

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

the **Crossroads**

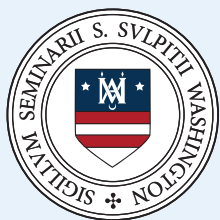
The Alumni Magazine for Theological College | Spring 2024



MINISTRIES AND
MENTORS

OUR GRADUATES

WORKSHOPS AND
CONFERENCES



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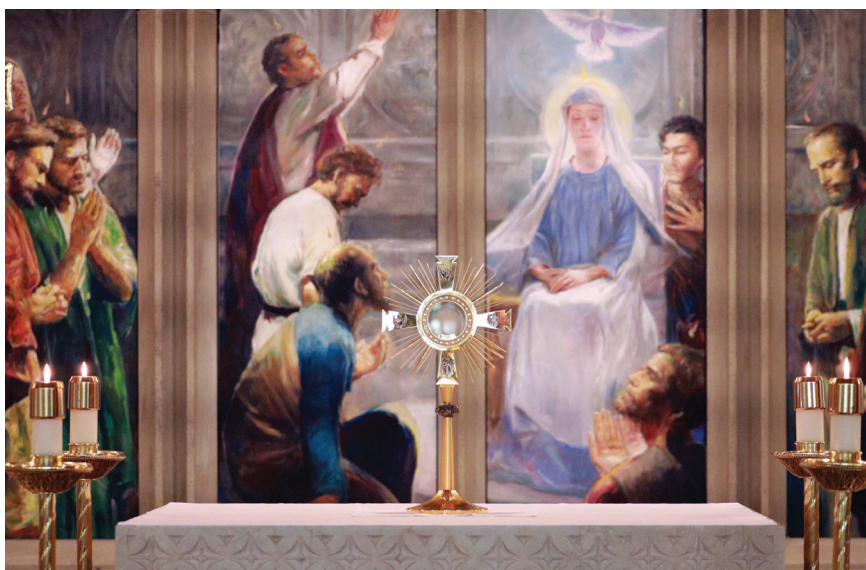
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Theological College participates in the mission and responsibility of the bishops to provide for the people of God wise and holy priests close to the heart of Christ and consumed in his work of salvation. In affiliation with The Catholic University 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.



National Eucharistic Revival

On the Feast of Corpus Christi, June 19, 2022, the National Eucharistic Revival began, spanning three years until its conclusion on Pentecost of 2025. The Catholic University of America is one of the major sponsors of the National Eucharistic Congress, to be held July 17-21, 2024, in Indianapolis, with our Rector Bud Stevens and Vice-Rector Chris Arockiaraj planning to attend. Theological College (TC) has been participating in support of the mission of this revival initiative in other ways as well. Seminarians have assisted their pastors in events to raise awareness of and love for the Eucharist in their parish assignments, while the seminary has hosted daily Eucharistic Adoration, with Solemn Benediction every Wednesday. TC's Basselin scholars sponsored the St. Vincent Chapel Holy Hour every Thursday evening throughout the year and invited the university at large to join. During the semester, Father Bud Stevens gave a Lenten retreat in Frostburg, Md., at Divine Mercy Parish on the topic of the Eucharistic Revival. And TC's annual preaching symposium this year, held in collaboration with The Catholic University of America's School of Theology and Religious Studies, was titled "Eucharistic Preaching in a Time of Eucharistic Revival" (see p. 4). On June 8, during the week of the Feast of Corpus Christi, the faculty, staff, and summer guests of TC will prayerfully welcome the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage procession passing through TC grounds, from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops facility to The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

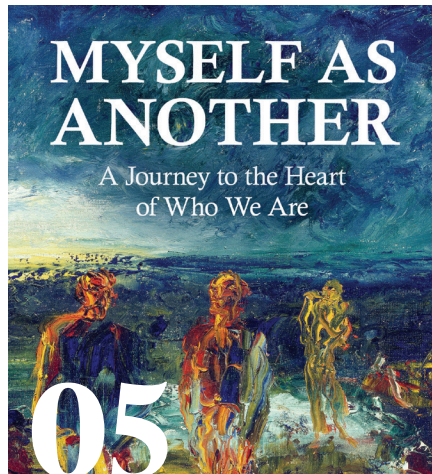
I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.

— JOHN 6:51

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BOOK LAUNCH

In March, Father John McNerney's book launch, *Myself as Another*, was appreciated by Theological College and the University community at large.



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OUR GRADUATES

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NEW STAFF

Theological College welcomes a new director of finance!



Front Cover: Theological College's 2024 Deacon Class is the largest in almost a decade, comprising 16 men from 10 dioceses.

Getting to Know Father Stevens

Last August, Father Gladstone (“Bud”) Stevens, P.S.S., was installed as the 18th rector of Theological College. A celebrated appointment, it received the requisite approvals of Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory, Archbishop of Washington; Peter Kilpatrick, Ph.D., President of The Catholic University of America; and The Very Rev. Shayne Craig, P.S.S., Sulpician Superior General. Join The Crossroads here in getting to know more about our rector and his vision for TC!

Father Stevens, in looking back on your inaugural year as rector, what is your assessment?

It has been a year not without challenges but I can say sincerely that it has been one of the happiest years of my life. I have learned to love the community and have gotten more deeply acquainted with the seminary’s unique mission. I really feel that this is where God wants me to be. I have nothing but positive things to reflect on when looking at this year in review.

What were some of your intentional focuses as you engaged with the seminary community?

A passion and concern of mine for the past several years has been to reclaim the role of the priest as teacher to a community of faith. Bishop Barron has also spoken about this — we need to reclaim the rabbinical character of Jesus. Jesus rejects most of the titles given to him but he does affirm the title of “Rabbi.” Somehow, “Rabbi” gets very close to the definition of Christ’s saving mission. There’s a certain urgency about this, as we live in such an irreligious, secular culture and we cannot count on the wider society for affirming our Christian values or even traditional morality. The people of God are looking to the priests for spiritual and moral guidance because they are not finding it anywhere else. So each priest needs to be passionate in his commitment to the preaching ministry. Our seminarians must be these preachers to those God entrusts to them, in whatever environments they find themselves.

My rector’s conferences this year were exclusively focused on “The Theology of the Priesthood,” looking at the priesthood from the perspective of the Church and what she teaches about the



At the end of March, Father Stevens offered a presentation in Fort Worth at the diocese’s Day of Reflection.

nature and mission of the priesthood. Studying *Revelation* and the writings of the Church tells us how Jesus wants his high priesthood to continue for the Church. (See p. 21 for more on these rector’s conferences.)

Where does Marian devotion come in?

In preparation for assuming responsibility as rector, I revisited a Sulpician document called “Marks of a Sulpician Seminary.” Devotion to Mary is closely aligned with the theology of the priesthood and I realized when I took office here that we could be doing more in relation to this priority, which is very much a characteristic of a Sulpician seminary. “Oh Jesus, living in Mary” is the first line of the hallmark prayer of our founder, Father Jean-Jacques Olier. Marian devotion is not just for the Sulpician Fathers but for the whole community. The way our Lord resided in Mary is the ideal toward which we should all strive. During my first year, we have focused on this in small ways, like optional Saturday rosaries together. I have been encouraging the seminarians to start Marian confraternities and other devotions to enhance their spiritual lives. Next year, I hope to incorporate an informal class on Mariology to supplement what Catholic University is offering.

You are one of only two converts in history to serve as rector of TC (the first being Father Anthony Lobo, 1976–1982). Do you think your Protestant background brings something new to the seminary community?

We are all always a product of our past. I have retained many positive and valuable inspirations from my Anglican background, such as a love for the Liturgy, love for language, a certain aesthetic sensibility, and a fondness for history. And I think, as a convert, I have a great appreciation for things we did not have, more perhaps than some lifelong Catholics who may take aspects of the Catholic faith for granted. These include devotion to Mary and an attachment to the Magisterium as a way we are preserved from error and are sustained in the truth by the Holy Spirit. I have experienced what

it is like not to have these things, and the profound difference they make, imparting to me a deep understanding of the care and embrace of the Holy Spirit in giving us these gifts.

You have served as vice-rector and rector in other seminaries. What uniquely distinguishes TC from other houses of formation for parish priests?

Being a national seminary has great advantages, with people coming from all over the USA and the world. This is a very fertile environment that offers a greater sense of the universality of the Church as a global community and provides a wider perspective for our fellows. Also, drawing from the University's many resources is a tremendous boon, while being in the D.C. area offers pastoral and apostolic opportunities that very few, if any, other seminaries can provide. This advances an intellectual, spiritual, and apostolic broadening that I've come to appreciate greatly.

How have you been able to engage with your faculty counterparts at The Catholic University of America in guiding our university and seminary in the mission of educating holy and knowledgeable priests?

I have enjoyed excellent relationships with my counterparts at the University. I go to regular meetings with the Dean's Council. Working with other deans gives me a wider perspective. TC's placement within the University's greater mission allows me to share the challenges and needs of the seminary with other administrators, who offer their ideas and expertise. I am also attending meetings with the faculty of the School of Theology and Religious Studies regularly. Their hospitality and encouragement has been a great support. They are also open to suggestions coming from my own experiences. I've had uniformly positive relationships with those at Catholic University and value the collaboration very much.

The rector enjoyed a morning of playing the Sporcle trivia game with the seminarians this past semester.



And what is your collaborative vision for the future?

The missions of Theological College and Catholic University are closely aligned. We all want to be a center of Catholic education and enlightenment for this country in every field and vocation. We are both infused with the desire to be of service to the Church in whatever field God has called the students to, and certainly having a seminary as a part of this mission is absolutely critical.

While this must have been one of your busiest years ever, you continued to celebrate Mass at local parishes, conduct retreats and give conferences and podcasts, mentor doctoral theses, and support the Knights of Malta as their chaplain, among other activities external to the seminary. Why have such pastoral priorities remained on your radar?

Quite frankly, it's fun for me to be involved in other ministries and activities! I really delight in providing any kind of priestly service. Being a rector is one way to serve but there are so many other ways in which a priest can live out his priestly vocation.

What other interests do you enjoy?

I am a great fan of old movies — in particular, the films of John Ford and Alfred Hitchcock. I appreciate literature as well. Two of my favorite novelists are Anthony Trollope and William Somerset Maugham. Regarding theological interests, I have favorites to whom I return for inspiration, such as Hans Urs von Balthazar, St. John Henry Newman, St. Augustine, and, a new favorite, Matthias Scheeban (see p. 27). In terms of music, I mainly listen to classical, baroque, and jazz. I love Mozart, Duke Ellington, Oscar Peterson, and I go back time and time again to Johann Sebastian Bach.

What advice would you give to TC seminarians as they journey ahead on their formation paths?

I strongly encourage our men to always trust the Spirit, who first called them to the priesthood!

— Suzanne Tanzi

COMMUNITY NEWS

Annual Preaching Symposium

Rev. Mr. Joseph McHenry
Archdiocese of Washington

On February 10, Theological College partnered with The Catholic University of America's School of Theology and Religious Studies (STRS) to present the 2024 Preaching Symposium for local diocesan seminarians, religious in priestly formation, and priests. Last year's Symposium, sponsored by TC, featured Timothy Cardinal Dolan, archbishop of New York, and Father Nicholas Lombardo, O.P. The 2024 Symposium, hosted jointly by TC and STRS, served as the inaugural event for Catholic University's Fulton J. Sheen Excellence in Preaching Initiative, a funded program (\$1.25 million) of the Lily Endowment's Compelling Preaching Initiative.

The theme of the 2024 Preaching Symposium, "Eucharistic Preaching in a Time of Eucharistic Revival," addressed the question of how preachers can better unlock the power of the Gospel and enkindle apostolic zeal in their congregations, particularly in this time of Eucharistic revival. It featured a keynote address by Most Rev. William D. Byrne, Bishop of Springfield, Mass. After Mass at TC and breakfast at Catholic University, followed by communal praying of Lauds for the memorial of St. Scholastica, Bishop Byrne gave his remarks. Noting the call for better liturgical preaching in the Catholic Church, he emphasized the need to return to the fundamentals of sound rhetoric.

First, he exhorted preachers to have a well-defined *logos* or main point that the congregants can take home with them from the liturgy. In formulating this message, he cautioned those gathered to allow it to flow from one's own prayer, rather than to try to instrumentalize prayer to manufacture a homily on demand.

Second, he encouraged preachers to pay attention to *pathos*, which he defined as a rousing call to action that answers how the message chosen makes its way into people's lives and enables an authentic encounter with Jesus.

Third, Bishop Byrne stressed the importance of *ethos* or the appeal of the preacher's character. In order for the preached word to be more lively and effective, the preacher must present himself as someone who is believable, trustworthy, and knows the hopes and dreams, as well as the joys and sorrows, of his congregation.

The preacher in today's secular culture, the bishop noted, is very much like St. Paul addressing the skeptical Corinthians. Therefore, the preacher must witness to the beauty of the Gospel's message of mercy and love. In so doing, he may present the *kerygma* — the saving truth of our faith — with a freshness that perhaps a poorly catechized congregation has never before experienced.

Turning to the specific topic of preaching on the Eucharistic mysteries, Bishop Byrne began by saying that the preacher must himself foster a reverential awe for the great sacrament. The best Eucharistic preacher will be first a Eucharistic adorer himself. He re-emphasized the importance of preaching often on the mercy and love of Jesus as a means for preparing a congregation to go deeper into knowing and loving the Lord present in his body, blood, soul, and divinity upon the altar. Bishop Byrne shared his conviction that once the faithful grasp something of Jesus's love and desire for a relationship with them, they will be amenable to embarking on a great journey deeper into the Lord's loving relationship as manifested in the Eucharist.

After the bishop concluded his talk and generously answered questions, Dr. Susan Timoney, STRS associate dean for graduate ministerial studies, in the School of Theology and Religious Studies, moderated a discussion among four priests with a wealth of varied experiences in preaching: Father Pat Smith, pastor of St. Augustine Parish in Washington, D.C.; Father Patrick Mary Briscoe, a Dominican and editor of *Our Sunday Visitor*; Father Frank De Siano, a Paulist professor of homiletics and mission preacher; and Father Bud Stevens, TC's rector. These priests engaged in a lively conversation and shared practical advice in response to questions posed by the TC deacons and by the audience present.

In short, the 2024 Preaching Symposium was a wonderful opportunity to hear from great preachers and to engage in fraternal discussions with priests and those in formation from various dioceses and religious orders. While the day's proceedings only began to scratch the surface of the *Ars Praedicandi* (the Art of Preaching), it certainly left those who participated desiring more — as any good homily should! ■

To watch the video of Bishop Byrne's remarks, go to the "Preaching Symposium" story at theologicalcollege.org.

Book Launch: *Myself as Another*, by Father John McNerney

Jackson Nichols

Second Basselin, Diocese of Little Rock

On Thursday, March 21, Theological College hosted the exciting book launch for *Myself as Another: A Journey to the Heart of Who We Are*. *Myself as Another* explores the depth and beauty of the human person by highlighting the insights of contemporary philosophers, not only in their written philosophy but also in their lived experience. The book launch celebrated this accomplishment in the field of philosophy by TC faculty member and director of Basselin Scholars, Father John McNerney.

The book launch was attended by TC students and faculty and by numerous friends and colleagues of Father McNerney. Remarks were given by the TC rector, Father Bud Stevens; Patrick Sweeney (3-B, Washington); Catholic International University's

Dr. Elizabeth Shaw, Provost of the Catholic International University, offers insights and accolades during the book launch event.



Father John poses with TC's Basselin scholars, whom he mentors.

Dr. Elizabeth Shaw; and The Catholic University of America's Professor of Politics Dr. David Walsh. Both Professors Shaw and Walsh have previously worked with Father McNerney. The remarks given not only praised his accomplishments in the field of philosophy but also praised the author himself. Father Bud described Father McNerney as a "true philosopher," meaning, "a lover of wisdom." Sweeney said Father McNerney is "a model of a saintly priest, philosopher, and how to be who you are." The praises of Father McNerney emphasized that his work in the realm of the philosophy of the human person is not something he only abstractly considers, but is something that he lives in his daily life.

The book itself received high praise from Walsh, who described *Myself as Another* as "a symphony to the person." The philosophy of the human person aims to transform our understanding of who we are as persons and how we encounter the beauty of all that we meet. McNerney explores the writings of politicians, psychiatrists, and philosophers on the subject of personal identity and the "other." Drawing deeply on the insights of Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic thinkers, he shows how a spirituality of unity can nourish us on "a journey to the heart of who we are." On this point, Shaw remarked that in *Myself as Another*, "you will meet some new people, some people you may know, and ultimately yourself." Interlocutors in each chapter represent a constellation of the greats, including Newman, Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein, Arendt, Bonhoeffer, Weil, Ricoeur, and many more.

This event concluded with Father McNerney giving some commentary in which he reflected on the human person. McNerney emphasized the need for the "other" in our journey as persons, stating, "We become who we are not by self-possession, but by dispossession," later continuing, "We never fully answer the question, 'Who am I?'" However, with McNerney as a guide in *Myself as Another*, one can certainly dive deeper into the mystery of oneself, and so follow the ancient imperative: "Know thyself." ■

Dean McCarthy Concludes His Tenure

Wheeler Wilson

First Basselin, Diocese of Orlando

After serving as dean of the School of Philosophy since 2011, Dr. John C. McCarthy stepped down from the position at the end of the 2023–24 academic year. He joined the faculty of the university in 1990 at the rank of assistant professor of philosophy, tenure-track. In March, he graciously met with me to reflect on his time at The Catholic University of America.

Although he was destined to become a philosopher, his path to the discipline wasn't always clear. He said, "I started out in engineering, mostly because I didn't know what I ought to do, and it at least seemed serious. In high school, just about everything I studied seemed to me really interesting. I loved mathematics. I loved the sciences. I loved literature..." After a semester in a co-op program in systems engineering, he concluded that it wasn't for him. "It was disappointing to me that during the entire semester, the only things I had been able to read were the assigned readings for my engineering, math, physics, and computer science courses."

He spent the next eight months in a co-op work assignment, often working double shifts on the weekends, and returned to full-time study in the fall, this time at the University of Toronto. Of the courses he took that year, he said, "The thing that I really loved was the philosophy course, so my second year there, I took two more philosophy courses. By that point, I was pretty much sold. It seemed that philosophy would allow me to do it all. Philosophy is an 'undisciplined discipline,' so to say, in the sense that it doesn't limit the range of its interests to this or that kind of thing. Indeed, in a certain sense it must not do so."

As he approached his senior year, McCarthy recalled having "a kind of a sinking feeling, because the only thing I really wanted to do was study more philosophy, but that seemed kind of crazy." Nevertheless, he consulted with some of his teachers, and one of them, a former Catholic University professor, recommended the school. "I wanted to go to a place where at least some members of the faculty were open to the possibility that Christian revelation is true," he said. "I had not made up my own mind, in that regard,



but at other places I'd applied and been accepted, it wasn't so obvious I could explore that possibility."

The next year, McCarthy found himself at Catholic University. During his time as a student here, he was privileged to study under both Msgr. Robert Sokolowski and Msgr. John Wippel, both of whom were Basselin scholars in their own day. "Somehow or other," McCarthy said, "I'm still here." After the 2011 death of the previous dean, Father Kurt Pritzl, O.P., McCarthy found himself, as he put it, "in harm's way," and was soon made the dean of the school.

"The biggest challenge," he said, "is one I didn't always recognize as such. This is going to sound awfully pious, but the biggest challenge for me has been my own shortcomings, my sinfulness, if you will... the many ways I got in the way of the job."

The other challenge McCarthy identified is inadequate funding. "We have always been a very lean operation. But, by the grace of God, and thanks to a very talented and very dedicated faculty, we've managed to punch way above our weight, almost unreasonably above our weight... It took me a while to understand just how constrained we are financially. Notwithstanding the generosity of many donors, we're not yet out of the woods."

Despite the challenges of the job, however, McCarthy considers his time in the dean's office as a privilege, entirely of a piece with the great blessing it has been for him to serve as a member of the school's faculty. "It's a tremendous thing to be involved in the work of studying and teaching philosophy. To have the leisure

to think about the things that really matter and to make even modest headway in understanding has been a real gift. It is also very rewarding to assist one's students in appreciating that the world is shot through with intelligibility, to encourage even the most cynical among them in the hunch that reality isn't just a crapshoot, that existence isn't ugly or absurd. Teaching is very gratifying work, work well worth doing. And it is particularly rewarding to study and teach philosophy in an ecclesial context, although naturally enough, this also involves peculiar challenges of its own. Please God, our efforts contribute somehow to the upbuilding of the Church."

When asked what sorts of changes he has witnessed in the field and in the Church over the years, he replied, surprisingly, "In a way, nothing much has changed during my time here. Philosophy is always concerned with the same old things. And the same old things, they keep being the same. In fact, they become even more the same, by getting ever 'older' than when we first came upon them, with each passing year! Aristotle hasn't changed, Plato hasn't changed, Thomas Aquinas hasn't changed. They can't change, they won't change. Nevertheless, there's something always fresh about thinking in their company. That's what we want to do, to think in the company of the great thinkers of the past, not because we worship them, and not to be their mouthpieces, by repeating their thoughts in a mechanical way, which wouldn't be thinking at all, but because there's every reason to regard them as friends in helping us to think for ourselves, here and now, about our common world. That's the point — to understand reality."

He did acknowledge some change, however: "When I wrote my M.A. thesis, I typed up my drafts on a portable electric typewriter, and then hired a typist to produce the final version. Footnotes were a bear! Nobody hires typists anymore, right?" Remarking on the many new technologies, he said, "We are constantly devising new tools to improve our situation, but we are always slow to recognize the many ways that our shiny new gadgets end up changing us, and not always for the better. The troublesome and troubling effects of the digital order are now on everyone's lips, for example. How it will all shake out remains to be seen. Still, I don't think the human heart has changed. The essential terms of what it means to excel as a human being — what makes the cardinal virtues cardinal — haven't changed. And our destiny, as revealed by Christ, is what it has always been."

When I asked for advice for aspiring seminarian philosophers, the dean said, "I hate giving advice," but I insisted, so he said, "Do the reading. Do your best to understand it. And then test out what you've read with your fellow Basselins. Ask yourselves

whether it makes sense or, rather, whether it helps you to make better sense of the world." He continued, "One of the great things about the Basselin Program is that it only functions in the measure that you're with fellow sufferers. You can see that real friendships develop among the Basselins. They help each other. The program wouldn't function without that. You see it, for instance, when a student finishes his M.A. orals and his classmates are all waiting for him outside Aquinas 100. And when they see he has survived the gauntlet, bloodied but not broken, they all cheer. Such friendship should be the model for all seminarians at Theological College; indeed, for all Catholic University students. It'd be great were every student at Catholic University to be like the Basselins in this, their ethos, their *esprit de corps*. And I think the Basselins know that this is the right way to be."

McCarthy extends his gratitude to everyone associated with TC who has helped him over the years. If anyone reading this is, in turn, grateful to McCarthy or the School of Philosophy, McCarthy recommends, "there's one great way to express your gratitude: pray for us. And for those in a position to do so, also consider making a donation to the school. I'm very grateful for the Basselins who have offered us prayers and financial support over the years, and there have been a great many of them."

Upon concluding his duties as dean, McCarthy will have a one-year sabbatical, which will free him to take a deep breath, think in "a more leisurely way" about things, and to do some scholarly writing. After that, he plans to return to full-time teaching and research. Most of all, he said, "I hope that a year from now I'll be a better man and therefore a better Christian." ■

It's a tremendous thing to be involved in the work of studying and teaching philosophy. To have the leisure to think about the things that really matter and to make even modest headway in understanding is a real gift. It is also very rewarding to assist one's students in appreciating that the world is shot through with intelligibility... Please God, our efforts contribute somehow to the upbuilding of the Church.

Feature

GRADUATE WITNESSES

Theological College's 2024 Deacon and Basselin Scholar Graduates

Theologian Reflections

Rev. Mr. David Birkdale
Archdiocese of New York

Reflecting on my time as a seminarian at Theological College, a quote from the *Aeneid* has been coming to my mind: "*Forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit.*" Virgil puts these hopeful words in the mouth of Aeneas who, on fire with piety, calls them out to his men as they cross the Mediterranean to plant the first seeds of Rome: "We will reminisce on these things and rejoice." I suspect Aeneas, with his piety and devotion to his divine vocation, is an underrated model for seminarians. Like Aeneas, we are each on a journey, and TC has been a pivotal part of that journey for all of us. I know that, like those Trojan warriors, when we recall this time at TC, it will be with joy.

On the other hand, Aeneas and his men were all going to the same place, so that one day they might have been able to reminisce on their journey together on the hills of Latium. This is a luxury we do not have; our class has been gathered from the four winds, and we will now be scattered back to them to realize our common call in different corners of the Lord's vineyard. What challenges will each of us face? What unique blessings does the Lord have in store? I can only hope that, like Aeneas and his men, we will one day be gathered together again to recount

these paths along which the Lord has and will have led us, and rejoice. Until then, *oremus pro invicem.*

Rev. Mr. Vincent Castaldi
Archdiocese of New York

I am profoundly grateful to God for my four years at Theological College. After having been previously formed abroad in Northwest Europe when I was a novice in the Society of Jesus, being in Washington, D.C., for seminary formation has been a great privilege. I have been given many opportunities to experience the greater Church in the United States while in the District of Columbia. I am especially thinking about my assignment at the parish of St. Joseph's on Capitol Hill. The parish community there and the pastor, Father William Gurnee, have been so supportive of me in my journey to the priesthood. I also thank my archbishop, Cardinal Timothy Dolan, for sending me to study at The Catholic University of America. I have had a first-class theological education.

Reflecting on my formation at TC, I have appreciated the Sulpicians and their unique style of seminary formation. They have encouraged me to grow and become a better version of myself without following a cookie-cutter approach to priestly formation. My advisor and spiritual director have helped me to grow intellectually, spiritually, pastorally, and humanly. I also appreciate all the workshops, small groups, and talks I attended in the seminary.

I look forward to my priestly ordination in May. I am happy to return to TC next academic year as a student priest to complete my licentiate. I am also excited to attend upcoming alumni days at TC

to reconnect with others. I have formed lasting friendships here.

God has been exceptionally good to me, and I believe being at TC was part of His Providence. As I end my time here, I will never forget the Latin words I noticed the first day I arrived at the seminary's entrance: "*Providentia Dei Nos Providebit*" (The Providence of God will provide for us).

Rev. Mr. Benjamin Grothouse
Diocese of Fort Worth

After four years and a pastoral year, I have seen a lot of changes while at Theological College. Through this time, I have received the freedom to grow as a Christian man and into a better spiritual leader. This time has provided me with some of the greatest Christian friendships and the skills to be an effective minister of God's love. I know that these friendships built on a common love and devotion to our Lord will be lifelong; they are built on a common fraternity that TC provided through its environment and culture.

Above all, I am grateful for the ways I have been able to grow in my spiritual life. I am especially thankful for the help of the spiritual directors, formation advisors, and the rector's leadership to help guide me in becoming an integrated Catholic man. They have taught me the importance of the dignity of the priesthood and the gift of joyful ministry.

I walk away from TC having received many gifts and joys but, most importantly, I go more prepared for the ministry of a priest. Entering priestly service, I know that the greatest gift ever given to me is my vocation. TC has nurtured that vocation and helped me to live it well. Relying on



The Deacon Class of 2024, TC's largest in almost ten years, back row, from left: Seth Seamen, Joseph Heisey, Daniel Kushner, William Mobley, Joseph McHenry, Nathaniel Roberts, Benjamin Grothouse, Dylan Prentice, Kenneth Nauert, Benjamin Schrantz, and David Birkdale; front row, from left, Stephen Wong, Vincent Castaldi, Elias Hazkial, John Kist, and Jacob Romero.

God's grace, I hope to carry these gifts with the same care that TC has given me.

Rev. Mr. Elias Hazkial

Student Government President
Maronite Eparchy of Los Angeles

Having entered Theological College in the middle of my formation years, I was initially anxious about fitting in because I was “the new kid” in school. That anxiety was compounded by being a “different” Catholic; the only Eastern Catholic (Maronite) seminarian in a Latin seminary. However, my anxiety was quickly dispelled by the overarching collegial character of the seminary and the underlying sense of fraternity among the seminarians.

I immediately realized that I wasn't the only “new kid” — I wasn't the only one that was “different.” As the *nation's seminary*, seminarians come from all over the country and are diverse in age, experience, and background. Therefore, many seminarians may feel as if they are “different” from the rest. But our differences do not impede our joint journey

towards the priesthood. Rather, our differences make the concepts of *universal* and *Catholic* tangible and real. Because everyone within the TC community has a different origin story, there is an inherent welcoming environment that fosters a practical mission towards the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God.

Looking back on my three years of formation at TC, I thank God for his Providence that brought me here and I look forward to his Providence that will reconnect me with the relationships I made in this seedbed of the ministerial priesthood.

Rev. Mr. Joseph Heisey

Archdiocese of Washington

Seminary training has provided me the opportunity to know and accept God's mission for me. This essential process gives a man the ability to go forward into a calling that demands a lifetime of strenuous labor with human souls. Without a strong sense of direction, I would not be able to follow such a calling.

In seminary, we immersed ourselves in liturgical prayer, built a community of teammates, and studied in order to understand better the way God has chosen to work to transform our human reality. We took time to develop the skills for this labor, guided by expert advisors and formators. Most people do not have the chance to spend years in a school of spiritual, personal, and professional development, and for this opportunity I am grateful. The most permanent takeaways from seminary, however, are the friendships — firstly, with God and the saints, and secondly with those moving forward with me into the priesthood.

Rev. Mr. John Kist

Diocese of Pittsburgh

I have often viewed the completion of seminary and subsequent ordination to the presbyterate as a “point of arrival” — that after the twists and turns of seminary a man “arrives” at his destination within the presbyterate where he will remain for his entire life. As I now approach the

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conclusion of my own time of formation, my mindset has shifted. I no longer see the completion of seminary as a point of arrival, but rather as a point of departure. I will depart with renewed fervor and a consecrated mission, to begin the work of Christ that has been continually shared by his priests generation after generation. This mission, given at ordination, is the point of departure into the newness of life with and within Christ's Church.

Seeing this step into the priesthood as a point of departure has also helped me reflect on my time of formation at Theological College and in other places of formation. Over these past years of formation, I have been prepared, equipped, challenged, tested, and supported, not to arrive, but to depart. I have been blessed to see the blossoming of friendships, to taste the richness of theological truths, and to be steeped in the sacredness of divine friendship. All of these things I carry with me, not as memories, but as gifts that equip me to take the next step. As I approach this next step, I am full of excitement, for there is no more exciting part of an adventure than when it begins. Therefore, equipped, supported, tested, and consecrated, I am thrilled to join a group of men who will depart from this formation environment to carry on the work of Christ as his priests.

Rev. Mr. Daniel Kushner *Diocese of Pittsburgh*

I came into major theology with a zealous desire to be challenged, inspired, and encouraged. In the first few years of my time at Theological College, I felt more challenged than inspired. As is often the case when we follow the Lord, he does not give us what we want; rather, he gives us what we *need*.

While it is true that my heart was sorely stretched during my first days and months in seminary, it was strengthened again as I began to grow. This began in Basic Supervised Ministry at MedStar Georgetown Hospital and was fostered by multiple directed silent retreats and beautiful experiences in parish ministry, as well as my strong friendships. I did not need to keep grasping for Christ through phantasma hopes for formation. Instead, Christ was reaching out to me.

As the dust is settling, and I stand at the gates of entrance into the presbyterate, I can see Christ's hand in my formation as well as in the transformation of TC. This place has changed significantly for the better, and so have I. But we both still have room for improvement. TC wore me down. This is not what I thought I wanted, but it was what I needed. I express my deep thanks and gratitude to all of God's servants in this place.

Rev. Mr. Joseph McHenry *Archdiocese of Washington*

As I approach the end of my time of initial formation and embark on my vocation as a ministerial priest of Jesus Christ in service of the people of God in the Archdiocese of Washington, I am grateful first of all to Almighty God, whose providence arranged the possibilities that led to and supported my years at Theological College. He alone knows the full register of people to whom I am indebted. Therefore, I trust him to reward those whose contributions to my vocation evade my acknowledgement here.

After God, I am grateful first of all to my ordinary, Wilton Cardinal Gregory, for the opportunity to study theology at this national seminary, which happily resides in my own local Church. I remain grateful

also to Fathers Carter Griffin and Mark Ivany, the directors of seminarians for the Archdiocese of Washington during my time at TC, for providing me with the material and spiritual support necessary to persevere in my vocation.

I am grateful, too, to the faculty members by whom I have had the privilege to be formed during my time at TC. In a particular way, I would like to thank my rectors, Fathers Dominic Ciriaco and Bud Stevens, Deacon Ed McCormack, my formation advisor for the entirety of my time here, and the three spiritual directors who have accompanied me on my vocational journey during these years.

I would be remiss not to acknowledge the unheralded work of all the staff, including the dedicated kitchen and housekeeping workers, who support the mission of the seminary and treat the seminarians with such care. Truly, they help make this institution a home for us.

One of the highlights of being a seminarian at TC is the opportunity to learn from world-class professors across the street at The Catholic University of America. To those who taught me, I remain grateful.

Lastly, I want to thank those who formed me pastorally as I served in ministry. These include the sisters of the Missionaries of Charity and the staff at Immaculate Conception Parish in Washington, led by the pastor, Father Charlie Gallagher.

One of the hallmarks of Sulpician formation is that it is a formational community: "*une communauté educatrice*." Within this community, we are given the freedom to be formed into mature men with an apostolic spirit of charity, zeal, and fidelity to the Gospel. I am convinced that any fruit that is borne by my priestly ministry will be in no small part due to the experiences I have had at TC. I pray that

A Prayer for Priests

O Jesus, look down with love on Thy priests. Fill them with burning zeal for the conversion of sinners. Keep unstained their anointed hands which daily touch Thy Sacred Body. Keep unsullied their lips purpled with Thy Precious Blood. Keep pure and unearthly their hearts sealed with the sublime marks of Thy glorious Priesthood. Bless their labors with abundant fruit and may those to whom they minister on earth be one day their joy and their crown in heaven. Amen.

This prayer was recited each evening by the community for the alumni of TC for decades from the founding of Theological College.

(Published in the first issue of the *Theological College Bulletin*, Vol. 1, Number 1, November 1955.)

just as I have encountered him in myriad ways within the halls of this hallowed institution, I may go out from them to share with my brothers and sisters nobody less than the Lord himself, to whom belongs glory and adoration forever.

Rev. Mr. William Mobley
Diocese of Dallas

Looking back on my time at Theological College, the things that stand out the most are the community of seminarians and the many unique experiences afforded by the location of the seminary. The March for Life and all the surrounding events, solemn Masses televised on EWTN at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, diverse parish ministry, interactions with lay students on campus, and encounters with bishops from around the country are just a few of the things I have experienced here. But more than any of those, the discussions in the halls and seminarian rooms, the camaraderie among the seminarians, and the time spent together in community have formed me into the man I am today.

I am incredibly grateful to our office staff, facilities staff, and food services staff. They all care very deeply about their work and have been a great support to me over the years. I especially want to thank Sofia Olkiewicz for her consistency and care for seminarians while working with three different rectors during my years here. I

am constantly inspired by the alumni from this institution who are good and holy priests who I can look to as role models and look forward to joining in serving the Church as a priest of Jesus Christ.

Rev. Mr. Kenneth Nauert
Archdiocese of Louisville

I am incredibly grateful for the time I have spent here at Theological College. When I moved from Philosophy at Saint Meinrad Seminary to Theology at TC and The Catholic University of America, I did not know what to expect. Moving to our nation's capital was a significant transition moment for me. Yet, what I found when I arrived was a community of brother seminarians that was welcoming, taking every opportunity to make me feel at home. I found life-long friends and brothers in the seminarians I encountered, and great mentors and fathers in the formation faculty.

When I look back on these few years, I see the opportunities that God granted me to learn and grow in what it means to be a man of God, a servant to others, and how to love with a pastor's heart. I believe wholeheartedly that God gives us every opportunity to become that which He has called us to be, and I believe that my formation at TC was the result of Providence. God knew intimately that I needed the freedom and the opportunities available at TC to become the priest he

wants me to be. This house of formation has shaped me into the deacon that I am today and will continue to make me the priest God desires me to be.

Formation, as I have come to know, is an ongoing process, and I know that the relationships, lessons, and formative elements I have received at TC will follow me into my ministry as a priest. I know that God will continue to form my heart after the likeness of his own Sacred Heart. I pray that I may be humble before the Lord my God, and that I will be docile to the continued formation he will instill into my life as I grow to be his priest. May I follow in the footsteps of our Blessed Mother Mary, and repeat with her, "*Fiat mihi secundum Verbum tuum.*"

Rev. Mr. Dylan Prentice
Archdiocese of Washington

"Do not let me hear of the wisdom of old men, but rather of their folly, their fear of fear and frenzy, their fear of possession, of belonging to another, or to others, or to God. The only wisdom we can hope to acquire is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless."¹

At the end of my seminary time, T.S. Eliot's words from his *Four Quartets* seem more appropriate than any others. One might be inclined to think, as Eliot spoke against in this poem, that wisdom comes merely from experience. At the end of so many years of studies and formation,



During his spring visit to the seminary, Cardinal Gregory celebrated Mass for the community and blessed new chalices for some of the Archdiocese of Washington deacons.

a man must necessarily be wise and full of knowledge that few others have, right? I'm with Eliot here; it is not my time in priestly formation, all the courses I took, all the hours of studying, or participating in seminary activities that have prepared me for the next step. Rather, it is God's work, the many hours of prayer and communion with him, the interior work of the Holy Spirit to prepare, in the heart of this young man, a suitable instrument for God's saving work to be done. I have learned that I do not acquire or fashion wisdom on my own nor is it given to me by another, but that God gives that ever-sought gift as we let ourselves be his. And it is in being totally his that we can accomplish any good for him.

I am grateful for all he has given me, not least of all the friendships that have encouraged me, humbled me, and called me to be better and seek holiness more fervently. "To make an end is to make a beginning," Eliot wrote.² I look forward to that beginning in priestly ministry, grateful for what I have been given and excited to share the joy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the world.

¹ TS Eliot, *Four Quartets*, "East Coker."

² TS Eliot, *Four Quartets*, "Little Gidding."

Rev. Mr. Nathaniel Roberts
Archdiocese of Washington

Near the beginning of my time at Theological College, I bumped into a priest of my archdiocese and he asked, "Are you guys ever going to have a normal year in seminary?" At the time, he was referring to the fact that I had finished my time in minor seminary and was

beginning major seminary during the COVID-19 pandemic, with campuses closed and classes moved online. This was an unusual beginning to my time at TC but I am not sure if you could call any of my time in seminary, even the time before the pandemic, "normal." There are ups and downs in any vocation in life, and seminary is no different. We all weather whatever comes our way and trust in God that he is continually drawing us closer to himself. This realization has helped me get through having classes online, the long finals weeks, and the struggles in my own formation. I knew that no matter what struggles I encountered, God was there to guide me because I was following him. My time at TC may not have been "normal" but it was always full of grace because it was precisely where God wanted me. Looking back on my time at TC, none of the struggles are visible, because in God's plan for my life they led me to where I am now; the vocation that God has always desired for me.

Rev. Mr. Jacob Romero
Archdiocese of Santa Fe

These four years at Theological College were quite a ride. Coming in 2019 was a new adventure, being the only seminarian from Santa Fe; yet from the moment I met the orientation team, I felt so welcomed and supported. I especially was so grateful for the support and welcome of Father Gerald McBrearity, who accommodated me and was always so kind. Admittedly, DC has been an interesting place to live, and made me miss home a lot. That being said, it's a place I will always be able to call

home and return to in the future. I had so many great opportunities during my time here, especially in the Brookland/Catholic University area. The greatest memories will be with my fellow seminarians here, including adventures to surrounding areas, board game nights, and times of prayer together.

I will also really miss my time at the Basilica across the street. It was an amazing ministry, where I was able to meet so many different people from all over the world, and was able to serve a mass or two with bishops and cardinals!

In the end, I will miss my time here. I've heard the old remark some priests make about the seminary's best view being the rear-view mirror of your car. I don't embrace that mindset; I want to remember that no matter where I go, God is always there, forming and sustaining us.

Thank you to all the faculty and staff here at TC, especially my rectors Fathers McBrearity, Ciriaco, and Stevens, and my formators, Fathers Andrew Szablewski and Robert Cro. I wouldn't be at this milestone without your support and leadership.

Rev. Mr. Benjamin Schrantz
Diocese of Syracuse

"Where have you come from, and where are you going?" (*Gen 16:8*). That short line from Scripture covers a lot of ground when I think about my time at Theological College. Looking back to where I came from and then journeyed over the past seven years, in preparation for where I am going next, there was no one defining moment but an amalgamation of various points along my journey that got me to where I am today.

When I first arrived at TC, one of the formators remarked, “Here at TC, we give you guys enough rope when it comes to formation. You can either build something beautiful, or not. It is up to you.” That freedom was all encompassing: from the academic electives we could take, to our ability to take in the cultural and historical offerings of Washington, D.C., to engaging in various pastoral ministry opportunities, to being able to develop my own spirituality. TC provided me with the opportunity to grow as an individual. And it is in that freedom, in that individual growth, that I was able to build up and prepare for future ministry back in my home diocese. That freedom TC has provided has given me appreciation for *where I have come from* and has prepared me for *where I am going*.

Rev. Mr. Seth Michael Seaman
Diocese of Richmond

The Lord has done a lot in my heart over the years that I have been in formation to be his priest. If, on the day I began my time at Theological College, someone were to have given me the option to be immediately ordained to the priesthood, I would have instantly seized upon that opportunity. The Lord knows what he is doing, however, and ensured that I got the formation that I really needed to live out the mission he has given me. Although the process has been humbling and has forced me to grow in ways that I was not entirely expecting, the Lord has provided for each and every step along the way. As a result of his providential loving kindness and boundless grace, I am now ready to live out my calling to be the Lord’s evangelist, lead people in discipleship, and be one who will help others encounter Jesus through the sacraments.

Although I am not worthy of any of this, I do feel prepared to get to work. God willing, I will be ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Richmond and be of some benefit to the Church and all of the beloved People of God across my diocese. I have been wanting to be in full-time active ministry for so long and, with the continual help of God’s mercy, I will now have that opportunity. Please pray for me as I join the Lord in his amazing mission in the world.

Rev. Mr. Stephen Wong
Archdiocese of Washington

The first question that arises when I reflect on the past five years is: Where did they go? After being stationed overseas for 18 consecutive years of the 40 years with the U.S. Army, oscillating between Asia and Europe, I was led to the Archdiocese of Washington — by the grace of God. It was here that I discovered daily conversion and confirmed my response to follow Jesus Christ, despite my past.

Initially set for a year at Theological College for pre-theology and an anticipated move to Saint John XXIII in Weston, Mass., for theology, a unique opportunity presented itself. The faculty at TC acknowledged my capacity to share experiences and wisdom with younger seminarians due to my background. And the Archdiocese concurred, allowing me to stay and gain more familiarity with the Washington, D.C. community. I firmly believe it was the Holy Spirit guiding me to this path. Words fail to convey my immense gratitude for the exceptional seminary formation I received. Arriving at the age of 56 and departing at 62, I leave as a much improved person, equipped and ready to carry out the work God has in store for me. I am not only prepared

to serve as a dedicated priest but also as a better and more compassionate person.

TC and the professors at Catholic University remain steadfast in fulfilling the mission of the Catholic Church, offering commendable groundwork in priestly formation, academia, and spirituality. Each passing year at the seminary has enriched my learning, growth, and the cultivation of spiritual bonds within a diverse community of seminarians and priests from various U.S. dioceses. This environment has fostered strong friendships and profound intellectual discussions. Engaging with the less fortunate, teaching catechesis at a university, serving as a hospital chaplain, and contributing to parish pastoral ministry have further reinforced my calling to serve the people of God. It was at TC that I authentically fulfilled the preparation for and practical application of the mission of evangelization, preaching, and pastoral care.

My outstanding experience at TC has shown me that true fulfillment lies not just in praising God but in being a manifestation of God’s glory, facilitating the divine indwelling within me. Once again, words fall short in expressing my profound gratitude to TC for shaping me in the best possible way over the past five years. I will forever be thankful for my time at TC. ■

Basselin Memoirs



The Basselin Class of 2024, from left, Patrick Sweeney and Liam Daigle.

Liam Daigle

Diocese of Worcester

Thesis

“Number and Divine Ascent:
An Exposition of Book VI of
St. Augustine’s *De Musica*”

Director

Kevin White, Ph.D.

The past three years at Theological College have been a great blessing. They have brought with them many gifts and opportunities. Among these gifts are the many friendships I have made within the seminary community, which have been supportive and enriching. Studying in Washington, D.C., has helped me to expand my outlook by introducing me to different traditions within the Church. Among my many experiences here, I have enjoyed serving as a catechist at St. Anthony’s Parish, singing in the seminary schola, and participating in various academic and pastoral conferences.

The Basselin Program at Catholic University has been challenging and thorough. I am very happy with the depth and breadth of the academic program in Philosophy. The wisdom and learning of past thinkers are a sure preparation for entering into the study of Theology. As I was brainstorming for my thesis, I desired to answer the question: Why does music cause different kinds of emotions? While not answering this question, my research led me to consider one of St. Augustine’s lesser known dialogues, *On Music*. In Book VI of this work, Augustine addresses the topics of order in the

universe, the function of the human soul, and the Christian’s ascent to God in love.

Gratitude is difficult to express when owed to so many people. I am thankful to the seminary faculty, who have guided us through these years of formation, and to the seminary staff, who have worked tirelessly for our well-being. I am grateful to all my brother seminarians, who have made this community so welcoming and uplifting. Also, I give many thanks to the faculty of the School of Philosophy, and especially to Dr. Kevin White, my director, who has made great efforts to bring us down the many corridors of Philosophy. To them, to my peers, and to all who have made this time at TC possible, I am grateful and wish God’s blessing.

Patrick Sweeney

Archdiocese of Washington

Thesis

“On the Viciousness of Addiction”

Director

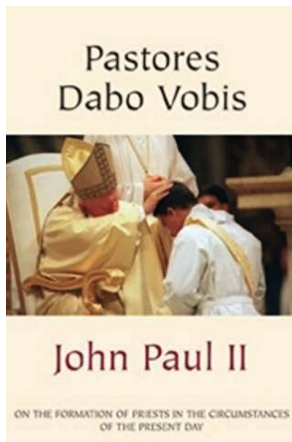
Marshall Bierson, Ph.D.

As my time at Theological College draws to a close, I find my heart conflicted between nostalgia for the past and excitement for the future. I feel nostalgia because the time for goodbye draws near. I know I shall always remember my time as a Basselin Scholar with great affection. I will greatly miss the rigorous study of Philosophy, with which I have fallen in love. I will miss my eminent professors, their engaging classes, and the talented students with whom I have been fortunate

enough to study. I will miss the faculty and staff who have generously labored for the important work of priestly formation. I will miss living across the street from the Basilica, with its lofty tower and impressive dome. I will miss the camaraderie of the TC seminarians. I will miss making late-night food runs after discussing philosophy and theology for hours. I will miss the study sessions before finals and comps, the erudite conversations in the library, and the discussions to and from class. I will miss Caldwell Holy Hours and retreats in the Shenandoah Valley. I will miss the Basselin College, our victories, our vespers, and our venerable traditions.

I feel excited for the future because I know that the Lord’s plan for my life continues. He led me here to ascend the heights of contemplation and seek after truths most sublime in order to forge a deeper love of him. I feel blessed to have spent time researching in the field of the philosophy of addiction. I trust my research on the viciousness of addiction, the nature of dependencies, and the loss of self-sufficiency will have great pastoral application in my future ministry. As I move on from TC, I feel ready to embrace what lies ahead, knowing that what I have received in this blessed place has well-prepared me for the future. I leave TC with happy memories, with hope for its future and mine, and with the assurance of my prayers. ■

SEMINARY LIFE



Pastores Dabo Vobis: Part II

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

*Vice-Rector, Coordinator of
Pastoral Formation*

After thirty-two years, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (PDV) remains an invaluable document on priestly formation following the conciliar decree *Optatam Totius* and provides guiding principles to both the new *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (RFIS) and the new, sixth edition of the *Program of Priestly Formation* (PPF).

In the previous (fall 2023) issue of *The Crossroads* (p. 14), Theological College's vice-rector offered Part I of this two-part exploration of the influence of the PDV on these other two documents. The first three main themes in Part I examined the seminarian's identity as a man of communion, as a man being configured to Christ, and as a missionary disciple. Here, we deepen our understanding of the impact of PDV on the pedagogical formation of seminarians.

• **The seminarian is a man in accompaniment.**

The good shepherd always accompanies his sheep and does not leave his flock in times of trouble and terror (*Jn 10*). Pastoral and spiritual accompaniment happen through cordial relationships as a spiritual father and spiritual spouse of the People of God. The priesthood of Jesus Christ is built on the relationship with his Father and his people. A priest is not just functional but is also relational in order to offer sacrifices to God on behalf of his people (*Heb 5:1-3*). "The relation of the priest to Jesus Christ, and in him to his Church, is found in the very being of the priest by virtue of his sacramental consecration/anointing and in his activity, that is in his mission or ministry. In particular, the priest as minister is the servant of Christ present in the Church as mystery, communion, and mission. In virtue of his

participation in the 'anointing' and 'mission' of Christ, the priest can continue Christ's prayer, word, sacrifice, and salvific action in the Church." (PDV 16).

Through the process of pastoral and spiritual accompaniment, priests prove themselves to be the visible signs of the merciful love of the Father in the Church and in the world. "Christ's gift of himself to his Church, the fruit of his love, is described in terms of that unique gift of self, made by the bridegroom to the bride" (PDV 22). In Sulpician tradition, the community of formators, especially the formation advisors, accompany the seminarian on his path toward ordination. Each seminarian is afforded the opportunity to meet with his formation advisor and spiritual director every other week (PDV 91-113). The distinction and clear separation of internal and external forums are strictly observed and faithfully respected in Sulpician tradition.

• **Seminarian formation of internal maturity happens through internal freedom.**

A seminarian needs to form an internal maturity so as to become a shepherd/pastor after God's own heart (*Jer 3:15*), following the model of Jesus, the good shepherd (*Jn 10*). One who cannot be intimate with God cannot possess an internal and affective maturity. Consequently, one who does not experience being loved cannot offer love to others. St. John Paul II writes, "Affective maturity presupposes an awareness that love has a central role in human life. In fact, as I have written in the encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself; his life is meaningless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it" (PDV 44).

Interior freedom is an important element of formation in the Sulpician tradition, as relationships only happen in freedom. The relationship between God and a seminarian happens in interior freedom which is shared, clarified, and reaffirmed in spiritual direction. A seminarian must possess an interior freedom to say "yes" to God's call, just as the Blessed Virgin Mary did. "Human maturity, and in particular affective maturity, requires a clear and strong training in freedom, which expresses itself in convinced and heartfelt obedience to the 'truth of one's own being,' to the 'meaning' of one's own existence, that is to the 'sincere gift of self' as the way and fundamental content of the authentic realization of self. Thus understood, freedom requires the person to be truly master of oneself, determined

SEMINARY LIFE

to fight and overcome the different forms of selfishness and individualism which threaten the life of each one, ready to open out to others, generous in dedication and service to one's neighbor" (PDV 44).

- **Valuing and integrating all dimensions of formation leads to transformation.**

The PDV encourages formation to happen through four dimensions – human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. These four dimensions are interrelated and interconnected. It is important that all four dimensions are equally valued and never to be compromised by overemphasizing one over the other. The unity of the formation program is described in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 60–62. “Each dimension of formation is aimed at ‘transforming’ or ‘assimilating’ the heart in the image of the heart of Christ” (PDV 57).

- **Virtue formation is achieved through habit formation.**

The seminary is the place where one can develop good habits to enrich all four dimensions of formation mentioned above. Formation of good habits lead to formation of virtues, especially the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance and the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, “Human virtues are firm attitudes, stable dispositions, habitual perfections of intellect and will that govern our actions, order our passions, and guide our conduct according to reason and faith. They make possible ease, self-mastery, and joy in leading a morally good life. The virtuous man is he who freely practices the good” (1804). “The seminary which educates must seek, really and truly, to initiate the candidate into the sensitivity of being a shepherd, in the conscious and mature assumption of his responsibilities, in the interior habit of evaluating problems and establishing priorities, and looking for solutions on the basis of honest motivations of faith and according to the theological demands inherent in pastoral work” (PDV 58). The result of virtue formation facilitates a seminarian toward his self-gift and advances his journey to the priesthood. “Priestly ordination requires, in the one who receives it, a complete giving of himself for the service of the People of God, as an image of Christ the Spouse” (PDV 22).

“

It is essential for the formation of candidates for the priesthood and the pastoral ministry, which by its very nature is ecclesial, that the seminary should be experienced not as something external and superficial, or simply a place in which to live and study, but in an interior and profound way. It should be experienced as a community, a specifically ecclesial community, a community that relives the experience of the group of Twelve who were united to Jesus.

— St. John Paul II

Pastores Dabo Vobis #60

God's promise, “I will give you shepherds after my own heart” (*Jer* 3:15) never fails. God continues to provide us with good shepherds. The effect of the PDV continues to echo today as an *aggiornamento* (bringing up-to-date) through both the new *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* and the new, sixth edition of the *Program of Priestly Formation*. ■





From left, second-theologian acolytes Stephen Parker (Diocese of St. Augustine), Peter Mallampalli (Diocese of Pittsburgh), and, far right, Trent Barton (Diocese of Ft. Worth) with Bishop Esposito and Rector Stevens.

Institution of Ministries 2024

On March 4, 2024, three acolytes were recognized in the Institution of Ministries ceremony at Theological College, presided by Bishop Juan Esposito, auxiliary bishop for the Archdiocese of Washington. One of the acolytes, Trent Barton, commented, “I would like to thank the TC community for their support these last two years of formation. These moments always make me thankful for the vocation of the priesthood, and this ministry of acolyte is another step toward living out the calling we have received from Christ.” ■

Please join the TC community in prayerful congratulations for these men and all from other seminaries who have received the ministry of acolyte this year!



Dear sons in Christ, as people chosen for the ministry of acolyte, you will have a special role in the Church’s ministry. The summit and source of the Church’s life is the Eucharist, which builds up the Christian community and makes it grow. It is your responsibility to assist priests and deacons in carrying out their ministry, and as special ministers to give Holy Communion to the faithful at the liturgy and to the sick.

— From the *Roman Pontifical*

Deacon Pastoral Ministries

The attention Theological College’s formation program gives to pastoral placements, with intense supervision and accompaniment, is based on more than 50 years of experience. Such hands-on work significantly enhances the future priests’ agency to address myriad needs across the pastoral spectrum. Our current seminarians are offered opportunities at 34 diverse sites. Herewith, a few of our current deacons share reflections on the value of their ministerial experiences. (See *The Crossroads*, Spring 2023, p. 16, for more ministry reflections.)

St. Bartholomew Catholic Church Bethesda, Maryland

One of the places that I think the formation at Theological College shines is in the pastoral formation program. I am currently blessed with the opportunity to serve at St. Bartholomew Catholic Church in Bethesda. As a deacon for the Archdiocese of Washington, this is a particular blessing for me since this is one of the parishes for which I may be



called to serve in my time as a priest.

My ministry at St. Bartholomew mostly involves being at the parish on Sundays to assist at Mass and occasionally preach. I was also excited to be able to teach the eighth-grade CCD class at the parish and help prepare these students for Confirmation. This is a ministry in which I had always hoped to participate but never had the opportunity. We began the year by talking about prayer and relationship with God. We then moved on to talk about prayers that we use all the time but often don’t understand well, namely the Our Father and the prayers in the Mass. This gave the children the opportunity to go through all the individual parts of these prayers and realize how we are praying and what we are praying for.

It has been very edifying to meet with these teenagers every other week and to help them go deeper into their faith as they prepare for the final step in their initiation into the Catholic Church. I have been privileged to walk with them this far and I look forward to continuing with them through to their reception of the sacrament of Confirmation.

— **Deacon Nathaniel Roberts**
Archdiocese of Washington



Deacon Vincent Castaldi crowned the Mary statue at St. Joseph’s Church in May.

I have been given many opportunities to experience the greater Church in the United States while in the District of Columbia. I am especially thinking about my assignment at St. Joseph’s Parish on Capitol Hill. The parish community there and the pastor, Father William Gurnee, have been so supportive of me in my journey to the priesthood.

— **Deacon Vincent Castaldi**
Archdiocese of New York

St. Peter's Catholic Church

Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C.



My pastoral ministry experience at Saint Peter's Catholic Church on Capitol Hill has been a profoundly enriching journey that has significantly contributed to my growth as a future Catholic priest. Assigned to Saint Peter's by Theological College, this experience has been a highlight of my formation,

providing me with a comprehensive and diverse exposure to pastoral ministry.

Engaging with the parishioners at Saint Peter's has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my time there. The warm welcome and active participation of the community have allowed me to forge meaningful connections and gain invaluable insights into the diverse needs of the faithful. This direct interaction has been instrumental in honing my interpersonal skills, fostering a sense of empathy, and deepening my understanding of the pastoral role.

The presence of great priests at Saint Peter's has been a defining factor in shaping my positive pastoral and preaching experience. Their dedication, humility, and commitment to serving the community have been shining examples for me to follow. Through their mentorship and guidance, I have learned the importance of compassionate pastoral care, effective leadership, and a deep spiritual grounding. These priests have not only imparted knowledge but have also demonstrated the practical application of theological principles in the context of parish life.

My involvement with various ministries at Saint Peter's, such as the Young Adult Group and Men's Bible Study, has been a source of spiritual uplifting and unity. The guidance of the priests in coordinating and supporting these ministries has built a sense of community and spiritual growth. Their involvement has exemplified the importance of nurturing faith and providing avenues for diverse spiritual expressions within the parish.

A significant aspect of my ministry at Saint Peter's was the timing of my assignment during my third-theology year and subsequent transition as a deacon. This chronological progression allowed a gradual increase in my responsibilities, providing a structured and comprehensive preparation for the duties I will undertake as a priest. The practical experience gained through this transition, coupled with the exemplary leadership of the priests, has been invaluable in shaping my understanding of priestly duties and responsibilities.

My pastoral ministry at Saint Peter's Catholic Church has been a cornerstone of my formation at TC. The engagement with parishioners, the spiritual enrichment from existing ministries, and the mentorship of the great priests at Saint Peter's have collectively contributed to a well-rounded and transformative experience. Saint Peter's has not only prepared me for the challenges of priestly duties but has also instilled a deep sense of connection and commitment to the parish community, guided by the positive influence of exemplary priests.

— **Deacon Stephen Wong**
Archdiocese of Washington



Deacon Stephen Wong talks about openness to God's plan and his ever-present accompaniment to a group of 50 young adults at St. Peter's.

Pastoral Supervisors Appreciation Banquet

Stephen Parker

Second Theology, Diocese of St. Augustine

Pastoral formation, which the *Program of Priestly Formation* calls “the culmination of the entire formation process” (PPF, 366), has always been a central tenet of the program of formation at Theological College. Each year, seminarians are given various opportunities to serve the poor, the infirm, and the laity. At the close of the spring semester, the faculty and seminarians of TC welcome those supervisors who manage and support the seminarians in their pastoral ministries for the Pastoral Supervisors Appreciation Banquet.

This year’s appreciation was extended to the 25 parishes, two hospitals, two universities, and two non-profit organizations in which our seminarians serve. The evening, themed “Forming Missionary Disciples in the Spirit of Synodality,” consisted of vespers, banquet, and an awards ceremony.

“Following Pope Francis’ invitation in *Evangelii Gaudium* to form missionary disciples set apart from the world in order to serve the world in this secular age, it is our mission to form priests in the heart of Christ so that, just as Christ was sent by the Father into the world, they too may be extensions of Jesus Christ and his missionary discipleship to the world in need,” explained Father Chris Arockiaraj, coordinator of the TC Pastoral Formation Program. Father Chris described how the seminarian is called to uniquely serve in the “field hospital” through the “ministry of charity (*diakonia*)” that Pope Benedict

XVI defined as “the Church’s deepest nature” in his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*. This ministry is sourced by personal prayer with the Lord, which Pope John Paul II frequently described and modeled throughout his pontificate. Father Chris exhorted, “One must pray until he falls in love. That love will kindle into a fire that spurs the seminarian to help those most wounded in the field hospital.”

Following past years’ examples of Blessed Michael McGivney and Blessed Stanley Rother, Father Chris introduced another Sulpician-trained priest, Servant of God Martin Narcisse, as a model of one who put this ministry into action. “On the one hundredth anniversary of his death, we think of the Sulpician Servant of God who served as a seminary formator in France and the United States prior to serving almost 10 years in hospital ministry and then nearly 30 years at St. Peter’s Parish in rural Waldorf, Md., accompanying the impoverished African American community after the Civil War,” Father Chris explained. “He is an example of a man who worked synodally and inclusively so that all would be served, no matter their situation.”

Following vespers, the Rev. Gerald L. Brown, P.S.S., Award for Excellence in Pastoral Ministry Supervision was presented to Father Richard Nichols, S.J., at the banquet. Father Nichols has mentored seminarians at Medstar Georgetown University Hospital for the past six years.

In accepting the award, Father Richard highlighted the need for patients to encounter Christ while in the hospital. “Those in the hospital are on a spiritual journey,” he explained. “Their brush with mortality causes them to realize that time is short and that death is not the end, but a door. It is our job to make sure that that door is a holy one filled with grace, hope, and love.” He went on to emphasize that the priest in the hospital is serving in the role of God the “Good Father,” bringing gifts of faith, hope, and charity to the patient in need. “Our faith is incarnational,” Father Richard concluded. “Jesus Christ took flesh, and it is in encountering patients that we can see his Presence. It is our job to then teach them to love him, in the midst of sin, death, and all. It is in that encounter that we see the transformative love of Jesus Christ.” ■



The 2024 Rev. Gerald L. Brown, P.S.S., Award for Excellence in Pastoral Ministry Supervision was given to Father Richard Nichols, S.J., the chaplain at the Medstar Georgetown University Hospital.

Rector's Conferences: Theology of the Priesthood

Rev. Mr. Joseph McHenry
Archdiocese of Washington

For this year's eight rector's conferences, Father Bud Stevens chose to speak about the "Theology of the Priesthood." What follows are the highlights of the series.

First, Father Bud considered the priesthood as a sacrament in three ways. Sacraments respond to fundamental human needs on a supernatural level. They also indicate the place where grace intercedes in life's crucial decisions, and they are living connections to Christ's Cross, the locus of sacrificial self-giving.

In another conference, Father Bud spoke about the inevitability of the priesthood. That is to say, the priesthood is inevitable insofar as it responds to human need. Namely, this need that the office of the priesthood responds to is the need for someone who can mediate meaning for the actual community of men and women made in God's image.

Father Bud then touched upon how the priesthood of Christ fulfills the priesthood found in the Old Testament. Adam and Eve were created with a sacred priestly character. This priesthood failed when sacrifice was refused. Thus, postlapsarian humans falter in exercising their priestly faculties. The priest of Jesus Christ, then, mediates the priestly dignity that all humans possess in potency. In other words, the priest is to manifest to people what they are made to be.

An important aspect of priestly life is the promises a priest makes. Father Bud taught that priestly promises are meant to be more than mere conformity to Jesus, but truly ways in which Jesus saves us. Thus, obedience is not a series of discrete acts, but rather a fundamental choice and a positive openness toward God's salvific will. Likewise, celibacy helps the priest to clarify for himself his personal, intimate need for Christ, his love for Christ and what he has done for him.

The rector also devoted a conference to the topic of priestly leisure, since he has found in his ministry to and with priests that many do not know how to experience recreation in a truly restorative manner. True leisure liberates us from the shackles



This statue of St. John Vianney, patron saint of parish priests, overlooks the tabernacle in the Upper Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

of what is necessary and allows us to build up an authentically human culture. All recreation should reflect something of the beauty of Christ, who is the form of God.

During his last conference of the year, Father Bud exhorted us in his final confidence to be men of profound trust in God's providential calling here and now. God calls men to be his priests at a certain time and place. In order to carry out his will, he endows us with the sacred power and ontological change we need to complete the mission he entrusts to us. Rather than be a cause for pride, this gracious gift of the Father's love for his people should fill priests with profound humility. In the sacrament of Holy Orders, God makes a unique claim upon the entirety of each man, calling him to be Christ in all situations. Thus, the priest has a greater capacity to suffer by virtue of his ordination, just as he has a greater power to receive his sisters and brothers into communion, and to share in the joy of the resurrected Lord. ■

Community Workshops and Recollections

Rev. Mr. Daniel Kushner

Diocese of Pittsburgh

In addition to monthly rector's conferences, the formation program at Theological College offers days and evenings of recollection on topics of immediate concern to seminarians. We have highlighted some of this semester's conferences to share this aspect of communal life.



Friar Timothy Kulbicki, O.F.M. Conv., presented the "Simplicity of Life" workshop Jan. 26–27.

Simplicity of Life

The Code of Canon Law, 282 §1, states, "Clerics are to foster simplicity of life and are to refrain from all things that have a semblance of vanity." This requirement is familiar to most seminarians who have spent some time in the program for priestly formation. However, it is a topic that often gets overlooked, misunderstood, or left solely to personal interpretation. At a community workshop this past semester, Friar Timothy Kulbicki, O.F.M. Conv., who serves as pastor and campus minister of the Newman Catholic Student Center Parish at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, provided many insights into how seminarians and priests can live out this discipline in the midst of a "consumer culture."

The primary suggestion of Father Timothy was to look to the mutual indwelling of the three persons of the Holy Trinity. Within the Trinity, there is no taking or consuming of the other. Rather, the Trinity is a communion of love that is characterized by giving and receiving. Because we are made in the image and likeness of the Triune God, Father Timothy suggested that this understanding of the Trinity must inform how we relate to one another.

Integrating this "*communio* theology," Father Timothy offered some pastoral questions for reflection: "How do I relate to parishioners? Do our relationships suit our needs? We tend to dehumanize people to the point that they are useful or beneficial to us. How do I not consume others?" These are certainly important questions for priests to consider as they live out their ministry. Furthermore, they are not questions one might immediately focus upon when pondering "simplicity of life."

Father Timothy proposed that the antidote for becoming a consumer of persons is "practicing hospitality." This involves "making room for others" and "nurturing others," especially the "inconvenient, the ugly, the poor, and those who have nothing to offer us." Father Timothy emphasized the importance of this practice "in the context of the affluence of the United States of America," a "consumer society that reduces people to things."

In addition to his reflections on relational consumerism, a practice not exclusive from material consumerism, he also provided suggestions for personal practice in parish life. Some suggestions included "practice gratitude daily," "make a point to interact with the lower-level parish staff," and "understand 'this is not my parish.'"

Simplicity of life is a requirement for those in the clerical state. Most seminarians are familiar with this requirement, yet often have only a vague understanding of its scope and its meaning. Father Timothy provided great insights into how simplicity of life extends beyond temperance in regard to material possessions, into our relationships with one another. It is a discipline that requires trust in God and gratitude for his gifts. For those who practice gratitude, Father Timothy says, "it is difficult to be grateful and covetous at the same time."

The Gift of the Here and Now

"We tend to be future minded..." This observation from Father Quinn Connors, O. Carm., resonated deeply with seminarians, who are trained to anticipate the next assignment, the next liturgy, the next stage in formation, and so on. Living a busy academic life that is combined with prayer and service, the seminarian is often



The Feb. 23 evening of recollection offered by Father Quinn Conners, O. Carm., focused on finding God in the “here and now.”

reminded that, should he be called to ordination, he can expect a busier schedule that consists of even greater responsibilities. The question of this evening of recollection was, “Where do we meet God in the midst of all of this?”

To answer this question, Father Conners turned to Scripture, highlighting Jesus Christ as the example of how all ministers are called to meet God “here and now.” This is evident in the many passages in the Gospels that depict Jesus in prayer. Passages such as *Mark* 1:32–37 and *John* 6:10–15 show Jesus performing miracles of healing as well as the multiplications of the loaves and fishes, immediately followed by his “withdrawal” from the crowds to be with his Father.

In *Mark* 6:30–31, Jesus receives the disciples after they had been sent out two-by-two to preach and cast out demons, and says, “Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while.” It is imperative to unite the experiences of ministry with personal prayer and reflection, to get away and gain perspective on all that has happened. In the midst of their ministry, Christ calls the disciples to be still and remain with him.

Finally, just before Christ’s passion, Jesus calls his closest disciples to pray with him, as his hour was near. Prayer saturates the life of all who follow Christ — in ministry, in times of joy, and in times of struggle and sorrow. It is the oxygen of a follower of Christ. Father Conners begged the question to the Theological College seminarians, thoroughly ensconced in their assignments and future duties, “Where is prayer in my life?” As it is written in *Ecclesiastes*, “For everything there is a season...” For prayer, the time is “here and now.”

Holy Week

On Friday, March 22, the seminarians at Theological College participated in a special weekend of recollection. This was a time for silence and intentional reflection in anticipation of the most holy time of the year, Holy Week. This began with evening

prayer, which was accompanied by a short reflection from Father Robert Cro, dean of men. This was followed by similarly brief reflections throughout the night that focused on how we embrace the Cross of Christ.

After dinner in silence, Father James McKearney, director of music, presided over a penance service that involved recalling failures to live in accordance with our faith, and petitions asking for forgiveness. Father McKearney preached on the “undeniable love of Jesus,” as evidenced by his passion. He reminded those present, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. And he gives him again...to you this night.” Private confessions were available when the service had concluded.

Later that evening, the house prayed night prayer together, led by Father Jaime Robledo, coordinator of spiritual formation and liturgy. This was followed by all-night exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Seminarians were encouraged to sign up for at least an hour during the night, so that the Blessed Sacrament would be perpetually adored. It was a night to “keep watch” with Christ, as the hour was drawing near.

Saturday began with a rosary at 8:30 a.m., then morning prayer led by Father Chris Arockiaraj, vice-rector. The office of readings were also prayed in common, ending with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The weekend of recollection concluded with Eucharist celebrated by Father Jaime, who continued the meditations on Christ’s passion, reminding seminarians that “to be renewed by the grace of this crucifixion we are invited to encounter the Crucified Lord, whose love encounters us to give us his meaningful life, a life to be always given for the good of others.” ■

Father Chris led morning prayer during the weekend of recollection for Holy Week.



Decline of Common Good

...world, the sense of belonging to a single human
 ...fading, and the dream of working together for justice
 ...seems an outdated utopia. What reigns instead is a
 ...uncomfortable and globalized indifference, born of deep
 ...moment concealed behind a deceptive illusion: thinking
 ...re all-powerful, while failing to realize that we are all
 ...in the boat.... Isolation and withdrawal into one's own
 ...are never the way to restore hope and bring about
 ...Rather, it is closeness; it is the culture of encounter.
 ...no; closeness, yes. Culture clash, no; culture of
 ...er, yes". (*Fratelli Tutti*, No. 30)

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TC's Social Justice Committee hosted an Evening of Justice event with Mr. Ian Mitchell, director of the Office of Social Concerns for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington.

Seminarian Initiatives

Social Justice Committee

Patrick Sweeney
 (3-B, Washington), SJC Chairman

This past January, during Poverty Awareness month, Susan Gallucci, executive director of Northwest Center, spoke to the seminarians about the center's work of serving local low-income residents, especially vulnerable youth and mothers. During Lent, we stepped up a number of our initiatives and added some new efforts. For example, we had increased attendance at our prayer vigils outside Planned Parenthood and some seminarians committed to praying there daily. We also sponsored days of service with both Lighthouse DC, an organization that helps house the recently homeless, and Catholic University Campus Ministry, which leads weekly food runs for the homeless. Additionally, the seminary participated in Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl as a Lenten initiative, raising \$600. Furthermore, this year's Spring Diaper Drive was also a success, providing 3,045 diapers and supplies to the Greater DC Diaper Bank!

In April, the SJC hosted a Journey to Justice Evening at Theological College in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Washington's Office of Social Concerns and the Justice, Peace, and Human Development department of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Mr. Ian Mitchell introduced the USCCB's Catholic Campaign for Human Development. He spoke about the Campaign's foundations in papal teachings such as *Mater et Magistra* and how its work today continues to live up to more recent papal documents such as *Fratelli Tutti*. He also spoke to the seminarians about the application of moral theory in pastoral practice, and the complementarity between justice and charity, and truth and experience.

The event concluded with a panel discussion among Mitchell; Fr. David Bava, pastor of Holy Redeemer Church

in Washington, D.C. (and TC alumnus of the Class of 1972); Mrs. Elissa Hackerson, the interim chair of the Social Justice Advocacy ministry at St. Augustine's Church in Washington, D.C.; and Ms. Ogechi Akalegbere, the director of Youth Ministry & Young Adult Faith Formation at St. Rose of Lima Church in Gaithersburg, Md. The conversation focused on the panelists' experiences of living Catholic social teaching in their respective parish ministries. Seminarians were also able to participate in the discussion through a Q&A period.

TC Sports Blog

Jackson Nichols
 (2-B, Little Rock)

This year we played soccer with St. Mary's Seminary and with the Dominican House of Studies, as well as playing intramural basketball, flag football, and pickleball at Catholic University. Some of the men from Theological College also played football and basketball casually together. This year, TC hosted the Vianney Cup Tournament competition between three regional seminaries: TC, St. Charles Borromeo, and Mount St. Mary's. For the first time, the competitions were played on the south side of the National Mall, next to Reflecting Pool. The winner for first place was Mount St. Mary's. The Iron Seminarian victor this year was Amos Stinton, coming out on top in combined scores for competitions in darts, billiards, and ping pong. All of these sports have been a great opportunity for us to grow in our relationships as a community, as well as meet and form relationships with men in other seminaries and with other students at Catholic University.

Amos Stinton (1-PT, Louisville) emerged the victor of this year's Iron Seminarian competition. He is pictured here receiving the trophy and the illustrious blue fleece vest from event organizer Jackson Nichols (2-B, Diocese of Little Rock). Congratulations, Amos!



Spring Break: Honduras

Jake Nadeau

(2-B, Charleston)

When Sam Ray, Liam Daigle, and I met up a week after our Honduras trip, it seemed that we could have sat there for hours and still not quite been able to find the right words to describe the experience we had on that trip. There is a certain peace that comes when one feels close to the Lord that cannot be described in words.

The trip began on Saturday morning, March 9, as we flew out to Comayagua, Honduras, and spent the first two days on retreat there. We discovered that we were being accompanied by seminarians from Arizona as well as students from the University of Texas. We were split into groups of seven and sent away to villages and towns to do ministry from Monday to Friday. These days started off with walking around to visit homes in the mornings to read the Gospel, talk, and pray with the families. In the afternoons, we put on programs for children, adolescents, and adults with talks, skits, songs, and games. For those five days, we were fed and lodged by local families. When we returned on Friday, we once again had a mini-retreat. Sam, Liam, and I were able to visit the local Honduran seminary for a couple of hours Saturday morning before flying out in the afternoon.

During this mission and last year's mission, I thought a lot about the question, "What is a mission?" After all, Honduras is statistically a more Catholic country than the U.S. Sure, they may have far fewer resources than we have, but this mission isn't about building a house or any such tasks. So then, what is this mission and what makes it so powerful? I believe that a mission of this sort is primarily a sharing of experiences between peoples of different lands. Here in America, the Gospel has touched us in particular ways, and those ways are both similar to, and different from, the ways it touches people in Honduras. Through the profound sharing of these experiences, the Gospel comes alive.

I remember one woman I visited whose son was disabled, and I cannot help but think of the man who asked Jesus that his son be healed: "Lord, I do believe, help my unbelief." I recall one couple I met who had been happily married for 80 years, and I think of the devotion that Mary and Joseph had to each other. And I have in mind one man who could not speak but was one of the most joyful people I ever met in my entire life, and I think of the many people to whom Jesus said: "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace." I also consider the other six people in my group on the mission, with whom I thoroughly enjoyed spending my



During spring break, as an independent initiative, pictured from top, Jake Nadeau (2-B, Charleston), Liam Daigle (3-B, Worcester), and Sam Ray (2-B, Little Rock) journeyed to Honduras to serve those in need there.

time, and think of how much we, like the Apostles, were truly helpless to do our task without God's help! Lastly, I remember with gratitude the priest with whom I was traveling, and how he, acting in the person of Christ today, was able to "heal the sick" through the sacraments.

At the end of the day, this level of awareness is what Sam, Liam, and I, as well as all TC seminarians, are striving toward. The Honduras mission trip provided a wonderful opportunity to explore the call of priesthood in a missionary environment. It is a true opportunity to bring the Gospel "to the ends of the earth." And this trip is only the beginning, for, as the Missioners of Christ's motto asserts, "Your life is mission!" ■

SEMINARY LIFE

Semester Highlights



TC seminarians made a Lenten pilgrimage to Holy Transfiguration Melkite Catholic Church. They participated in the Divine Liturgy and had a tour of the church before enjoying a hospitable luncheon.

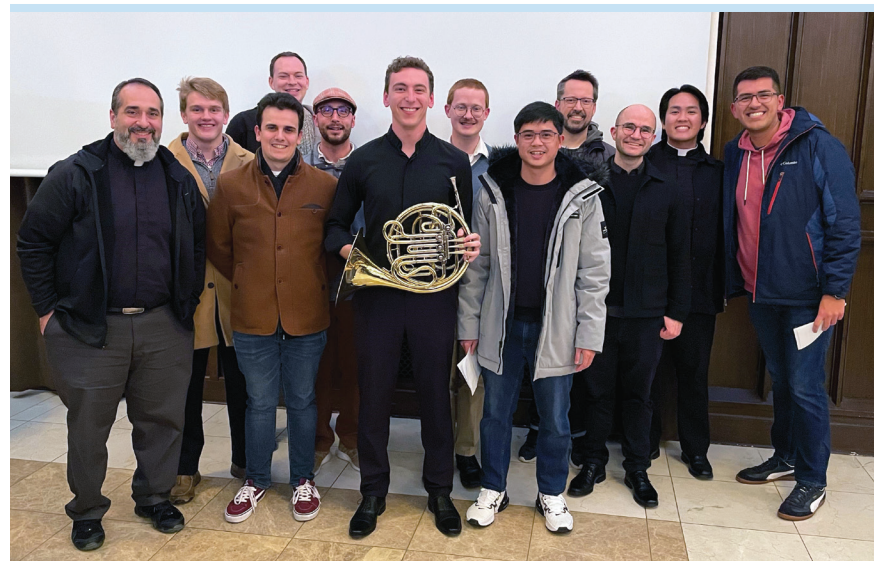


This semester, His Excellency Evelio Menjivar-Ayala, auxiliary bishop of Washington and the first Central-American-born person to serve as bishop in the U.S., came to the seminary to join the weekly meeting of TC's Hispanic Affairs Committee.

French horn musician Sam Ray (2-B, Little Rock) enjoyed the support of his TC brothers this year as he participated in concerts with the Catholic University Wind Ensemble.

In post-Roe v. Wade America, I think the March for Life is still of great importance. Many people may choose to go to demonstrations closer to home or in their state capitals since this is often where there is still work to be done. However, the March for Life should continue, if only to remind the federal legislators that the overturning of Roe v. Wade is not the end of the struggle for unborn babies.

— **Deacon Nathaniel Roberts**
Archdiocese of Washington



Theological College hosted this year's Vianney Cup, beginning with Mass in the Crypt Church of the National Shrine, competitions and bag lunch on the National Mall, and a convivial dinner back at TC. Congratulations to the Mount St. Mary's victors, and thanks to all for a great day of fun and fraternity!



THEOLOGIAN FOR OUR TIMES

Rev. Matthias Joseph Scheeben (1835–1888)

Rev. Gladstone Stevens, P.S.S.

Rector

In recent years, there has been a revival of interest in the works of one of the great theologians of the 19th century, Matthias Joseph Scheeben. He spent most of his professional career as a professor of Dogmatics at the seminary in Cologne and wrote on every major subject within that discipline. Scheeben's influence on the course of German theology has been incalculable; scholars such as Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI cite him as a key inspiration for their own endeavors, and I think it is appropriate to regard him as a remote father of Vatican II. That being said, Scheeben remains, as David Augustine recently stated, "the best theologian you've never heard of." In my own small way, I hope this column can help correct the situation.

It is no easy matter to select a theme from his works in such a brief essay. As noted above, his corpus is enormous and there was no aspect of theology to which he did not devote his creative energies. Given that we are in the midst of a Eucharistic Revival, one of his insights into the sacrament would be appropriate. For Scheeben, the Eucharist touches upon the very heart of Christian faith; indeed, for him, it provides the indispensable lens for the Catholic understanding of God and his encounter with us. In his book *The Mysteries of Christianity* he writes: "Here [in the Eucharist], surely we must perceive how powerfully, how deeply, and with what unbounded generosity the divine love invades the world of God's creatures to rescue them from their lowliness and, so to speak, to consume them entirely with its divine fire down to the innermost reaches of their being."

Thus, for Scheeben, the doctrine of transubstantiation and the Church's affirmation of the Real Presence is not so much a theory



of what happens to bread and wine in the celebration of the Mass as it is a proclamation of how deeply we believe grace penetrates reality and how radical God's love can transfigure persons and situations as well as things. We believe that God can transform the very essence of things and make the ordinary radiate with divine glory. If we take Scheeben seriously, then we believe that God can accomplish in our very being the miracle made manifest on the altar; namely, creaturely reality can, through grace, become a bearer of the real presence of Christ.

What I find of particular interest in the quote given above is that Scheeben gives emphasis not to our act of consumption of the sacred species but God's action of consuming us in the reception of the divine gifts. For me, this is a wonderful prayer for not only this time of Eucharistic Revival but for all our days. May we let ourselves be consumed by God, transformed in our essence, and be the real presence of Christ in the world. Amen. ■

Thus, the work of grace is the greatest wonder of God's omnipotence. It is even greater than His creation of the world out of nothing. It can be compared only with that unspeakable act of God the Father by which he begets from all eternity His own Son...

— Fr. Matthias J. Scheeben
The Glories of Divine Grace

FACULTY AND STAFF

Meet Kendra Nova



Kendra Nova joined Theological College as director of finance in November 2023, bringing nearly 13 years of experience in finance for not-for-profit organizations. She has a rich and varied experience in multiple finance and leadership roles. Her extensive leadership experience is augmented by an M.B.A.

Prior to joining TC, Kendra worked at other nonprofit organizations, including charter schools in Washington, D.C. In her past roles, she successfully implemented strict internal controls, leading and creating annual budgets of over \$25 million in collaboration with various departments within the

organizations. She has advocated and has executed multiple process automation initiatives to bring about efficiency in operations. She has been able to do this on the back of a successful track record of leading the finance team to deliver on challenging goals under demanding timelines.

She always strives to create a productive, welcoming, and friendly work environment, encouraging every team member to achieve their very best to collectively accomplish their goals. Her leadership mantra is: “communication, commitment, and positivity.” Along with management and finance accomplishments, she is also a wife and a mom to three beautiful children. During her free time, Kendra enjoys self-care routines and spending time with family. ■

On Formation and the Interior Life

Deacon Ed McCormack, coordinator of Intellectual Formation at Theological College, published an article titled, “Helping Formators Shine a Light on the Internal Life of Seminarians,” in *Integratus: The Journal of the Catholic Psychotherapy Association* (Vol. 1, No. 4, December 2023, pp 279–293).



Abstract

Spiritual directors and formation advisors are charged with the difficult ministry of getting to know the men and women they work with who are in formation for religious life and the priesthood. This includes understanding the experience of the people they work with, especially their inner life. But the inner life of another person is a dark, vast, and mysterious world. This article draws on features of Internal Family Systems (IFS) therapy to help shine a light on the interior life of those in formation for religious life and diocesan priesthood. IFS can help a formator make sense of a person’s complex internal relationships by identifying the different kinds of internal reactions a person has while proceeding through formation. The article explains key IFS terms such as

“protectors,” “managers,” “firefighters,” “exiles,” and “the Self,” which help formators understand those reactions and what a person is experiencing. After considering some of the implications this IFS approach offers formation advisors and spiritual directors, the article provides three formational practices based on IFS that can promote self-knowledge for those in formation. The article concludes with a discussion of how these practices can transform one’s identity and promote a Christ-led form of leadership. This article lays the groundwork for further research on the status of the Self in IFS and its possible relationship to the Spirit of God in Scripture and Christian theology. ■

ALUMNI

Class Notes

60s

Rev. Donald Karlen, '64, of the Diocese of Syracuse, N.Y., shared that, as he is currently celebrating his 60th anniversary, on June 1 he will also be celebrating the priestly ordination of his diocesan brother, Deacon Ben Schrantz, whom he had the joy of baptizing so many years ago!

Rev. John Hynes, '65, of the Diocese of Wilmington, Del., and former pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Wilmington, recently retired after 58 years of faithful priestly service. He remains active by serving at Holy Cross Parish in Dover.

70s

Rev. Joseph Mulligan, '75, of the Diocese of Charlotte, N.C., shares that he is still enjoying active ministry serving as airport chaplain in Charlotte, saying Masses at a local assisted living center, conducting a Sunday lectionary Scripture study, and leading a small faith community. We at TC are looking forward to celebrating your upcoming 50th anniversary, Father Mulligan!

Rev. John Kleinwachter, '77, of the Diocese of Crookston, Minn., is now semi-retired and is senior associate priest at St. Philip's Catholic Church in Bemidji, Minn.

80s

Monsignor Jacques Plante, '81, of the Diocese of Providence, R.I., was named dean (vicar forane) last October by Bishop Richard Henning for a three-year term. Monsignor Plante was assigned



Deacon Ben Schrantz with his friend and mentor, Father Don Karlen.

to Cumberland/Lincoln Woonsocket Deanery 3 to assist and support the clergy there. He remains pastor of St. Aidan-St. Patrick Parish in Cumberland, R.I.

Very Rev. Joseph Callipare, '85, rector emeritus of the Basilica of St. Michael the Archangel in Pensacola, Fla., will conclude his third five-year mandate as vicar for permanent deacons and director of the permanent deacon formation program on June 30, 2024.

Monsignor Joseph Hirsch, '86, of the Diocese of Lacrosse, Wis., is director of Casa Hogar Juan Pablo II, a mission of the diocese since 1986. Casa Hogar is a home for youth in Lurin, Peru, that delivers high quality care in a family environment. To learn more about Monsignor Hirsch's ministry, visit homeajm.org.

Very Rev. Anthony Chandler, '89, of the Diocese of Louisville, Ky., has been named vicar for clergy, director of priest personnel, and rector of the Cathedral of the Assumption in Louisville. In his previous assignment, he served as president/CEO of Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Fort Worth, Texas.

00s

Rev. Joseph Rogers, Pre-T '03, formerly of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., took final vows on June 29, 2021, with the Servants of the Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary, based in Miami. Father Joe was the first priest to join the community's male branch, fulfilling a decades-long dream of the order's founder, Mother Adela Galindo.

CLASS NOTES

10s

Rev. Andrew Garnett, B '11, of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, N.Y., was recently appointed the 20th rector of Trinity Church in Northport, N.Y.

Rev. Casey M. Sanders, '17, of the Diocese of Louisville, Ky., has been appointed administrator of St. John Paul II Church in Louisville, after having served as associate pastor of Holy Trinity Church.

Rev. Daniel R. Waruszewski, '17, of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, Pa., has been appointed as sacramental minister to the nursing homes in the territory of Saint Catherine Labouré Parish, South Park/Upper Saint Clair, and Resurrection Parish, Bethel Park/Upper Saint Clair, after having served as parochial vicar at Saint Aidan Parish in Wexford. He will reside at Saint John Vianney Manor.

Rev. David J. Egan, '19, of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, Pa., has been appointed parochial vicar at St. Aidan Parish, Wexford, with continued ministry as chaplain of North Catholic High School. He previously served as parochial vicar at Divine Grace Parish, Cranberry/Ellwood City/Zelienople.

Rev. Christopher Masla, '19, of the Diocese of Richmond, Va., has been appointed administrator of two parishes in southwest Virginia: Christ the King in Abingdon and St. John the Evangelist in Marion. He previously served as parochial vicar at the Basilica of St. Andrew in Roanoke.

Rev. David Roman Jr., '19, of the Diocese of Bridgeport, Conn., has been appointed pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Fairfield, after having served at St. Aloysius in New Canaan. ■



Father Matt Kiehl ('15), second from right, vicar for vocations for the Diocese of Richmond, celebrated Eucharist with the TC community this past semester, while spending a few days with seminarians from his diocese.



Father Vincent Vu ('23), parochial vicar for St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Largo, Md., offered an inspiring homily during a TC visit this past February.

What's missing here? You are! Use the enclosed envelope to send us a ministry or retirement update!



In Memoriam



Rev. Edward E. Carroll, '50 (B '46), of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Wis., died on November 28, 2023, at the age of 99. He grew up in Kenosha, attending Catholic schools in the area and, in 1940, he began his priestly formation at Saint Francis de

Sales Minor Seminary. He entered the Basselin Scholars program at Theological College and Catholic University in 1944. He received his M.A. in Philosophy in 1946 and his Theology degree in 1950. Father Carroll was ordained to the priesthood on May 27, 1950, at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in Milwaukee by the Most Reverend Moses E. Kiley.

Father Carroll's priestly ministry began as an assistant pastor at St. Robert's Catholic Church in Shorewood, Wis. In September 1955, he began graduate studies in social work at the Catholic University of America. He was appointed the assistant director of Catholic Charities in 1957, and as chaplain at St. Mary's Hill in Milwaukee in 1959. From 1957 to 1987, Father Carroll also served as moderator of the Christ Child Society. In 1963, he became the administrator at St. Charles Boys' Home and chaplain to the Brothers of the Holy Cross. He became the director of Catholic Charities in 1980, which he left in 1984 in order to become pastor of St. Paul Parish in Genesee Depot, where he served until his retirement on February 27, 1989.

Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKi presided at the funeral Mass on December 5, 2023, at St. Elizabeth Catholic Church in Kenosha, with interment in St. George Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, please

consider memorial remembrances to Catholic Charities (<https://www.ccmke.org> or 7101 13th Ave., Kenosha, WI 53143) or St. Vincent De Paul Society of Kenosha (7531 30th Ave., Kenosha, WI 53143).

For The Crossroads' Distinguished Alumnus Profile interview with Father Carroll, see the Spring 2021 issue, p. 22, also available under the "Alumni" tab at theologicalcollege.org.



Rev. Thomas J. McGrath, '59, of the Diocese of Syracuse, N.Y., died on March 22, 2024, at the age of 90.

After graduating from the Christian Brothers Academy, he attended St. Andrew's Seminary and St. Bernard's Seminary, both in Rochester, and then Theological College at Catholic University.

His assignments during his 65 years of ministry included assistant pastor in Syracuse at St. John the Baptist, Our Lady of Lourdes, and St. Michael's, as well as St. Thomas in New Hartford and St. Mary's in Cortland. He was pastor at St. Paul's in Norwich, St. Mary of the Assumption in Rome, and St. Ann's in Syracuse, and his most recent placement was at St. Mary's of the Lake in Skaneateles, an assignment he loved for 15 years. He retired from St. Mary's of the Lake and worked part time at Stella Maris Retreat

IN MEMORIAM

House for two years. He then returned to St. Mary's for another five years. After his second retirement from St. Mary's, he served part time at St. Michael's and St. Peter's Parish in Onondaga Hill for seven years and Our Lady of Hope in Syracuse for seven years. He often said he still had more work to do, and he continued to minister to others on an individual basis.

Father McGrath was well known as an avid New York Yankees fan through good times and bad. He had great memories of his time at Otisco Lake, both from childhood and in more recent years. He also enjoyed visiting with his many friends at the Willow Glen Diner, the Skaneateles Post Office, and Kinney's Drug Store.

Bishop Douglas Lucia presided at his wake on April 5, and Bishop Emeritus Robert Cunningham was the principal funeral celebrant, with Father Louis Vasile, of the Diocese of Rochester, delivering the homily the following day. Interment was in St. Mary's of the Lake Cemetery in Skaneateles. Donations in his memory may go to: The Priest's Clerical Fund Diocese of Syracuse, 240 E. Onondaga St., Syracuse, NY 13202, or the Human Development Fund at St. Mary's of the Lake. To send condolences, visit: robertdgrayfuneralhome.com.



Dr. Darrell John Burnett, B '63, of Laguna Niguel, Cal. (originally from the Diocese of Cincinnati), died on August 26, 2023, at the age of 82. He was born November 14, 1940, in Cincinnati, Ohio to Jule and Marian Burnett. A gifted public speaker and

published author, he worked as a clinical and sports psychologist, helping others with wisdom and kindness until retiring in 2021.

He dedicated nearly 30 years to the Little League Challenger Division for children with special needs, greatly increasing the division's visibility, inclusivity, and positive impact. For his involvement, he was honored as the 2001 Laguna Niguel Citizen of the Year. In 2007, after being honored as the Little League Challenger Volunteer of the Year, he was invited to join the Board of Directors of Little League International as an at-large member.

A beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, coach, and friend, Darrell was known for his infectious sense of humor and love of games, always ensuring those in his company were filled with laughter and joy. He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Susann Burnett, his three children, and eight grandchildren.

His funeral took place on September 12, 2023, at the Mission Basilica in San Juan Capistrano, Cal. Donations in his memory may be made to the Challenger Division of Little League at: littleleague.org/who-we-are/making-a-donation/.



At the 2016 Alumni Day reception, Father Paul Warhola, right, chatted with Father Tom O'Donnell ('61, Diocese of Helena, Mont.).

Rev. Paul Warhola, '69, of Denver, Col., died on January 19, 2023, at the age of 80.

He graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School in Jefferson Hills, Penn., in 1961. He attended St. Cyril & Methodius Seminary and then graduated from Duquesne University. He finished his graduate studies at Theological College and Catholic University and was ordained a Byzantine Catholic priest in 1969. He was first an assistant pastor at St. John's Cathedral Munhall, Penn., then assigned as priest in Ashtabula, Ohio. In 1974, Father Paul decided to move west and establish a new Byzantine church: Holy Protection Mother of God, in Denver, Col., which is still active today.

After many accomplishments as a Byzantine Catholic priest, Father Paul joined the Orthodox Church. He met and married his wife, Lorene, and together they welcomed two children, Pablo and Teresa, and three grandchildren.

Father Paul was very active in the Denver community, serving as a hospital chaplain for 16 years and also at St. Vincent DePaul. He ran a food bank for the Church of the Resurrection, which he founded. He was dearly loved and will be missed by many, including his Theological College brothers, whom he was able to reconnect with at Alumni Day 2016.

A Divine Liturgy was held in his memory on July 9, 2023, at the Ascension Byzantine Church in Clairton, Penn.



Rev. John P. Cunningham, '79, of the Diocese of Baltimore, Md., died on October 1, 2023, at the age of 74.

Father Cunningham earned a bachelor's degree from Fordham University and a master's degree in English from Princeton before attending Theological College and Catholic University. He was ordained by Baltimore Auxiliary Bishop T. Austin Murphy Dec. 29, 1979, in the chapel of Princeton University.

From 1980 to his retirement in 2018, he served at St. Gabriel (Woodlawn), St. Rita (Dundalk), St. Joseph (Fullerton), St. Thomas More (Baltimore), St. Jane Frances de Chantal (Pasadena), St. Margaret (Bel Air), St. Mary of the Assumption (Govans), and St. Pius X (Rodgers Forge).

Father John was known for his great faith, his unflinching memory and incisive intelligence, and his pastoral care, especially to the sick and the suffering. His memorial Mass was held December 16, 2023, presided by Baltimore's Bishop Barry Knestout, at St. Margaret of Scotland Church in Bel Air.



Father John McMurray celebrated his 89th birthday in 2020 with his conferees at the Villa Olier retirement home.

Father John E. McMurry, P.S.S., former Theological College spiritual advisor (1982–1984), and director of spiritual formation (1984–1988), died March 25, 2024, at the age of 93.

After attending parochial schools in his native Nashville, Father McMurry earned a degree from St. Ambrose College in Davenport, Iowa, before entering theological studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He was ordained in Rome on Dec. 16, 1956, and completed his S.T.L. degree at the Gregorian University in 1957.

He served as an associate pastor at several parishes in Nashville (1957–1969) before joining the Society of St. Sulpice. His diocesan ministries were at the Cathedral of the Incarnation, St. Mary’s Church, and Blessed Sacrament Church and Mission.

Father McMurry then joined the Society of St. Sulpice and was assigned to the faculty of St. Patrick’s Seminary & University in Menlo Park, Cal., from 1969 to 1970 and from 1974 to 1975. He did his doctoral studies in theology at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California, from 1970 to 1974 and completed the Ph.D. in 1977. He was admitted to the Society in 1972. After his studies in Berkeley, he was assigned to the theology faculty of St. Thomas Seminary, Kenmore, Wash., for one year (1975–1976). After that, he returned to parish ministry to serve as associate pastor of St. Joseph Church, Vancouver, Wash., for one year (1976–1977). He then took a leave of absence from the Society from 1977 to 1979. He returned to the Society with an assignment on the formation faculty of St. Mary’s Seminary & University, Baltimore (1979–1982), after which he joined the formation faculty of Theological College from 1982 to 1988. After a sabbatical (1988–1989), he returned to St. Mary’s Seminary & University in Baltimore. In 1990, he began a joint appointment with St. Mary’s Spiritual Center on Paca Street. In 1992, Father McMurry took up residence at St. Mary’s Spiritual Center and became its director.

After many years of diverse ministries on the West and East Coasts, Father McMurry found his most focused ministry as

the director of St. Mary’s Spiritual Center. As a graduate of the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in Washington, D.C. (1981–1983), he developed incisive skills for spiritual guidance. He was well known as a leader of the Intensive Journal Workshop and traveled widely on the east coast, as well as to California, to conduct these workshops on keeping a spiritual journal.

He retired to St. Charles Villa (now Villa Olier) in Catonsville, Md., in 2007. During his initial years at the Sulpician retirement community, he continued to be involved in pastoral ministry and served as spiritual director for priests and lay people. As his strength weakened and capacities diminished, he withdrew from these ministries and lived out his remaining days quietly at the Villa.

Memorial Masses were celebrated at the chapel of the Villa on April 1, 2024, and April 9, 2024. Very Reverend Daniel F. Moore, P.S.S., Provincial of the U.S. Province, presided. Father John’s friend of many years, Joseph Johns, preached and remembered him as a true spiritual father, a good shepherd who served as a mentor and model of compassionate ministry. Following Jesus, Father McMurry’s ministry led many to live more abundant lives. ■

BEQUESTS

Theological College recognizes with gratitude the generous bequests of:

- **Rev. Msgr. Andrew G. Varga**, of the Class of 1978. Monsignor Varga’s fruitful life of ministry in the service of the People of God of the Diocese of Bridgeport spanned 44 years. (Read his complete obituary in the Spring/Summer 2022 issue of *The Crossroads*.)
- **Rev. Thomas McGrath**, of the Class of 1959. He served the Diocese of Syracuse for over 65 years, including during his retirement years. (See obituary, p. 31.)

We offer prayers of gratitude for their fruitful ministries and their support of Theological College. May they rest in peace!



Theological College
401 Michigan Ave., N.E.
Washington, DC 20017

THE CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY
OF AMERICA 

Alumni Day 2024

SAVE

the

DATE

10.02.24



5:15 p.m. Alumni Day Mass

6:15 p.m. Reception with the
TC Community

7 p.m. Alumni Recognition
and Award Dinner

Honoree: Rev. Daniel Carson,
Class of 2012

REGISTRATION

To register for the annual Alumni Day Reunion and/or for sponsorship opportunities, visit theologicalcollege.org and click on the "Event" tab, or register by mail with the completed form in the brochure that will be mailed to you. For questions or assistance, contact us at 202-756-4914 or tanzi@cua.edu.

Congratulations to all of our alumni celebrating ordination anniversaries in 2024!