

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE | THE NATIONAL SEMINARY OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

The
Crossroads

The Alumni Magazine for Theological College | Spring 2023



**INTRODUCING
THE NEW PPF**

**SPRING SEMESTER
HIGHLIGHTS**

**OUR
GRADUATES**

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The Crossroads Celebrates Almost Seven Decades!

In 1955, Theological College marked one of the largest enrollments in its 38-year history, with 169 seminarians registering for the fall semester. Among them were six students who banded together to produce the first alumni newsletter, provisionally titled *Theological College Alumni Bulletin*. Previously, TC news was shared with alumni through *The Voice*, the newsletter of its mother seminary in Baltimore, St. Mary's. The headline of this new four-page publication read, "Alumni Newsletter Underway." They appealed to the recipients, "This is your paper. ... To start things rolling, how about sending us a name for the bulletin?" The editors then explained their endeavor: "The aim of this paper is simply to serve as a sort of rendezvous, where old friends and acquaintances may meet again after years of separation — a concrete expression of that supernatural charity already uniting the TC family, faculty, alumni, and present student body. May God and your cooperation make this effort a success." Pictured here are some of the first editions of what is still in 2023 known as *The Crossroads*. (See one of the earliest editorials for the magazine from Bishop Hannan on Page 9). Today, as then, we are pleased to produce this publication that continues to recognize the "concrete expression of that supernatural bond of charity already uniting the TC family."

To offer comments, suggestions, and updates for *The Crossroads*, please contact us at tanzi@cua.edu, or 202-756-4914.



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Theological College participates in the mission and responsibility of the bishops to provide for the people of God wise and holy priests close to the heart of Christ and consumed in his work of salvation. In affiliation with The Catholic University of America, Theological College assists seminarians in the task of vocational discernment and in the preparation for priestly life and ministry at the diocesan level, particularly as experienced in the United States.

SPRING BANQUET AND FAREWELLS

The end-of-year Mass, banquet, and send-off included recognizing seminarians going on pastoral year, going to other seminaries, and those being ordained. This year, special recognition was also given to the retirement of Father Jim Froehlich and to Rector Ciriaco, who is moving on to another ministry.



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Cardinal Dolan, right, and Father Lombardo, O.P., left, confer during the two-part presentation on preaching for TC faculty and seminarians, followed later in the semester by a workshop addressing racism.



FOCUS ON BEAUTY

The annual spring art exhibit opened the St. Patrick's Day celebration with works from seminarians, faculty, and those from area religious houses. Left, *Theotokos* by Brother Daryl Moresco, O. Carm. (oil on wood).



A Time of Transition

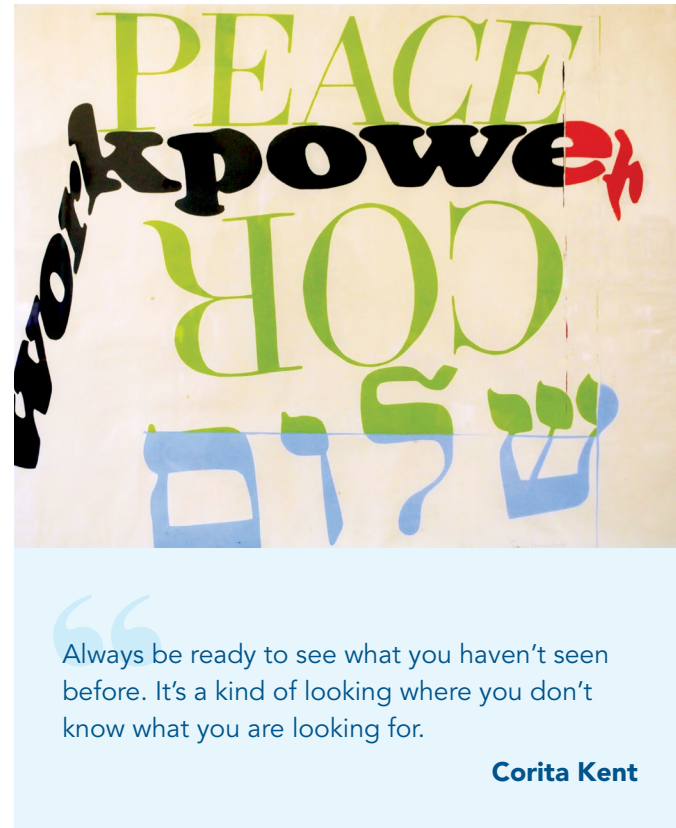


In this issue of *The Crossroads*, we focus on those who will be ordained to the priesthood, those who will move on to new seminaries, and those who will retire and embrace a new assignment in Sulpician ministry.

Our deacons have been preparing themselves over these last four or five years for ordination to the priesthood. Through prayer, study, and hard work, they have followed the promptings of the Holy Spirit to lead and guide them to this moment of priestly ordination. As you read their testimonies of gratitude, you will be uplifted by their willingness and readiness to go out into the world and preach the good news of Christ. And our disciplined Basselin scholars have met the rigorous demands necessary for their philosophical degrees, in preparation for the transition to seminaries where they will begin theological studies.

Father Jim Froehlich, O.F.M. Cap, who has served the Theological College Community for 13 years, decided to retire at the end of this academic year. Father Jim has been a great blessing to us, sharing his joy and sense of humor. His expertise in the area of counseling has greatly contributed to his formation work as an advisor and spiritual director. Father Jim will remain active in retirement, and has plans for a much deserved sabbatical. As for me, I will be transitioning to a new Sulpician ministry as Director of Homiletics at St. Mary's Seminary & University in Baltimore, for the fall 2023 semester. This position became available at the time I completed my Doctorate in Ministry in Preaching in January. There is a need for a homiletics director at St. Mary's, as they have recently been awarded a Lilly Endowment for work in homiletics with seminarians and clergy formation. All this coming together for me is providential. This will allow me to teach, give retreats, and do writing and research in the area of homiletics that I would not be able to do as rector. I have been at Theological College for eight years. This is where my Sulpician ministry began and I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here in all my roles — formation advisor, associate director of intellectual formation, director of Basselin scholars, vice-rector, and rector — with all their challenges. My priesthood has been greatly enriched and I will be forever grateful for that.

In the TC refectory there is an original serigraph from the famous pop artist, Corita Kent, titled, *Shalom*. The words on



Always be ready to see what you haven't seen before. It's a kind of looking where you don't know what you are looking for.

Corita Kent

the serigraph are "Work," "Power," "Peace," and "Cor," and the Hebrew letters for "Shalom" are prominent. I share this here as encouragement for all those moving into a time of transition. Work thrives on the power of the Spirit, which brings peace to the heart in the mission and evangelization of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. My prayer is that our work gives us the power, the effective agency, to evangelize so as to communicate the peace Christ offers us all, which is at the heart of our faith. I leave you with some advice from Corita Kent: "Always be ready to see what you haven't seen before. It's a kind of looking where you don't know what you are looking for."

Our Lady Seat of Wisdom, pray for us!

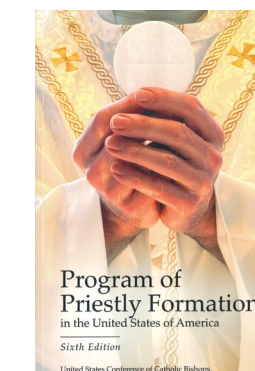
May God be praised,

Rev. Dominic Ciriaco, P.S.S.

Father Dominic Ciriaco, P.S.S.
Rector

The New Program for Priestly Formation

Joseph McHenry
Third Theology,
Archdiocese of Washington



As part of formation at Theological College, this past spring's Monday rector's conferences offered a series geared toward understanding the new *Program for Priestly Formation* (PPF), Sixth Edition. The new PPF was developed by the USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations based upon guidance from the Holy See. Promulgated in June 2022, this is now the new paradigm for seminary formation in the Church in the United States.

This PPF envisions priestly formation as an integrated experience that is grounded in community and oriented to developing men capable of being missionary disciples.

New to the sixth edition of the PPF is the terminology used to describe the four phases of formation: propaedeutic, discipleship, configuration, and vocational synthesis. While the two middle phases could be found in the earlier formation program, the propaedeutic and vocational synthesis stages are not only new terms, but also new concrete realities for men entering seminary formation. The rector's conference series has helped us to look at each stage in turn.

The propaedeutic stage is the first a man enters once he has been accepted into priestly formation for his diocese. The goal of this stage is to provide men entering formation with the basic groundwork they need to succeed in priestly formation that will occur in a seminary context in the ensuing stages. While not an equivalent, a helpful analog to the propaedeutic stage is the novitiate in religious life. Rather than academics, the focus of this stage is on building a life of prayer and fraternity while transitioning into a spirit of openness to being formed. This stage, to last a year, will also serve to lessen dependency on technology and social media. The PPF envisions the propaedeutic stage occurring with other men under the guidance of a priest-formator in a space designated for this purpose. In August 2023, the Sulpicians of the United States will open a formation house for men in this stage of formation that will be under the patronage of Blessed Michael McGivney and located on historic Paca Street in Baltimore (see back cover).

As part of the four-part rector's conferences series explaining the new PPF, Father Dominic Ciriaco (top), rector, referenced *The True Priest: The Priesthood as Preached and Practiced by Saint Augustine*, a short monograph on the pastoral practice of St. Augustine that emphasizes ministry as service of the people of God by means of God's word and God's mysteries. Presenters on the PPF also included Father Chris Arockiaraj (center), vice-rector and coordinator of pastoral formation, and Father Jaime Robledo (bottom), coordinator of spiritual formation and liturgy.

The Holy Spirit is alive in the life of the Church, especially as she discerns how to best form the men who present themselves as desiring to test their vocation to the ministerial priesthood. May the Lord, who has begun this good work, bring it to completion for his glory and the salvation of souls!

obedience to his ecclesiastical entity, which for the diocesan seminarian is his sponsoring diocese. He is to acquire a greater awareness and assumption of the priestly identity that will allow him to conform himself (or allow himself to be conformed) to the sentiments and affections of the Son, making a gift of himself for the pastoral care of the flock that is to be entrusted to him. It is in the configuration stage that the ministries of lector and acolyte will be most appropriately conferred, as these mark a progressive deepening of the seminarian's configuration to Christ in the liturgy and in ministry.

The final stage of priestly formation is called the vocational synthesis stage. As the name suggests, this is a period to integrate all that has been developed incrementally in the previous stages. This integration takes place after completion of the curriculum of studies and ordination to the diaconate and is to last at least six months within the man's home diocese. The goal of the vocational synthesis stage is to assist men in their transition as clerics into the parish or other diocesan ministerial settings in which they will live out their priesthood.

During the course of these conferences on the new PPF, two things became abundantly clear. First, the Church is entering a period of priestly formation that will require patience and an openness to adjustment, as the rich theory of the new PPF undergoes implementation in the sometimes imperfect concreteness of our diocesan and seminary structures. Second, the Holy Spirit is alive in the life of the Church, especially as she discerns how to best form the men who present themselves as desiring to test their vocation to the ministerial priesthood. May the Lord, who has begun this good work, bring it to completion for his glory and the salvation of souls! ■

After the propaedeutic stage concludes, a seminarian enters the traditional seminary environment in what is called the discipleship stage. The primary goal of this stage is to grow in intimacy and relationality with Jesus Christ. In this stage, seminarians engage in philosophical studies that train their minds in right reason and prepare them for future study in theology. The seminarians are also formed to deepen their moral virtues and grow in maturity and self-control that will be foundational for the final two stages of formation. During the discipleship stage, the seminarians also engage in apostolic pastoral work, especially with the poor and underserved. By the end of this stage, the seminarian should determine with resolve that God is calling him for service in the ministerial priesthood. This self-knowledge allows him to confidently transition into the configuration stage.

It is in the configuration stage that the seminarian, having already been admitted as a candidate for Holy Orders, enters more profoundly into the contemplation of the person of Jesus Christ, the beloved Son of the Father, sent as Shepherd of the people of God. The seminarian is also configured in loving



Representing the Diocese of Rockville Centre at the March for Life, from left, Joe Krug (3-B), Rob Paradiso (2-PT), Bishop John Barres ('89), Rev. Alex Turpin (former TC resident priest), Auguste Horner (3-B), and Rev. Matt Browne ('19).



March for Life 2023

Jacob Daul
Second Theology, St. Augustine

The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers [and sisters] of mine, you did for me.'

Mt 25:40

In January, the Theological College community once again participated in the March for Life, beginning with the Vigil Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. The following day, seminarians, their guests from other seminaries, and some TC staff joined the large faculty and student cohort from Catholic University congregating at the nearby metro. Downtown, I was awestruck to see the multitude of people gathered in our nation's capital for the sake of promoting the value of life. This is the goal of the aptly named March for Life, for it is not just an anti-abortion rally, but rather it is a movement for a large portion of the American population to physically show that they stand united in the fundamental idea that an innocent life must be protected and nurtured from the very moment it comes into being — the moment of conception. The March for Life is a firm opposition to the societal injustice of abortion, an injustice which takes on multiple forms: against the child for withholding the gift of life, against the mother and father who are denied the opportunity to care for their son or daughter with a love unlike any other, and lastly against God, "whose eyes have seen the unformed substance of every person" (*Ps* 139), and "holds everyone as a royal diadem in his hand" (*Is* 62:3).

The advocates for life at the March came from all over the country, bolstered in numbers by the overwhelmingly Catholic presence in the Washington metro area. There were rows of banners displaying the names of local churches and schools. There were a multitude of seminarians, priests, and women religious all along my route between Brookland and the Capitol. Additionally, a huge number of people from other faith backgrounds were present, peacefully offering solidarity through a unity of purpose.

The most striking aspect of this year's March for Life is that it was the first since the repeal of the 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision.

The Dobbs vs. Jackson decision on June 24, 2022, marked a momentous day for the protection of life, as it removed federal protection of abortion. This means that the power to govern this practice is now left up to the states, a number of which have restricted access to abortion. However, much has yet to be done in our country, for there are many areas that still permit abortion. This development influenced the March; instead of advancing toward the Supreme Court, the general direction went toward the Capitol building to demonstrate to the congressmen and women of each state our collective desire to restrict and ultimately abolish abortion.

The theme of this year's March was "Next Steps: Marching Forward into a Post-Roe America." There are different opinions concerning how to advocate for life going forward. Will the pro-life movement march to the Capitol, as we did this year? Should the demonstrations be relocated to the individual state capitals, since the issue has moved from the federal to state legislatures? Should the date be changed to eliminate the connection to the Roe vs. Wade ruling?

"The pro-life movement has just experienced a major victory in the fall of Roe vs. Wade, but our work to build a culture of life is far from complete," remarked Jeanne Mancini, the head of March for Life's Education and Defense Fund. I am grateful to be joined by my brother seminarians at the March every year, and on Saturday mornings as we pray outside of an abortion clinic here in Washington, D.C. As Americans, we can reach out to our representatives and senators, by letter or vote, to voice our defense of the right to life. The best place to start is our local community. We must show compassion and be willing to offer a helping hand to mothers and children in need. For example, in my own diocese, there are pro-life women's health clinics that need supplies to provide for expectant mothers who may otherwise consider abortion. May God inspire our efforts for them and inform our vigilant commitment to protect vulnerable lives at all stages! ■

Rev. Ken Marlovits ('14), Diocese of Pittsburgh director of the Office of Priestly Vocations, seated at right, and Very Rev. Tom Sparacino, above him, rector of St. Paul Seminary and director of pre-ordination formation, joined TC seminarians Daniel Kushner (3-T), center, and Deacon Jacob Gruber, left, with other Pittsburgh seminarians hosted by TC for the March for Life.





The class of 2023 gift, a Holy Family of Nazareth statue, was blessed and incensed in the 4th St. courtyard prior to the Mass.

Year-End Farewells

Suzanne Tanzi

“The rector took the opportunity to marvel at how wonderful it was ... to look out upon all those present in full knowledge of the beautiful changes that the Spirit had inspired in them while at TC.”

statue, a gift from the graduating class of 2023. The house then processed to the end-of-the-year celebration of the Eucharist. In his homily, Father Ciriaco highlighted the *Acts of the Apostles*, in which we see the apostles, who had a personal relationship with Christ, putting into practice what he had been teaching them. Just like the apostles, the seminarians seek the truth, which is made available to them through personal engagement with those mentors and educators Jesus has put on their path, so that they in turn may help to open the eyes of others. As Pope Francis commented, “We are called by God who takes us from among men, so as to be for men.” These reflections were especially fitting for those whose departure on pastoral year was imminent, and the rector extended a special blessing to them for this stage of their formative path.

This concept of generous fraternity was seen in action during the light-hearted and collegial reception and banquet that followed the Mass. At the conclusion of the dinner, as usual, departing seminarians received gifts from the rector and were applauded by all present. In turn, on behalf of the fourth theology graduates, Deacon Rapkoch presented to the seminary a *Pledge*

On April 27, the final house Mass and farewell banquet marked the end of classes before exams and seminarian departures. The evening began in the 4th Street courtyard with the Diocese of Raleigh’s Deacon Nick Rapkoch blessing the new Holy Family of Nazareth

of *Mass Intentions* plaque, memorializing the soon-to-be priests’ commitment to each say a monthly Mass for TC’s seminarians, faculty, and staff throughout the 2023-24 year. In addition, the Student Government Association (SGA) president, Deacon Jacob Gruber (Pittsburgh), handed the SGA president’s reigns over to Elias Hazkial (Maronite Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles), with a parting gift surprise: a wooden gavel. Father Jim Froelich, O.F.M. Cap., was also given a tribute, recognizing his retirement after 13 years of service to TC as beloved formation advisor, spiritual director, and “small group” facilitator for so many seminarians.

This evening held another moment of farewell, with the announcement that Rector Ciriaco will be moving on to another ministry as the Lilly Endowment Chair of Homiletics at St. Mary’s Seminary & University in Baltimore. In his remarks, vice-rector Father Chris Arockiaraj recalled how Father Ciriaco stepped up to address the unique challenges of his various roles at TC since 2015, especially during his last three years as rector. Besides his unflinching commitment in various roles, he brought other gifts: “His love of the saints and holy images and his expertise in homiletics have been great blessings he shared here at TC, and will share at St. Mary’s.” Father Ciriaco deeply appreciated the vice-rector’s accolades, as well as the moving words from Deacon Gruber on behalf of the SGA and the entire graduating class.

“Those who go, stay, and those who stay, go.”

St. Francis de Sales

The rector took the opportunity to marvel at how wonderful it was for him to look out upon all those present in full knowledge of the beautiful changes that the Spirit had inspired in them while at TC. He pointed out that it will be like this for the future priests present, when they too will move on from congregations, looking out with affection and gratitude, perhaps at a final Mass, upon all those they have connected with. The words of St. Francis de Sales help us to appreciate such important transitions among the faithful: “Those who go, stay, and those who stay, go.” Father Ciriaco will be taking his TC memories and friendships with him to St. Mary’s, while those at TC will keep at heart all he has given them during his tenure. ■



Father Jim Froelich, right, accepted the rector’s heartfelt best wishes after eight years of friendship and formation work together.



Father Chris Arockiaraj presented Father Ciriaco with a parting gift: a montage of reproductions of the icons he acquired during his tenure as rector to grace the halls of TC.



Deacon Nick Rapkoch presents the *Pledge of Mass Intentions* to the seminary community.



Prayer for the Beatification of Mother Mary Lange

Almighty and Eternal God, you granted Mother Mary Lange extraordinary trust in your providence. You endowed her with humility, courage, holiness, and an extraordinary sense of service to the poor and the sick. You enabled her to found the Oblate Sisters of Providence and provided educational, social, and spiritual ministry especially to the African American community. Mother Lange's love for all enabled her to see Christ in each person, and the pain of prejudice and racial hatred never blurred that vision.

Deign to raise her to the highest honors of the altar in order that, through her intercession, more souls may come to a deeper understanding and more fervent love of you.

Heavenly Father, glorify your heart by granting also this favor [mention your request here], which we ask through the intercession of your faithful servant, Mother Mary Lange. ■

Mother Mary Lange, O.S.P. (1789–1882)

This past November, two new paintings were unveiled at Theological College of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and Mother Mary Lange. Both were painted by Sulpician artist, Father Peter Wm. Grey, P.S.S., and commissioned by a generous donor. They are reminders of the significant collaboration between the Sulpician Fathers and women religious in American Catholic history. In this Spotlight, we focus on Mother Mary Lange.

Elizabeth Clarisse Lange was born in Haiti in 1789 of parents of mixed race. Her father was a plantation slave and her mother was the daughter of the plantation owner. During the Haitian revolution, the Lange family moved to Cuba, where Elizabeth received an excellent education. She left Cuba in the early 1800s and immigrated to the United States, where she settled in the city of Baltimore. Elizabeth was fluent in French, Spanish, and English and used her linguistic skills to teach the neighborhood's African American children in her own home. Always devout in the practice of her Catholic faith, Elizabeth would attend Mass in the lower chapel of St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore. It was here that she met and befriended a Sulpician priest, Father James Hector Joubert. Together they taught catechism to the children of the area and Father Joubert encouraged Elizabeth in her prayer life and ministry.

It was Elizabeth's desire to devote her life as a religious sister but, at the time, "women of color" could not join Catholic religious orders. Elizabeth and Father Joubert decided to establish the first religious order for women of color known as the Oblate Sisters of Providence. With several companions, Elizabeth professed vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience and was named the superior of the order, as Mother Mary Lange. In Baltimore, she established the first school for African American children in the country. It is still in existence today.

Providence was always on the side of Mother Lange as she underwent many trials and tribulations during her life to establish her order. Mother Lange experienced racism often, both from society and the Church she loved and served. She overcame her obstacles with patience and a firm faith. Mother Lange guided her congregation of women religious until her death on February 3, 1882. Her cause for canonization has been introduced in Rome and is advancing.

The painting of Mother Lange that hangs in the hallway here at TC depicts her with arms raised in prayer as an oblation. The term "oblate" means "an offering to God." The artist has envisioned Mother Lange offering her prayer to the Lord on behalf of all the struggles she encountered, the racism she had to face, and the racism still evident in our current society. Her arms are raised in oblation for her religious community that is still active today and for the work she shared with the Sulpicians as she continues to intercede for us all, especially the seminarians in formation. The painting of Mother Lange reminds all who walk the hallways of TC of this valiant woman's contribution to the Church, the need to collaborate with women in ministry, and the struggles and tensions that still exist with racism in our society and Church. These are all concerns we have addressed in this year's formation program at TC (see Page 17).

May Mother Lange's example inspire us all to work for justice and equality for all those who suffer from discrimination. May she intercede for us and the Church so that all may find their place within the Church to build the kingdom of God here on earth. Let us pray for the canonization of Mother Lange so that her life and message may reach all corners of the Church throughout the world. ■



To the Alumni and Students of Theological College

The following editorial was solicited from Archdiocese of Washington's Auxiliary Bishop Phillip Hannan in January 1957, by *The Crossroads* editorial board who requested "some thoughts on the needs of the times in their relation to the priesthood in which we all share or hope to share." May it serve as inspiration for our recent graduates, seminarians, and alumni!
(Continued on Page 10)

Graduate Witnesses

Theologian Reflections

Rev. Mr. William Buckley
Diocese of Richmond

Except for my pastoral year in 2020–2021, I have spent each of the past six years living at TC; thus, the community has formed me in many ways. I am very grateful for all my experiences here.

I have appreciated the guidance of the faculty throughout my time at TC. Several priests have come and gone during my time here and each has impacted me in a different way. I am especially grateful for the guidance and support of my formation advisor, who has patiently worked through all the different aspects of formation with me over the years. For me, figuring out how best to engage with the different aspects of formation has been a learning process. The more I have been open and honest with the Lord, with myself, and with the people around me, the more I have seen the Lord's work in gradually shaping me into the man and the priest he is calling me to be.

I have found the pastoral formation opportunities to be particularly valuable during my time at TC. I was able to do direct service with the poor during my first year at a local day shelter for men; my second year, I taught a class of seventh graders as they prepared for their Confirmation; my third year, I worked as a chaplain in a hospital. Finally, during these last two years, I have been able to serve

in a local parish. Parish ministry has been my favorite pastoral assignment. Serving at St. Mark the Evangelist parish has given me the opportunity to continue exercising diaconal ministry each week in different ways, both in English and in Spanish: assisting at Mass, preaching, baptizing, offering talks and reflections, serving in the food pantry, and gathering with the young adult group. These experiences have continued to draw my heart toward parish ministry that I hope to do as a priest.

TC has also been a place where I have learned alongside other seminarians to live in community. The men with whom I lived inspired me and taught me a great deal. I hope the friendships fostered here will help us build fraternity with brother priests, and that we may continue to support one another in being faithful to our priestly vocation.



Theological College's 2023 graduates, front row from left: James Buttner, Nicolas Rapkoch, Peter Bui, and Cesar Garcia. Back row, from left: Gregory Schettini, Vincent Vu, William Buckley, André Sicard, Jacob Gruber, and Austin Hoodenpyle. Not pictured: Paul Kucharski (see Page 28).

From Bishop Hannan

Current events are revealing with crushing impact that the elementary struggle of the world is between the forces of God and those of darkness. Every major recent event has had an unmistakable theological background. The same is true in our country, though events here are of a different order and lack, fortunately, any bloody clashes.

This is the hour for priests. But it is the hour only for completely dedicated and sacrificing priests, those who know that souls are not saved by “metered service” or rigidly fixed hour ministrations. In fact, it is particularly true in our country where social changes and longer leisure hours (with their concomitant problems) create a challenge for all thinking people. Millions outside the Church realize that such times demand the strong discipline of Christian thinking if we are to avoid wholesale degeneracy. Those who look to the Church, those who speak with Catholic priests, expect to find the spirit of Christian sacrifice and discipline which alone can rescue the world.

Obviously, a priest cannot be effective unless he is sympathetic and easy to approach. This does not imply that he can be wavering or irresolute in principle or self-discipline. People do not come for counsel to those who are not firm in their principles. They come only because they wish the security of the Rock of Peter.

As the Holy Father [Pope Pius XII] noted recently in his encyclical on the condition of Hungary, people are willing, in the last analysis, to sacrifice every worldly possession and life itself to achieve peace and freedom. Certainly, aspirants to the priesthood cannot be content with any less devotion to the cause of Christ. ■

Rev. Mr. Peter Bui

Diocese of Worcester

I am so grateful to my diocese and the formation faculty and staff at Theological College for providing me with opportunities to grow, learn, and prepare myself for ministry as a priest of Jesus Christ. These six years of maturation have been incredibly transformative, and I believe that all my experiences — successes and challenges — have been guided by the Holy Spirit. With the help of God’s grace, I’ve been able to deepen my relationship with God, to recognize his love more profoundly, and to better share it with others. Since entering seminary, I’ve developed a newfound appreciation for philosophy and theology through the courses offered by the faculty of The Catholic University of America. They were edifying, both intellectually and spiritually, because they helped me to see and understand the world through different lenses.

However, most transformative were my pastoral experiences in the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., I discovered that each church community has its own culture and personality. Through the seminary program, I was given the opportunity to serve at Vietnamese- and Spanish-speaking parishes, though my proficiency in both languages is limited. I thought my ignorance of these languages would be a barrier to my work in ministry, but my weaknesses actually allowed me to experience worship in new and formative ways because they taught me to trust in the work of the Holy Spirit, even if I did not always understand it. I was most touched by the faith and devotion of the people of God, a faith that has inspired my own, because they were doing their best to love God and keep their families close to his Church. They continued to trust that he was always at work even among daily challenges, losses, and struggles — a lesson I know will be most helpful in the future.

Rev. Mr. James Buttner

Diocese of Syracuse

As I conclude my studies, I am struck by the curious (and perhaps disconcerting) feeling that I know very little. After two years of philosophy studies and four years of graduate theology I may have expected to feel thoroughly educated. Yet, what I find myself most conscious of is not my knowledge but my ignorance — by the recognition of how much there is still to learn. This is not a critique of the academic program by any means! Instead, I am re-discovering what my formators and spiritual director have explained over the years: that the study of theology is not ultimately about acquiring knowledge, like ammunition; it is about learning the Catholic tradition in order to understand the mind of the Church and to think in harmony with her, as a theologian.

Essential to this kind of thinking is the sense of wonder and reverence for the mystery of God and his creation. Thus, I am encouraged to find this sense of wonder being cultivated, even as I conclude my degree program. I certainly feel confident that I have learned a great many things, and I have already witnessed how my studies have informed my own life and my ministry. At the same time, I am sure

that I am not “done” learning or being a true “student,” and the same is true for my discipleship in general. My time here has helped to open my eyes to the great depth and richness of the life of faith, and I look forward to the next chapter of my discipleship as I now seek to follow Jesus Christ as his priest.

I am also filled with a sense of gratitude for TC and the people whom the Lord has placed in my life since I arrived here in August of 2016. I have met many incredible people and seminarians, and studied with truly excellent University faculty. I have benefited from the wonderful TC office and facilities staff, and the hard-working, dedicated Sodexo staff who take such good care of us. Most especially, I am grateful to the many Sulpician fathers who have dedicated their lives to the formation of diocesan priests. They have truly been instruments of the Lord’s grace and mercy in my own life, and I pray for their continued ministry. In addition to the entire faculty, many thanks to some special individuals during my time here whose mentorship I greatly benefited from: the late Dr. Gerald Muller, Dr. David Lang, and Father Jim McKearney for their musical tutelage; Fathers Gerald McBrearity, Hy Nguyen, Leo Gajardo, Martin Burnham, Jim Froehlich, Mel Blanchette, and David Thayer for their guidance and friendship. I pray that my future ministry is characterized by the generosity I have been shown by these and so many others during my time here.

Rev. Mr. Cesar Garcia

Diocese of Dallas

As I look back at my time at Theological College, I am grateful for the many ways God has manifested his great love. Through my seminarian brothers, faculty,

“This is the hour for priests. But it is the hour only for completely dedicated and sacrificing priests, those who know that souls are not saved by ‘metered service’ or rigidly fixed hour ministrations.

Bishop Phillip Hannan

staff, spiritual director, professors, and friends, I have been given an incredible experience to be formed into the man God has called me to be in preparation for the priesthood. I am also thankful for the faith and personal growth that have been nourished within the seminary community and with my pastoral assignments, with an ever-growing desire to serve the people of God with fidelity. And lastly, I am thankful for the hope for the Church that has been cultivated as I am sent alongside my classmates to give up our lives in response to God’s invitation to participate in the ministerial priesthood of his son Jesus Christ. *Ad majorem Dei gloriam.*

Rev. Mr. Jacob Gruber

Diocese of Pittsburgh

I am so grateful for my years of formation at Theological College. I did not know what to expect when I was sent here for studies, and my preparation for coming was not without some trepidation. But I distinctly remember the welcome I received on my first day. Within moments of pulling in, a smiling orientation team opened the door to welcome me, while other seminarians absconded with my car and belongings, and set to work on preparing my room. The people on this team were volunteers. They loved TC, and they wanted to share that with everyone else that comes through

these doors. Orientation anywhere is a confusing time, but I understood one thing clearly in mine: I matter, I belong here.

Over the years, I have discerned in the men here a remarkable mix of seriousness and levity. The formators and seminarians are serious: They are about the Lord’s call, which demands an ever-greater offering of one’s own self in a formative process. And there is a levity: In so many ways, the guys have formed a community characterized by festivity and creativity. One of my most profound joys — not without its challenges! — has been my time as president of the Student Government Association, where I saw first hand the gifts and talents of the seminarians of TC and its faculty, as well as inspiring moments of growth and development.

I have been warned by wise priests that no seminary adequately prepares a man for all the twists and turns of priestly life. If so, then a seminary is not to be judged by the standard of impeccable prescience, but by the tools it gives a man for managing when his resources come short. To that end, TC deserves great praise. It has taught me that a priest is nothing less than a man after God’s own heart, a living icon of Christ. A priest’s greatest resource is the heart of Christ: adored in prayer, understood in study, imitated in ministry, and emulated in the priest’s own humanity — Christ in our hearts, minds, and hands.

I wish to express my gratitude to the Sulpicians who have walked with me along the way, for their priestly witness and for their dedication. Theirs is a task of thankless labors and quiet miracles in the unseen work of forming hearts. May God richly bless Theological College, and may Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom, ever be its model and patroness.

Rev. Mr. Austin Hoodenpyle
Diocese of Fort Worth

This quotation, below, from the *Book of Isaiah*, which serves as the entrance antiphon for Laetare Sunday, also expresses my own sentiments as I approach ordination to the priesthood and the end of my time at Theological College. I came to Theological College in the fall of 2015 as a Basselin Scholar and remained at TC for my theology studies. This period included significant growth as well as difficulty and my fair share of “mourning.” Nevertheless, I learned in that time to persevere in discernment and trust in the results of that discernment. I have also learned to seek out those ways in which adversity may serve as a stimulant to growth and an exercise in virtue.

The nearer I come to priestly ordination, the more I realize what a radical change it will be in my life. I look forward to that change with a mix of excitement and nervousness. To some degree, my time in seminary, including those years spent

at Theological College, has formed and prepared me to meet the challenges of priesthood head on. In another way, I recognize that one cannot really know what being a priest is like until he is one. I look forward to finding out.

Mr. Paul Kucharski
Archdiocese of New York

Above all else, I’ve appreciated the fraternity here at Theological College. Because it is a national seminary, I’ve had the privilege of meeting seminarians from around the country, listening to their vocation stories, and learning about their dioceses. And I have been supported in my own vocational journey by their friendships, prayers, and good humor. Though I’ve not told them directly, I admire all the young men here who had the courage to pursue the Lord’s call right out of high school or college. Alas, I did not have the same courage when I heard the call at their age, but in God’s marvelous providence I have no doubt he will make good use of my life experience in ministry, something that formation here has helped me to see.

I will deeply miss the camaraderie of prayer, especially stopping by the chapel some odd hour to visit Our Lord in the Eucharist and finding brothers there praying the breviary or rosary. More than anything, I’ve benefited from the example of such deeply prayerful men. Despite the ongoing scandals and divisions

within the Church in this country, I have hope for its future based on the integrity of the seminarians who are being sent to Theological College, those whom I am blessed to call my friends.

Rev. Mr. Nicolas Rapkoch
Diocese of Raleigh

A lot has happened in my five years — including pastoral year — at Theological College. There were many changes and challenges over these years but there remained one constant through it all: Jesus Christ. What I’ve come to reflect upon is that no matter what state of life you are called to, Jesus Christ needs to be, and will be if you let him, the primary formator in your life. When you allow him to form you, you find him alive and working through the people around you in a variety of ways.

What I am taking away from Theological College is just that: the awareness that if I allow Jesus Christ to work with me as my Lord, guide, and friend, everything will fall into place as it needs to and he will remain with me in it all. Theological College provides the place for this to happen for those whom Christ is calling to his priesthood. He has been here with me the whole time, working in his marvelous ways through the people I have encountered while in seminary. It has been so important to have been given the space and environment that Theological College provided to hear God, to learn from him and about him, and to discern my own calling to his priesthood.

Of course, none of this is possible on one’s own. God places us in communities for a reason. I would like to thank the great friends I have made while here, those who have been a source of constant joy. Of course, I would also like to thank the

faculty and staff who have made it possible to have this blessed time with the Lord so I can better hear that unceasing call, “Follow Me.”

Mr. Gregory Schettini
Diocese of Dallas

In his document on the formation of priests, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, St. John Paul II described formation within the seminary as “a continuation in the Church of the apostolic community gathered about Jesus, listening to his word, proceeding toward the Easter experience, awaiting the gift of the Spirit for the mission.” I am grateful that my time at Theological College has allowed me to gather with brothers who also seek to have their hearts configured more fully to the heart of the Son. It is a gift to hear and to witness how the Lord is working in and through the lives of these men. We are preparing for active, sacramental ministry, but a seminarian through the graces received from his baptism and confirmation is already called to share in the ministry of the Church.

In teaching catechetical classes at the parish, in offering words of encouragement to pilgrims outside the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, in listening to the suffering of a grieving mother during a mission trip, I have already begun to share in that ministry of the Church of reconciling the world to God. It has been inspiring to see brother seminarians who have shared in the same ministry now serve the Church as her priests. Theological College has been a place of encounter with God, a place of waiting in the upper room for the outpouring of the Spirit, a place from which to be sent out on mission.

Rev. Mr. André Sicard
Diocese of Salt Lake City

“The freedom to be formed.” This motto has been the quintessential formational experience of my time at Theological College. I am grateful that I have had the freedom to experience growth in who I am as a person, to grow in my relationship with God and with those around me, to open my mind to the study of God and the Church, and to learn to be more aware of the Spirit moving in me and in others as I serve the people of God. I am thankful to the formation faculty, especially my formation advisor and spiritual director, fellow seminarians, pastoral supervisors, and so many people who walked with me and accompanied me on this road of discipleship toward ministry in and for the body of Christ.

The opportunity to be in Washington, D.C., has offered me the freedom of opening my horizons in being in touch with the universality of the Church and of having unforgettable experiences. My pastoral assignments, especially these past two years at St. Matthew’s Cathedral, have given me wonderful ministerial experiences that have helped me to take responsibility for my own vocational formation as a missionary disciple.

I am particularly grateful to TC for helping me view art as foundational in my spiritual life and in the spirituality of priesthood. Whether it was serving as organist or pianist for liturgies or learning that poetry and artwork can be a place where God speaks, I have been able to lean into the creativity of the Spirit in my life. I was introduced to the poet Mary Oliver who taught me that prayer “doesn’t need to be the blue iris . . . but the doorway into thanks.” I “met” the artist Corita Kent who challenged me to “be happy whenever

you can manage it. Enjoy yourself. It’s lighter than you think” (Rule 9 from Immaculate Heart College Art Department Rules). An appreciation for the arts has uniquely enriched my life and, in turn, my vocation.

Every journey has its highs and lows, but I finish my seminary formation assured that, with the freedom to be formed, Jesus Christ has called me by name to serve the priestly people. I am confident, thanks to all those who have journeyed alongside me and because of all the experiences I have lived, in going out into the world and saying, with Mary Magdalene, “I have seen the Lord!” (*Jn* 20:18). And I know that he is truly alive.

Rev. Mr. Vincent Tinh Vu
Archdiocese of Washington

On my ordination invitations to family and friends is the humble response of our Blessed Mother, “May it be done to me according to your word” (*Lk* 1: 38). I believe her message also sums up my time at Theological College because proper discernment requires lots of prayer, trust, and learning to surrender to the will of God, who is able to make the yoke easy and the burden light (cf. *Mt* 11:30).

The moment I realized that God was calling me to become his priest, I was filled with a profound love that seemed to fill my entire body and soul. And, through the gifts of formation and discernment, that initial spark has grown into an intense flame. Like the prophet Elijah, my heart cries out, “I have been most zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts” (1 *Kgs* 19:14). Even during challenging times, when this flame was nothing more than a smoldering wick, the Lord did not quench it (cf. *Is* 42:3) because I had the help and guidance of my formators, spiritual directors, and

Rejoice Jerusalem and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning; exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.

Is 66:10-11

brother seminarians who were there to accompany me on my journey.

Another great blessing I received during my formation was the renewed desire “to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life” (Ps 27:4). I believe that this is what seminary formation is all about — that is, to encounter the Lord more profoundly day and night, not only in the sacraments but also in the minuteness of daily life. The seminary has been a healthy community where “brothers dwell together as one” (Ps 133:1) and, with the prayers and support of these brothers, I have matured in self-knowledge and in being better able to recognize and see God’s providence and hands at work.

I was at TC because God wanted me to be formed as his priest. Each day, I pray that his will continues to kindle the flame in my heart so that, as with Mary’s *fiat*, I can help to bring Christ, the Prince of Peace, into the world and forever “proclaim his faithfulness through all ages” (Ps 89:1).

Basselin Memoirs

Benjamin Albanese

Diocese of Raleigh

Thesis

“The Harmony of Divine Simplicity and Divine Freedom: A Response to Critics”

Director

Gregory Doolan, Ph.D.

My time at Theological College was a profoundly formative time in my life. I entered during the COVID-19 pandemic, and this made my transition from St. Charles Seminary (college division) in Philadelphia more challenging. Theological College places great emphasis on taking responsibility for one’s own formation, which allows for much personal flourishing. I felt that, in a positive sense, I was tested greatly at TC — spiritually, humanly, pastorally, and academically.

The Basselin program was an amazing

opportunity for intellectual and personal growth. My classmates were deeply devoted to Jesus Christ and never have I met men who were as committed to the study of philosophy as I did when I was in the program. I met brothers with whom I will always share a special bond, regardless of geographical distance. In addition, researching my thesis enabled me to answer a question that I had for four years. The summer I spent writing my thesis brought great peace.

Certainly, TC has room for improvement, like all seminaries, but I value the time I spent here, which was necessary for my development toward entering the priesthood, as a man and as a Christian. It provided certain challenges to me that I may not have encountered elsewhere. For that, I will be eternally thankful. Glory be to Jesus Christ!

Auguste Horner

Diocese of Rockville Centre

Thesis

“Thomas Aquinas’ Account of Voluntary Action and Choice”

Director

Kevin White, Ph.D.

The past three years at TC have formed me in unexpected and beautiful ways. God in his love has revealed to me more and more who I am. He has granted me continued

Proclaim his faithfulness through all ages.

Ps 89:1



Basselin graduates, from left, Auguste Horner, Jakob Pohlman, Benjamin Albanese, Michael Marincel, Joseph Krug, and Jack Kristensen.

healing from the sins of my past and conversion from the failings of my present. He has filled me with a sense of mission to share with others what I have experienced and known in him. That mission he has configured to the mission of the Church, so that the two are increasingly one.

I thank the community of seminarians at TC for their acceptance, support, and fraternal correction. I also thank the faculty, especially my spiritual director and formator, for their guidance. I thank my bishop and the people of Rockville Centre for having sent me here to grow in deeper knowledge and love of the Lord. May God who gave the increase be praised.

Jack Kristensen

Archdiocese of New York

Thesis

“Cicero and Aquinas on the Virtue of Religion”

Director

V. Bradley Lewis, Ph.D.

My time at TC has been, in different ways, a source of healing and personal growth for me. The collaborative relationships and candid conversations I have had in spiritual direction and formation have helped me better understand myself with my weaknesses and strengths. Because of this work, I have been able to put intellectual formation, the heart of the Basselin Scholars Program, more in its proper context in my life. I hope that this work will help me be a joyful, holy, and happy priest in the not-too-distant future, and someone who can better use his gifts to serve others instead of someone who is dominated by, and dominating with, their gifts.

My thesis topic this year was on the virtue of religion in Cicero and Thomas

Aquinas. Aquinas brings out something implicit in Cicero’s work when he says that the virtues of religion and holiness are the same reality. While both affirm that the virtue of religion is about “justice toward God,” Aquinas completes what Cicero thought by affirming that a relationship with God is something rooted in love. Aquinas answers Cicero-the-Skeptic’s question, “What is the nature of the divine?” by saying, “God is love.” This is something I have come to know to be true more and more deeply in my concrete experience over the past three years.

Joseph Krug

Diocese of Rockville Centre

Thesis

“Aquinas on Truth as the Foundation of Language”

Director

Gregory Doolan, Ph.D.

Between the classes, the fraternity, the hours spent in long conversation, and the hours spent in prayer, my experience in the Basselin Scholars Program has been one I would not trade for anything. I have made friendships that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. We have grown together through ups and downs, through academic challenges, through prayer, and through discussion. Sometimes, it feels as though the last three years have been comprised of one long conversation, about everything — different ways of praying, divine freedom, the eternity of the world, the nature of signs, different metaphysical systems, the fundamental structure of the universe ... and the list goes on. My classmates, whom I am proud to call some of my closest friends, have been unfailing witnesses to me of the virtues of truth and charity, rooted in the Gospel.

Academically, the Basselin program has lived up to its reputation as a rigorous and intense course of study. However challenging at times, I am happy to have had the opportunity to be in the classroom with professors who sincerely believe the material that they are teaching, while at the same time drawing the best from their students. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Gregory Doolan, my thesis director, for his true skill as a professor of metaphysics. I am also immensely indebted to our two rhetoric professors, Sister Anna Wray and Mrs. Cornelia Hart. They made us all better speakers.

As I look forward to the next chapter, I know I will greatly miss Theological College and Catholic University. But I am filled with great joy as I see the next generation of Basselin scholars. I will hold dear my memories of the Basselin program.

Michael Marincel

Diocese of Fort Worth

Thesis

“The Possibility of Eternal Creation in Bonaventure and Aquinas”

Director

Timothy B. Noone, Ph.D.

Reflecting on the last three years here at Theological College and The Catholic University of America, I am especially grateful for the seemingly boundless opportunities offered in order for me to grow and, when needed, to be stretched toward a fuller capacity for self-gift in Christ. I look back with deep appreciation for the quality of the Catholic University School of Philosophy. I am sincerely thankful for all that I have been graced to receive through the excellent professors, especially Dr. Noone, my thesis director.

Furthermore, the diversity and scope of pastoral ministry opportunities at TC are boundless, and I am grateful for the many powerful ministerial experiences I have shared, especially with the poor and with the deaf and disabled communities in the Archdiocese of Washington.

The rigorous nature of the academics forced me to be profoundly intentional about the other three dimensions of formation (human, pastoral, and spiritual) because, with the substantial intellectual load, it took a great deal of effort to make adequate space in my schedule and in my mind for the other necessary aspects of formation. It is not common to find someone who says that formation in seminary is an easy experience, and I suppose that is true of any period of testing or of higher education. If it was not difficult, how would we learn to surrender to the leadership of Christ so that he might increase — until it is no longer we who live but Christ living within us?

Most of us striving toward priesthood are not perfect. We need to be refined by the Lord, who desires an undivided heart in us so that, through our total self-gift in ministry, God may glorify himself in his Church. Therefore, we praise the Lord

“People do not come for counsel to those who are not firm in their principles. They come only because they wish the security of the Rock of Peter.”

Bishop Phillip Hannan

who sits and refines the sons of Levi as one who refines silver and, with St. Paul, we glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, because it is not simply an obstacle to be endured. It is the very bridge of salvation established by Christ to span the infinite gap between man’s sinfulness and the thrice holy perfection of the Father.

Jakob Pohlman
Diocese of Worcester

Thesis
“Entäußerung und Entfremdung:
Karl Marx on Alienation”

Director
Michael Rohlf, Ph.D.

My thesis topic may raise some eyebrows, but I think it is critical to engage with Marx’s thought, especially in a world where his thought is often said to be so prevalent. As Pope Benedict XVI remarks in *Spe Salvi*, the great error of Marxism is that it attempts to find a remedy for “the fall” in material things; it thinks that by engineering social situations and providing material goods, it can save man’s soul. Marx’s view, however, is a fundamentally flawed view of human beings, which denies the capacity of man to transcend his material conditions, and also denies the role of a personal God who has a relationship with every human person.

The dignity of human beings demands an authentic account of personhood and community life for which Marx’s thought ultimately fails to consider. Nevertheless, he is incredibly useful in pointing to the ways in which modern economic practices contradict and even fight against that dignity. As, God willing, future priests,

we will have to minister to people who are suffering the effects of these practices and who are experiencing economic hardship. By critically reflecting on the shortfalls of our society, we will be able to approach the spiritual treasures of the Church with renewed appreciation and be able to be a beacon of hope in a world which has largely lost its direction.

One of the most valuable facets of the Basselin program has been the *communauté éducatrice*, in the words of the French School of Spirituality, which the program forms and nurtures among its participants. My fondest memories of the program have been the passionate conversations about great philosophers — such as St. Thomas, Hegel, and Husserl — that we have engaged in, in the Basselin library, in the hallways, and at the dinner table. The intellectual and spiritual brotherhood we have shared over the past few years has been invaluable.

I am incredibly grateful to Dr. Rohlf, to the professors of the School of Philosophy, and to my confreres for the intellectual guidance they have given me. I also would like to express my thanks to the faculty, staff, and students of Theological College who have provided formation for me over the past years. Particularly, I would like to thank my advisor, Father Jim Froelich of the Capuchins, and my spiritual director, Father Christopher Begg of Catholic University, for their constant support and prayers. I also want to thank Father Dominic Ciriaco for making Theological College more conducive to study, prayer, and human growth. It has been a true honor to be a part of TC during this time. ■

SEMINARY LIFE

Facing the Challenges of Today’s Church

Throughout the year, the Theological College formation program offers many opportunities for growth in the human, spiritual, academic, and pastoral areas of development. The evenings and weekends of recollection, rector’s conferences, Sulpician meditations, and community workshops are designed to inform and fortify those preparing for a lifetime of ministry to the people of God. This year, the two remarkable weekends highlighted below — one on preaching and one on racism — incisively addressed the climate and needs of the Church in this moment in history, and were greatly appreciated by the entire TC community.

Ars Praedicandi

Cardinal Timothy Dolan
and Rev. Thomas Lombardo, O.P.

Jacob Gruber
Fourth Theology, Diocese of Pittsburgh

Paul Kucharski
Third Theology, Archdiocese of New York

It’s no secret that Catholic preaching needs a lot of work. Many people cite the quality of preaching as a reason for their leaving the Church and, to a certain extent, who could blame them? The Gospel really is good news, and its effect really is beautiful. But if our preaching is not demonstrating that goodness and beauty, something is missing. Change is needed at every level but, in a special way, beginning in seminaries.

Preaching is an art form, something calling for technique, creativity, and an aesthetic sensibility. By reframing the ministry

of preaching in these terms, the real glory of the great preachers throughout history comes into focus. The lucidity of Ambrose, the rhetoric of Augustine, the poetry of Bernard, the simplicity of the Curé of Ars: these were matters of artistry, not merely science.

During the November Weekend of Recollection, Theological College invited two speakers to help seminarians to understand how to best respond to this great need in the Church of today. Timothy Cardinal Dolan and Father Nicholas Lombardo, O.P., each addressed different aspects of preaching the good news masterfully. In attendance were not only seminarians, deacons, and priests representing Theological College, but also guests from St. Mary’s Seminary, the Dominican House of Studies, Capuchin College, Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary, and the Paulist Fathers House of Mission and Studies.

Cardinal Dolan noted that preaching is an ecclesial vocation — that is, an activity that is from, for, and within the Church, the Bride of Christ. As such, the priest who preaches must take himself to be acting *in persona Christi*, though not in such a way, of course, that his personality disappears. Rather, the goal is for Christ to shine through the temperament, style, and words of the individual preacher. This can only happen, the Cardinal argued, if a priest’s homily begins with prayer and the conviction of John the Baptist: “He must increase and I must decrease.” Moving from the theological to the practical, the cardinal offered, with his characteristic candor and humor, a range of concrete suggestions for preparing a homily, including the need for brevity and simplicity of speech.

Father Lombardo’s talk outlined principles of preaching that he received from a beloved and recently deceased mentor, Rev. William John Burke, O.P. His central message was that it is not enough for a homily to have good content — care must be taken to convey the content in a manner that is accessible to the assembly.



Cardinal Timothy Dolan, left, discusses *in persona Christi* preaching with the TC community.

Father Nicholas Lombardo, O.P., right, emphasized accessibility in conveying the hope-filled good news to future congregations.

Thus, the preacher must address the congregation's felt needs (not just their objective needs), use concrete examples, and draw on personally experienced insights. Above all else, the preacher must convey the good news, even when talking about difficult topics like sin and damnation. If the homily does not convey hope, Father Lombardo argued, then it has failed as a homily, no matter how well-delivered and theologically astute.

The talks beautifully complemented one another and were enthusiastically received by those in attendance. Many of us thought of our patron and model, St. John Vianney, who inspired the people of his time and is surely interceding for the people of our own. May he continue to be a strong patron of our seminarians, as Theological College seeks to produce curés of a new sort of Ars, curés of the *Ars Praedicandi*.

On Racism

Archbishop Shelton Fabre and Ansel Augustine, Ph.D.

Jakob Pohlman
Third Basselin, Diocese of Worcester

“But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?”
1 Jn 3:17

At the outset of second semester, Theological College had the privilege to host Dr. Ansel Augustine of New Orleans and Archbishop Shelton Fabre of Louisville for a human formation community workshop about how to approach the sin of racism and its implications in priestly ministry. The seminarians gathered in Viéban Hall on the evening of Friday, Jan. 27, and the following morning to hear the speakers present virtually.

Dr. Ansel Augustine is the New Orleans area director for Vagabond Missions. Has served on the board of directors for the National Catholic Young Adult Ministry Association and the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry. He is an Emmy-nominated film producer, and recent author of *Leveling the Praying Field: Can the Church We Love, Love Us Back?*, which tells the story of racial inequality and persecution in the Catholic

Church from a personal and historical perspective and offers a way forward for today's generation. Approaching the issue of racism from a personal perspective, Dr. Augustine frankly shared his experience of ministering for over 20 years to demonstrate how the “original sin of racism” permeates many aspects of the Church's approach to ministry and how, as future ministers, we can work to build a Church that is truly catholic (i.e., universal) in its scope.

He gave three concrete ways in which we can break down racism in our parish communities and seek communion with our brothers and sisters. First, we can make our churches places where people of differing backgrounds feel comfortable sharing and expressing themselves. The Church has always been described by the Church Fathers as “the City of God” and a safe haven for all peoples. Our role as Christians with an evangelical mission is to make that heavenly reality present on earth in our imitation of Christ's own practice of charity. Any act or attitude of racism or discrimination is clearly a grave sin against charity and contrary to Catholic life.



This year, the Theological College community gathered for a “Contra Racism Holy Hour.”



Archbishop Fabre met with seminarians via Zoom.

Second, we should listen to the stories of those we welcome into the safe spaces of the Church. By listening to each other's stories, we recognize the image of God within them and learn about experiences which differ from our own. Other peoples' stories allow us to recognize the common adoption we have all received as children of God, and they can also shed light on the diverse, beautiful ways that cultures have found of manifesting that filiation.

Third, Dr. Augustine urged us to empower and include those cultural differences within our parish ministry, since this allows people to express themselves in continuity with a tradition that has influenced them immensely. Our role as community leaders, he remarked, is to encourage the participation of the laity in the daily life of the Church and to accompany them as they tell their stories in a wider sphere.

Archbishop Shelton Fabre of Louisville presented the following morning. Archbishop Fabre was recently moved from the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, La., to Louisville by the Holy Father, and he is also the chair of the USCCB's Ad Hoc Committee on Racism. He was a major contributor and author of *Open Wide our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love*, the USCCB's pastoral letter against racism. He approached the topic of racism from a particularly priestly perspective, emphasizing the necessity of preaching regularly against racism.

The archbishop's convictions spring from witnessing racism as a prominent issue in American public life. Quoting Karl Barth,

“Unless the Lord build the house, those who build it labor in vain.”
Ps 127:1

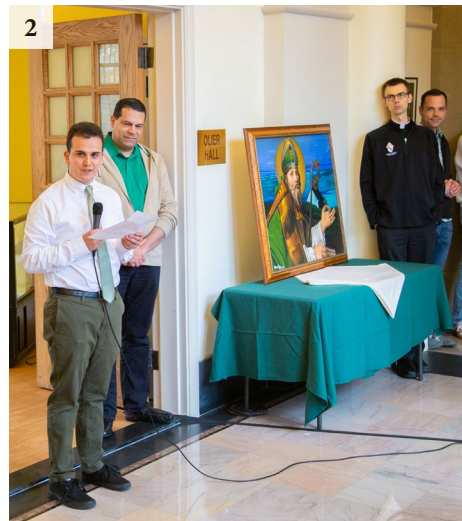
His Excellency said that preaching should be done “with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other.” The silence of the Church on such an important cultural issue is a cause of scandal to many people. As future priests, we must be ready to preach the Gospel's message at both opportune and inopportune moments.

Many people try to justify racism by pointing to crime or other factors, and others want to use the issue of racism to simply further their own political agenda. But the archbishop said that, as men of the Gospels, we must stand apart from such positions. We must condemn racism for what it is — a sin, and an offense against charity — and offer a way forward. This must be our starting position before even beginning to consider various political expediencies.

Overall, the two speakers exhorted us to take seriously the message of Christian love that the Gospel presents to us, and they invited us to reflect on how to speak out against this powerful and pervasive social sin. Only by returning to the powerful love of God for all of his children will we be able to overcome the deep wounds that plague our society. ■

Annual Art Show

This year Theological College celebrated St. Patrick's Day with the opening of its annual art show, titled, "May the Road Rise Up to Meet You: Artistry and the Irish Imagination." The show opened, as is now custom, with musical and other cultural entertainment from talented seminarians. Seminarians, guests, and faculty enjoyed a convivial reception together as they appreciated and discussed the artwork. ■



- 1 – Irish Sky Series: *Connemara* by Elizabeth Hueber (transparent watercolor).
- 2 – Patrick Sweeney (2-B, Albany), the organizer of this year's exhibit, welcomes the TC community to the opening.
- 3 – Liam Daigle (2-B, Worcester), performs a flute solo in honor of the Memorial of St. Patrick.
- 4 – Father John McNerney, TC's resident Irishman and director of Basselin scholars, discusses the works with Vincent Castaldi (3-T, New York).
- 5 – Artwork on display encompassed several styles and mediums, including photography, charcoal on paper, oil on canvas and on wood, acrylic on canvas and on wood, watercolor, and prismacolor pencil on paper.
- 6 – *Perseverance* by Deacon André Sicard.



Father Elmer spent six months to restore the shrine to the Virgin Mary on the property of the Missionaries of Charity in Dallas.



Father Elmer painted this Sankofa Bird for his parish's African American heritage celebration. This traditional Ghanaian image, a bird with its feet facing forward toward the future, reaching back to retrieve the egg of its past, symbolizes the belief that the past serves as a guide for the future; as the forward march of a people proceeds, the knowledge of the past must never be forgotten.

The Mission of Beauty

Rev. Elmer Herrera-Guzmán, TC Class of 2020, is parochial vicar at Holy Cross Catholic Parish in Dallas and chaplain for Methodist Dallas Medical Center. He was also one of the first of a team of priests who ministered in hospitals all over the diocese during the worst of the COVID-19 crisis. Here, he talks about his work and inspiration as an artist, and his experience launching Theological College's first annual art show.

Father Elmer, you organized TC's inaugural annual art show. What catalyzed this initiative?

In 2016, my first year at TC, I got into conversation with a three other seminarian artists about the connection between art and prayer. We shared that art was how we prayed! The idea of the TC art show between us, at the outset, was to communicate this passion to the wider community, to create disciples for the mission of beauty. When the opening event finally transpired in January of 2017, we had around a dozen artists (including from other houses of formation) displaying sculpture, icons, paintings, photographs, drawings, and more.

How was it received?

Very well! Some of those who attended were from outside the TC community — Catholic University, the Dominican House of Studies, the Carmelites ... People are always hungry for the true and the beautiful. Whatever we can do to keep these kinds of explorations and conversations open is a worthy service, because looking behind beauty to the Author of beauty means people can be brought into closer communion with God.

Backing up a little in your story, what drew you to a vocation to the priesthood?

I was born in Santa Rosa de Lima in El Salvador. My grandfather there had a profound conversion experience to the faith and, against so many odds, became a preacher, as did my own father later. (The Catholic Church there needs preachers because there are not enough priests to reach so many people.) My family moved to America under refugee status, and I did not hear about this family history until I was in my 20s. It affected me deeply and planted a seed.

How long have you been painting and how did you get started?

When I was 10, I reluctantly accompanied my sister to an after-school painting program, and to my surprise I was greatly encouraged by our teacher, who was a well-known local lettering and mural artist whom I admired. Later, in the U.S., I began doing murals while I was in high school, starting with the school facility, and then was offered commissions from restaurants. This supported my adventure into college life.

Did you have to "take a break" from art when the rigors of seminary life set in?

No; quite the opposite. Since I always had so many things on my mind at once, my spiritual director counseled me to use my art as a way to focus and reflect. Art became very important in my vocational journey as a transformation happened: It was no longer just a pastime but a work of prayer. I learned then to imbue my work with meaning. Much more than a

reflection of reality, I wanted it to be a meditation on the truth of reality, offering it as a prayer, sometimes for one intention or another. Being in seminary was like getting off the ocean onto a pond. This pond is calm on the exterior, allowing you to attend to the tempests and winds and questions on the inside of yourself. This requires a vigilant meditative disposition, even amid the collegial brotherhood we all need and share. In my work today, I continue this effort to imbue meaning in order to “lift” my intention to God, or the viewer to look at God, to join in prayer. I want always to be secondary, to disappear behind my work.

Who or what have been your biggest inspirations?

Well, as I said, my father and grandfather pointed the way for me. In my creative work, I rely heavily upon the inspiration of the Holy Spirit! Within the prayer ethic of creating, revelations come to me, and I understand better what I am being asked to share with others. For my iconography, I follow the methodology and prayer of the Russian Orthodox school. And I have always been greatly encouraged by St. Rose of Lima, patroness of my hometown, who was said to have done everything with a smile. I also strive to imitate the passion of St. Catherine of Sienna, who forged a way in the vineyard of the Lord even when the fruit seemed sparse: “Be who God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire!” Imagine, this eternal phrase from someone who thought her life was a failure!

What role does beauty play in the life of the faithful?

Contemplating beauty — in art or music or anywhere it manifests itself — offers a glimpse of The Beautiful. It has a role to play in pulling something out of us,

which is the impetus to contemplate the Source of this beauty. Using music as an analogy, when you listen to a wonderful piece of music, you can close your eyes and identify and marvel at the different instruments, the different movements. But when you open your eyes, you can watch the source and orchestrator of it all: the Conductor. The artist guides the eye of the beholder into a deeper search for the Creator. If you think of art as a mirror, you may see yourself in it, and it could spur questions regarding what is behind the mirror. “What is beyond?” can lead to “Who is the Creator of beauty?” and even “Who am I?” and other meaningful ontological questions.

What are you working on now?

Many of my creative endeavors are focused on restoration — something I also did while at TC. I recently refurbished a decaying statue of Mary and her outdoor shrine area for the Missionaries of Charity in our diocese. And I just completed a painting of the traditional Ghanaian “Sankofa Bird” for my parish’s Sankofa Concert Series to celebrate African American Heritage. I do whatever I can in this realm for whoever has a need or a desire to learn. My parishioners are facing some tough realities, and not only in the hospital system where I am chaplain. Life is harsh. With your eye up against the harshness, it is difficult to find beauty and peace there. Stepping back, higher realities can be glimpsed. Art, in front of us and as a metaphor, is a good way for me and my parishioners to take that step backward in contemplative thought and prayer. For example, if you have your eye too close to the sun, you see only burning and explosions. If you step back, as far back as in a painting, and ask people, “How does that painting of the sun make

you feel?” you will almost always hear an answer that includes the descriptions “beauty and peace.”

Are you selling your artwork?

I think anyone who is given a talent or gift should give it to his brothers and sisters to grow (even if it is being sold for this purpose). As for me, I do not sell my work; the only condition attached to my own art is that it must be shared, on display. When it is no longer being used, I ask that it be returned to me to start a conversation with someone else. It is so important to me that the exploration of the human/human awareness be informed theologically — otherwise, humans tend to turn away from the Creator, the author of beauty. Maybe in the future I will donate my work to a worthy charity to sell in a fundraiser. I could also offer an art class for a good cause. I like this idea as it would be a chance to teach in the hopes of creating disciples for the mission of beauty. This hope is where TC’s annual art show began!

What advice would you give to seminarians who have the desire but are struggling to find time to create?

If art is regarded as something “on top of everything else,” it will not be occupying its rightful place, especially in the very demanding time of discernment. The spiritual, academic, human, and pastoral seminarian path is long and involved, and includes everything you are wrestling with inside yourself. “One more thing,” on top of all of this, doesn’t make sense. It has to be a part of the whole journey. Let art draw you into silence, into prayer. The minute you begin to spend time this way, you are not spending it, you are investing it; you are gaining, like investing money in a spiritual bank. ■

—Suzanne Tanzi



Institution of Ministries

On January 31, Most Rev. Erik Pohlmeier (above), Bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine, presided at the Institution of Ministries ceremony at Theological College. In addition to some family and friends, other guests included Father Fabio Refosco, Provost of Rock Hill Oratory; Very Rev. Tom Sparacino, rector of St. Paul’s seminary and director of pre-ordination formation for the Diocese of Pittsburgh; and Rev. Brian Capuano, vicar for Richmond vocations.

Instituted to the ministry of acolyte were, above from left in photo: Blake Thompson (2-T, Ft. Worth), Michael Anctil (2-PT, Richmond), Jacob Daul (2-T, St. Augustine), and Johnni Do Bonfim, C.O. (2-T, Rock Hill Oratory).

Three first theologians were instituted into the ministry of lector, bottom from left in photo: Stephen Parker (St. Augustine), Peter Mallampalli (Pittsburgh), and Trent Barton (Ft. Worth). Max Korzan (1-T) of the Archdiocese of Washington, inset, was also instituted as lector the following weekend, on February 5 at the St. John Paul II Seminary in Washington, D.C. ■



Spring Semester Highlights



Father Ciriaco and TC deacons received a warm welcome from Archbishop Christophe Pierre during their annual spring visit to the Apostolic Nunciature in Washington, D.C.



The annual Prayer for Christian Unity is a public invitation for the Catholic University community to join TC seminarians and faculty to pray together for unity. This year, Father Frank DeSiano, C.S.P., President of the Paulist Evangelization Ministries, preached on the theme, "Do good; seek justice" (Is 1:17).



Iron Seminarian 2023 final competition results:

Table Tennis: Peter Mallampalli (1-T, Pittsburgh) defeated Jacob Gruber (4-T, Pittsburgh).

Darts: John Kist (3-T, Pittsburgh) defeated Nicolas Rapkoch (4-T, Raleigh)

Billiards: James Buttner (4-T, Syracuse) defeated Nicolas Rapkoch

Iron Seminarian Tournament champion: James Buttner, pictured above.



On March 22, area pastoral supervisors who mentor TC's seminarians in their ministry assignments were thanked at a banquet in honor of their selfless service. As has become custom, two awards were bestowed at the end of the evening: the Direct Service to the Poor Award to the Little Sisters of the Poor in Washington, D.C. (accepted by Sister Constance Veit, right), and the Rev. Gerald L. Brown, P.S.S. Award for Excellence in Pastoral Ministry Supervision to Monsignor Walter Rossi, rector of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.



During the past semester, Sister John Mary, O.P. (left), and Sister Hyacinth, O.P. (right), of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist (Ann Arbor Dominicans) offered a much appreciated evening of recollection titled, "Saint Dominic and the Heart of the Priest." The sisters have enjoyed being part of the TC community during the 2022-23 academic year, during which they resided in Providence Hall while working on advanced degrees at Catholic University and the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception.



On February 14, Bishop Dorsonville, former auxiliary bishop of Washington, celebrated Mass as he bid adieu to the TC community before departing for his new diocese: Houma-Thibodaux. He is pictured here with seminarians from the Archdiocese of Washington.

Alumni Day 2023

SAVE *the* DATE

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 4, 2023



5:15 p.m. **Alumni Day Mass**

6:15 p.m. **Reception with Theological College Community**

7 p.m. **Alumni Recognition and Award Dinner**

Registration

To register for the annual Alumni Day reunion and/or for sponsorship opportunities, go to theologicalcollege.org and click on the "Events" tab, or register by mail, returning the completed form in the brochure you will receive in the mail. If you have any questions or need assistance, contact us at 202-756-4914 or tanzi@cua.edu.

Congratulations to all of our alumni celebrating ordination anniversaries in 2023!

Student Government Association

Prayer and Worship News

Deacon Peter Bui

Diocese of Worcester



The Prayer and Worship Committee (PWC) at Theological College supports many prayer and reflection opportunities in its efforts to help brother seminarians discover the endless treasures of Mother Church and to experience God's love. These include the Monday morning rosary prayer group, Monday morning and Wednesday all-day in-house Adoration, house pilgrimages, Caldwell Hall/St. Vincent Chapel holy hours at Catholic University, and extemporaneous preaching practices. The PWC evaluates proposals from other committee members who desire to form a prayer group in different traditions, such as *lectio divina*, praise and worship, and *Jesu Caritas*. PWC also hosts guest speakers who give talks on spirituality. This past semester the speakers included the Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne, speaking about palliative care (see Page 28), and Father Leopold Glueckert, O. Carm., Ph.D., who introduced us to Carmelite spirituality.

The two *Jesu Caritas* groups meet every two weeks. Vincent Vu's cohort, below, has been meeting over dinner to pray together and support each other during their years of formation.



Jesu Caritas

Deacon Vincent Vu

Archdiocese of Washington

I've been in a *Jesu Caritas* group for a couple years now. *Jesu Caritas* groups are fraternal groups for priests and seminarians inspired by the life of St. Charles de Foucauld, in which men can confide in and receive support and accountability from their brothers in Christ. This is meant to be a source of life and joy for the members in order to better live out their discipleship and call to celibacy. More than just a "support group," *Jesu Caritas* helps men live the Gospel more deeply and more intentionally, to live more like Christ each and every day.

Here at TC, we meet every two weeks to share our experiences, count our blessings, and to better discover God's presence in our everyday lives. We often encourage and pray for each other as we find ways of imitating Christ to the best of our abilities. As a group, we offer each other unconditional support and, once in a while, we go out for a movie, as we did to see *The Chosen*. We also made a Lenten pilgrimage the nearby Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land.

At the heart of *Jesu Caritas* is *agape*, or love. St. Paul wrote: "Love is patient, love is kind . . . It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails" (1 Cor 13:4-8). *Jesu Caritas* stretches me and challenges me to love like Christ because we each have different personalities and backgrounds, yet we are all on the same path toward holiness. We have different opinions and approaches to ministry, yet Jesus unites our differences and brings us together as one body in Christ. I firmly believe that I can only share God's love because he loved me first and the group has helped me to recognize this and to joyfully live out my vocation while encouraging others to joyfully live out their calling as well. A member of a *Jesu Caritas* group once remarked, "It is a precious thing, to be allowed to take your brother's life in your hands." The sacred privilege to walk closely with each other on this journey is a fruitful gift.

The Spirituality of Palliative Care

Paul Kucharski

Third Theology, Archdiocese of New York



On February 15, the men at Theological College had a unique opportunity to learn about the spirituality of palliative care. Sister Carmela Marie of the Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne, a religious order dedicated solely to caring for terminally ill cancer patients, spoke by Zoom of her experience at Rosary Hill Home, the order's motherhouse in Hawthorne, N.Y. The Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne were founded by Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, daughter of famed author Nathaniel Hawthorne, after her conversion to Catholicism and her encounter with the poor and destitute in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Today, the Dominican Sisters have several homes, all dedicated to free care for those dying of cancer.

Sister Carmela began by noting that their patients range from fervent religious believers to staunch atheists. The sisters are certainly open to discussing matters of God and faith when prompted, but they do not proselytize; rather, their primary goal is to communicate God's love by their personal care for each patient, by becoming Christ to those who are dying. In turn, she insisted, the patients become Christ for them, and thereby a source of joy and spiritual strength.

Sister Carmela admitted that the most difficult suffering to witness is emotional and spiritual suffering, rather than anything physical. Many patients have strained relationships with family and former friends with no desire for reconciliation, and bitterness toward God for their cancer. With patience and God's grace, however, some do ask the sisters to arrange visits with estranged family members and begin to open their hearts to God's love and forgiveness. And those who do not, who die to all appearances embittered and alone, are not despaired of, for, as Sister Carmela noted, "At the end of the day we are all in God's mercy, and who are we to say how God will save someone?"

After her talk, Sister Carmela answered questions from the men, mostly having to do with pastoral care. Sister Carmela said that when it comes to care for the dying, priests need to develop the ability to really listen to patients. Often, she said, what they really think or feel is masked by their actual words and transmitted by tone or body language. Moreover, a priest should never dismiss a patient's pain and anger toward God. Sometimes, a caregiver simply needs to empathize and allow a patient to express such feelings. Perhaps down the road a notion of redemptive suffering can be introduced, but only when one has discerned that it is prudent. Finally, everything a priest says or does in the presence of the dying must be anointed by the belief that God is infinitely merciful and loving.

The men at Theological College were most grateful to Sister Carmela Marie for taking time out of her busy schedule to speak about the spirituality of palliative care. It afforded them an invaluable opportunity to learn from someone who has made ministry to the dying her life's work — a ministry all priests will enter in to in some capacity.



Social Justice News

Michael Marincel

Third Basselin, Diocese of Ft. Worth

This year, the Social Justice Committee promoted awareness of social issues through sponsored speaker events, with a focus on justice and support for those who have been caught up in the criminal world and prison system. To this end, the fall semester House Party fundraiser was able to donate a significant sum to Thrive for Life, whose founder, Father Zach Presutti, S.J., gave a presentation on his work with the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated (see article at right, from one of our seminarians who is involved in prison ministry).

The committee also offered a screening of the movie *Unguarded*, about APAC, a revolutionary prison model in Brazil whose goal is the valuing of the human person, assisting them with tools and accompaniment so that they may responsibly rejoin society. Observing the daily lives of the *recuperandos* (recovering inmates) who live and work there, we saw firsthand why — as one inmate puts it — "No one escapes from love." The film's producer, Simonetta Wiener, was present on Zoom for the Q&A afterward.

The spring semester's House Party collection was for Diffusion of Hope, which funds Catholic school tuition (\$200 per child) for needy children in Haiti. This nonprofit was started and is run by Father Wesbee Victor ('21, New York) and Father Michael Kieler ('21, St. Augustine). For more information or to donate, go to: diffusionofhopecharity.com.

This year, the committee co-sponsored the spring break Honduras mission trip with the Hispanic Affairs committee, while the annual Diaper Drive, led by Jake Nadeau (1-B, Char-leston), was a huge success. Lastly, the sidewalk prayer sessions, organized by Jacob Daul (2-T, St. Augustine), continued throughout the year at a nearby abortion clinic.

Prison Ministry

Patrick Sweeney

Second Basselin, Diocese of Albany

In the Gospel, Jesus says, "I was in prison, and you came to visit me" (*Mt 25:36*). At the center of the priest's heart is a place for all those who are poor, marginalized, rejected, and forgotten. At Theological College, seminarians are trained to have a heart like that of the Good Shepherd — a heart that sees, remembers, and loves all people as sons and daughters of the Father. Inspired by this apostolic spirit, the seminarians organized an in-house fall fundraiser to raise money on behalf of Thrive For Life, a prison ministry apostolate founded in the Archdiocese of New York by Father Zach Presutti, S.J. By pooling together resources and stipends, the seminarians, together with the help of TC faculty and staff, were able to raise a record amount (see above).

In order to raise greater awareness about prison ministry and to thank the seminarians for their donation, Thrive For Life founder and president Father Zach joined TC for the celebration of Mass and delivered a talk to the house. In his remarks, Father Zach emphasized the privileged role a diocesan priest has in ministering to the incarcerated and their families. He reminded the men that pastors have a holy responsibility to care for all the souls in their geographical region, including those behind bars who can be easily forgotten. He also shared the providential care that has been shown to his ministry, especially through the intercession of the saints. Father had been praying to the Blessed Mother and Servant of God Rev. Walter Ciszek, S.J., for help in acquiring a new facility to house women coming out of prison. God answered his prayers when unexpectedly an old convent in Manhattan was donated to Thrive For Life! Central to Father Zach's message to the seminarians was the necessity of approaching this work as disciples of Christ and ministers of the Church. "The work of accompanying people who are incarcerated is the work of the Church — it has to be the work of the Church." The ministry must be rooted and grounded in a relationship with Jesus Christ and his Church "because if it's not rooted in that, it's only holy social work."

One of the most impactful parts of Father Zach's talk for me was his description of the work of Thrive For Life and his own experiences as a Catholic priest working with incarcerated persons. He shared how the money that we raised would go toward retreats behind the walls where inmates come to a deeper knowledge of their identity as beloved children of God, and where they experience, sometimes for the first time, the reality of the

risen Lord at work in their lives. Father also shared that the funds would support houses of study outside prison where formerly incarcerated persons could continue the good work of college education in a stable and spiritual environment.

Father Zach's presentation and the work of Thrive For Life uniquely influenced me since my pastoral ministry this year has been at Howard County Detention Center. Thrive's efforts and those of countless priests, deacons, and lay volunteers around the country are desperately needed today. From my own experience, there are many people incarcerated who hunger and thirst for the Gospel and the sacraments. Unfortunately, because of some mistake they have made, these people are discarded by society and often left uncared for and forgotten. But the Church stands against the throwaway attitude of our culture and sees every person as infinitely valuable in the eyes of God and worthy of our love as human persons.

Ministering in a prison setting has allowed me to move beyond preconceived ideas into lived experiences. I have come to know firsthand the devotion and desire for holiness present in even the darkest of places. I have come to know the power of hope that programs like Thrive For Life afford to our incarcerated brothers and sisters, by lifting their spirits in prayer and giving them the means for a better life. But most importantly, having ministered behind the bars for the past year, I know the profound presence of light that a Catholic minister brings to those who are lonely, despised, and despairing. It is a presence that — God willing — I will one day bring as a priest of Jesus Christ.

Patrick Sweeney presents Father Zach Presutti with the SGA-sponsored collection for the Thrive For Life prison ministry.



Hispanic Affairs

Jacob Romero
Third Theology, Archdiocese of Santa Fe

This year, the Hispanic Affairs Committee continued sponsoring weekly Spanish Night Prayer, followed by good Latino food, every Tuesday night. The group enjoyed the experience of sincere fraternity and practicing our Spanish language skills. We also continued our weekly Spanish table on Monday nights, eating dinner together and conversing in Spanish. Two of our deacons, who are native Spanish speakers, graciously offered their time to tutor others in Spanish throughout the school year as well.

In November, we set up the *Día de Los Muertos* altar where we displayed pictures of our loved ones who have died, as a devotion to remember these and all the dead. On All Saints' Day, we held a movie night, watching the Disney Pixar film *Coco* in Spanish, and during second semester we watched *The Book of Life* in Spanish. This year, we also were able to combine our efforts with the Social Justice Committee in organizing a mission to Honduras during spring break. This was a fruitful trip of ministering to our brothers and sisters in need. Lastly, in April we hosted Rev. Lalo Jara, O.F.M., D. Min., Archdiocese of Washington's director of Evangelization and Pastoral Planning. Father Jara's presentation elevated our understanding of Hispanic ministry in today's American context.



In March, Father Dominic Ciriaco, rector, blessed all those embarking on the spring break mission trip to Honduras.



The Alberione Project

Dylan Prentice
Third Theologian, Archdiocese of Washington

Theological College's Alberione Project was founded in 2018 by seminarians dedicated to empowering a new generation of priests to evangelize through modern media. In revitalizing this initiative, we hope to offer short weekly presentations by seminarians for seminarians on various topics concerning priestly life and evangelization, catalyzed by the presenters' personal interests. We also hope to produce an in-house newsletter of creative writings and evangelization reflections, written by seminarians for seminarians in-house. Our goal in getting this off the ground is first to evangelize ourselves as well as to "test out" various new modes of evangelization, and then to reach out to connected communities through online/social media, as was done in previous years.

After its one-year hiatus, the Alberione Project's re-inaugural event was hosted by Joe Heisey (3-T, Washington), above, who gave a talk titled, "A Culture of Physicality: Developing the Embodied Self." His desire to share his passion and expertise came through in his inspiring summary statement: "Supreme athletic performance is not for everyone, but supreme physical health is." The other three presentations were "Defining Culture for the Pastoral Leader: How to Effectively Enter Into and Serve Your Parish Community" by Deacon Nicolas Rapkoch of Raleigh, in which culture was defined through a mission-oriented and servant-leadership outlook to be more effective pastoral leaders in the parish; "And his eyes were opened a little: Ignatius' Imaginative Prayer with Scripture" by Vincent Castaldi (3-T) of New York, in which we explored St. Ignatius of Loyola's method of imaginative prayer with Scripture as a group; and "Strength Expo 2023: A Demonstration and Explanation of Basic Approaches to Strength Training" by Joseph Heisey, Paul Kucharski (3-T) of New York, and Jackson Nichols (1-B) of Little Rock, during which, in the TC gym, we were exposed to various approaches to strength and weight training with demonstrations and hands-on application. ■

FACULTY AND STAFF



Father Chris Arockiaraj M.S., S.T.B., Ph.L., Ph.D., D. Min.

**Vice-Rector
 Coordinator of Pastoral Formation**

The Christian should be characterized by an effort to see things in the best light; if it is true that the word *Evangelos* means good news, then Christian means happy man, spreader of happiness.

Pope John Paul I

This past spring, Theological College's vice-rector Father Chris Arockiaraj attended the biennial meeting organized by the Association of Theological Field Education (ATFE). ATFE is an international ecumenical organization devoted to the highest level of theological "field" education that optimizes the potential growth and success of those preparing to enter different ministerial

environments. Those involved in ATFE, like Father Chris, cultivate collaborations between institutions and contexts for ministry education and students, such as the prison ministry placement described on Page 29.

As a priest for more than 28 years and TC's coordinator of pastoral formation for the past six years, his knowledge and experience in the field is of great value to educators and formators of candidates for ministry. He offered a presentation titled, "Resilience and Pastoral Formation" for the 150 participants from the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom. Father Chris explained that, in the cultural milieu of the modern world we live in, ministers and priests face the real risk of stress and subsequent burnout. Being aware of it in a proactive way, practicing self-care, and learning resilience techniques are imperative to the well-being of those who are committed to accompanying those in need.

Spending the weekend with ATFE colleagues who embody and mentor students in practices of theological reflection, vocational discernment, and leadership development, Father Chris commented that he was greatly edified by all the presentations and discussions, especially those focused on practicing mindfulness and developing creative approaches in ministry. ■

For more information about the Association of Theological Field Education, go to: atfe.org.

Class Notes

70s

Msgr. Roger E. McGrath, '71 (B'67), of the Diocese of Camden, former faculty, and Lifetime Service Award recipient in 2010, recently shared with *The Crossroads* that he is enjoying retirement and is serving as the retired priests' representative on the presbyteral council. Additionally, he continues to serve on the diocesan finance council and investment committee while "staying busy helping out in parishes."

Msgr. Bruce Miller, JCL, '77, of the Diocese of Alexandria, has been appointed academic dean of St. Joseph Seminary College, St. Benedict, La. Father Miller shared, "This challenging position will allow me to have an active retirement serving future leaders of the Church without ultimate institutional responsibility. Please keep the seminarians in your prayers as we seek to discern God's will with them!"

80s

Rev. Mason Wiggins, B '80, of the Diocese of St. Augustine, was appointed pastor of St. William Catholic Church in Keystone Heights, including service at St. Philip Neri Mission Church, also in Keystone Heights, as a secondary assignment.

90s

Rev. David G. Poecking, '96, class representative, of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, has been transferred from his ministry as pastor of Archangel Gabriel Parish, Kennedy/McKees Rocks/Robinson, to serve as regional vicar of the South Vicariate, effective Dec. 1, 2022. Father Poecking is assigned residence at Saint Michael the Archangel Parish, Dormont/Mount Lebanon/Scott.

Rev. Michael Hickin, '97, of the Diocese of Fargo, has been transferred from his ministry as pastor of the cluster parishes of St. Alphonsus Catholic Church and school in Langdon, St. Edward's Church in Nekoma, and St. Michael's Church in

Wales, to serve as pastor of St. Anthony's Church in Mooreton, and Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Mantador.

Msgr. James P. Shea, B '98, of the Diocese of Bismarck and President of the University of Mary in Bismarck since 2009, received in May the Canterbury Medal from the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, a national nonprofit, public-interest legal and educational institute, in recognition of his leadership last May. This prestigious award is presented annually to an individual in the public square who "has fought for and defended the basic human right of religious liberty." It is named after St. Thomas Becket, the 12th-century archbishop of Canterbury who was martyred for defending the rights of the Church.

00s

Msgr. Robert Kinnally, '05, class representative, of the Diocese of Bridgeport, is one of three priests of his diocese honored by Pope Francis with the rank

Congratulations to the members of the Class of 2013, Class of 1998, and Class of 1973, who are celebrating their 10th, 25th, and 50th anniversaries of ordination to the priesthood this year!

of Chaplain to His Holiness, carrying with it the title of Monsignor. Msgr. Kinnally was notified of his new title, effective Jan. 6, 2023, by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. The new papal honors are the first awarded to priests of the Diocese of Bridgeport since 2008, when the late Pope Benedict XVI recognized 14 priests. The elevation to the honor of Chaplain to His Holiness was celebrated during a Mass and investiture ceremony on April 16 at St. Aloysius Church in New Canaan. Congratulations, Monsignor!

Rev. Nathan March, '07, of the Diocese of Portland (Maine), has been transferred from his ministry as pastor of St. Brendan the Navigator Parish in Camden, to serve as pastor of St. Michael Parish in Augusta, effective Jan. 16, 2023. The parish is comprised of St. Mary of the Assumption Church, Augusta; St. Augustine Church, Augusta; St. Joseph Church, Gardiner; Sacred Heart Church, Hallowell; St. Denis Church, Whitefield; St. Francis Xavier Church, Winthrop; and St. Michael School, Augusta.

10s

Rev. Samuel Fontana, B '10, of the Diocese of Lafayette, La., was installed as pastor of St. Thomas More Church in Eunice on July 12, 2022, after having served on the faculty of St. Joseph Seminary in Benedict since the fall of 2020.

Rev. Michael R. Ackerman, '14, Class Representative, of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, has been named pastor of Resurrection Parish, Bethel Park/Upper Saint Clair, where he has been serving as senior parochial vicar, effective Jan. 3, 2023, for a term of six years. At the same time, Father Ackerman will remain

as part-time chaplain at Seton-LaSalle High School.

Rev. William C. Frei, B '16, of the Diocese of Charleston, is serving as parochial vicar of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Columbia in addition to serving as the Men's Discipleship Group Coordinator and chaplain of Cardinal Newman School in Columbia. He recently led a retreat for college students in the area.

Rev. Matthew G. Gworek, '16, of the Archdiocese of Hartford, was appointed dean of Deanery 2, for a term of three years, effective October 1, 2022, in addition to duties as pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Farmington and St. Mary Star of the Sea Parish in Unionville (Father Gworek was named pastor on Jan. 1, 2022), and as the director of communications and public relations in the archdiocese since 2019.

Rev. Charles Pavlick, Pre-T '16, of the Diocese of Arlington, shared with *The Crossroads* that he is assisting Bishop Burbidge with the implementation of *Traditionis Custodes* and is serving as the chaplain of the American Heritage Girls.

Rev. Michael Russo, '19, of the Archdiocese of Washington and parochial vicar at Sacred Heart Parish in Bowie, Md., has been recognized in local news for his "work of justice" in organizing the cleaning up of an unmemorialized cemetery of enslaved (or formerly enslaved) deceased, discovered on church property. These graves are thought to belong to those comprising the large workforce on a Jesuit plantation that was on the site in the 1700s and 1800s.

20s

Rev. Armando Herrera-Dos Reis, '22, below, was ordained by Bishop Knestout (right) with Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio (left) of the Archdiocese of the Military Services concelebrating, for the Diocese of Richmond on Dec. 10, 2022. He is pictured here also with diocesan brother Deacon William Buckley ('23). Father Armando, a First Lieutenant who already serves in the U.S. Army Reserve, will accede to active chaplaincy duty after a three-year period of civilian assignments in his diocese. He is now serving as parochial vicar of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Harrisonburg. ■

February Visitors

1 – Father John De Guzman (Raleigh, '22) returned to TC to celebrate Mass; pictured here with his diocesan brothers Ben Albanese (3-B), left, and Deacon Nick Rapkoch. He now serves as parochial vicar at St. Michael the Archangel Roman Catholic Church in Cary, N.C.

2 – Father Elmer Herrera-Guzmán, (Dallas, '20), preached at a liturgy during a seminary visit. (See interview, Page 21.)

3 – TC welcomed a visit from Father Rhett Williams ('18), who serves as Director for Vocations and Seminarians for the Diocese of Charleston, pastor at St. Thomas More Catholic Church in Columbia, and Catholic chaplain at the University of South Carolina. Here he is pictured with Jake Nadeau (1-B, Charleston).



Father Armando Herrera-Dos Reis, second from right, was ordained on Dec. 10, 2022.

In Memoriam



Thomas W. Mahan, Ph.D., B '51, died on Aug. 31, 2020, at age 91. Dr. Mahan, a retired graduate dean and psychology professor, had a rich and varied career. After spending seven years as a Catholic seminarian and three years as an officer in the U.S. Coast

Guard, he turned to the academic world. In the turbulent years of the 1960s, he was a pioneer in the school desegregation movement and other achievements. He spent over 35 years in academia before retiring in Brevard, N.C., where he continued his involvement in educational initiatives and reforms. Throughout his life, he was also very active in the religious and mental health worlds, but his wife and children were always his top priority.

Dr. Mahan received many recognitions and awards throughout his lifetime. He especially treasured six of these: St. Pope John Paul II made him a knight commander in the Order of St. Gregory the Great; Theological College chose him to be the second recipient of the Cardinal Joseph Bernardin Medal for contributions to Church and community; the state of South Carolina selected him to be the second Governor's Professor of the Year; and The Citadel, where he spent 20 years, many as the college's first graduate dean, awarded him three different honors. Upon retirement in 1991, he received The Palmetto Medal, awarded only by unanimous consent of the Board of Visitors; on the 35th anniversary of the creation of the Graduate Studies Program, he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities; and in February 2017, he was inducted into The Citadel Wall of Fame for his "outstanding historical contribution to education."

Due to COVID-19 restrictions at the time of Dr. Mahan's death, there was no funeral service. Memorial donations may be made to Free Rein, P.O. Box 1325, Brevard, NC 28712, or Rise & Shine, P.O. Box 1036, Brevard, NC 28712.



Rev. John "Jack" O. McCaslin, '55, class representative, died on Sept. 26, 2020, at age 91. Father McCaslin, from Omaha, Neb., was raised in a family of 13 children that produced five priests and one religious sister. He attended Creighton Preparatory School

in Omaha, Conception Seminary in Conception, Miss., and Theological College. He was ordained for the Archdiocese of Omaha by Archbishop Gerald T. Bergan in 1955 at St. Cecilia Cathedral in Omaha.

Between 1955 and 1963, Father McCaslin served as assistant pastor at the former St. Philomena, Christ the King, and the former St. Patrick parishes, all in Omaha. He was named pastor of St. Paul Parish in Plainview in 1963. He returned to Omaha in 1967 as pastor of the former Holy Family Parish, where he served for 12 years while also serving as the archdiocese's director of social action.

Between 1979 and 2000, he also was pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Ponca, the former Immaculate Conception in Waterbury, Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Tilden, St. Patrick in Tekamah, Holy Family in Decatur, and Immaculate Conception, St. Adalbert, and St. Joseph parishes, all in Omaha. Father McCaslin retired from active ministry in 2000.

In addition to his lengthy service as a parish priest, Father McCaslin spent a lifetime campaigning for peace and advocating for the disenfranchised. Many in Omaha will remember his arms and war protests at SAC/Offutt Air Force Base and that he marched at Selma with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. He helped raise funds to support the Sienna Francis House and Stephen Center. In his later years, he made frequent trips to the Tecumseh State Correctional Institution to minister to inmates. When Father McCaslin saw injustice, he countered with faith, love, and conviction.

Many heartfelt tributes were posted for Father McCaslin at his passing, including the following: "We offer our sincere sympathy to the McCaslin family. Father Jack was a committed and holy man. He inspired so many people and fought for just causes. Thank you, Father Jack, for your presence among us and for your personal inspiration."

Mass of Christian Burial was offered September 30, 2020, at St. Pius X Church in Omaha. His body was donated to the Creighton University School of Medicine.



Msgr. Joseph G. Riedman, '56, class representative, died peacefully on March 4, 2022, at his home in Connersville, Ind., at age 93. Msgr. Riedman began his seminary studies and formation at the former St. Meinrad College in St. Meinrad and later at

Theological College. He was ordained to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis in 1956.

His first assignment was twofold: he was part-time assistant pastor of Holy Angels Parish and part time religion and mathematics instructor at Scecina Memorial High School, both in Indianapolis. In 1960, he was transferred nearer to his work, to reside at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Indianapolis and to become full-time religion and mathematics instructor at Scecina. He attended Ball State University during the summers to complete a master's degree in mathematics.

In 1973, Msgr. Riedman was transferred from the classroom to serve as pastor of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield, Ind. In 1980 he was transferred to be pastor of Our Lady of Greenwood Parish in Greenwood. In 1993, he was transferred to Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis where he finally retired from active ministry in 2009.

Shortly after retirement, he was invited by Regent Seven Seas Cruise Line to be a chaplain on a 90-day Pacific Ocean cruise. After this, he took up residence in his own home in Connersville, Ind. He continued to assist in various parishes when requested until his health made it too difficult.

Msgr. Riedman enjoyed many life achievements and awards. Some of them include the designation of Monsignor and the Catholic school "Lifetime Achievement Award."

From an article that highlighted his life, featured in The Criterion Online Edition from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, author Sean Gallagher shared the following edifying story:

For the last several years of his life, he suffered with dementia. By the time he arrived at the 64th anniversary of his ordination on May 3, 2020, Msgr. Riedman could not recognize most people he had known for years. On that day, Father Dustin Boehm, pastor of St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville, came to Msgr. Riedman's home in the southeastern Indiana town to celebrate Mass for him on his ordination anniversary. "He slept through the entire Mass," recalled Father Boehm. "But he woke up during the words of consecration, and he said them with his hand out, just as any concelebrating priest would." ... "He had entirely forgotten who I was and lots of other people," Father Boehm continued. "But he never forgot the most important words of his priesthood, which are the

words of Christ becoming present among us."

That moment had special meaning for Father Boehm, who received his first Communion from Msgr. Riedman some 30 years before, when he was a seven-year-old member of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, where Msgr. Riedman served as pastor at the time. On the day that Msgr. Riedman died, Father Boehm was able to return the gift he had received from the dying priest when he was a boy, bringing Christ to him in the sacraments, this time in the anointing of the sick.

Most Reverend Charles C. Thompson, Archbishop of Indianapolis, offered the Mass of Christian Burial for Msgr. Riedman on Tuesday, March 15, 2022, at St. Gabriel Catholic Church in Connersville with interment following at St. Michael Cemetery in Brookville.



Rev. Kenneth Doyle, '66 (B '62), died on Oct. 28, 2022, at Teresian House in Albany, N.Y., at age 82. Father Doyle began his seminary education at Mater Christi Seminary in Albany and completed it at Theological College. He was ordained for

the Diocese of Albany in 1966 by Bishop Edward Maginn.

Father Doyle's dedicated priestly ministry, spanning over five decades, incorporated his many talents and interests to serve the Church in a variety of ways. He earned his law degree at Albany Law School while serving as editor of *The Evangelist* and chaplain at Academy of the Sacred Heart. He went on to travel with St. John Paul II, interviewing pontiffs in both English and Italian, acting as Rome's bureau chief of the National Catholic News Service. In addition to several other roles, he was a NYS Catholic Conference lobbyist, director of media relations for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and chancellor of public information for the Diocese of Albany. He also served on many boards and committees throughout his career including St. Peter's Hospital Board of Directors, vice chairman of the Whalen Foundation, Inc., and chair of the Albany International Airport Authority.

Additionally, Father Doyle served as a beloved pastor at the Parish of Mater Christi (formerly St. Catherine of Siena) in Albany and as sacramental minister for St. Thomas the Apostle in Cherry Valley, St. John's/St. Joseph's in Rensselaer, and St. Mary's in Clinton Heights. He advocated for the poor, donated to multiple organizations, and counseled many readers through the "Question Box" published in *The Evangelist* and other Catholic

news publications. Many friends and former parishioners left heartfelt tributes to Father Doyle at his passing, including the following: “Father Doyle was a gift from God. We were so blessed to have known him and to benefit from his kindness, his love, his service, and his humor. He will be missed and never forgotten.”

Mass of Christian Burial was concelebrated on Nov. 5, 2022, at the Parish of Mater Christi in Albany, with interment at St. Peter’s Cemetery in Troy, N.Y. Memorial donations may be made to the Rev. Kenneth J. Doyle Retired Priests’ Fund at The Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, 40 N. Main Ave., Albany, NY 12203.



Rev. Stephen D. Gosnell, ’78, class representative, died on May 23, 2021, at age 69. A priest for 43 years, Father Gosnell is remembered for his caring spirit, his outreach to the homeless, and his dedication to the Holy Land. He was ordained to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Baltimore

on May 20, 1978.

Father Gosnell’s priestly ministry included service as associate pastor at several parishes as well as serving as pastor of the parishes of All Saints in Liberty Heights, Prince of Peace in Edgewood, and St. Andrew by the Bay in Annapolis. He was also a Knight of the Holy Sepulcher. In 2007, he left St. Andrew by the Bay to serve on the archdiocesan marriage tribunal. In addition to his duties meeting with people seeking annulments, Father Gosnell worked on the cause for sainthood for the Venerable Patrick Peyton, known as the “Rosary Priest,” according to Teresa Ewen, ecclesiastical notary. Known for his administrative skills, Father Gosnell helped process testimony by witnesses from around the world, she said.

In 2009, Father Gosnell moved to Mercy Medical Center to serve as a chaplain. Three years later, he also became the first priest of the Archdiocese of Baltimore to serve as the national chaplain of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas.

In 2013, he became associate pastor at St. John the Evangelist in Frederick, then returned to the Baltimore area as associate pastor of St. Ursula, Parkville, and Immaculate Heart of Mary, Baynesville, from 2015 until his retirement in 2018. Father J. Kevin Farmer, pastor at St. John in Frederick, noted Father Gosnell’s empathy and his faith. “He was very, very present for the sick, and especially when people were dying,” he said. “He was so energized when he preached. He loved to preach. He loved liturgy.”

Homelessness was an issue Father Gosnell took up during his

time at Prince of Peace in Harford County. He helped with efforts to provide those experiencing homelessness with shelter and meals on a rotating basis with other churches. Father Gosnell’s interest in the issue led him to work with Harford County government officials to provide aid.

Archbishop William E. Lori offered a memorial Mass on June 4, 2021, at Immaculate Heart of Mary in Baynesville. His friend, Father Edward Hendricks, pastor of Divine Mercy Parish in Western Maryland, was the homilist. He is interred at St. Peter’s Cemetery in Westerport.



Rev. Charles L. Breindel, ’99, died on July 16, 2022, at age 74, after suffering a stroke. A native of St. Marys in Pennsylvania, Father Breindel held two graduate degrees in math and earned a doctorate in health administration and planning from Penn State

University in 1978. During Father Breindel’s distinguished first career, before his call to the priesthood, he worked as a hospital administrator, consultant, professor, and the dean of the Master’s in Healthcare Administration Program at the medical college of Virginia Commonwealth University. He taught and helped develop healthcare systems in the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

After discerning a call to the priesthood, he entered Theological College in 1996 and was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Walter Sullivan for the Diocese of Richmond in 2000, after receiving his master’s degree of divinity.

Initially, Father Breindel served as parochial vicar at St. Edward the Confessor in North Chesterfield from 2000 to 2001, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Newport News from 2001 to 2002. His first pastorate was Sacred Heart in Danville, where he served from 2002 until 2011, when he was also pastor of St. Paschal Baylon in South Boston and St. Elizabeth of Hungary in Brookneal. He next served as pastor of the Church of the Ascension in Virginia Beach from 2011 until 2013, and then Holy Spirit in Christiansburg and Holy Family in Pearisburg from 2013 to 2015. Additionally, Father Breindel chaired the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Commission for five years, from 2005 until 2010.

After retirement, he joined St. Gregory the Great Parish in Virginia Beach, where he frequently offered Mass. He was well-known for his engaging homilies, which he shared with a large email list after celebrating Mass. He also self-published two editions of his memoirs. Father Breindel was a beloved member of the community at Marian Manor, where he last resided. He was a friend and advisor to many, and his door was always open.

Father Breindel is survived by his children, Sara, Elizabeth, Rebecca, and Tressa, and by four grandchildren from his marriage before his ordination. Rev. Eric Vogt, O.S.B., presided at the Mass of Christian Burial on July 30, 2022, at St. Gregory the Great Parish in Virginia Beach with interment at St. Mary’s Catholic Cemetery in St. Marys, Penn.



Rev. Howard P. Bleichner, P.S.S., former rector of Theological College, died Dec. 14, 2022, at age 85. The following obituary was featured on the Associate Sulpicians website and in the latest *Update* magazine, written by Rev. Anthony J. Polgorelc, P.S.S.

Born Jan. 11, 1937, and raised in Pittsburgh, Father Bleichner was one of two children of Howard and Catherine (*nee* Hoban) Bleichner. He died from complications related to Parkinson’s disease. He is survived by his sister, Joan Stanley.

Father Bleichner was educated in Pittsburgh parochial schools. He earned a B.A. in 1958 from Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H. He then entered St. Mary’s Seminary & University where he earned an S.T.B. in 1965 and an S.T.L. in 1967. He was ordained for the Diocese of Pittsburgh on May 13, 1967. He immediately joined the Society of St. Sulpice and was admitted in 1970.

As a Sulpician candidate, Father Bleichner was first assigned to teach at St. Charles College in Baltimore, Md. (1967-1968). In 1968 he completed his M.A. degree at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. He then went west to teach at St. Patrick’s Seminary, Menlo Park, Calif. (1968-1969). After two years of teaching, he began doctoral studies in theology at the University of Tubingen and was awarded a D. Theol. in 1973. He returned to the U.S. to begin teaching at St. Mary’s Seminary & University, until 1977. He then moved back to St. Patrick’s Seminary to teach (1977-1988) and served as its rector for 10 years, 1978-1988. Father Jerry Coleman, who succeeded him as rector, commented, “Perhaps his greatest achievement was to build a solid and professional faculty devoted to scholarship, pastoral sensitivities, and many well-praised theological publications.”

After a one-year sabbatical (1988-1989), he served as the executive director of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Priestly Formation and Committee on Vocations from 1989 to 1992. During this time, he oversaw the development and drafting of the fourth edition of the *Program of Priestly Formation*. He was made rector of Theological College and, during his term (1992-2002), he oversaw a major renovation of

the dining room and chapel.

Following a sabbatical in 2002-2003, he retired but continued teaching. He returned to the West Coast to live in his own home in Santa Cruz and to teach part-time at St. Patrick’s Seminary for 10 more years (2003-2013). He wrote two books: *View from the Altar: Reflections on the Rapidly Changing Catholic Priesthood* and *In the Circle of Mysteries: The Coherence of Catholic Belief*.

With his health starting to weaken, he moved back to his home diocese of Pittsburgh to reside at St. Paul’s Seminary and to teach part-time in the seminary program affiliated with Duquesne University (2013-2015). In 2015, his health concerns prompted a move to the senior living facility of Brookdale in Mount Lebanon, Pa.

Throughout his career, Father Bleichner was universally acclaimed as an excellent teacher. Students found him to be a master of his subject matter and a clear presenter who was also witty and, at times, poetic. As an administrator, he was straightforward and willing to face difficult matters. He was highly respected by Church leaders for his abilities.

Father Tom Hurst, who served as vice-rector at TC when Father Bleichner was rector, remembered him as an inspired preacher: “Howard took seriously the words of St. Paul to Timothy to ‘proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is inconvenient or convenient; convince, reprimand, encourage.’ (2 Tim 4:2). Howard had an in-depth understanding of Scripture as the word of God for us. He had incisive observations for its application in our lives as individuals and as members of a community.” His good friend, Father Bob Leavitt, reflected on Howard the priest: “Inside the formidable public person was a sensitive, even shy, spiritual man. He prayed and recited the Mass prayers with a deep inner devotion to the mystery. There was a calm and contemplative spirit about him.”

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at St. Basil Church of Holy Trinity Parish, the church in which Howard was baptized, in Pittsburgh on Tuesday, Dec. 20, 2022. The Most Reverend David A. Zubik, Bishop of Pittsburgh, presided, and Father Clement Gardner, a longtime friend, was the homilist. Father Bud Stevens, the first provincial consultant was the official representative of the Province of St. Sulpice. Father Bleichner was interred beside his parents at St. Michael’s cemetery in Pittsburgh. Father Dan Moore, Provincial Superior, commented, “With the passing of Father Bleichner, the Province, the Society, and the Church have lost a significant spiritual father.”

May he rest in the arms of the God he sought and served so well. ■



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The McGivney House,* located in the former convent at St. Mary's Historic Site, Paca Street, Baltimore, will implement a program of formation for the propaedeutic year envisioned by the new Program for Priestly Formation (sixth edition). The Sulpicians are excited to offer a home to candidates, i.e., aspirants, for the priesthood on the original site where priestly formation began in our nation.

The program will provide aspirants to the priesthood an opportunity to get to know each other, discern reflectively, develop a sense of prayer, and deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ. Aspects include community, catechesis, deepening of spirituality, self-knowledge, trust, fraternity, and prayer.

Our Sulpician tradition and its emphasis on *communauté éducatrice*, a "formational community" — the double aspect of fraternal life and of participation in a common mission — informs the horarium.

*As the former convent is being renovated and expanded, the inaugural propaedeutic year will take place at St. Mary's Seminary & University, Roland Park, in a dedicated wing of the seminary residence adjacent to the Center for Continuing Formation.

Registration, Fees, and Financial Information

Carleen P. Kramer

Executive Assistant to the Provincial Superior
Very Rev. Daniel F. Moore, P.S.S.

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