUMBLING TO ENCOUNTER SUCH GRATITUDE’

KENNETH CLEM is a first-year theologian studying for the Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kan.

■ For my parish weekend assignment, I am going with three other seminarians to Transfiguration Parish in Wau-

conda, Ill. Transfiguration Parish is a beautiful parish that is very diverse. On Sunday alone, there are Masses in Spanish, English and Polish. With the variety of Mass languages and times, our group decided to attend a different Mass for each of the different parish weekends. The first Mass that we attended was in English and the presider was the seminary’s very own Father Marty Barnum. The parish had been informed that we were coming, so the parishioners were joyfully awaiting our arrival. When we first walked through the doors of Transfiguration Church, we were immediately greeted and welcomed to the parish.

Everyone was excited to meet us and to show us the renovations that they were doing to the sanctuary. It was wonderful to see the “organic-ness” of the parish through its renovations and how the people were able to joyfully celebrate the Mass in a chapel that is framed in scaffolding and bare cement. I very much look forward to observing the progress of the renovations over the next few months. Father Barnum was very happy to see all of us, and, because of his familiarity with us, was able to introduce each us to the parish after Mass. After Mass, we stood in the vestibule and meeting area of the church and greeted everyone as they left. Those who had not seen us before Mass were very excited to say hello and welcome, and even those that did snuck in for a round two. Occasionally someone would stop to express their profound gratitude at not only our being in the seminary, but for us coming to visit.

It was extremely humbling to encounter such gratitude. When I was going to the parish, I was simply excited to get out of the seminary and see some people who are not seminarians, but I did not stop to think about the people in that parish and how they would see and respond to me. Those encounters gave me something to think about on the drive back to Mundelein. The joy and gratitude of the entire parish are wonderful reminders as to why we are here at seminary; we are not here to go to school, but to learn how to serve the people of God. This parish weekend experience was a beautiful reminder of that. Getting ready for the next parish weekend, I am excited to meet more parishioners and, in whatever small way I can (even if it is simply being there), bring the light of Christ to them as they have brought it to me.

‘IT IS NO LONGER I WHO LIVE, BUT CHRIST WHO LIVES IN ME’

DEACON JEGAR FICKEL is a fourth-year theologian and deacon studying for the Diocese of Grand Rapids, Mich.



■ During the rite of ordination, those to be ordained are called to lie prostrate on the ground. At that moment, the whole Church, including the saints in heaven, intercedes on their behalf. This powerful gesture signifies the laying down of his entire life in service of Christ and his Church. Those to be ordained are invited to say with the Apostle Paul: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” (Gal 2:20)

This past spring, 31 men from Mundelein Seminary lay prostrate on the floor and were ordained deacons. Being a deacon isn’t an occupation; it is a new way of life. He doesn’t put on and off his new identity as one would a business tie, or a clerical shirt for that matter. Rather, the totality of his life — from the ordinary and secular to the extraordinary and explicitly religious — is done in service for Christ and his Church. In this way, all that is ordinary and secular is drawn into the extraordinary life of Christ.

And so, as deacons, the fourth-year men are assigned to parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Chicago. The deacons visit their parish every weekend, and sometimes during the week for special occasions. Their tasks at the parish are diverse and manifold: they assist at Mass, proclaim the Gospel and preach, baptize, bury the dead, attend parish parties, visit parishioners in their home and help out with retreats. At the disposal of the pastor, the deacons serve the people of God wherever there is a need.

Christ teaches us that “whoever loses his life will save it.” (Lk 17:33) Paradoxically, it is in giving that we receive. The more we try to preserve ourselves — focused on our own agenda, time and wants — the more we lose ourselves. Life becomes dull. We become less alive. Conversely, the greater we abandon ourselves — focused outwards on the world, on the needs of others — the more we find ourselves. Life becomes an adventure. We become more alive!

While every moment offers a deacon the opportunity to live for others, the visits to the parishes do so particularly. It is there, within the diverse community of believers, that the deacon is able to carry out his specific duties. In short, he is able to do what he was ordained to do; his promise to lay down his life is taken up. And true to Christ’s teaching, he finds that, in letting go of himself, he breaks open into a more expansive sky, and begins to discover a greater liberty and fresher joy.



PHOTO ESSAY EL PASO-CIUDAD JUÁREZ PAPAL PILGRIMAGE

BY MICHAEL L. LEWIS | 1T, DIOCESE OF EL PASO

When news broke that Pope Francis would be visiting the U.S.–Mexico border at the same time as Mundelein’s mid-semester break this February, Bishop Mark Seitz, bishop of El Paso, invited Mundelein seminarians to the borderland to be part of the historic international celebration of “Two Nations, One Faith.” In addition to celebrating an unprecedented Mass with the pope in two countries, Mundelein pilgrims were also able to witness the same unique history, rich culture and deep faith that drew the Holy

Father to the El Paso, Texas–Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, region, while witnessing firsthand how the Church ministers to the sick, the migrant and the poor on both sides of the border. After returning, pilgrimage participants shared their experiences and raised \$1,000 during a seminary taco dinner to benefit two apostolates they visited during the trip: a clinic for special-needs children run by the Sisters of Charity in Ciudad Juárez and Annunciation House, a shelter for migrants in El Paso.



1. Cardinal Seán O'Malley, archbishop of Boston, laughs with Mundelein pilgrims after a Mass of welcome for visitors at St. Pius X Church in El Paso. Dozens of bishops from the United States and Mexico visited the borderland during the pope's visit along with hundreds of thousands of pilgrims.

2. Paul Grandi, a first-year theologian studying for the Diocese of Tucson, Ariz., plays with a child at the Proyecto Niño clinic in the Anapra neighborhood of Ciudad Juárez. The clinic, run by the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati about a mile from the border, focuses on special-needs children, who are often forgotten in the poorest neighborhoods of Juárez. After witnessing years of drug-related violence, the city is experiencing a peaceful renaissance, which the pope sought to highlight during his trip to the city, the first ever by a sitting pope.

3. A Mundelein seminarian prays next to the ramp at the border in Ciudad Juárez, which was used by Pope Francis the day before to bless migrant families gathered on the other side of the river in El Paso. The ramp will re-

main near the site as a permanent memorial to those who've died while trying to emigrate throughout the Americas.

4. Mundelein seminarians pray in front of the statue of Christ the King atop Mt. Cristo Rey in Sunland Park, N.M., after making the more than 80-story climb. The monument, located near where the borders of Texas, New Mexico and Chihuahua meet, was built as a sign of hope during the persecution of the Church in Mexico in the 1920s and 1930s.

5. Alonso Alfaro, a first-year theologian studying for the Diocese of Joliet, Ill., speaks with a mother at Proyecto Niño as she performs physical therapy on her young son. The clinic also teaches parents and siblings how to take care of their special-needs family members.

6. Seminarians listen as a volunteer at Annunciation House explains how the shelter in downtown El Paso ministers to migrants, especially children and families detained by immigration authorities in the U.S. The pope highlighted the plight of immigrants during his week-long journey in Mexico, which cul-

minated with his visit to Ciudad Juárez.

7. Rob Ryan and Cristian Garcia, both first-year pre-theologians studying for the Archdiocese of Chicago, mimic the shape of the iconic monument to Mexican President Benito Juárez, the city's namesake, just south of the border in Ciudad Juárez. The monument's shape is a reference to how Juárez, the first indigenous president of Mexico, brought the letter "X" back to the spelling of the country, which had been Europeanized as "Mejico."

8. Michael Lewis, a first-year theologian studying for the Diocese of El Paso, explains the history of the San Elceario Mission-Chapel in San Elizario, Texas, near the site where the first Mass was celebrated in what is now the diocese on April 30, 1598. Mundelein pilgrims were able to visit each of the 17th and 18th-century missions — on both sides of the Rio Grande — that make up the region's historic Mission Trail.

9. Mundelein pilgrims pause upon returning to campus after the 23-hour journey by van from El Paso.

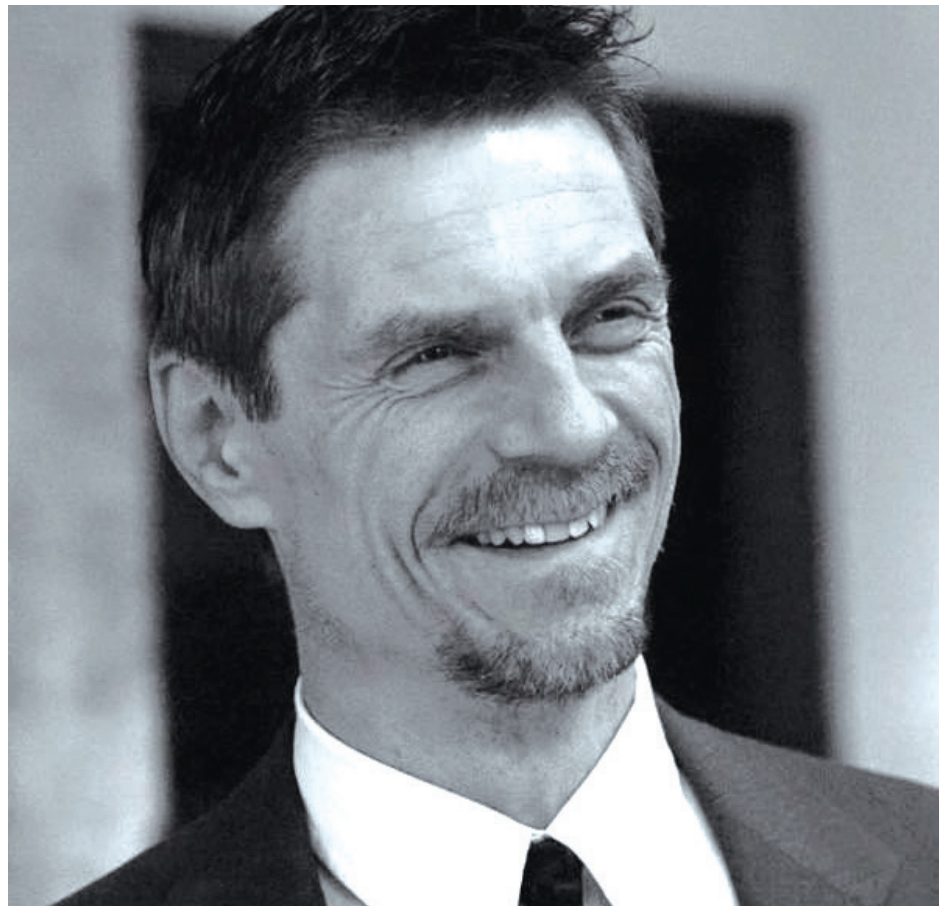
DR. GERRY GIRDAUKAS

BY DEACON KEITH WOLFE
4T, DIOCESE OF JOLIET

Since driving up to his wake during a blizzard after Christmas, I have thought deeply about what Dr. Gerry Girdaukas meant to me and to our seminary community. In the fall quarter of first theology, I had a difficult incident in my family. After speaking with Father Ron Hicks, our former dean of men, he directed me to Dr. Gerry for counseling. I would spend the next four years with Dr. Gerry.

The morning drive to his Lake Bluff office marked every Thursday. He helped me discover psychologically and spiritually that I was good enough as God made me. His fatherly confidence in me was profoundly formative in my journey, not only towards priesthood but as a man. While I do not know the individual stories of the others who saw Dr. Gerry, I do know that he influenced each of them to discover that they, too, could be happy, healthy and holy. His presence, on the alumni basketball team, at Wednesday formation sessions, or in his offices at Lake Bluff and on the second floor of the theology building, was a gift. I recall with profound gratitude the life of Dr. Gerry.

From the *Program of Priestly Formation*, the process of formation involves a deep appreciation for the human pillar. We need to be bridges, not obstacles. It is our personality that is a living icon for the sacramental, ontological presence



of Christ within us. In his service to the seminary, Dr. Gerry helped us prepare for priesthood by engaging with ourselves in an honest, intentional and necessary way. He brought a background in formation from his years in the religious life. His counseling sessions brought the hopeful promise of God's grace and sometime imperfect reality of human nature into a more perfect alignment. Dr. Gerry had a way of being present on campus in a quiet way. His solicitude conveyed a deep sense of interiority that drove him outwards. I know his own life had experiences of profound grief. He was a man who lived faith with a firm conviction that suffering only makes sense in the shadow of the cross. I do not feel bold in saying this because we would open each counseling session with a brief conversation about the saint of the day. He would share the insights from his faith-sharing men's group from his parish.

Over the years, I got to know about Dr.

Gerry. His love of classic automobiles, the Green Bay Packers and Wisconsin. But, more than all of these, it was his love for his family, especially his wife Kris, which was the most evident joy in his life. In January, I had the privilege of being asked to preach the homily for the community Memorial Mass. I spoke then about how the period of death seems to definitively end life. But, despite what grief may feel,

there is a mysterious reality of faith. And, just because it is mysterious doesn't make it any less true. Death is not a period. Death is a comma. We pray for the dead that they, too, may one day enjoy perfect and purified communion with the saints and angels worshipping God in the New Jerusalem. May Gerry's voice join with that celestial choir. ■



**DEACON
KEITH
WOLFE**

is a fourth-year theologian studying for the Diocese of Joliet, Ill.

MEYER LECTURER: WILLIAM LANE CRAIG

BY PATRICK GORMAN | PT2, ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Dr. Craig's early studies were in the Chicagoland area, receiving a B.A. from Wheaton College and two M.A.'s from Trinity Divinity School. Continuing his studies in Europe, he earned doctorates from the University of Birmingham and the University of Munich. He is the author of more than 30 books and 100 articles. Currently, Dr. Craig is a research professor of philosophy at the Talbot School of Theology and maintains ReasonableFaith.org, a website dedicated to explaining and defending the Christian faith.

As the Meyer Lecturer, he spoke to the seminary community about philosophy and the New Evangelization and sharing the Gospel on college campuses. We sat down together to discuss Dr. Craig's work and his time at Mundelein.

What does it mean to you to speak at a Catholic seminary like Mundelein? I am very gratified that people who aren't part of my Protestant confession would find my work useful and helpful, and this just thrills me. I have made it the point of my ministry to defend what C.S. Lewis called "mere Christianity," the sort of central truths to all of the great Christian confessions. So I have been astonished at the receptivity among Catholics to my work. So

This year's Albert Cardinal Meyer Lecture featured renowned Christian apologist, lecturer and debater William Lane Craig.

this is really wonderful for me to have this chance to give these lectures here.

Why have you decided to devote your life to apologetics? When I became a Christian in high school, I was immediately confronted with explaining to my nonbelieving friends and family members why I had made this radical change. And so, right from the very beginning, I was confronted with giving reasons for belief. That was then deepened by my study at Wheaton College. It was there that I had the vision of sharing the Gospel in the context of giving an intellectual defense of the faith.

How have you encountered Christ through this ministry? I feel that my knowledge of God's person and work have been immeasurably deepened and become more profound. The more I study God and his attributes, the more majestic and awesome he becomes, so that I think that my worship of God is deeper precisely because of my philosophical studies. I have a mind that is at rest in the fundamental historicity of the portrait of Jesus that is painted in the Gospels, including his radical personal claims and his resurrection from the dead. And so that inspires, I think, a kind of confidence and repose that is very helpful in the Christian life.

What role does a rational defense and explanation of the faith play in today's society? I have a burden for university students. The vast majority of my speaking is done on university campuses. I think that the prevail-

ing thought on the university campus is that Christianity is irrational and outmoded, and therefore no really intelligent person can believe in such a thing. I want to explode that caricature as best I can and help university students to see that becoming a Christian is the most rational thing that they can do.

What do you see the biggest challenges for priests and future priests today?

I think that in the local congregation that one serves, it is absolutely crucial not to lose our high-schoolers and college students. If we're not teaching their parents to be intellectually engaged with their faith and giving their kids good reasons for why we believe as we do, the next younger generation is going to walk away from the faith. And so, I think that people who are serving a local congregation need to have something in place whereby they're training people to know what we believe and why we believe it.

How can we uphold a Christian culture with philosophy?

I believe, and the pope also believes, that philosophy is absolutely crucial in shaping culture. Philosophy can help to shape the university, and the university is the most important institution shaping Western culture today. So if Christianity can be restored to a position of respect and credibility at the university, this is going to impact culture in the long run. ■



PATRICK GORMAN is a second-year pre-theologian studying for the Archdiocese of Chicago.



A SACRED THEOLOGY DOCTORATE FIRST

BY DAWN EDEN

The first time I heard of a place called Mundelein was one morning in late January 2008 when I was in the pre-op room at a Washington, D.C., hospital awaiting the anesthesiologist who would put me under for an operation to remove a suspicious lump from my thyroid. With the fervor of a recent Catholic convert, I had called upon the saints to be with me there, especially Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. The depressing feeling one gets in the hospital of being at others' mercy was just beginning to hit me when my gaze fell upon the label on the package of slippers that had been given me to put on. It read: Medline Industries, Mundelein, Ill.

Mundelein! There was only one Mundelein that I knew of, the Cardinal Mundelein who was a contemporary of Sheen and was mentioned in his autobiography. The sight of his name in that unlikelyst of places seemed to me a sign from Sheen that he and his friends in heaven were praying for me. And so it was that, years before I arrived at Mundelein Seminary or even conceived of studying there, I developed a devotion to its namesake.

It turned out that the lump was cancerous and further treatment was needed. Although I eventually made a full recovery, my newfound awareness of my mortality led me to make some changes, the most significant of which was going back to school. At that time, having left a newspaper job to write on Catholic spirituality, I was living from one freelance paycheck to another. My thought was to get a graduate degree as quickly as possible so I could work in campus ministry and gain some stability (as well as health insurance).

So it was that I entered Washington's Dominican House of Studies in fall 2008 intending to leave in two years with an M.A. But that's not how things worked out. Instead of being in and out of graduate school, I ending up falling in love

with St. Thomas Aquinas.

The angelic doctor's magnetism kept me under the influence of his Dominican brethren until 2014, by which time I had earned not only an M.A., but also a sacred-theology baccalaureate (a graduate degree) and licentiate. Those last two degrees, which are issued under the authority of the Holy See, are prerequisites for earning the highest theology degree recognized by the Church, a sacred-theology doctorate.

By my final year at Dominican House, I had discerned a vocation to spiritual motherhood in the heart of the Church. It was a vocation that would include consecrating my celibacy to Jesus, acquiring a sacred-theology doctorate and, I hoped, teaching at a Catholic college or seminary.

I did not initially envision doing my doctorate at Mundelein because, as a non-driver, I needed to live on-campus, and I thought only clergy could live there. Once I learned the school offered housing for laity, I emailed Dr. Matthew Levering and inquired if he might direct my dissertation on the topic of redemptive suffering. He responded immediately, saying he would "rejoice" in the task. Perhaps it was a sly reference to St. Paul's teaching on rejoicing in suffering (Col 1:24), but in

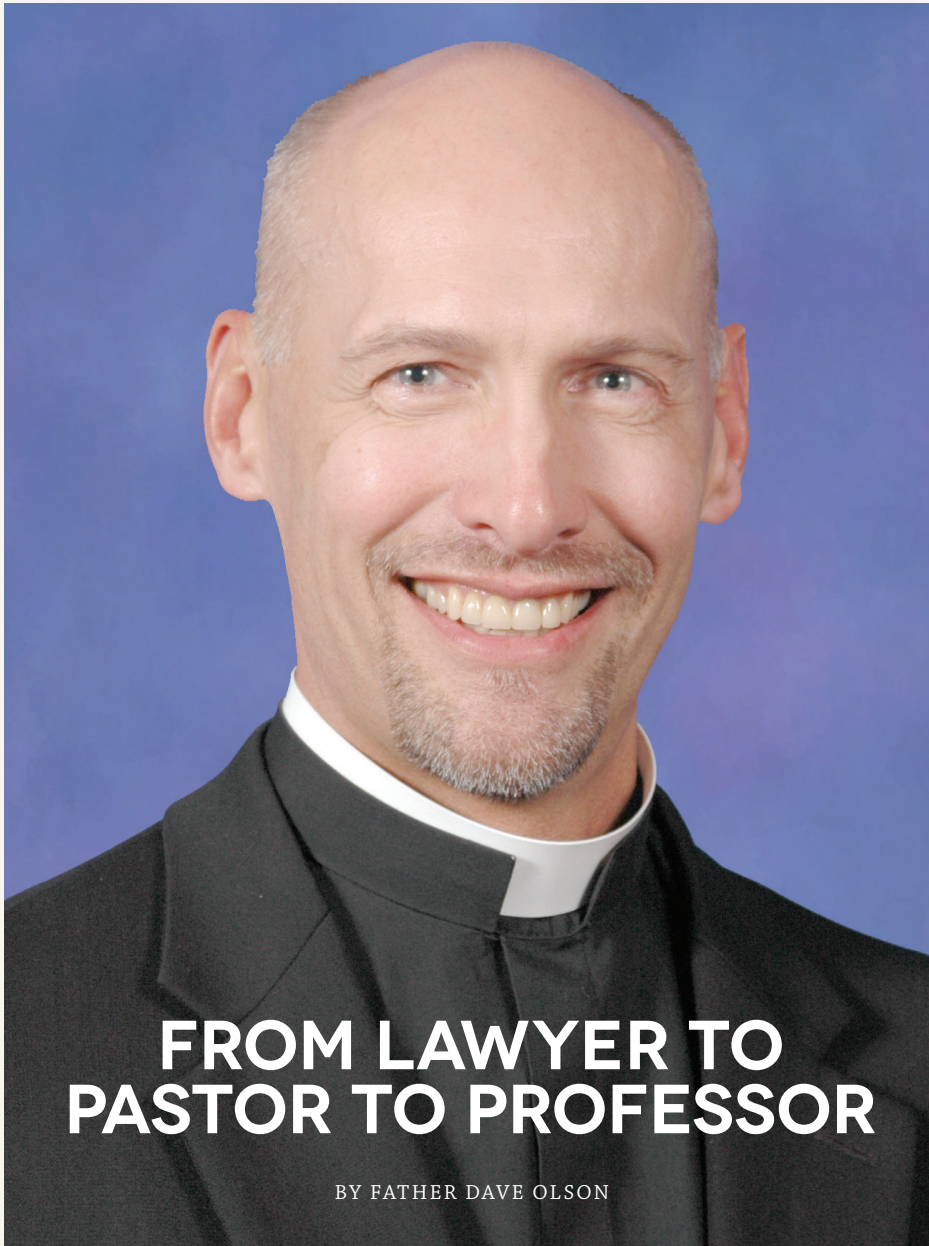
any case, it was a "Yes." Aided by a friend, I moved to Mundelein, putting most of my belongings into a self-storage facility across the street from the Medline Industries water tower.

And so it is that, as I write, I am preparing to graduate this spring as the first woman ever to receive a sacred-theology doctorate from the university Cardinal Mundelein founded. It has been a joy living and studying here. Being around the seminarians and other graduate students on a daily basis,

witnessing their faith and faithfulness, inspires me in my own vocation, giving me great hope for all that the Holy Spirit is doing.

Come summer, having received the best education the Church has to offer, I shall remove my items from storage to have them shipped to the British seminary where I am to begin teaching in the fall. When I see the Medline water tower, I will say a prayer of thanksgiving to God — and to his servant, Cardinal Mundelein. ■

DAWN EDEN, S.T.D. CAND. is a noted speaker and author of several books, including, *The Thrill of the Chaste* (Catholic Edition): *How to Find Fulfillment While Keeping your Clothes On* (Ave Maria Press, 2015).



FROM LAWYER TO PASTOR TO PROFESSOR

BY FATHER DAVE OLSON

Even though I am a priest of the Diocese of La Crosse, joining the faculty here at Mundelein Seminary has been a return to very familiar territory. From pre-theology through obtaining my S.T.L., I spent six years living and studying at Mundelein. A number of the faculty who are still here were here when I first came to campus. The route I took to return here has led to a great variety of experiences.

I spent five years as a chaplain and teaching religion in a Catholic high school in Wausau, Wis. During those

five years, I was an associate in a parish for a year, an administrator of a parish for a period of time and finally

in residence in a parish and commuting to teach and be chaplain in the high school. For two years ending in 2006, I lived in Rome at the Casa Santa Maria doing studies for a doctoral degree in systematic theology at the University of St. Thomas (The Angelicum). I came back to La Crosse to become pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish in the city of La Crosse. I was pastor of that parish for six years, and during the first four years of those six I also finished writing my doctoral dissertation. In fact, my vacation time from the parish was often spent at the library here at Mundelein. Doctoral degree finally in hand, I told my bishop that I might like to work in a seminary. Spock might say the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the one, but my bishop just said he wanted me to take over the pastorate of the Newman Parish serving the students at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. It was a task I was pleased to do for two years.

The change of coming back to Mundelein this past July has been a lot less than when I first came here in 1993. Then I had left the practice of law to become a seminarian. The big change now is from being pastor, where I had the final word on things, to being part of a faculty where I am among the newest members. But, this is a good faculty and a good school and I am pleased to spend my time with both formation and academic work. I am on the opposite side of the desk now in courses on Ecclesiology, Vatican II and Doctrine of God. As anyone who has taught would tell you, the first year is hard. In part, because there is a lot of difference between knowing the material and teaching it; but, even more, it is coming to know the questions that need to be answered. I've taken to assuring students that my take on GPA is that, for my first year of teaching, it stands for "guinea pig adjustment." ■

FATHER DAVE OLSON, J.D., S.T.D.

is a priest of the Diocese of La Crosse, Wis., an associate dean of formation and an assistant professor in the Department of Dogmatic Theology and Pre-Theology.



An immense crowd of worshippers gather for the solemn pontifical high Mass on the field northwest of the column of the Immaculate Conception (where the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes is today) on the campus of the University of St. Mary of the Lake on June 24, 1926, the final day of the 28th International Eucharistic Congress in Chicago. An estimated 428,000 to 1 million people made the trip to campus.

1926 EUCCHARISTIC CONGRESS

BY MICHAEL L. LEWIS | 1T, DIOCESE OF EL PASO

This summer marks the 90th anniversary of one of the seminal moments in the Catholic history of Chicago, as well as that of the United States: the 28th International eucharistic Congress, held June 20-24, 1926. Cardinal George Mundelein, having secured for Chicago the first eucharistic congress ever to be held in the United States, rushed to complete the buildings of his new seminary (then called Saint Mary of the Lake Seminary) for the culminating event — a solemn pontifical high Mass on the steps of the just-finished Chapel of the Immaculate Conception celebrated by papal legate Cardinal Giovanni Bonzano, and a three-mile-long eucharistic procession through the campus.

By all accounts, hundreds of thousands descended upon the seminary grounds; the *Chicago Tribune* estimated that more than 428,000 came, and the *Chicago Daily News* said it was between 500,000 and 1 million. A special train station was built across the road from the seminary to ferry the throngs of pilgrims to and from the city and surrounding towns, and more than 18,000 cars were said to have parked.

The pageantry and solemnity of the occasion were marred somewhat by a mid-afternoon hail storm that sent worshippers scurrying for cover. Indeed, a mob looking for shelter pressed against the closed gates of the train station, injuring more than 100. But even this could not mar the overwhelming success of Cardinal Mundelein's bold showcasing of the deep faith, strength and patriotism of Catholicism at his most American-looking seminary.



MICHAEL L. LEWIS is a first-year theologian studying for the Diocese of El Paso, Texas.

In addition to the few photos here, hundreds more of this Eucharistic Congress have been digitized by the staff of the USML library and can be viewed online at <http://bit.ly/Euch-Cong1926>. ■



A temporary high altar with crimson curtains, folding chairs and bleachers were set up outside the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception for the closing Mass of the congress. The original pergolas surrounding the chapel can be seen in the background, as well as the Philosophy Aula (today, the Conference Hall) on the far left. But the administration and library buildings had not yet been built.



Bishops and priests lead the eucharistic procession through the campus in front of the Philosophy Residence (now the USML Conference Center). Knights of Columbus (in top hats) attempted to maintain order by lining the route.



Cardinal Giovanni Bonzano, the former apostolic delegate to the United States and the pope's personal representative at the congress, celebrates the final Mass in front of the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception. Cardinal Patrick Hayes, the archbishop of New York, delivered the homily.



BY BEAUTY AND THE SPOKEN WORD

A LOOK INTO TWO SEMINARIAN MEDIA INITIATIVES

BY DEACON MATT LITAK | 4T, ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



BEATIFIC FILMS

The pilgrims processed up to receive their blessing and medals before their journey to the Holy Land. Moving silently among them, capturing all their grins and nervousness, is the quiet witness of a high definition Red brand digital camera. Helmed either by Deacon Dan Steele or his brother, Deacon Peter Steele, the camera has been almost ubiquitous on campus

this year. It has witnessed and captured Masses, talks, addresses, sporting events, campus events and the commonalities of everyday seminary life. Interviews have been given, sunsets and sunrises recorded and moments like that sendoff observed and saved. It is all part of the process of creating what is hoped to be the first of many videos for a nascent film studio, Beatific Films, the dream evangelization project of these two brothers.

Growing up on the secular West Coast, now studying for the Diocese of Yakima, the two started out as kids filming “silly skits” and little “skater videos” to display their skateboarding mastery. They both began to grow in the faith, and Dan, who had worked as a graphic artist, entered the

seminary. He was soon joined by younger brother Peter, who had briefly flirted with religious life. As they advanced in their seminary journeys, they were again and again stunned by the beauty they were encountering in the faith they were coming to know and love. As Dan recalls, this is when they began to “always [talk] about doing” something along Beatific Films lines and definitely had felt filmmaking as a calling, but to that point had not done anything concrete. That is until they saw a Catholic video that featured the colors, textures, compositions, feel and appeal that they had always talked of using. The video of Brother Ditusus skateboarding, made by Spirit Juice Studios, finally inspired them to begin making their own videos.



The motivation was pretty simple. As Peter explains, the pair were simply “tired of people not knowing how truly great the Catholic Church is.” They felt like God had become a joke to the secular culture, and that the “Catholic” and “Christian” media output simply was not capable of appealing to those for whom religion was a joke. So the two had a strong desire to “display the Church as she really is” and show people that not only was she not some antiquated monster, but something which spoke with beauty, truth and goodness. Both Dan and Peter agreed that this is what they needed to do. They needed to put the beautiful on display and let that sing to people’s hearts. For, as Daniel puts it, “Beauty speaks a universal language to

the heart; it lets us know that life is good and worth living and, ultimately, points to the source of that goodness.” For him, “Beauty is the star of the new evangelization because it sidesteps polemical arguments and allows one to experience truth without prejudices.”

Displaying that beauty became the new challenge. While they had had some experience in putting videos together from their skater days, this new undertaking was far beyond anything they had ever done. Peter says it has all been “a learning process and a painful one.” Online videos and books have been helpful, but they only go so far and they both have expressed the frustration of learning things by trial and error as they gradually figure things out

like lighting, editing, sound and just the camera itself. Along the way, they have poured in hundreds of man hours, filming and re-filming shots and video, only to find they had messed up and needed to start again. They have also spent thousands of dollars of their own money getting equipment and parts. It was money Dan had saved up from his graphic design days for his future bride. In a way, he says, he now is spending that money on his future bride, the Church. They have enough equipment, they are confident to do much of what they want to accomplish, but the pair do have some pretty big ideas for down the road, and do not know all of what they need to make those plans happen.

Their future film plans would be focused



on the human person's ordination to God, happiness and good and evil. These projects would treat the deeper existential questions of the human person. A film series on the hidden treasures found in the written works of the Church, often unknown to people outside of seminary, is another possibility. For now, though, they intend to focus on their current video, which will "show the daily life of the seminary; that we are normal; and all the fun things that go on here than nobody knows about." They hope it will be a vocational tool for people who either don't have a seminary in their back yard, or who otherwise have no idea what goes on inside its walls.

There have been plenty of graces that have come from this filming process. No small one is the beauty they have encountered on Mundelein's grounds. Peter will tell you, that "The beauty of the campus itself makes you want to film. It is a fun playground to be living in." Dan will wax poetic. As he puts it, "We live in an enchanted forest: with deer, foxes and mysterious trees of all shapes and sizes. The lake, the sun and the architecture call me to adoration

daily. The environment has been the most conducive place to find God in the beauty of his creation, it is easy to lose yourself. Not a day passes when I don't think about how I can capture the glory." But, it isn't the only grace. Daniel, who describes himself as an awkward, misunderstood introvert, thinks "running around campus with a camera has helped people see a side of [him] that is more understandable." He also feels this "is the first year in seminary that [he] really felt free to be completely [him]self." Another grace is that the project allows the brothers, who are close, but "polar opposites" in terms of disposition, to work together. While one works with speed, ease and optimism, "all you have to do is point and shoot," the other tends to view everything with complexity and trouble, taking 100 shots to get one right — and even then is dissatisfied. But, even for this difference, Daniel says he "couldn't ask for a better partner, friend and companion to journey with through priesthood" — and toward beauty. To follow or contribute to their journey, you can go to beatificfilms.org.



3 DOGS NORTH

Focusing less on the beautiful image, and more on beauty that lies in a good conversation with good friends, is the reasonably popular podcast "3 Dogs North," produced by seminarians Rob Johnson, Michael Metz and recent seminarian and now priest Father Connor Danstrom. The podcast started simply enough. Father Connor had a couple of guys over at his brother's house and they were talking and sharing the anecdotes, theology and playful banter that has come to typify the podcasts today. Father Connor's brother, a web designer, enjoying their conversation, opined that they should start a podcast. Nothing happened initially, but a couple of months later, they were talking and the three of them found themselves talking about recording some of those conversations for a podcast. Father Connor's brother helped them get started, setting up the website, designing the logo, getting the syndication feed on iTunes and showing them how to upload new podcasts. With that, the

podcast was started, and outside of some newer sound equipment, not much has changed from that initial launch.

According to Father Connor, “The intention of the podcast from the beginning is described in the intro: “To objectify the subjective with as little violence as possible.” In other words, to bring the listener into their conversation with as little violence to that conversation as they can manage. A lot of what they do is Skype conversations that are recorded, edited and put online. The podcast’s topics vary widely, from movies, to sports, to songs, to stories, but if it is about anything, it is about, as Father Connor says, “friendship and conversation, mostly about God and his action in our lives.” But it isn’t always serious, as Rob attests, they “make fun of each other more than [they] talk about serious topics”; and he says that not in a bad or mean way, but a playful way. As he goes on to say, “It’s fun and a real grace for all of us, the fact that it has been fruitful for listeners is a testament to the Holy Spirit.” In a lot of ways that fun, that joy, the fact that they are enjoying the conversation is what is so attractive about the podcast. These are real conversations from real friends, talking about real things. It is a freewheeling conversation; one in which it can be easy for them to forget that they are recording. By it, their listeners experience, in Father Connor’s words, “three people who really know each other being themselves whose friendship is about something a lot bigger than them.”

The same can be said of their podcasts, with the impact of their recorded conversations being far more than their sum. Most obviously is the way that their conversations have impacted their own lives and friendships. Because of their podcasts, they’ve been able to stay in contact with one another despite their divergent paths and lives. They are each studying for different dioceses, and with Father Connor’s ordination, they now no longer live just down the hall from one another (the name of the podcast is a derivative of the hall or “Cam” they lived on, 3 North, and its nickname, “the Dogs”). So, from a practical side, doing the podcast has allowed them to keep in contact despite the busyness of their lives. As Rob emphasizes, it allows them to “really share deeply with each other about what is going on in

[their] lives, and if something is too personal for the internet than it can easily be [edited] out.” Which happens occasionally. But, the podcast and the conversations that are shared have the kinds of things one finds in a good spiritual friendship. The podcast, for Rob, features “good friends who trust each other, which always leads to a deepening relationship. Sometimes, that means prayer intentions, sometimes, funny stories, [and] sometimes, wanting to flesh out a complicated idea.”

For Michael, it can mean being struck by what one of the other members has shared and bringing that to prayer. For him, the podcast’s conversations tend to stay with him “for the majority of the week, not just in thought, but in prayer as well.” He has gone on to “read books that were recommended, prayed with things that” the others have talked about and has “most definitely used the stories and anecdotes to teach the faith.” He feels “blessed with the quality of friends that God has placed in [his] life,” seeing them and through them the podcast as “a gift that will shape [his] priesthood forever.” He continues, “Spending time consistently every week talking about the things on my heart and on my mind with other people of faith is a special thing. For me that is what our conversations are; time to share ideas and experiences of God and of life with men I respect and love deeply.” For him, the podcast “is a legitimate blessing that continues to enlighten and invigorate [his] own life.” He also has seen it bear some good fruit in his ministry, as he will continually use some of the things shared, or ideas brought up in his parish life. Father Connor vouches for all of this, calling the podcast “a nice creative outlet” that “gives [them] a reason to stay in touch and have conversations about things that matter,” adding that “it seems to be helping people and advancing the kingdom.”



They’ve received some pretty strong feedback to support this. While admitting that they do not get that many emails, the ones they have had have been pretty powerful and testify to the impact their shared conversations can have. The emails, as Father Connor tells it, “come from all over, all ages, men, women, mothers, fathers and college students.” Father Connor would go on to speak about how a good number of people have reported either going back to Mass or back to confession as a result of listening. One of the most powerful stories shared with them was of a person who was suicidal and depressed who would listen to them because the other voices they heard were so negative. It was reading stuff like this that helped them see “that it’s not [them], but God who is working through [them],” Father



**DEACON
MATT
LITAK**

is a fourth-year theologian studying for the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Connor continues, “We’re miles away, and something we said maybe months ago comes through the internet and arrives in someone’s ears at the moment they need to hear it. That’s God. Human beings can’t arrange it to make that happen.” And wherever God will have this podcast go, they will follow. Such is the life of any evangelization project. ■

WHY? OR WHY

BY JUSTIN T. AGBIR

O Eternal Love

What do you see in me, mere mortal;

That I myself do not see?

What do you know about me, a sinner;

That I myself do not understand?

You continuously draw my ears

To the sound of your voice

A sound that keeps thundering

With lightning flashes

Leaving the firmament of my soul unstable

Provoking feelings of the heart

Torrents to drench the cheeks

When I am so confident in my ability

You say I am insufficient

When in doubt you say I am able

Head too heavy for the weak neck

Your finger still raising the chin

Rheum beclouding the eyes!

Your radiance piercing the clouds

You have broken the heart

Still setting the flames ablaze

Should I ask “why?” or say why

If you chose me let me choose you

If I am your choice

Let me make you my choice

Let me fit your plans into my expectations

Am I to have why as a question?

Am I to take why as a reason?

Should I ask “why?” or say why

What song do you have for me?

What song do you want from me?

Do I possess any property?

Do you want to clear the air?

Do you want to clear the ground?

What do you see in me?

What do you know about me?

THE BEAUTIFUL FRUIT

BY DEACON VALERY AKOH

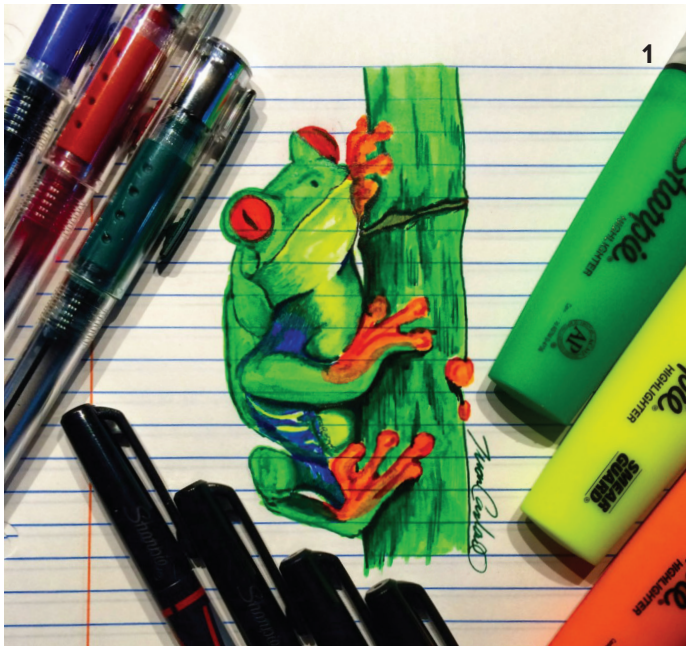
Everyone looks at it and desires it
Its litanies of praise are second to none; yet it weeps.
It weeps within its saps to its roots.
It decries the brokenness of its foundation:
 how broken the soil, nasty the manure from which it sprung;
yet how paradoxically true and necessary was such a foundation!
Oh beautiful fruit, be thou grateful of thy Farmer and thy brokenness;
For it is the only way to be truly beautiful!

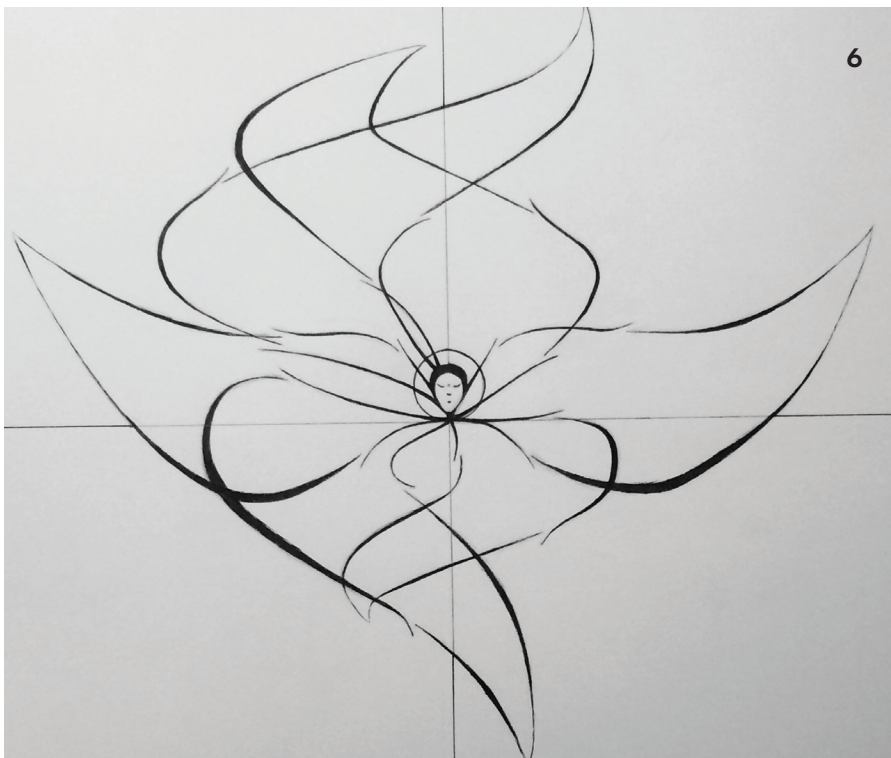
TO THE GATEKEEPER OF IMMORTALITY

BY DAVID BANAUCH

A song to dearest death, the one for whom we wait:
Oh sister death, how I long for thee
Gift of my lover, you care for us so
Like an ornate frame, you circumference our lives
Granting definition, delight of the artist
Oh sister death, how I love your approach
Bringer of life, slender blood – soaked virgin
Cause of fear, author of delight
Infinitely complex, beautifully simple

COMPILED BY DEACON MATT LITAK | 4T, ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO





1. Art for The Bridge, by Carlos Orozco, first-year theology, Archdiocese of Seattle, Wash.

2. Sixth Station, by Deacon Dan Schumaker, fourth-year theology, Diocese of Grand Rapids, Mich.

3. The Seraphim Project, by Carlos Orozco, first-year theology, Archdiocese of Seattle, Wash.

4. Young Octavian, by Michael Purszke, first-year theology, Archdiocese of Chicago.

5. Untitled, by Deacon Dan Schumaker, fourth-year theology, Diocese of Grand Rapids, Mich.

6. The Seraphim Project, by Michael Purszke, first-year theology, Archdiocese of Chicago.

7. A Blessed Priest, by Deacon Jegar Fickel, fourth-year theology, Diocese of Grand Rapids, Mich.

NEW CAMPUS VISITORS CENTER WILL PROVIDE A PLACE OF WELCOME

BY MICHAEL L. LEWIS | 1T, DIOCESE OF EL PASO



Visitors arriving at the University of Saint Mary of the Lake for the first time often don't know where to start or where to go. But after construction of a new Visitors' Center is complete — an addition to the existing campus dining hall — guests will have a central spot where the university can roll out the red carpet of welcome.

After breaking ground in May, workers are hard at work on the \$5 million project, which is only the second major construction project on campus since its completion in the early 1930s. Expected to be complete in December, the facility will add larger restrooms to the dining hall, relocate the campus bookstore, provide a staffed information desk for visitors, showcase Mundelein's history and art in a new gallery and give students and faculty a multiuse space to meet informally and relax. Above all else, the 6,500-square-foot project's primary aim

will be to welcome members of the public, said Father John Kartje, Mundelein's rector/president.

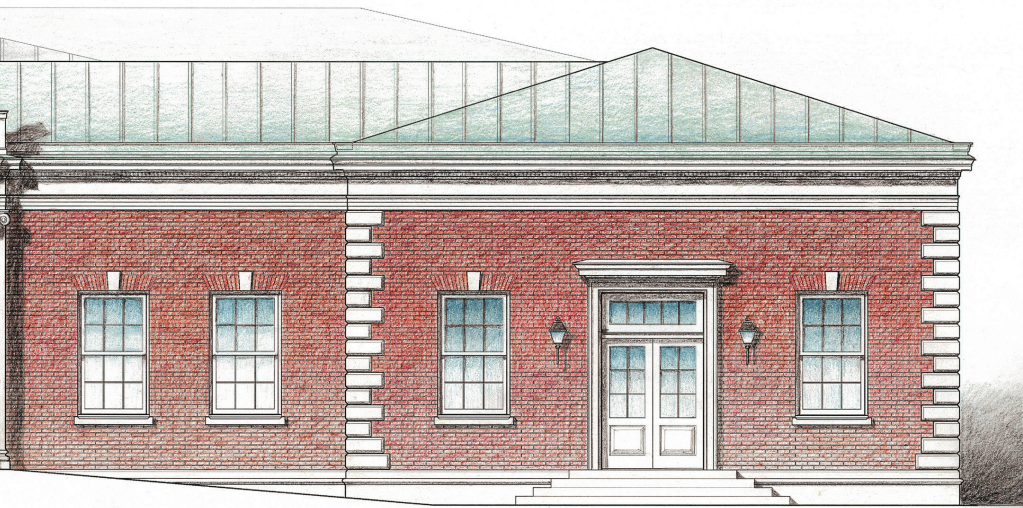
"It's a way to help deepen the interface between ourselves and visitors, who come here from all over the archdiocese, of course, but also from all over the world," he said. "The campus was not designed to be open to visitors; it just wasn't part of the original vision. And now, that's hardly the case; we have people coming to campus all the time. They come for liturgies, they come for concerts and they come just to see the place."

However, those guests don't always have a good idea of where to go on campus, said Ryan Butts, Mundelein's vice president for institutional advancement.

"If you are a visitor on campus and don't know anyone, you are likely to wander around until you stumble upon a building and happen to encounter someone," Butts said. "This will basically become the new 'Grand Central' of the seminary, so that people can have an entry point that makes sense. We've stretched the current footprint of the campus about as far as we can to make it visitor-friendly. But in order to make it truly welcoming, this will be the linchpin."

The addition to the centrally located dining hall was designed by Bureau AD and architect Thomas Norman Rajkovich. It will be built to match the campus' existing American Colonial architecture by Valenti Builders. Brothers Jim and Joe Valenti also oversaw construction

This rendering of the new addition to the campus dining hall shows what the building's east front will look like, which will face the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception. The new campus bookstore, located on the left, would be connected to a new multiuse meeting space on the right by a new lobby in the center. (Rendering courtesy of Bureau AD)



of the McEssy Theological Resource Center. The brothers were honored last fall at Mundelein Seminary's Rector's Classic Golf Outing for their numerous contributions to the renovation of many Catholic properties throughout Chicagoland. The addition will expand the dining hall to the building's east, toward the Pati Dowdle Lehman Memorial Garden and the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception. At its south and north corners will be the new bookstore and multiuse space, respectively.

Butts said the time had come for the bookstore to leave its longtime home in the basement of the theology residence building.

"We'll be taking it out of the basement and bringing it into the light, so to speak, to allow it to be more than just a seminary textbook store," he said. "We want it to be more public, so visitors can buy gifts, clothing and memorabilia —

whatever connects them to Mundelein."

The other main room will be a comfortable space with a capacity for food and beverage service and can be configured for multiple uses, Fr. Karttje said.

Butts said the room was being designed to be versatile.

"It'll be a smaller area for more informal meetings, where you can have a cup of coffee, or configure it as a private dining space, or even create a small lecture space or student lounge," he said. "It's designed to be adaptable."

But perhaps the most striking area will be a new lobby, featuring a staffed welcome desk. "As soon as you arrive, someone will greet you with a smile and explain what you can see here — here's a tour book so that you can do a walking tour, for example," Butts said. "Or, if you're meeting somebody, we can call them and they can meet you in this central spot."

"The centerpiece of the addition will

be a long hall with French doors opening out to the Dowdle Garden," Fr. Karttje said. "The hall could provide a gallery for displaying Cardinal Mundelein's extensive art collection. It would also offer an opportunity to highlight the rich history of our campus. The addition would create a lasting homage to Cardinal Mundelein serving as a wonderful point of entry to the seminary."

The project also includes the resurfacing of the adjacent parking lot, as well as new signage guiding visitors to the center of campus.

But the project is only the first phase of a multi-year plan to address other areas of the dining hall, Butts explained.

"This will be Phase I of the project. Phase II will provide much needed improvements, including the addition of modern ventilation, air conditioning and a greater seating capacity," he said.

The final stage will involve refurbishing the faculty dining room, as well as the addition of a private dining room to accommodate special guests.

"Once this project is complete, we'll take a look at how it interfaces with our other facilities and projects, and prioritize what makes sense for a longer vision down the road," he said.

Father Karttje sees the project as symbolic of his vision for an ever-deepening relationship between the seminary and the numerous diocesan communities that we serve. "If we are a welcoming community, then we need to constantly ask ourselves what that actually means," he said. "This addition represents a bricks-and-mortar commitment to that objective." ■



MICHAEL L. LEWIS

is a first-year theologian studying for the Diocese of El Paso, Texas.



‘WITH GREAT POWER COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY.’

BY RYAN BUTTS

We all have heard some form of this great line from Uncle Ben to Peter Parker, who, unbeknownst to him, had acquired new powers to become Spider-Man. I can remember reading through the comic books of Peter Parker — this nerdy, high school kid who has a heart for people and with new power is able to amplify his vocation in service to others. He was always that humble servant of the people, and, when blessed with more responsibility, rose to the occasion.

I think of that storyline often as I encounter the men studying here at Mundelein for the priesthood. At some point in their lives, they followed a calling from God and started down a path to discern whether priesthood was the best way for them to serve the Lord and his people. The crazy thing is that they don't need to be bitten by a radioactive spider to have an ability to reach thousands. They will assume that responsibility the day that they kneel in front of their bishop and are anointed as a priest of Jesus Christ.

On that day, when they become a shepherd of God's people, they have an impact that will reach beyond their own human abilities. Every day, I get to come to work on their behalf to inspire others to support their journey to

priesthood. It is important work.

Each seminarian who studies here is supported by their bishop or archbishop through tuition, room and board costs of \$35,000 per seminarian. The full cost is near \$47,000 per seminarian — leaving a \$12,000 gap per seminarian per year for us to raise through gifts and contributions. With our largest class in decades (225), we started the year with a goal to raise \$2.7 million to cover “the gap” for the 2015-2016 school year. I'm proud to say that, as of the printing of this magazine, we are nearing that goal, well ahead of our fiscal year's end on June 30.

Thank you for your support of these men who, like superheroes, understand their responsibility and the impact that they can make on future generations.

I am grateful every day that the men here at Mundelein are formed in tradition, trained in compassion and will be prepared to shepherd because of the formation that they are receiving each and every day. It is rigorous. It is tough. It is necessary.

For joining us in this important mission, I am truly grateful for your partnership. Together WITH YOU in Christ, we are Mundelein. We (all of us together) form parish priests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ryan K. Butts".

Ryan K. Butts
Vice President
Office of Institutional Advancement



LEAVING MUNDELEIN

BY FATHER JIM PRESTA

This year, I am celebrating my 30th anniversary as a priest of Jesus Christ. I was ordained on May 24, 1986, at Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago by Joseph Cardinal Bernardin. There were 36 men in our Saint Mary of the Lake Seminary class. Eighteen of us were ordained on May 24. Each year, I coordinate our class party. This year, we will gather here at Mundelein Seminary to celebrate our priesthood anniversary.

During my 30 years of priesthood, I spent the first 10 years in parish work as an associate pastor. I enjoyed my first seven years at St. Christopher Parish in Midlothian. Priests often compare their first assignment to their first love. The people of my first parish helped form and shape my priestly identity. They taught me more than I could teach them. Much of the same happened at my second parish, Queen of Martyrs in Evergreen Park. I spent three great years with great people. So many in the parish were city workers: policemen and firefighters. They were good-hearted, salt of the earth folks. I thoroughly enjoyed my years there, even though they tried to make my Italian heart into an Irish one!

These last 20 years of priesthood have been spent in seminary formation. I was rector/president of St. Joseph College Seminary in Chicago for 14 years. I feel so fortunate and blessed to have seen so

many young men go through the undergraduate seminary program at Loyola University Chicago. Many became priests and now serve not only in the Archdiocese of Chicago, but also in Milwaukee, San Bernardino, Toledo and Belleville. So many others have married, have become good Catholic husbands and fathers. A number of them are teachers, catechists and pastoral ministers. They continue to serve the Church in a variety of ways. I am so proud to have had a small part in their college education and formation.

In 2010, Francis Cardinal George appointed me to the faculty of Mundelein Seminary. I have served as a professor of dogmatic theology and taught courses on Priesthood, Ecclesiology, Mariology, Vatican II Documents and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. As vice rector, I have proudly served under three rectors: Msgr. Dennis Lyle, Bishop Robert Barron and Fa-

ther John Kartje. I am also grateful to both Francis Cardinal George and Archbishop Blase Cupich for their great support of this place. The seminary has been blessed by the men who have served as rectors of Mundelein Seminary. I have served as director of admissions and director of pre-theology. In my most recent position, I have overseen the conference center as well as the facilities, finances and fundraising of the seminary. What a blessing to serve side-by-side with such talented seminary faculty members who have given their lives to the service of priestly formation. The seminary staffers are dedicated and hard-working people who love the seminary and its sacred mission. In a special way, I have been privileged to work with hundreds of men from 40 (or more) dioceses throughout the United States and the world who are now serving as happy, holy and zealous priests for the Roman Catholic Church. These 20 years have been such a tremendous blessing for me. I am so grateful to the Lord for the opportunity to serve at the finest seminary in the country!

This past March, Archbishop Cupich asked me to be the new pastor of St. Emily's Parish in Mt. Prospect, Ill. Like other assignments, becoming a pastor was not something I was planning, but I believe in God's providence. I have always believed that Our Blessed Mother has her maternal mantle wrapped around my priesthood. With that kind of protection and love, I know that she will keep me close to the Sacred Heart of her son and lead me on the right path. I look forward to becoming a pastor and ministering to the good people of St. Emily's. They, too, will teach me so much about priesthood. After 30 years, my formation as a priest is ongoing.

Thank you, Mundelein Seminary! I will always cherish and treasure the seminarians, faculty and staff of this sacred place! ■



**FATHER
JIM
PRESTA**

is a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Ill., and was ordained in 1986. Father Presta has served the archdiocese in seminary formation for the last 20 years at both St. Joseph's College Seminary and Mundelein Seminary.

BY NOAH THELEN | 1T, DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS



VICKI THORN TALK

On Jan. 18, Vicki Thorn, founder of Project Rachel, spoke to seminarians about the aftermath in abortion in women and men. She first gave a talk over

lunch, speaking generally about her work and her founding of Project Rachel, an organization dedicated to assisting post-abortive women and men in healing. She then spoke to Father Marek Duran's Medical Ethics and Human Suffering class for first-theology students.



INSTITUTION OF LECTORS

Most Rev. Joseph R. Cistone, bishop of Saginaw, Mich., presided at the institution of the order of lectors Feb. 24. At the Mass, 43 seminarians were received into the order of lector.



LUNAR NEW YEAR

While seminarians were on break for New Year celebrations according to the Gregorian calendar, students were still able to get a taste of a New Year celebration, as some students put together a Lunar New Year celebration. The occasion included a Mass, said by Father Francis, pastor of St. Therese Chinese Catholic Mission, as well as a feast following the Mass with Asian food from multiple traditions. The Mass also incorporated several languages, with the help of Chinese, Vietnamese and Filipino students at Mundelein Seminary. As students were leaving the Mass, they were given a red envelope, traditionally symbolizing luck, with money and a Bible verse to reflect on for the New Year.



MARCH FOR LIFE

Despite weather conditions that prompted Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C., to declare a state of emergency, 23 students from Mundelein Seminary traveled all the way to the nation's capital to participate in the March for Life. The event, held annually on Jan. 22, marks the controversial Roe v. Wade ruling that deemed abortion legal in the United States. The seminarians also attended a pro-life Vigil Mass at the National Shrine Basilica of the Immaculate Conception.



PRE-THEOLOGY II MISSION TO PERU

For the third straight year, seminarians in their second year of Pre-Theology traveled to Piura, Peru, during the Easter Break. There, they spent time with Father Joe Uhen and the people of Santisimo Sacramento Parish. Seminarians gave out Communion to the sick and homebound, remodeled houses, handed out food and clothing and visited with those who live in the area.



PRE-THEOLOGY II MISSION TO ARIZONA

Pre-Theology II students traveled to the San Salano Mission in Topowa, Ariz., over the mid-winter break. The mission, run by Father Ponchie Vasquez, O.F.M., and Father David Gaa, O.F.M., is on the O'odham Native American Reservation and is just miles from the Mexican border. Seminarians performed various tasks, such as doing repairs, landscaping and visiting the sick and the imprisoned. They also took the time to learn about the culture of the Tohono O'odham people, as well as the migrant crisis in the area.

Upcoming Events

JULY 7, 2016

Annual Priest Alumni Outing and Dinner
Pine Meadow Golf Course, Mundelein Seminary
Refectory

SEPT. 22, 2016

Rector's Classic
Annual Golf Outing and Awards Dinner
Pine Meadow Golf Course, Mundelein Seminary
Refectory

OCT. 23, 2016

Rector's Fall Mass
Chapel of the Immaculate Conception
Mundelein Seminary
8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer
9 a.m. Mass

DEC. 4, 2016

Donor Advent Retreat
Mundelein Seminary Conference Center

DEC. 4, 2016

Annual Christmas Concert
Mundelein Seminary Auditorium
2 p.m.

For more information on these and other upcoming events at Mundelein Seminary, visit www.usml.edu.



FATHER RICHARD J. WOJCIK LUNCH-TIME CONCERT SERIES

This semester, Music Director Linda Cerabona kicked off the Father Richard J. Wojcik Lunchtime Concert Series. The concerts, which take place twice a month, feature both faculty and students in the style of chamber music. The first performance of the series featured Ryan Adorjan, second-year theologian for the Diocese of Joliet, Ill., accompanied by Linda Cerabona.



JOSEPHINUM BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

Following a championship in the Father Pat O'Malley Invitational, the Mundelein Lakers basketball team travelled to Columbus, Ohio, to win the 36th annual Helfant Classic. The tournament, hosted by the Pontifical College Josephinum, featured 10 teams from across the country. The Mundelein Lakers survived two overtime thrillers in order to beat St. Meinrad Seminary in the final. First Pre-Theology student Elliot Zak (Diocese of Lafayette, Ind.) won MVP Honors in the tournament, hitting clutch free throws to clinch the championship.

FATHER CHRISTOPHER CIOMEK

After 12 years as a member of the full-time faculty at Mundelein Seminary, Father Christopher Ciomek is moving on to become pastor of St. Peter Damien Parish in Bartlett, Ill. Father Ciomek has served a wide variety of roles at Mundelein, including director of Chicago seminarians, associate dean of formation, and cam priest of Three Boulevard. He has also helped in teaching various courses, such as Liturgical Ministry in the Polish community and co-teaching Theological Reflection III with Father Ray Webb and Spiritual Direction with Father Marty Barnum.



The process of Father's departure started when Father Ron Hicks, vicar general for the Archdiocese of Chicago and former dean of formation at Mundelein Seminary, called Father Ciomek. But he was in the Holy Land and only saw a voicemail from the vicar general. "He didn't say why he was calling," Ciomek said with a chuckle.

Upon calling him back, Father Ciomek learned that Archbishop Blase Cupich wanted him to become a pastor. "I was surprised," Ciomek said. "But we were in Bethlehem and I was able to spend some time in prayer. Finally, after some prayer, I thought I should do what the archbishop wants."

As much as he enjoyed his 12 years at Mundelein, he knew that it would be good for him to become a pastor. "I thought that the longer I stay [at Mundelein], the harder it would be to become a pastor," he said.

Prior to his time at Mundelein, Father Ciomek spent time at St. Monica Parish in Chicago, Ill., and St. Theresa in Palatine, Ill. While serving as associate pastor, he received a call from Msgr. John Canary, former rector of Mundelein, asking him to join the faculty. "That was a huge surprise. I never thought I'd be back at Mundelein."

Father Ciomek already has numerous ideas for how he can boost vocations in a parish setting, most of which involve getting young people to Mundelein. These ideas include a soccer tournament at Mundelein and taking groups of altar servers to visit the seminary. "Some young people might never have been to Mundelein. You are sowing the seeds, you just never know."

Overall, Father Ciomek says Mundelein will always be a special place to him. "I will miss interaction with the faculty, seminarians and staff," Ciomek said. "The faculty is awesome. It is really a good group of dedicated people ... I love the climate we have at Mundelein. We are all like brothers and sisters."



NOAH THELEN is a first-year pre-theologian studying for the Diocese of Grand Rapids, Mich.



A PECULIAR HEART

BY GIDEON BARR | PT2, DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD-CAPE GIRARDEAU

In the making of this current issue of *The Bridge*, I met with our rector, Father Kartje, and some other administrators to discuss our respective ideas for the issue. In that meeting, a running joke began to form around Father Kartje's use of the word "heart" as a metaphor. The new welcome center is the "heart" of the campus, the seminary is "at the heart of every diocese we serve" and even his monthly newsletter is "*Cor ad Cor*," or heart to heart. Aside from picking up on our rector's favorite words and phrases for the sake of humor (a common practice at Mundelein), this notion of heart has been central in my life and discernment as a seminarian.

As men in formation to be priests, we often hear that we are developing the "heart of a shepherd," that prayer, according to Cardinal Newman, is "heart speaking to heart," or that St. Ignatius recommends noticing the "movements of the heart." All of this being true, in all of the speech about hearts and what they should be, it could be easy to lose sight of what seems most important — our own hearts as they actually are.

While hearts can certainly be formed, molded and filled with compassion and love, I think they also come with some given structure and shape — with a pecu-

liarity. My experience at Mundelein thus far could very aptly be summarized as a discovery of my own heart. A discovery of a givenness, a peculiarity, in how I react to the world and respond to the people I encounter. A discovery of desires often shared by others, but always uniquely felt. And the discovery of wounds I never meant to have.

Quite rightly, the prophet Jeremiah asks, "The human heart ... who can understand it?" It has often been difficult and quite uncomfortable to search after my own heart. More often, it has been ambiguous and frustrating. Whether it has been the presence of things I'd rather not admit or the absence of things I wish were there, the heart seems to resist understanding.

As difficult as this process of knowing the heart can be, it is not fruitless. As you take note of the experiences and conversations that are provocations and the moments of prayer that are illuminating, a definitive idea begins to take shape. A sense of the whole is felt and under-

stood. A coherent image of your own person emerges and, with this, delusions of perfection are shattered and a real awareness of your own limitations is formed.

In my own life, though, this awareness of the heart — in all its limitations, desires, wounds and peculiarity — has been accompanied by a confidence far different than any I have ever felt. The sense that this man, with this peculiar heart,

is loved by God and called to serve is tremendously liberating. Much the same, the more I understand the contours of my heart, the more I come to understand what I truly need and what my vocation will look like. While this process of discovery is far from over and much of my heart remains *terra incognita*, I take comfort knowing that I am made in the image of a God with a peculiar heart. ■



GIDEON BARR

is a second-year pre-theologian studying for the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Mo.

☞☞ My experience at Mundelein thus far could very aptly be summarized as a discovery of my own heart."



MUNDELEIN SEMINARY

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

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

www.usml.edu



2016 MUNDELEIN SEMINARY COMMUNITY

“Together in Christ, we are Mundelein Seminary. We form parish priests.”