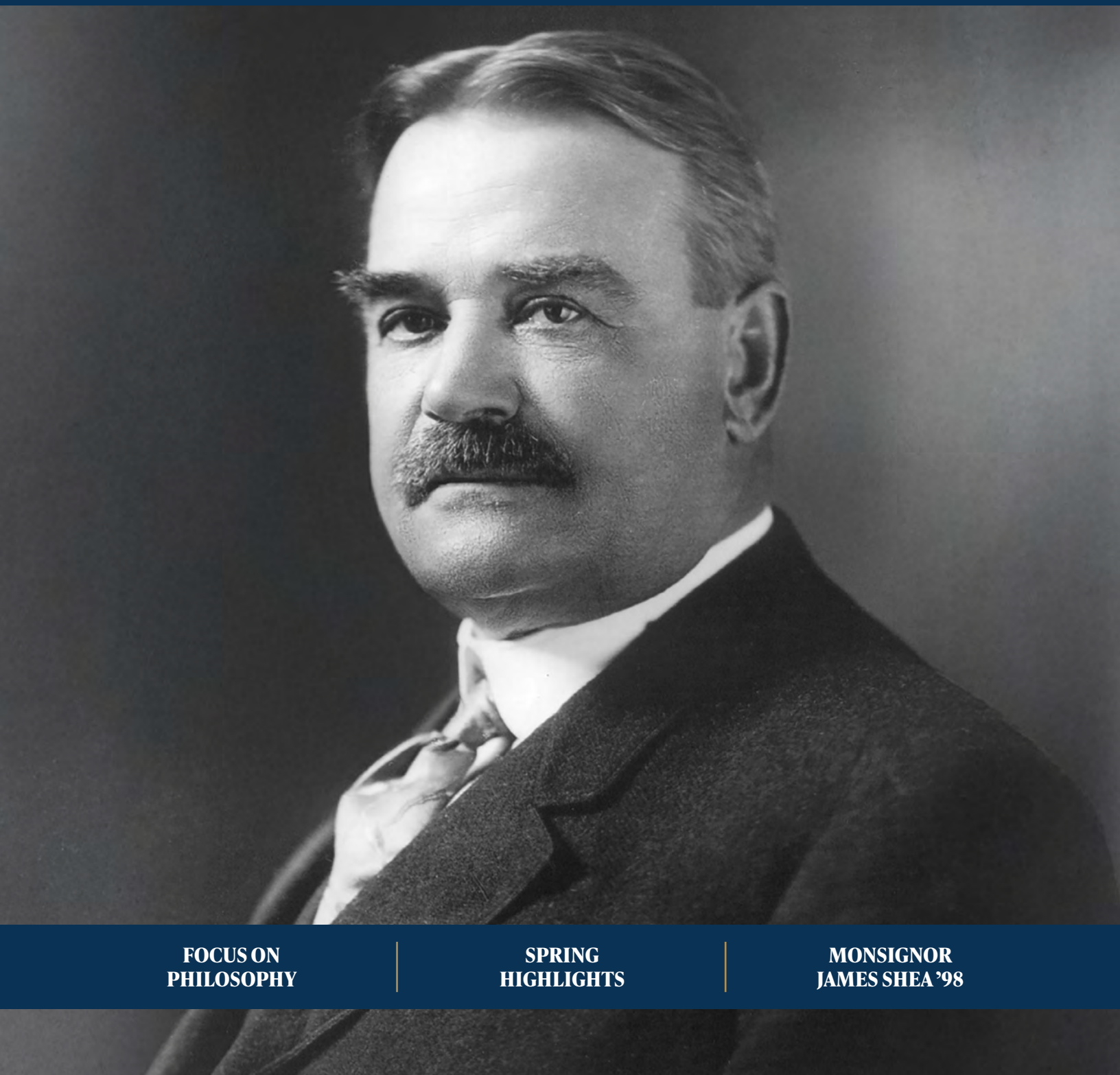


THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE | THE NATIONAL SEMINARY OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

The **Crossroads**

The Alumni Magazine for Theological College | Spring 2025



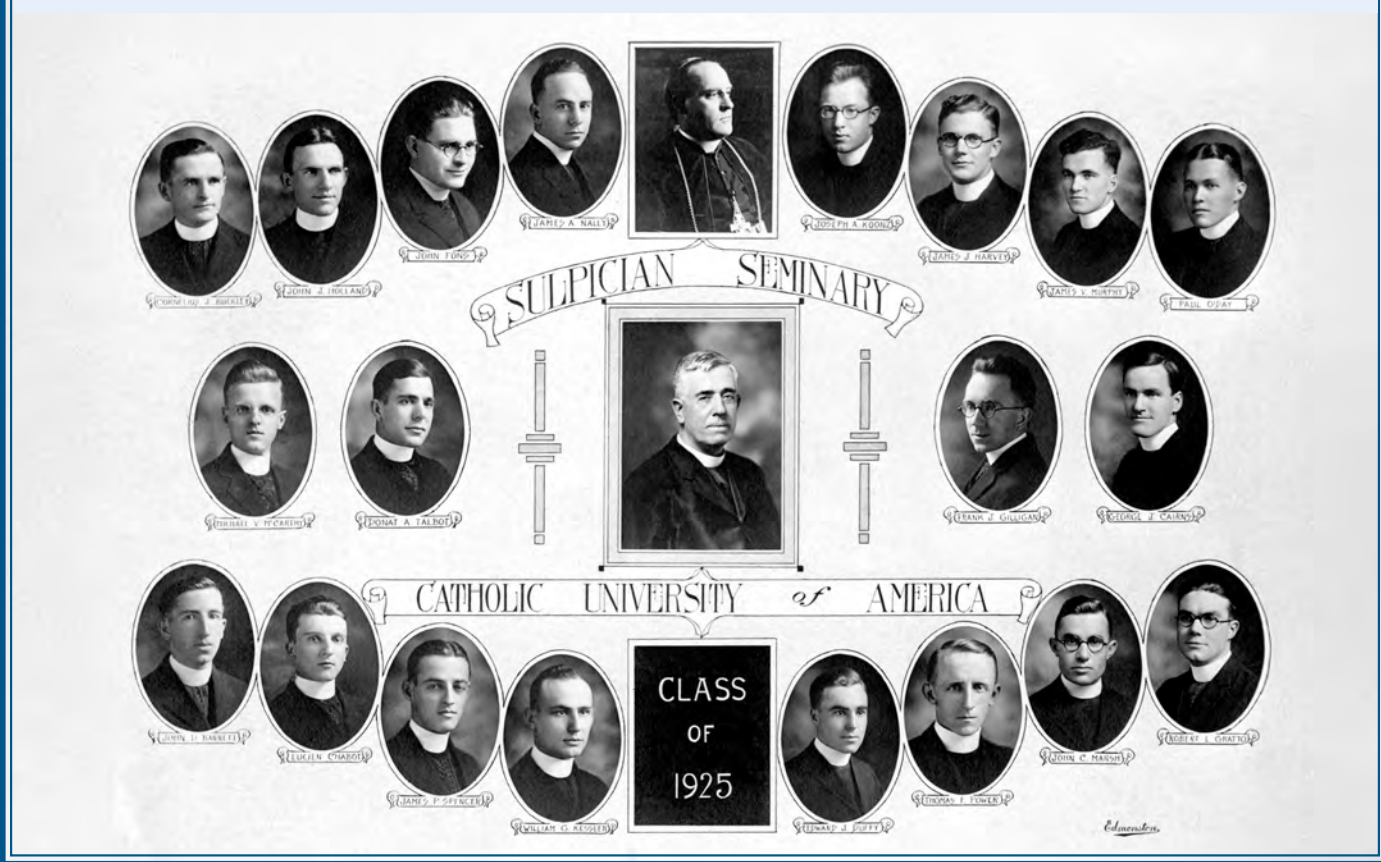
**FOCUS ON
PHILOSOPHY**

**SPRING
HIGHLIGHTS**

**MONSIGNOR
JAMES SHEA '98**

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

The Class of 1925 was the first class of graduates of the Sulpician Seminary (later, Theological College) after its having been granted independence from St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore in 1924.



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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

Cover image: Theodore Basselin was the benefactor of the Basselin Scholars Program (the Basselin College), which was founded with a bequest upon his death in 1914. In 1923, the pioneer class of 12 Basselin scholars entered the seminary.

CONTENTS

BASSELIN EVENTS

George Weigel was the keynote speaker for the Basselin Scholars Program dinner event in February.



02 FROM THE RECTOR

03 COMMUNITY NEWS

New Dean of the School of Philosophy

Basselin Days

08 FEATURE

2025 Graduate Witnesses

11 SEMINARY LIFE

Spring Semester Highlights

Honduras Mission Trip

Pastoral Ministries

University Research Day

Our Vietnamese Brothers

A Pope of Hope

Student Government and Sports

Seminarian Literature Selections

24 THEOLOGIAN FOR OUR TIMES

St. Thérèse of Lisieux

25 FACULTY

Ordination Milestones

26 ALUMNI

Distinguished Alumnus: Msgr. James Shea (B '98)

Class Notes

In Memoriam



PASTORAL MINISTRIES

TC's pastoral placement program is mentored by experienced ministers from the DMV area, including St. Joseph Church's Father William Gurnee, who received the excellence award.

SEMINARIAN SUPERLATIVES

Seminarians from each class offer their literature favorites from across a broad swath of genres.





“
The Church will
have to initiate
everyone —
priests, religious
and laity — into
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accompaniment”
which teaches us
to remove our
sandals before
the sacred ground
of the other.

— Pope Francis

The Legacy of Pope Francis

The passing of a pope is a time not only of mourning but, hopefully, an occasion for reflection. Over the last weeks I have been thinking and praying about the theological and spiritual meaning of the Petrine Office and its significance for the life of the Church. Specifically, what mark did our Holy Father Francis leave on the office and what will be his legacy? At the risk of making a premature judgment, the word that keeps coming to mind over these days is “accompaniment.”

Repeatedly, Pope Francis returned to this notion in his role as Vicar of Christ. In his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* the Holy Father writes, “The Church will have to initiate everyone — priests, religious and laity — into this ‘art of accompaniment’ which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other.” For Francis, this is the only authentic way the Church can evangelize the world; that is, she but resembles the Lord who saves and guides his children not from an infinitely distant heaven but through accompanying them on their actual human journey. In addition, the Pope recognizes that this incarnational path is at the heart of the life of genuine discipleship. No matter the state of life to which we are called, all Christian men and woman are meant to cultivate this art of accompaniment and manifest God’s own kenotic love to others. For centuries, we have followed the path urged upon us by Pope Francis and joined with our brothers and sisters in their struggles and sorrows and made visible to them the power and presence of Christ.

This form of art has always been central to the life of the seminary. Seminarians are expected not to exercise charity at a distance but by drawing near to their brothers in formation to support them, to serve the needs of each person present in friendship, becoming true companions along the way. As part of the TC formation program, and as a way of life, they are called to do the same in various pastoral assignments (*see p. 14*) and outreach opportunities offered by the Social Justice Committee and by Campus Ministry at Catholic University, among others.

One of the key questions facing all groups within the Catholic Church at this moment is how best to pay tribute to Pope Francis. What is the most appropriate way to honor his memory? I suggest that, as seminarians and priests — in unity with all the Christian people of the world — we simply do what the Holy Father urged us to do; namely, be artists of accompaniment.

Blessings,

Rev. Gladstone (Bud) Stevens, P.S.S.
Rector

New Dean of the School of Philosophy

V. Bradley Lewis, M.A., Ph.D.

Jake Nadeau

*Third Basselin,
Diocese of Charleston*

Dr. Lewis, you took over as dean of the School of Philosophy in August. Can you describe your career trajectory up to that point?

I started here in 1997 as an assistant professor of political and legal philosophy. I was hired right out of graduate school, just as I received my doctorate, to replace Russell Hittinger, who received an endowed chair at the University of Tulsa. I did all the things professors do — teaching, publishing, speaking at conferences — and was eventually tenured. I was associate dean for one year, the year before last.

You specialize in political and legal philosophy, especially in classical Greek political thought and in the theory of natural law. What drew you in this direction?

I was very interested in politics when I started college in the 1980s. In fact, what I wanted to do was to fight the Cold War. I studied politics at the University of Maryland with a focus on international relations. I studied Russian and Russian history, which I wanted to specialize in. I was also very involved in politics on campus. But, at a certain point, I thought, “Wait, what are the first principles here? What is all this supposed to be about? What is our regime really aimed at? What should the goals of political activity be?” So, I took some courses on political philosophy and became hooked on this new focus. I then went to Notre Dame for my doctorate on political thought.



Dean Bradley Lewis, right, with Basselin Program donors Henry Mack, left, (B '04) and Desi Fernandez (former Philosophy minor, BA '03) at the fund-raising event in February (*see p. 6*)

Do you have any other interests?

Well, they’re similar to that. When I’m not fulfilling my dean responsibilities and when I’m not working on philosophy pursuits, I read a lot of books about politics and history, including political history, and I keep up with foreign affairs.

What changes have you witnessed and perhaps been a part of in the School of Philosophy over almost three decades?

The biggest change has been a shift toward more of an emphasis on undergraduate studies. As you may know, Catholic University began exclusively as a graduate institution. It was modeled on Johns Hopkins and the University of Chicago to be the Church’s graduate institution. Fairly early on, they started admitting undergraduate students as well. But even when I got here in the late ’90s, there was still more of a graduate feel, as there were more graduate students than undergraduates at that time. This continues to be a priority — there are a lot of graduate students and graduate programs — but the center of gravity has shifted in the undergraduate direction.

A major reality that everyone is grappling with now, just in the last three years or so, is AI. That hit us out of the blue, and we’re trying to figure out how to navigate it. It is already changing the way people think about assignments and how to teach classes and so forth. We have to deeply consider how to integrate it, how to teach with it, because it’s not going away.

What objectives do you hope to achieve during your tenure?

Given the changing landscape of higher education and the financial issues that accompany it, we need to be more involved in advancement than we’ve been in the past. That means raising more money to support our programs. I am spending quite a lot of time communicating with donors, working with Advancement to find new donors and setting priorities for what should be funded. Since I started in July, the focus has been on the Basselin Scholars Program. We need more money in the endowment to support the students in that program. This semester, we had the first fundraising events for the program (*see p. 6*). We are having some success, but it is also very important to raise money to support our doctoral students.

Another priority is faculty development. We’re trying to do more to move our faculty — especially the younger ones — along in their careers. We want to see them succeed in their research and teaching, to be promoted, and to communicate their achievements.

Pursuing a degree in philosophy may not lead to a direct career path. What would you say to any student who might be considering the value of a degree in philosophy?

I am amazed by the number of times I’ve spoken with people who are very successful in a variety of different fields who tell me how crucial philosophy has been for them. They tell me that they wish they had studied more philosophy. Recently, I met a very successful businessman who said that philosophy classes were the most important ones he took when he was a student here.

Last year, I was on sabbatical at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, where I attended two public lectures by retired four-star generals. These presentations were directed at students, midshipmen, and both men talked about how important philosophy had been to them. In one case, the general emphasized how his philosophy courses really helped him think about things all through his career. And the other one said he really wished he had taken more, because he found, especially as he became more and more senior, that the work that he had to do in terms of thinking and planning, making important decisions, required him to consider principles that you only fully understand when you think philosophically.

“

Philosophy gives you critical thinking and logic, but it also gives perspective on the world and what’s really important. It allows you to see the big picture and to think about first principles and what your goals really ought to be.

Our graduates go into all different kinds of career paths. In addition to candidates for the priesthood, they work in think tanks, in journalism, in business, in education. I know a former student who did a philosophy doctorate here and is now working on Wall Street. Philosophy gives you critical thinking and logic, but it also gives perspective on the world and what’s really important. It allows you to see the big picture and to think about first principles and what your goals really ought to be. It’s striking how people see this more clearly as they get older and more successful.

From another angle, many seminarians might see the study of philosophy only as something to get through as a prerequisite for theology. Why is the study of philosophy important to the ministry of a priest?

People don’t realize that being ordained to the Roman Catholic priesthood requires a philosophy degree first, and it should be an obvious step. I don’t think in any other faith community philosophy plays such a role. People ask, “Why? That’s curious.” The reason is that our faith is a reasonable faith. Of course, there are certain doctrines that we only know because of

Revelation, but even those doctrines that you could never arrive at on the basis of natural reason are reasonable. They can be defended using rational arguments, even though they didn’t come from rational arguments. A lot of our ethics, a lot of our morality is the morality of natural moral law. It’s put into a different context in the faith, but these are things that the great thinkers of human history have described before. Just think about the reality that God himself, according to our faith, according to Scripture, has taken the name Logos. In the beginning was Logos, the Word. The fact that our faith is reasonable is extraordinarily important. To be able to explain that to people — through preaching, catechetics, and even normal conversation — is essential. This is where philosophical training comes in.

What are your thoughts about, and hopes for, the Basselin Scholars Program?

First of all, this is a program that has a great history; it’s been a part of our teaching program here for a long time. Originally, Theodore Basselin endowed the program upon his death in 1914, and the first class of Basselins came in 1923, after the seminary had been built. A number of prominent bishops have gone through the Basselin Scholars Program, and also some renowned philosophers of great academic talent. Two of the most important members of our faculty and of the University as a whole, Monsignor Robert Sokolowski, who is still teaching with us, and Monsignor John Wippel, who just died a little over a year ago, were both Basselins, as was Bishop Robert Barron, a very well-known Catholic thinker.

The program has played a very important role. We want it to continue, and we would like to improve upon it. The endowment is not nearly as robust as it should be, so we’re working to increase it. Right now, we’re getting a fairly small number of Basselins every year. My goal would be to have five Basselins a year, 15 total at any one time in the three years of the program. Fundraising has begun and, if this continues, we can hope to carry on long into the future.

What advice would you give to our Basselins who are journeying on this challenging academic road while in formation for the priesthood?

Take advantage of it. To earn the Ph.B. in two years and then the Ph.L. the following year allows time to seriously think about philosophical questions before entering theology and eventually ordained ministry. Take advantage of the faculty; learn as much as you can from them. Let’s be honest: our professors don’t love grading papers and final exams, but they love talking to students about philosophy. Our curriculum is excellent. We focus on the most central texts in the history of philosophy, addressing all of the great questions. This program presents an opportunity that most people don’t have, and it only lasts three years, so try to benefit as much as you can from it! ■



Jake Nadeau met with Dean Lewis to discuss his goals for the School of Philosophy and its students.



At The Monocle, from left, Brother Gregory Santy, O.P. (B '17), Brother Bertrand Hebert, O.P. (B '18), Justin Motes (B '20), Philosophy professor Rev. Ignacio De Ribera-Martin, Jake Nadeau (B '25), Rev. John Winslow (B '20), and Rev. Edouard Guilloux (B '15)

Basselin Days

Suzanne Tanzi

From the first class of seminarians who completed the Basselin Scholars Program and graduated with their M.A. degrees in 1926, Theological College (TC) and The Catholic University of America's School of Philosophy have hosted over 675 priest aspirants in this rigorous academic and seminary formation program. The program's permanent fixture at Theological College and the university was lauded and supported with fund raising during two days of special events recognizing its unique legacy.

Invited alumni and donors met with seminarians, faculty, and staff for the kick-off dinner on February 27 at The Monocle on D Street. This establishment has itself been part of D.C. history for over 60 years, having hosted every president since John F. Kennedy at one time or other in their careers. The evening began with a few words from Jake Nadeau, a third Basselin from the Diocese of Charleston, who expressed sincere gratitude for the program before introducing university President Peter Kilpatrick. The President conveyed his pride that this program is a pillar in the School of Philosophy's mission as a "keeper of the flame." Philosophy Dean Bradley Lewis then had the honor of introducing the great Catholic theologian and intellectual, George Weigel, Distinguished Senior Fellow of Washington's Ethics and Public Policy Center.

Weigel asserted that the Basselin Program is more important today than when the first philosophers entered it in its halcyon days, because of the deep distress in which Western culture finds

itself during this time of the "dictatorship of relativism." The program is a "culture-forming counterculture." The world needs intellectually prepared priests, like St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and St. John Paul II, priests who can bring a hopeful outlook to a confused culture, he said. Rector Bud Stevens then stepped up to add a few words of his own in gratitude for this premier program hosted by TC and Catholic University, as well as a blessing for all present and for the meal to follow.

The next day of events began early, at the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast, attended by Catholic University staff and faculty and some of those in town for this two-day Basselin event. The keynote speaker was Monsignor James Shea of the Basselin Class of 1998 (*read the interview of Monsignor Shea on p. 26*). Upon return to campus, a memorial Mass for deceased Basselin scholars and faculty, organized by Monsignor James Watkins (B '81), was offered in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. In his brilliant homily, Bishop Michael Olson (B '89) took up again the theme of hope — the message of the Gospel itself. "Hope takes us out of our world and carries us back into it to bring the love of God." As the bearer of this message, a Basselin scholar not only tells the truth but conforms the offering of his life to it.

Following the Mass, attendees gathered in Aquinas Hall for the introduction of a new book focused on Basselin alumni, to be published in 2026. The author, Aaron Martin, Esq., received

his B.A. in 2002 while enrolled in the program and in formation at Theological College.

The working title is *It Needs No Prophet*, based on a quote by the fourth rector (1909–1928) of Catholic University during the time of the program's initiation, Bishop Thomas Shahan: "It needs no prophet to foretell the influence, direct and indirect, which this good man's timely generosity will one day exercise in the Catholic Church of the United States."

In his book, Martin picks up where the establishment of Theodore Basselin's endowment leaves off, tracing the ensuing 110 years of the program primarily through its "bright lights." These lights shine across the trajectory of history, and include chapters on Fr. John Cronin, S.S. ('28), Fr. Raymond Brown, S.S. ('49), Monsignors John Wippel ('56) and Robert Sokolowski ('57), Cardinal Raymond Burke ('71), Bishop Robert Barron ('82), Msgr. James Shea ('98), and others.

The final intimate component of these days dedicated to celebrating the Basselin Scholars Program was a moment to meet the current Basselins, six of whom introduced themselves and offered insights into their lives of fraternity and academic study. Their rector, Father Bud Stevens, spoke of the hope they engender in their bright and energetic response to the joys and challenges to which they have been invited. He affirmed that they "represent the very intent of Theodore Basselin in giving birth to this program, which is to form men committed to teaching and conveying the truth." The students, alumni, and others in the audience took the opportunity to offer and garner advice for the road ahead and share meaningful experiences.

The small cohort present for the wrapping up of this two-day Basselin salute stayed in place in the Aquinas lecture hall for the more public finale, the sixth in the School of Philosophy's



Aaron Martin, Esq., presented the outline for his upcoming book on graduates of the Basselin Scholars Program.

Spring lecture series titled, "Boethius in Aquinas's Ontology and Theology of Accidents." This lecture was given by the renowned academic, Father Stephen Brock, Ph.D., and was attended by over a hundred interested students, faculty, and truth seekers. ■

Please join the efforts of Theological College and Catholic University's School of Philosophy to bolster the endowment for the Basselin Scholars Program by contacting Lauren Pizzella at pizzella@cua.edu.



Father Bud Stevens introduced six current Basselin scholars, who came to Aquinas Hall to share their unique experiences.

Feature GRADUATE WITNESSES

FEATURE: GRADUATE WITNESSES

Theological College's
2025 Deacon and Basselin
Scholar Graduates

Theologian Reflections

Rev. Mr. Andrew Clark
Diocese of Richmond

When I first arrived at Theological College, I sought to better understand the Sulpician tradition that I had found myself tossed into. In that research, I discovered a brief work by Rev. Jean-Jacques Olier titled, *Pietas seminarii sancti sulpitii*, in which he sought to establish a firm foundation for his seminary. Although never completed, this text illuminates his radical love of Christ, the Church, and an abundant desire for holy priests. The first sentence in particular has become a continuous source of inspiration for me. It demonstrates Olier's genius: "The first and last goal of this institute will be to live supremely for God in Christ Jesus Our Lord, in such a way that the interior life of his Son will penetrate the intimacy of our heart and that each one will be able to say what Saint Paul, for his part, affirmed with confidence: 'It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me' (*cf.*, *Gal. 2:20*)."

Theologically rich and full of the sanguine ardor of the French School of Spirituality, this sentence, in my opinion, serves as a consummate first principle for any seminary. Moreover, it elucidates one of the most fundamental actions required of a priest, if not perhaps his most necessary action, namely, to



The Class of 2025, from left, back row, Andrew Clarke, Michael Villavicencio, Ike McCracken; front row, Cole McDowell, Johnni Do Bonfim Silva, and Daniel Roberts

become an *alter Christus* in the fullest sense of those hallowed words.

The genius of Olier shows that the work of a good seminary does not end when its students graduate and "hit the marble" but continues throughout priestly ministry in the priest's daily quest to imitate Christ. As I look back at my nine years of formation, especially my years at Theological College, I am grateful for all the ways in which TC has helped me to live more supremely for Christ. As I anticipate ordination to the priesthood, I pray that in the end I, too, will be able to say with confidence, "It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me." May God be praised.

Rev. Br. Johnni Do Bonfim Silva, C.O.
Rock Hill Oratory

The call to the priesthood is a gift from God. The years of formation at Theological College have helped me to mature in understanding the

importance of giving myself completely. The vocation to priestly life is not a career, but a lifelong journey of denying myself, taking up his cross, and following him (*Mk 8:34*). During these years of formation at TC, I faced many challenges, but I was certainly able to deepen my spiritual, academic, and pastoral life. I conclude this stage of my life's journey with an awareness of a missionary Church in which, through my priestly ministry, I am invited to help all who come to me to experience the love of Christ and to become authentic disciples of Christ. I feel very happy and fulfilled in my vocation as an Oratorian priest and I am very grateful to everyone who has been part of my journey so far. May God bless you all, and always count on my prayers.

Deacon Isaac McCracken
Diocese of Fort Worth

Starting first theology was an entirely new experience, from new classmates

and a new school to a new city in an unfamiliar part of the country, all during the raging pandemic at the time. Nevertheless, I was excited to begin the next leg of the formation journey — until I failed a class in my first semester.

Nobody likes to admit his own mistakes, and I certainly was not excited to tell my formator about my inadequate grade. I expected the response to be sanction, probation, or expulsion. Instead, to my surprise, I received compassion and support from the entire formation team. I worked with my formator to overcome the mentality that had led to my grade and have worked ever since to ensure that mentality does not take hold again.

I learned one aspect of the priesthood from this, which is that, insofar as everyone commits sin, they are never prevented from returning to God and receiving his mercy. Occasions for reconciliation are calls for the Church, and especially her ministers, to accompany those who come to her to ask for God's mercy.

Rev. Mr. Patrick (Cole) McDowell
Archdiocese of Louisville

When I first visited Theological College in the spring of 2018, it was distinctly familiar to me. At that time, I was a graduate student finishing up a master's degree at the University of Notre Dame, and several of my classmates were seminarians for the Congregation of the Holy Cross, the religious order that runs Notre Dame. I was delighted to learn, then, that Theological College offered a similar experience — a seminary attached to a larger Catholic university that would enable me to take courses alongside lay students and stay in regular contact with the larger world. After much prayer, I knew that God did not want me

to be in an echo chamber or an ivory tower, sealed off from the world. God wanted me to be a priest for a Church that, in the words of Pope Francis, "goes out."

Over the course of these years, I have been enriched by a broad human spectrum of professors, lay students, and fellow seminarians from numerous dioceses and religious orders — a diverse cross-section of the American Catholic Church that I know I could not have encountered elsewhere. The rich variety of my pastoral assignments, including a homeless shelter, an inner-city parish, a suburban parish, and a major hospital, have helped to prepare me for the many pastoral needs that I will encounter as a priest. Finally, the ability to discern alongside so many dedicated seminarians and to witness the example of so many holy, courageous priests has taught me that we are not alone in this endeavor. We are baptized and ordained into the one priesthood of Jesus Christ, who continues to call all of us into ever deeper unity with himself.

Rev. Mr. Daniel J. Roberts
Diocese of Pittsburgh

I entered Theological College in the fall of 2020, a time when "social distancing" and classes on Zoom were still widespread, making authentic human connection difficult. Because of this, I was especially grateful to find here a community of prayerful, like-minded men who were welcoming, energetic, hospitable, and exhibited a good sense of humor! As my time here continued, this culture helped me to form genuine and lasting friendships rooted in Christ.

Alongside this strong community of brothers, I am grateful for my priest and

“
To live is to
change and to
be perfect is to
have changed
often.

— **St. John Henry Newman**

faculty mentors, who have prayed for me, journeyed with me, and helped me to keep my focus on the Lord, through both steady and more trying times. I've been inspired by my professors, who have not only been excellent teachers of the rich intellectual heritage of the Church, but who also witness to their faith by the way they pray and interact with their students.

I'm grateful for my pastoral assignments, especially at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital and the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle. At both of these placements, I was challenged to share my faith with a wide variety of people, and I was grateful to recognize that my prayer, study, and formation had been preparing me for just these conversations. I look back on all these experiences, and on the relationships I have formed during my time at Theological College, and I am most thankful that God has used all of them to deepen my knowledge and love of him.

Rev. Mr. Michael Villavicencio
Archdiocese of Santa Fe

When I look back at my time at Theological College, I am drawn to reflect on the amazing and grace-filled Providence of God that has led me to deepen my love for him and for the Church he calls me to serve, forming my heart to grow in love for the ministerial priesthood. I am grateful for the faculty of priests and all the staff who have supported me, whether through advice or a simple prayer. I have always felt the closeness and dedication of this community that fostered growth in my human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral maturity.

The opportunities that have been provided for me in the last four years have truly been a blessing from God. They have deepened my knowledge of doctrine and morals and grown my love for prayer and liturgy and for the search for love of Christ in the parishioners at my parish assignment and in the lives of those I served in hospital ministry.

As with any journey of discernment, I also learned how to grow amidst the challenges of formation, even in the moments that have personally tested my vocation. I have appreciated the patience of my Sulpician formation advisors, Rev. Andrew Szablewski and Rev. Jaime Robledo, who guided me through the challenges and the joys of discernment by their own example of a priestly heart. I also give thanks for Rev. Bud Stevens, who has been a true spiritual father to me, and to the many priests of Theological College who have shown the joy of priestly ministry in their lives.

I am thankful for my brothers who have walked this journey with me, leading me to be the person I am today.

It is through their love and joy that I embrace challenges and unite them to Christ, trusting in his love and mercy to continue forming me according to his own heart as I enter this new chapter of my life.



Basselin Memoirs

Jake Nadeau
Diocese of Charleston

Thesis
"Reality and Truth in Descartes and Berkeley"

Director
Thomas Marré, Ph.D.

I am very grateful for my time as a Basselin at Theological College, during which I have become a better man in a number of ways. The program really taught me to think in ways that I never anticipated, ways that I believe will help me as a priest. I think about having gone back to visit my middle school and doing a Q&A session with the kids. With some of the questions they were asking, I was telling them, "Well, yes, in one sense,

but no in another sense." It was after this session that it hit me that I was using philosophy to answer questions that were about theology. At that moment, I realized that all of the extra philosophy from this program had truly been fruitful, and will continue to be so.

While oftentimes the program is thought of for its academic strengths, I think that perhaps the area in which I have most benefited during my time as a Basselin has been in pastoral ministry — in places such as that classroom I visited. I have been genuinely moved by my pastoral assignments at the Missionaries of Charity House and at Saint James Parish in Mount Rainier. I have primarily been with immigrants or the children of immigrants, all while making various mission trips to Latin America throughout these years. I have truly seen the face of Jesus in all of these people.

Ultimately, it was with the pastoral dimension in mind that I chose my thesis topic on reality. We live in a day and age where we often find ourselves discouraged by reality. By seeing that reality is beautiful, people can regain hope.

I end my time as a Basselin with gratitude and peace for these gifts that I have received, and for the many lessons that the Lord has taught me through them. Additionally, I look forward to four more years at Theological College for the study of theology! ■

SEMINARY LIFE

Spring Semester Highlights



Propaedeutic House Dedication
On Jan. 23, the Blessed Father McGivney Propaedeutic House of Formation — in Baltimore and under Sulpician stewardship — was dedicated. More than 50 people attended the ceremony, including, from left, TC faculty member Rev. Neal Mulyata, Rector Bud Stevens, McGivney House Director Shawn Gould, Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly, and TC Vice-Rector Chris Arockiaraj.

Prayer for Christian Unity
On Jan. 24, TC joined the Prayer for Christian Unity initiative, in the octave of St. Peter and St. Paul, with presenter Father Russ McDougall, C.S.C., executive director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs at the USCCB. This year's theme, "Do You Believe This," was inspired by the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea. This year, the prayers and reflections for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity were prepared by the brothers and sisters of the monastic community of Bose in northern Italy.



March for Life
On Jan. 27, after hosting a 3 a.m. Holy Hour for Life at the John Paul II Shrine, TC seminarians and faculty braved the cold weather to participate in the March for Life. The community was joined by those from St. Paul Seminary and St. Mary's Seminary, who were staying at TC for the pro-life events in D.C.

Institution of Ministries

On Feb. 3, alumnus Bishop Michael Olson (B '89) of Fort Worth presided at TC's Institution of Ministries for ten of our men. From left are: lectors Xavier Polisetty (1-T, Ft. Worth), Cuong Le (2-T, Louisville), Lane Tschirhart (1-T, Ft. Worth), Nicholas Hoelscher (1-T, Ft. Worth), Peter Nguyen (1-T, Ft. Worth); lectors and acolytes Quang Nguyen (2-T, Ft. Worth), Robert Weisberg (2-T, Ft. Worth); and acolytes Thach Nguyen (2-T, Pittsburgh), Antonino Castellano (2-T, Pittsburgh), and Jeffrey Ambreit (3-T, Ft. Worth).

On Feb. 16, Matthew Fichter (1-T, Washington), right, was instituted as lector by Bishop Evelio Menjivar.



Our New Cardinal

On March 11, Cardinal Robert McElroy was installed as the eighth Bishop of the Archdiocese of Washington at a Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. The TC community welcomed him with great enthusiasm, while being full of gratitude for Cardinal Gregory's service, leadership, and encouragement throughout the years.

Visiting Bishop from Oslo

For the Solemnity of St. Joseph, Bishop Frederik Hansen of Norway, a former Sulpician candidate and close friend of the faculty, celebrated the Vigil Mass for the TC community. He offered an inspirational Lenten homily on St. Joseph's silent cooperation with the will of God. ■



Spring Break 2025

Honduras Mission Trip

Carl Baumann
First Pre-Theology, Richmond

"Please remain seated for a short delay. Our engine is missing a small part." These comforting words issued over the intercom of our flight to Fort Lauderdale marked the start of an adventurous one-week trip to Honduras. The nine of us TC seminarians included Cameron Huhlein, Nico Broussard, Wheeler Wilson, Jake Nadeau, Carl Baumann, Matthew Fichter, Robert Weisburg, Quang Nguyen, and Deacon Andrew Clark. During our short but densely packed trip, there would be long hikes up and down steep mountain trails, stunning mountain vistas, little children with big smiles, and an abundance of roosters and cute stray dogs we weren't allowed to pet. We felt like the early disciples of Jesus being sent out into a remote country with a single backpack, a walking stick, and the Word of God.

Upon arrival at the airport in Comayagua, a small city a few hours away from the capital, we spent two days at the Missioners of Christ headquarters preparing for the trip. On Monday morning, after distributing our Clif Bars, liquid IV packets, and toilet paper, we were intermingled with a group of seminarians from Phoenix and a large contingent of students from Christendom College and Texas A&M and Ohio State Universities and split into 11 separate groups.

When we reached our mountain villages (*aldeas*), we were greeted by our guides, residents of the towns who were well acquainted with the Catholics in the area. Some groups stayed in small clay-brick houses with dirt floors and clay-tile roofs while others were based in a small village church called an *hermita*, or in a local community hall. Separated from our brother TC seminarians, we were excited to meet our new teams and begin ministry.



Quang Nguyen encourages local children on a hike into the mountains.



Jake Nadeau, left of center, and other missionary students are given a sendoff by their host family at the end of their mission.

Throughout the week, we entered into an intense but surprisingly restful rhythm of community life. We would wake up around 5 a.m., pray together, and eat breakfast before visiting several houses in the village. After lunch, we would sometimes take a brief siesta before preparing for an afternoon Holy Hour, children's/youth event, talk for the adults, or Mass. After dinner, we met as a team to share highs, lows, and "God moments" from the day. Our main focus was spending time with the villagers, entering into their lives, reading the Gospel with them, and praying together. It was beautiful to see how receptive the Honduran people were to us strangers. They all gave from their poverty to ensure that we were well fed and cared for. We could see that Jesus was the center of their lives, his humble yet radiant countenance shining in their faces.

The greatest moments of the week were often the most simple. One seminarian, Cameron Huhlein, remarked that the highlight of his week was seeing the glowing smile of a small girl who followed his group around for a good part of the day. Another seminarian, Robert Weisberg, shared his powerful experience of bringing the Eucharist to the sick. He likened himself to the donkey who carried Christ into Jerusalem. It was humbling for him to offer himself as the means by which these villagers could encounter the healing love of Jesus in the sacrament, a rare privilege they would only be able to receive once or twice a year in some cases.

The trip had a huge impact on our lives. We all agreed that our time in Honduras rekindled the fire within our hearts, encouraging us to look for new ways to be open to the Holy Spirit at TC. We are hoping to return in the future and would love to take more seminarians with us. On our trip, we met so many beautiful people, received more than we could give, and ultimately were reminded of the wonderful life of freedom, communion, and joy that Jesus came to bring. ■

Pastoral Ministries

This past semester, Theological College facilitated the placements of seminarians in catechetical ministry, service with the poor apostolates, parish ministry, diaconate ministry, hospital ministry, campus ministry, and prison ministry. Below are reflections on three of these ministries.

Our Lady Queen of the Americas Washington, D.C.

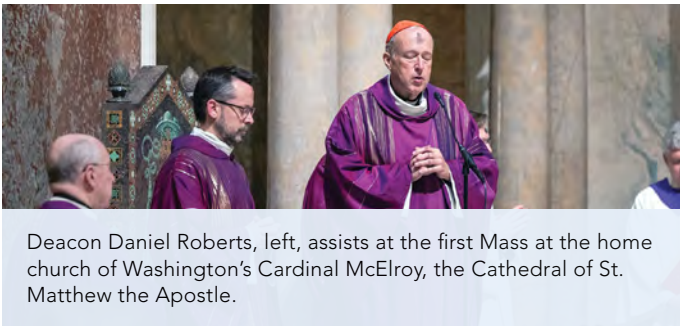
Bishop Michael Olson’s advice to his seminarians as they began studying Spanish in college seminary was, “Don’t be afraid to speak Spanish poorly.” Knowing that I was likely to minister to a population made up of at least some Spanish-speakers, I decided to learn the language as best as I could. For me, this involved practice with reading, writing, speaking, and listening. TC’s Hispanic Affairs Committee provided opportunities to use the language in both conversational and liturgical contexts (with, for example, the monthly Spanish Mass), so seminarians grow together in their language skills and the ability to share what they’ve learned outside of the seminary.

I decided in second theology to undertake ministry at a parish where everyone spoke Spanish. Over these past three years at Nuestra Senora Reina de las Americas (Our Lady, Queen of the Americas Church), I had opportunities to not only practice communication in Spanish, but form relationships and experience the varied cultures of the parishioners. I enjoyed sharing all this with my fellow language-learners back home at TC. *Por eso estoy muy gracioso a todos que lo hicieron posible que yo pudiera experimentar esto para prepararme servir a las poblaciones de Dios.* (That’s why I am so grateful to everyone who made it possible for me to experience this, in order to prepare myself to serve God’s people.)

— Deacon Isaac McCracken
Diocese of Fort Worth



Our Lady, Queen of the Americas Church



Deacon Daniel Roberts, left, assists at the first Mass at the home church of Washington’s Cardinal McElroy, the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle.

Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle Washington, D.C.

For the past two years, I have been assigned to the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle in Washington, D.C. It is a bustling parish with a diverse congregation and a wide variety of ministry opportunities, which have spurred continued growth in my ability to serve and share my faith.

As a third theologian, in addition to serving at Mass, I was entrusted with leading the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) classes, baptism preparation, and presiding at certain prayer services outside Mass. I especially appreciated the opportunity I had to journey with an engaged couple through their process of marriage preparation.

This year, as a deacon, I preached homilies, met with a new couple for their marriage preparation, continued with OCIA and baptism prep, and assisted at various liturgies with presiding bishops and cardinals. On any given weekend, I might encounter foreign ambassadors, young adult professionals, government workers, tourists, and the homeless. People come to the Church from so many different backgrounds, and the Lord calls us to have the flexibility and servant’s heart to cast our nets wide as we preach his Gospel. As I complete my time at St. Matthew’s, I am reminded of the lesson from that other great apostle, St. Paul, who, in preaching the truth, became “all things to all people, that [he] might by all means save some” (1 Cor 9:22).

— Deacon Daniel Roberts
Diocese of Pittsburgh

Christ House Washington, D.C.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve at Christ House over the past semester. Christ House is a 24-hour residential medical care facility for homeless people in the Washington, D.C., area. Patients here suffer from a variety of illnesses and injuries, and are given a dignified and respectful place to recover. Christ House also offers assistance in the form of social workers, who help patients get their lives started again. On top of the medical and social care, Christ House offers spiritual guidance through pastoral ministry, led by the chaplain, Charles Anderson-Gray. My work at Christ House is to assist him in the spiritual care of the patients by being present and accompanying them in their times of recreation and rest, and by participating in their Bible studies. Much of my work is spent speaking with patients in English and Spanish, and helping in the communication between patients and staff, as well as between the patients themselves. It is very evident that God is working at Christ House, with the Gospel being preached and the patients being served with compassion and love. *(For more information, visit christhouse.org.)* ■

— Peter Nguyen
First Theology, Diocese of Fort Worth



The bronze statue in front of Christ House, “The Servant Christ” by Jimilu Mason, depicts a modern Christ offering to wash the feet of the people of the Adams Morgan neighborhood.



Father William Gurnee accepted the 2024–25 Rev. Gerald Brown, P.S.S., Award for Excellence in Pastoral Ministry Supervision from Rector Stevens.

Pastoral Supervisors Appreciation Dinner

In gratitude for the leadership and guidance to our seminarians in each of their assignments, the Pastoral Supervisor’s Appreciation Dinner on March 27 welcomed 25 of our valued seminarian mentors in pastoral work. Father Chris Arockiaraj, vice-rector and coordinator of pastoral formation, presided at vespers. He reflected on the importance and challenges of being supervisors in the 21st century, forming priests for the future Church. The holy “patron for youth” who will be canonized on Aug. 3, Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, was presented as a model for the seminarians in integrating faith, knowledge, and pastoral ministry.

Father William Gurnee, pastor of St. Joseph’s on Capitol Hill, received the 2025 Rev. Gerald Brown, P.S.S., Award for Excellence in Pastoral Ministry Supervision, in recognition of his selfless commitment to all our seminarians who have been under his thoughtful direction over the years. Jeffrey Ambreit (3-T, Fort Worth), in gratitude for his assignment at St. Joseph’s, commented, “Father Gurnee is a good mentor because of the personal attention and care he shows for his parishioners. He truly gets to know them and encourages them. It has been a privilege to learn from his pastoral care.” ■

May God bless our supervisors and all who support Theological College’s ongoing work of seminary formation after the heart of Jesus Christ!

University Research Day

April 2, 2025, was University Research Day. Under the guidance of Father Jaime Robledo, P.S.S., coordinator of intellectual formation, Theological College participated for the first time in this annual Catholic University event, with three student priests and one Basselin scholar presenting their theses to the house community. The presentations in Viéban Hall were followed by evening prayer and a congratulatory dinner.

PARTICIPANTS:



Father David Birkdale
Archdiocese of New York

“Take up my yoke’: Saint Bonaventure’s Preaching on the Cross and Humility”



Jake Nadeau
Diocese of Charleston

“Reality and Truth in Descartes and Berkeley”



Father Vincent Castaldi
Archdiocese of New York

“Embracing Synodality with the Help of Blessed Jan Van Ruusbroec: Situating Pneumatology in a Trinitarian Context”



Father André Sicard
Diocese of Salt Lake City

“Not for the Priesthood, but for the Ministry’: Application of Norms for Pastoral Formation from *The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States of America* in Initial Diaconal Formation in the Diocese of Salt Lake City”

Our Vietnamese Brothers

Antonino Castellano
*Second Theology,
Diocese of Pittsburgh*

When I arrived at Theological College in the fall of 2023, I expected my first year of formation to largely consist of getting accustomed to the new environment. Things like wearing clerics, avoiding speed cameras, and working on research papers soon became part of daily life. While I knew there would be a slight culture shock when I moved to our nation’s capital, I was not anticipating that my new residence on the crux of the third floor hallway would offer a cultural immersion.

I entered the seminary with my Pittsburgh diocesan brother Thach Nguyen, from Ha Tinh, Vietnam. We were assigned rooms next to Cuong Le, a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Louisville, also originally from Ha Tinh. Soon, Tung Sy Ho, another student for the Archdiocese of Louisville, joined us, coming directly from Vietnam. Tung became my next door neighbor. The next semester, Thanh Phan, also coming directly from Vietnam for the Louisville diocese, moved next to us.

I soon found the sound of people speaking in Vietnamese and the smell of pho also to be part of my TC experience. I had the pleasure of joining them — and some from other religious houses — at several Tết Trung Thu (mid-autumn) and Tết Nguyen Dan (Lunar New Year) festivals. Whether it was attending Mass with a local Vietnamese community, singing karaoke at a Tết celebration, or sitting on the floor in a dorm room enjoying a hot pot meal, I cherished these opportunities to get to know my brothers from Vietnam and celebrate their common heritage.

I also came to know more about their struggles adapting to American culture and the challenges they faced in communicating and studying in a new language. Furthermore, while they found solace in their common traditions and the local Vietnamese communities, the fact remains that they have left their land, their homes, and their families to follow Christ.

Before moving on in my own formation, my bishop asked me why I wanted to become a diocesan priest in Pittsburgh rather than another diocese. I told him that I had spent most of my life coming to know Christ through the Church there. Asking



Peter Nguyen (1-T, Ft. Worth), right, led the singing for the Lunar New Year liturgy

Tết at TC

This year at Theological College we celebrated the Tết (Lunar New Year) holiday on January 29. We had a Mass with Vietnamese hymns, combining voices that included those of guests from other religious houses. Father Bud Stevens offered some opening remarks about the importance of the holiday and the beauty of the faith as lived out in Vietnamese culture. Two alumni from TC came back to join in the celebration: Father Steve Wong (’24), who celebrated the Mass, and Father Vincent Vu (’23), who gave the homily. Our brothers from Vietnam, as well as other seminarians with a Vietnamese heritage, including Quang Nguyen, Peter Nguyen, and Blake Thompson, helped to host and organize the reception with Vietnamese food, traditions, and games. Cuong remarked, “We value this opportunity to share our culture with the seminary community and we really appreciate the support of the faculty and staff in this endeavor.” Tung also commented, “It was like coming back home and it helped me to revisit my happy memories.”

me why I wanted to become a priest for Pittsburgh was like asking me why I wanted to go to my *nonna’s* house for Sunday dinner. Where else would I go? Getting to know these men who undoubtedly have similar attachments to their local churches and their families, but have chosen to leave them behind to become priests and serve people in a foreign land, continues to be a great witness to me of the sacrificial love towards which God calls his priests. Their witness challenges me to foster a willingness to do the same. ■



At the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, TC's Deacon Keith Burney assists Pope Francis at the Mass of canonization for Junipero Serra on September 15, 2015.

Pope Francis: A Pope of Hope

Rev. Chris Arockiaraj, P.S.S.
Vice-Rector

“*Carissimi fratelli e sorelle, buona Pasqua*” (Dear brothers and sisters, Happy Easter) — these were the last words of Pope Francis from the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica to the faithful gathered on Easter Sunday morning. By wishing “Happy Easter” to the world, Pope Francis, though he was sickly, exhausted, and weak, eagerly desired to express his last wish, which was to tell the world that Jesus is risen and Jesus is alive today.

Pope Francis indeed lived the message of hope that Jesus is alive today. His preference was to serve the hopeless, the marginalized, the suffering, the sick, the indigenous, the refugees, and the poor. As pope, he made his first visit outside Rome to a refugee camp situated on an Italian island, Lampedusa, where refugees, especially from north Africa, flock for safe haven. Many refugees die on the way when they are crossing the Mediterranean Sea.

Five years ago, the whole world was at risk of losing hope due to the deadly pandemic. On the eve of the COVID outbreak, Pope Francis went to St. Peter’s Square and delivered an extraordinary blessing (in his *Urbi et Orbi* address) to the city and to the world. He repeatedly instilled hope in the people who were living in fear and anxiety during the pandemic period.

Pope Francis initiated the World Day of the Poor to be observed on the Sunday preceding the solemnity of Christ the King. This was to exhort us to think of the poor and to support them financially during the Thanksgiving week and to prepare to celebrate Christ the King, who will come again at the final judgment. In his book, *Let Us Hope: The Path to a Better Future*, Pope Francis quoted a poem from Alexis Valdes:

*We’ll miss the old man who asked for a buck in the market,
Whose name we never knew, who was always at your side.
And maybe the poor old man was your God in disguise.
But you never asked his name, because you never had the time...
When the storm passes, I ask the Lord, in shame
That you return us better, as you once dreamed us.*

Pope Francis continued to be faithful to the call he received to be a pastor and to be a sign of hope. He continued to build the Kingdom of God on earth, guided by Jesus who read at the synagogue in Nazareth, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” (*Is* 61:1–2). Pope Francis went to prison on Holy Thursdays to wash the feet of the prisoners in order to tell them that God loves and forgives them, and to give them hope that they will be set free one day. He inaugurated the year of mercy to remind us that God is unconditionally merciful and forgiving when we repent.

Pope Francis was a man of hope for people living in war zones, especially in Russia and the Ukraine and Israel and Palestine. He attempted numerous times to bring nations together in peace and reconciliation. He made phone calls every day even from the hospital when he was sick, to talk to the pastor of the only open church in Gaza, to instill in the faithful hope and courage. His daily voice, as a voice of a good shepherd whispering into the ears of the hopeless, gave them hope that one day war would be over and they could live in peace again.

During this Easter season, we read about Jesus meeting his hopeless and falling away disciples on the way to Emmaus and accompanying them with hope (*Lk* 24:13–35). Ordained ministers today are called to be a sign of hope for the hopeless and to accompany them to Jesus, the true fullness of Hope, the Resurrection and the Life. ■

Student Government

Deacon Daniel Roberts
Student Government Association President
Diocese of Pittsburgh

This spring, the Student Government Association (SGA) and its four committees served Theological College, and beyond, in a number of ways, including works of charity, a mission trip, and novel community events. Throughout the entire year, our seminarians have stepped up in creative and generous ways, demonstrating faith, fraternity, and charity. The past semester’s highlights include:

- **The Hispanic Affairs Committee**, helmed by chairman Jake Nadeau (3-B, Charleston), continued to host the bi-weekly Mass in Spanish and the weekly dinners and night prayers in Spanish, as well as Spanish movie nights. Nine men also participated in the Honduras mission trip during Spring break, which was a powerful and unique opportunity for pastoral ministry in a Hispanic country.
- **The Prayer and Worship Committee**, chaired by Quang Nguyen (2-T, Fort Worth) continued to seek ways to foster the spiritual life of the house. It relied on seminarian input regarding music selections for Masses, and it sponsored a True Devotion to Mary reading group and the Extemporaneous Preaching group (*see p. 20*). To cultivate saintly devotion and in preparation for the reception of St. Thérèse’s relics this upcoming fall, the committee purchased and distributed Lenten and Easter meditation books incorporating her writings.
- **The Community Life Committee (CLC)**, under chairman Deacon Cole McDowell (4-T, Louisville), organized a number of events to foster the fraternal life of the house, including regular movie nights, a Super Bowl Party, Mardi Gras, the Iron Seminarian Tournament, and the annual Spring House Party, which had a Western theme this year.

Deacon Michael Villavicencio (Santa Fe) accepts the Iron Seminarian trophy from CLC chairman, Deacon Cole McDowell (Louisville).



Maeve Gilheney-Gallagher appreciated a generous check from TC Social Justice Committee chairman Robert Weisberg (2-T, Ft. Worth) for Catholic Relief Services.

- **The Social Justice Committee** continued to act on its mission of mercy for those in need. On Ash Wednesday, Maeve Gilheney-Gallagher, global solidarity coordinator for the Archdiocese’s Mission Office, gave a presentation that introduced the seminarians to the work of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), before accepting a check from Social Justice Committee chairman Robert Weisberg (2-T, Ft. Worth) for over \$6,600 to assist the efforts of CRS to respond to recent hurricanes and other disasters worldwide. This money was raised by the seminarians during the Fall House Party.
- The Social Justice Committee also hosted a talk by Evelyn Polomo, an immigration lawyer, who provided the community with information on how to support and guide immigrant communities effectively within the framework of U.S. immigration law. The committee members also worked to put together care kits for the wellbeing of the homeless in the local area. The Spring House Party generously raised \$4,000 for Casa Hogar Padre Chinchachoma, an orphanage in Xochicalco Morelos, Mexico, where seminarian Peter Mallampalli (Pittsburgh) is serving his pastoral year.
- **The SGA House Project** annually aims to contribute to improvements at TC to benefit future seminarians. This year, the SGA invested in two improvements: the addition of bistro tables for seminary receptions and the installation of a stove to upgrade the kitchenette in the terrace-level game room.

Extemporaneous Preaching Fellowship

Deacon Daniel Roberts
Diocese of Pittsburgh

Once again this year, seminarians took part in the Extemporaneous Preaching Fellowship, a small group for prayer, practice in preaching, and fraternity. Recognizing that preaching is one of the primary duties and callings of a priest, the preaching fellowship offers an additional venue to grow in preaching, outside the more formal liturgical and classroom settings. The group meets weekly in the fifth floor chapel. It is open to anyone at TC, but everyone present must understand that if they attend, they will be preaching! We pray and “cast lots” to determine the order in which we will preach. Then, we each take a turn preaching from an upcoming Sunday’s Mass readings. No one knows what he will be preaching on before the meeting.

When each person takes his turn, he has a minute or two to familiarize himself with his reading, followed by eight minutes (or less) to pray, proclaim the reading, preach, and then close in prayer. It’s a real exercise in trust, spontaneity, and reliance on the Holy Spirit. Certainly, we should never neglect diligent preparation for when we preach in the parish. Nonetheless, it is genuinely encouraging to discover what each of us can do with just the Scriptures in front of us and the thoughts that come to us in the moment, inspired by prayer.



in the fact that he is always speaking to us in a variety of ways, but in a special way through the Holy Scriptures. ■

I have seen some truly meaningful preaching in this setting. This shouldn’t surprise me, because God can do anything, but it reminds me that he acts in cooperation with our own level of faith and preparation. That is what the Extemporaneous Preaching Fellowship is about. It’s a group of men building each other up by helping each other to grow in faith: faith in God, and



Our enthusiastic athletes traveled to the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio, to represent TC at the Feb. 15 basketball tournament.

Inter-Seminary Basketball Tournament

Nicholas Hoelscher
First Theology,
Diocese of Fort Worth

This past February, Theological College was invited to participate, with seven other seminaries, in the 44th Annual Helfant Classic Basketball Tournament. The other teams represented the Josephinum minor seminary and its theologate, St. Charles Borromeo, Mount St. Mary’s (Cincinnati), Saint Meinrad, Saint Joseph’s (Dunwoodie), and Sacred Heart. We travelled to the Josephinum and, at the conclusion of the seven-and-a-half-hour drive, we immediately jumped into a game against Sacred Heart Seminary. We lost pretty handily, but we learned from our mistakes and turned up our offense and refined our defense.

On Saturday, coming off a short night’s sleep, we proceeded to Mass with all eight seminary communities in a good reminder of our unified mission and identity in service to the Church. We then spent the morning setting plays and strategies and working out the kinks in our game, culminating in a tough fought game against St. Charles Borromeo Seminary.

We enjoyed lunch with the Josephinum seminarians, before facing off against their theologate team. We maintained a solid lead through most of the game, yet in the last moments of the game we surrendered the lead and the game. The Josephinum theologate team took home the trophy for the whole tournament. We returned home to TC with plans for next year’s invitation. All who came enjoyed the fraternal competition and new friendships that the tournament offered, and we are highly motivated for a better showing next year.

Go Ravens!

Wheeler Wilson
Second Basselin,
Diocese of Orlando

Theological College sports took shape this semester in the basketball, soccer, and pickleball Ravens teams. The Basketball Ravens, apart from participating in the Helfant Classic (see sidebar), went 1-2-1 on the season, just missing the playoffs in Catholic University intramurals. The experience garnered this season between the tournament and the intramural league, together with newfound modes of tactical deployment, bode a hopeful future for the Basketball Ravens, with every player expected to return next year.

The Soccer Ravens began their season with the Annual Vianney Cup on March 29. This year’s Cup — the fifteenth that TC has participated in annually — was graciously hosted by Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary on their new campus in Ambler, Pa., and included themselves, Theological College (joined by four generous and highly skilled players from Saint Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore), Mount Saint Mary’s Seminary

The Vianney Cup teams pray together before the TC vs. Dominican House face off.



(Emmitsburg, Md.), and, for the first time in history, the Dominican House of Studies. The Theological College Soccer Ravens began the tournament with a tough 4-0 loss to Saint Charles, the score not quite reflecting the competitive feeling throughout much of the game. They followed that performance with a 4-3 loss to the Dominican House of Studies in the loser’s bracket. This was, by far, Theological College’s best game,

especially when one considers the halftime score of 3-0 Dominicans. In the winner’s bracket, Mount Saint Mary’s fell during the championship game to Saint Charles Borromeo, ending a 17-year Vianney Cup drought for them, and only the second interruption in that near two-decade period of the Mount hosting the trophy within their walls. The games were preceded by Mass celebrated by Bishop Keith Chylinski and followed by vespers and a sumptuous meal.

The next day, the Soccer Ravens, beaten and battered, took to the field against a Catholic University intramural team to inaugurate the intramural season, and once again fell 4-3 in a game that was competitive throughout. The Soccer Ravens enjoyed the rest of the season, which was punctuated by a 4-3 win against the John Paul II Seminary.

The Pickleball Ravens, consisting of Amos Stinson (2-PT, Louisville) and Xavier Polisetty (1-T, Fort Worth), were undefeated all season and made it to the third set of finals with a 7-9 loss. ■

“Sports get the heart pumping, the blood moving, and help us develop fully human relationships with each other in what can otherwise be a one-sidedly cerebral environment.

— Wheeler Wilson
(2-B, Orlando)

On Literature: Seminarian Selections

The task of believers, and of priests in particular, is precisely to “touch” the hearts of others, so that they may be opened to the messages of the Lord Jesus. In this great task, the contribution that literature and poetry can offer is of incomparable value.

— “Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis on the Role of Literature in Formation”



Deacon Cole McDowell
Fourth Theology
Archdiocese of Louisville

I just finished reading *The Betrothed* by Alessandro Manzoni, a nineteenth-century Italian novel that happens to have been

one of Pope Francis’ favorite books (he read it three times). It is thoroughly Catholic, not only in terms of its subject matter, but also in terms of its moral and spiritual outlook, set in the historical context of northern Italy of that time. I was shocked by how many parallels the story bore to recent events in our own time, and I found reading the novel to be far more of a spiritual experience than I was expecting. This novel deserves a place among the other giants of nineteenth-century European literature, and I would highly recommend it to anyone, especially to priests.

Next on my list is *The Wicked Years* series by Gregory Maguire, who is a lifelong Catholic and considered becoming a priest himself. The first book is the source material for the hit musical *Wicked*, as well as for the blockbuster film.



Deacon Blake Ryan Thompson
Third Theology
Diocese of Fort Worth

I recently read *The Autumn of the Patriarch* by Gabriel García Márquez. It

lacks traditional paragraph and sentence structure, so it was a challenge to read at first. However, once you get a grip on Márquez’s unique narrative style, the novel is impossible to put down. It needs to be approached as a work of dense poetry rather than a mere book, as it paints a chilling image of tyranny and decay that touches on the absurd and is even at times comical.

I’ve always enjoyed reading biographies. I recently finished *The Victorians* by Jacob Rees-Mogg, which is an anthology of 12

Victorian-era figures who helped to shape modern Europe. It is a non-traditional biographical work in that it is more concerned with establishing the context of those featured, their mindset, ethos, and their lasting legacy.

I am currently reading *A Perfect Spy* by John le Carré. I’ve always loved psychological thrillers, and this book doesn’t disappoint. It follows a British spy who goes missing. The novel unpacks both the search for the spy and also his origins and life, offering the reader an excellent window into the life of a tortured, broken man.



Bartek Sobkowicz
Second Theology
Archdiocese of Washington

My favorite authors are Fyodor Dostoevsky (*The Brothers Karamazov*, *Crime and Punishment*), and two Polish

Nobel Prize winners: Henryk Sienkiewicz (*Quo Vadis*) and Władysław Reymont (*The Peasants*). My favorite religious author is Scott Hahn.



Nicholas Hoelscher
First Theology
Diocese of Fort Worth

For recreation, I enjoy reading fictional

works, especially those set in the time of ancient Rome that focus upon Roman legionary combat. One of my recent joys has been reading works by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and I have been particularly appreciative of his short stories, titled *The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard*. Some other works that I have found especially poignant are *A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah and *The Shadow of His Wings* by Father Gereon Goldmann. The next book on the docket that I will be reading is *Lord of the World* by Robert Hugh Benson.



Amos Stinson
Pre-Theology
Archdiocese of Louisville

Regarding spiritual reading, literary

works by saints or their autobiographies are always edifying. I am currently reading *The Story of a Soul* by St. Thérèse of Lisieux and have recently read *Introduction to the Devout Life* by St. Francis De Sales. Fictional Catholic novels are also enriching, such as *The Diary of a Country Priest* by Georges Bernanos. Another favorite category is the historical, non-fiction adventure genre. I have recently read *Endurance* by Alfred Lansing, which is about Ernest Shackleton’s heroic voyage to Antarctica in hopes of finding the South Pole. I have also read *The River of Doubt* by Candice Millard, which is about Teddy Roosevelt’s journey to the Amazon. Stories like these are amazing — they show how man has a deep longing for adventure and a desire for grand exploration. We have lost some of this drive in our current age, so it is inspiring to read about these men, who lived not too long ago, pursuing greatness through exploration while putting their own lives at risk.



Jake Nadeau
Third Basselin
Diocese of Charleston

I like to read non-fiction about various

subjects such as theology, saints, psychology, and philosophy, among others. But I also like to read fiction just as much, if not more. Some of my favorite works are *The World, the Flesh, and Father Smith* by Bruce Marshall, *All the Pretty Horses* by Cormac McCarthy, *Wise Blood* by Flannery O’Connor, *The Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri, *1984* by George Orwell, and *Paradise Lost* by John Milton. These works are special to me because they manifest things about God and man in vivid images that I will never forget. For example, in *The World, the Flesh, and Father Smith*, Father Smith has a conversation with a woman who suggests that religion is used as a sort of psychological comfort. Father Smith turns this on its head and points out that the opposite is actually true: we often try to use other comforts as a substitute for religion. He famously says that “the young man who rings the bell at the brothel is unconsciously looking for God.” Through stories like this, fiction often reveals to us the deeper meaning of life and of faith.



Nicholas Broussard
Second Basselin
Diocese of Lafayette

Some of my favorite authors are Evelyn

Waugh, Brandon Sanderson, Ernest Hemingway, and Flannery O’Connor. For fun, I’ve been reading the *Mistborn trilogy* by Sanderson and *One Piece* by Eiichiro Oda, and my eyes are set on *O Pioneers* by Willa Cather after I’m done with these. My favorite literary works would have to be *Brideshead Revisited* by Evelyn Waugh, *The Virginian* by Owen Wister, and *Interior Freedom* by Jacques Philippe — *Brideshead Revisited* and *Interior Freedom* because they played and continue to play a significant role in my ongoing conversion and *The Virginian* because of how beautifully Wister both paints the Wyoming landscapes and makes characters come to life.



Cameron Huhlein
First Basselin
Diocese of Birmingham

Recently, I have been enjoying the

books of Ernest Hemingway, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, and Leo Tolstoy, as well as some of the authors I covered in my high school literature class, like Walker Percy. In particular, I would recommend *The Old Man and the Sea* by Hemingway. This novel is a very sober reflection on perseverance and purpose and is filled with Christian themes. I would also recommend *Anna Karenina* by Tolstoy. This novel was a profound and sometimes painful reflection on marriage, family, and meaning. Finally, *The Moviegoer* by Walker Percy was an enjoyable book about the search for God in a disillusioned culture. ■

St. Thérèse
of Lisieux
(1873–1897)

Rev. Gladston Stevens, P.S.S.
Rector

This coming November, Theological College will have the honor of hosting the relics of St. Thérèse of Lisieux during their display in the Archdiocese of Washington. I thought I would use this column as an opportunity to reflect upon why she is such an important Doctor of the Church for our time.

It has been observed by many that St. Thérèse, at first glance, seems to be an unlikely teacher for the world today. Her life was tragically short and somewhat sheltered. She founded no movement and did not bequeath to the Church an immense body of work. In fact, she seems to have existed on a plane far removed from our post-modern concerns and problems. Paradoxically, however, these may be the very reasons she can speak to us profoundly. A person too immersed in the spirit of a given age often lacks the perspective necessary to view it with a critical eye. One of St. Thérèse’s biographers, John Beevers, writes, “Her



The centenary of St. Thérèse of Lisieux’s canonization (May 17, 2025) has marked this a “Theresian Year,” with relics touring from Jan. 4 to Christmas 2025. They will arrive in the Archdiocese of Washington this November, stopping first at Theological College.

message is clear and unmistakable and, unless we understand it, the pace of our descent into destruction will quicken until there is no halting it.”

In an age that moves at a frantic pace, the Little Flower reminds us of the value of contemplation. In a narcissistic culture, she sought only to be plunged into the abyss of God’s love and mercy. We value power and are fascinated by our capacity to master the world. By contrast, Thérèse recognized that we are never stronger than when we acknowledge our weakness in the presence of God. She once wrote to a priest, “Let us work together for the salvation of souls; I of course can do very little, absolutely nothing; what encourages me is the thought that by your side I can be of some use; after all a zero by itself has no value but alongside One it becomes potent, always provided that it be put on the proper side, not before it.” Finally, in a time of hedonism, she offers the Little Way, a path that recognizes the necessary concomitance of suffering and love.

It is well known that, during her life, St. Thérèse made it her special mission to pray for priests. Another contemporary commentator on her works, Hans Urs von Balthasar, points out that in her eschatology, heaven is the prolongation and perfection of one’s vocation, not its cessation. Let us ask this great saint to continue her important work and keep Theological College in her prayers. Saint Thérèse, *ora pro nobis!* ■

“

I choose all!

— St. Thérèse
of Lisieux

Celebrating Ordination Milestones

This year, the community recognized the 35th anniversary of **Father Jaime Robledo**, coordinator of spiritual formation and liturgy and intellectual formation, and the 30th anniversary of **Father Chris Arockiaraj**, vice-rector and coordinator of pastoral formation. Father Arockiaraj will take a year of sabbatical next year. The 25th anniversary of ordination for **Father Bud Stevens**, rector, will be on June 2, and the official celebration will be in the fall, but the seminarians recognized this milestone at the End-of-Year Banquet with a surprise cake and gift certificate for books, as reading is one of his favorite occupations.



Father Jaime welcomed dozens of friends, including many TC alumni, to celebrate (and concelebrate) the Eucharist and share a meal in honor of his anniversary. He is shown here with his sister Sofia, who came from Columbia, and J.C.L. candidates Father Jesús Hernández (Sacramento) and Father André Sicard (’23, Salt Lake City).



Father Chris Arockiaraj presided at vespers preceding the Pastoral Supervisors Appreciation Dinner in March (see p. 16).



Although Fr. Bud chose to postpone his 25th anniversary celebration in recognition of a time of mourning for Pope Francis, the house expressed their appreciation for his many years of ministry, especially his most recent in service to Theological College.



Distinguished Alumnus: Monsignor James Shea

Basselin Class of 1998 | Diocese of Bismarck

This past spring, Theological College had the pleasure of hosting alumnus and former Basselin scholar Monsignor James Shea prior to his keynote address at the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast, where he spoke alongside notable Catholic voices such as Papal Nuncio Cardinal Christophe Pierre and Vice President J.D. Vance.

The current president of the University of St. Mary in Bismarck, N.D., is not a stranger to speaking to large crowds. He is a regular keynote speaker at the Fellowship of Catholic University Students' SEEK conferences and was a featured speaker at this past summer's National Eucharistic Congress, which hosted 55,000 Catholics gathered from all over the country. In our sit-down during his visit to Theological College, we were able to reflect on the foundations that led to his work as a diocesan priest, a president of a university, and a national

speaker, as well as what he believes is the current mission for those entering the ministry of the Church.

Monsignor Shea: I don't remember the last time I was here. It wasn't too long ago, but it is always good to be back. It always feels like home. I remember being in these halls and gathering all together in a classroom for the Basselin speech class. Are the Basselins still doing that?

They are. And that actually brings up an interesting observation. There is a distinct emergence of leaders in the Church such as yourself and Bishop Robert Barron who went through the Basselin Program, albeit at different times and eras. Have you sensed any commonality that you share when speaking with them?

I think the philosophy program at Catholic University has a deep and robust tradition. You can certainly sense how someone like Bishop Barron has benefited greatly from it because it is Thomistic in its basis but it also encompasses all other aspects of philosophy. Its excellence and fidelity are really impressive. You have figures such as Monsignor Sokolowski still present who taught me and Bishop Barron. That legacy and tradition are spectacular. With the environment of Catholic University combined with the Sulpician formation program, and the Dominicans next door, this was and is a happening place. All of that interaction happening here makes it unique. Unlike other ecclesial training places that are self-contained, nothing is self-contained here. Catholic University is intricately connected to TC.

One experiences the Basselin Program as a philosopher, which is different from theology, a different season of life. In the *Convivio*, Dante talks about the period between ages 18 and 22 as a time in which there is a "stupor of mind." For a Basselin to be studying philosophy at Catholic University, to be immersed in this magnificent and sprawling ecclesial atmosphere and living with theologians at various stages approaching ordination, with the Sulpicians, near the Dominican House of Studies, there is a whole constellation of ingredients that make for a very full experience of life with mind and heart in formation for the Church.

Do you have particular memories that stand out as you recall your time here?

Oh certainly. The day that I left, I realized I had come as a boy and had grown into a man here. I grew up in the middle of nowhere, before the internet, and arrived in the fall of 1994. I had never lived in a city like D.C. or experienced anything like this place. So I approached everything with a naivety and docility. Obviously, like everywhere else, seminaries are communities of fallen men, striving in a way that is not free of drama or conflict. But I didn't notice any of that. I was just happy to be here. I loved my classes. I came as a boy and really grew up here. When I left, after having such a beautiful experience at TC, I was very prepared to study theology. My classmates in Rome would make fun of me because I could not speak longer than five minutes without mentioning TC and The Catholic University of America. I was very proud to have been in seminary here.

Jumping to the priesthood, can you speak a little about your experience as a newly ordained priest, especially coming back from abroad?

I went to Rome for four years. I was supposed to be studying there longer, but I was ordained in 2002, which was the worst year of the clergy sex abuse scandal in the States. My bishop called me a few weeks after the Dallas Charter to come home to assist in the diocese. I was assigned to teach at a high school and I remember sitting at my desk in Rome and saying to myself, "I guess this is the end of higher education for me."

“

Human beings cannot live without hope. We are inveterate in seeking ways and means of hoping, and without hope, everything falls apart for us. Without hope, human beings are miserable and unhappy creatures. It doesn't matter; you can give us health and wealth and prosperity of every kind, but eventually, without hope, we'll tire of it.

— Monsignor Shea
National Catholic Prayer Breakfast



Monsignor Shea was the keynote speaker at the 20th annual National Catholic Prayer Breakfast on February 28, giving a riveting address on the topic of hope, "which human beings cannot live without." (Photo: EWTN News)

How did you then go on to become President of the University of St. Mary?

If the unexpected change of plans in 2002 had not happened, I would never have been a high school teacher. I loved it in a way that was so evident that the sisters who founded the University of Mary took notice (I didn’t have a single other qualification in the world) and I became president there at the age of 33, though the average age was 62. For 10 years, I was the youngest president of any university in America. I went into that work with no experience or qualification or any knowledge of accreditation or funding. All I had was the education that I had been given. The model for my work has been deeply influenced by the ideal of education that I experienced at Catholic University.

How was your spiritual life in the midst of all of this? It seems like a lot to deal with in your first years of priesthood.

Coming out of seminary in the abrupt way that I did, I was immediately thrown into teaching and marriage prep in those busy first years... I made a policy for myself that I had to read three articles from the front of *First Things* before I could make it to the very funny and wonderful back section. That kind of discipline or habit was my experience with prayer too during those early busy years. I was praying but sought to return to the same sustained prayer that I had while I was living in the seminary.

Things changed when I went out West to become pastor of a small parish. It was the only time in my life that I would come to the end of the day having completed everything that I had to do. I had graded all of my papers! At this point, I was a veteran teacher who knew how to teach, and the parish was manageable. I would wake up early and go over to my little church and pray a Holy Hour, sometimes sitting in the pew, sometimes walking around. It was amazing because the church was so quiet. It was very beautiful.

I said no to being the president of the University of Mary multiple times because I wasn’t ready and I loved what I was doing and where I was. But I finally came to the University of Mary, and because the work was so desperately beyond my own capacity, I remember being up at 2:00 in the morning in my office, with unanswered emails, and the nagging sense that something was going wrong somewhere on campus. From that was born the deepest sense of prayer that has been sustaining

me all the years since. I realized that I had to choose between turning in upon myself in self-pity at the overwhelming weight of the moment or I had to hold myself up to God and receive love there. I had to choose. I think it is a choice we have to make every day, but I had to choose in a fundamental way regarding the trajectory of my interior life at that time. I chose and have habitually chosen the latter, to hold myself up to God. I am able to say, since I said no to him at first, “I didn’t get myself into this; it isn’t all my responsibility — you are responsible, too. We are co-responsible, and you have to do more than I have to do.” This has been very sustaining in that I can be little and pathetic sometimes, but I can count on God to carry me through.

This key sustenance has drawn on a conviction that traces back to the Basselin Program as well. When I arrived, I was the only Basselin that year amidst guys who had been studying for years at that point. I didn’t know anything, having come from a Presbyterian school. I was beyond my capacity, which was good. It is good and humbling when you have to choose “Who am I?” and “What am I going to be?” “Am I going to accept and receive? Or am I going to pretend and pose?” To be given that responsibility in my early thirties, which was objectively beyond my capacity, was good for me and good for any young man to be faced with.

To be a pastor on a college campus is such a big responsibility, but we see priests within that calling, like yourself and Father Mike Schmitz and other campus chaplains, rising to face the problems of the world with their students. It is a beautiful opportunity, as the campus is sort of a microcosm of the world. You have talked about this in your book, *From Christendom to Apostolic Mission*. Looking ahead to priesthood, unaware of where or when the bishop will call us, do you have any words for men in formation regarding how to best prepare?

I cannot imagine a more exciting time to be in formation to be a priest. The formation that men are receiving today is miles ahead of formation at our time. The Church is really coming into her own around certain aspects of formation. You have *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, the vision of Pope Saint John Paul II for seminary formation, explaining the pillars of formation. With recent reforms, there is a lot of focus on the spiritual life, to develop an awakened heart going into one’s priesthood. All of this is really wonderful; it is a great moment.



While visiting TC for this interview with Stephen Parker (far right), Monsignor Shea was able to meet some of the current Basselin scholars, from left, Chris Hanrahan (2-B, New York), Liam Leonard (1-B, Lake Charles), and Trenton Thieneman (1-B, Louisville).

But the world is not becoming any less complicated, and that means that it is more consequential than ever before that a seminarian attends with great seriousness both to spiritual formation and to the intellectual life. The importance of the intellectual life takes center stage, not to displace others, especially the spiritual life, but it takes center stage in that the culture has shifted such that, as a priest, one cannot rely in any sense upon the ambient culture to support the preaching of the Gospel. A man needs to have a mind that is able to perceive those aspects of contemporary life that are amicable to the living of the Gospel in its reality and its power so that those aspects can be part of both one’s own vision and the vision of the true life that is given to the people entrusted to his care.

What is needed more than ever before is an awakening of mind to the vision of the Gospel, to the true story of the Gospel. It has always been important, but now it is more important that a man be swept off his feet by the rescue mission of Christ and to be drawn into it. Without that, we will be lost. In a Christendom world, the life of the priest, which has never made sense as Saint John Paul II referenced in “*Gift and Mystery*,” must occupy a place in society. Even though the priesthood

is still a mystery, the priest has a place of honor and respect. He has a role to play, and people look to him for certain things. In a post-Christian age, in a new apostolic age, the life of the priest is utterly confounding. It doesn’t make any sense at all. That means that our clarity as to what we are called to and the challenges and opportunities that it presents is more poignant than ever before. That means that the intellectual and spiritual life, and all that come with them, need to be honed and supple and ready. It is more important than ever before. The good news is that our formation is better than ever before. It is wonderful to see men ready to take up the call! ■

— Deacon Stephen Parker
Diocese of St. Augustine

Class Notes

Theological College acknowledges with gratitude all those who responded to our Giving Tuesday outreach last November. We will remember you all in our prayers!

70s

Monsignor Michael McCarron, '77, of the Diocese of Richmond, retired from full-time ministry in June 2024, after having served most recently as pastor at St. Thomas More in Lynchburg.

80s

Monsignor Michael Clay, '80, of the Diocese of Raleigh, former Catholic University associate dean and professor in the School of Theology and Religious Studies, retired from full-time ministry in July 2024. He remains busy conducting conferences on the recently revised *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults*, providing weekend coverage in parishes, and completing a manual on the pastoral implementation of the catechumenate in rural and Latino parishes. The manual will be published later in 2025 by Liturgy Training Publications.

Rev. Mason Wiggins, B '80, of the Diocese of St. Augustine, was appointed pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Orange Park in July 2024, for a six-year term. He previously served two years as pastor of St. William in Key Stone Heights.



On March 16, Father Mel Ayala ('10), associate rector and director of liturgy of the Basilica of the National Shrine, celebrated Mass with Father Charles Silvas ('22), left, and Father Jacob Romero ('24), right. Both Father Charles and Father Jacob served in pastoral assignments with Father Mel at the Shrine while in formation.

00s

Rev. Matthew Luft, '00, formerly of the Order of St. Benedict, St. John's Abbey, was incardinated as a priest for the Diocese of Des Moines on March 15, 2024. On the same day, he was appointed pastor of St. Pius X Parish in Urbandale for a six-year term. He previously served there as the parish's administrator.

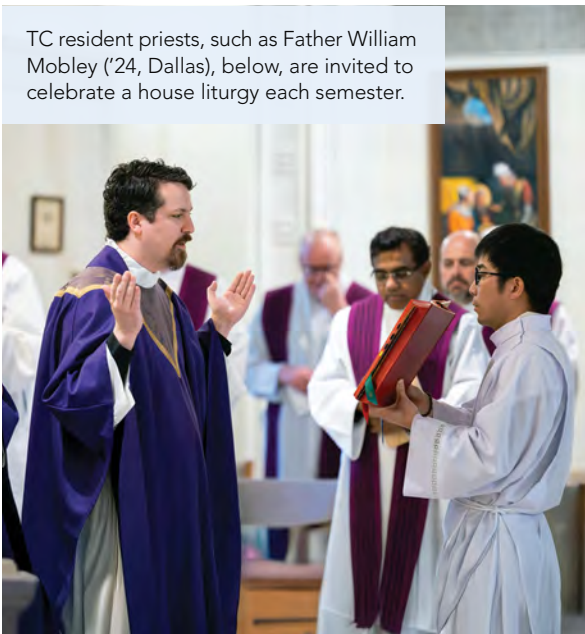
Rev. Clyde Timberlake Meares, '02, of the Diocese of Raleigh, after having been on sabbatical, served as interim sacramental minister at the Parish of Maria Reina de las Americas in Mount Olive and the Mission of Santa Teresa in Beulaville.

Rev. Brendan Guilfoil, B '08, of the Archdiocese of Chicago, has been associate pastor at St. John the Evangelist in Streamwood since 2023, after having served at Mary Undoer of Knots in Jefferson Park. He received an S.T.L. in 2024, focusing on the role of the illative sense in uniting the different arguments for God's existence in St. John Henry Newman's work. He is an adjunct instructor in the School of Parish Leadership and Evangelization at the University of St. Mary of the Lake and

chaplain to the Archdiocese of Chicago's Catholic Committee on Scouting. He is also part of a volunteer on-call chaplain team for emergencies in the Chicago airport system. In a generous gesture of appreciation for his formation at TC, Father Guilfoil recently gifted to each TC seminarian a copy of *The Sacred Heart: A Love for All Times*, by Dawn Eden Goldstein (Loyola Press, 2025).

10s

Rev. Jeremy Mohler, '15, was appointed administrator at St. Catherine of Sienna Parish in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, Pa., in July 2024.



TC resident priests, such as Father William Mobley ('24, Dallas), below, are invited to celebrate a house liturgy each semester.



Father John De Guzman ('22, Raleigh), center, met with TC friends in March after accompanying his 8th grade students on their annual class trip to D.C.

20s

Rev. John De Guzman, '22, of the Diocese of Raleigh, has been appointed parochial vicar of St. Paul Catholic Church in New Bern, N.C., after having served as parochial vicar at St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church in Cary. Father John continues to be active on Instagram at [@frjohndeguzman](#), where he most recently ran a Lenten series called "Ashes to Allelu-🙏".

Rev. Jacob Romero, '24, of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, has been made pastor of St. Rose of Lima in Santa Rosa, in addition to serving as pastor of St. Anthony of Padua in Fort Sumner. This appointment comes after serving for five months as parochial vicar at Our Lady of Fatima in Albuquerque. ■



Father Stephen Wong ('24, Washington), left, was Mass celebrant and Father Vincent Vu ('23, Washington) delivered the homily for the Lunar New Year Mass (see p. 17).



Father Jeffrey Sessions (B '19), left, recently visited his Basselin diocesan brother Cameron Huhlein (1-B), center, with the vocation director for the Diocese of Birmingham, Father Wyman Vinton.



During the semester, Father Matt Kiehl ('15), Richmond's vicar for vocations, offered TC seminarians a weekend of recollection focused on the Heart of Jesus and the example of St. John the Apostle.



In Memoriam



entering formation at Theological College. He was ordained a priest on May 1, 1954, at the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Nashville by Bishop William L. Adrian.

Monsignor Hofstetter’s early assignments included serving as an associate pastor at Holy Name Parish and as director of Camp Marymount. He was also a professor at Father Ryan High School. In 1956, he became an associate at the Cathedral of the Incarnation, and in 1961, was named diocesan director of Newman clubs. He was also chaplain for the convent of the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia Congregation in Nashville, served on the Commission for Ecumenical Affairs, was examiner in Liturgy for the Junior Clergy Exams, and was assistant vicar for religious in the Nashville Deanery.

He became pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Madison in 1970 and later served as pastor of St. Mary Parish in Oak Ridge from 1973 to 1981. At that time, he was assigned as pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Knoxville, and in 1982, he became episcopal vicar for the Knoxville Deanery. In 1987, he was appointed pastor of St. Augustine Parish in Signal Mountain. He then moved to St. Jude as pastor in 1990, where he served until 2005. The Hofstetter Family Life Center at St. Jude was

named for him in 2005. In that year, he became pastor of Good Shepherd Parish in Newport, where he served until his death. Father Hofstetter was conferred the title of Prelate of Honor to His Holiness on Aug. 11, 2011, and given the title of monsignor.

The Mass for Christian Burial was celebrated on July 18, 2022, with interment at the parish columbarium.



and was valedictorian of the class of 1958, and from St. Andrew’s and St. Bernard’s Seminary in 1962. After completing seminary studies at Theological College, he was ordained to the priesthood on May 21, 1966, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Syracuse. He earned a master’s degree from the University of Detroit in 1970 and a certification in pastoral counseling from the Onondaga Pastoral Counseling Center in 1975.

He taught religion at Rome Catholic High School (1966–1967) and at Utica Catholic Academy (1967–1973), then served as Newman chaplain at Hamilton and Kirkland Colleges (1973–1980), after which he assumed the role of director of family life and parish services for Catholic Charities (1980–1987). He was appointed chaplain of St. Joseph’s Nursing Home (1982–1987) and later became the pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church, New Hartford (1987–1999). His last assignment was Newman chaplain for Utica College and SUNY-POLY (1999–2018).

Rev. Paul J. Drobin, ’66, of the Diocese of Syracuse, died on September 27, 2024, at the age of 84.

Paul Drobin graduated from St. John Kanty Preparatory School in Erie, Pa., where he earned seven varsity letters

While at SUNY-POLY, he was also a long-time facilitator for Mohawk Valley Institute for Learning in Retirement. His part-time assignments took him across central New York ,where he became endeared as parochial vicar at the following parishes: Transfiguration (Rome), Holy Trinity (Utica), Our Lady of Lourdes (Utica), St. Bernard’s (Waterville), St. Mary’s (North Brookfield), St. Francis of Assisi (Durhamville), St. Mary’s (Irish Ridge), Blessed Sacrament (Utica), St. Mary’s (Clinton), and St. Agatha’s (Canastota). A devout priest, he dedicated himself to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, particularly its document, *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et spes)*.

Father Paul’s community service was extensive. The Ride for Missing and Exploited Children was especially important to him. He was at the first Ride in 1995 and most thereafter. In 2007, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children gave him a special award. He was a founder and president of the Samaritan Counseling Center, president of the Utica Public Library, and served on the boards of the Resource Center for Independent Living, United Way of the Valley and Greater Utica Area, Institute for Applied Ethics at Utica College, Insight House, Family Services of Utica, Munson Williams Proctor Arts Institute, Utica Rotary Club, Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, The House of The Good Shepherd, and the Ethics Committees of Faxton, St. Luke’s, and St. Elizabeth’s Hospitals. Additionally, he enjoyed memberships in many local organizations and attractions, particularly the William E. Burke Council #189 Knights of Columbus, the Oneida County History Center, and the National Baseball Hall of Fame.



The New Testament always speaks of Christ not as one who taught, or demonstrated, the possibility of a glorious after life but as one who first created that possibility — the Pioneer, the First Fruits, the Man who forced the door.

— C.S. Lewis

He received several honors for his commitment to the community, including an Honorary Doctorate of Sacred Theology from Utica College, the Dream Maker Award (The Women’s Fund), Joseph R. Carucci Award (Genesis), Citizenship and Service Award (SUNY-POLY), Starfish Award (Catholic Charities), Robert Woods Student Life Award (Utica College), the Masonic Temple Award, a Campaign Award (The United Way), the Distinguished Service Award (AFL-CIO Central New York Labor Council), and two Paul Harris Fellow Awards (Utica Rotary Club).

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Oct. 5, 2024, at Holy Trinity Church and interment was at Holy Trinity Cemetery in the Drobin family plot in Yorkville. Donations in Father Paul’s memory may go to the Thea Bowman House, The Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties, and/or the Holy Trinity Church Memorial Fund.



Rev. Kenneth Klink, ’66, of the Diocese of Madison, died on Oct. 5, 2024, at the age of 84.

Father Klink completed general collegiate studies at St. Lawrence Seminary, his philosophical studies at

St. Francis de Sales Seminary, and his theological studies at Theological College. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop William P. O’Connor on May 28, 1966, at Saint Raphael Cathedral in Madison.

Father Klink began his ministry as a parochial vicar at Holy Mother of Consolation Parish in the village of Oregon. He then served as an instructor at Holy Name Seminary for many years, as well as serving as the associate director of vocations. After returning for a period to Holy Mother of Consolation Parish as a parochial vicar, Father Klink served for many years as pastor at St. Mary of Lourdes Parish, Belleville, with mission to St. James Parish, Dayton, from which he retired as pastor emeritus in 2010. Father Klink also served several terms on the Diocese of Madison Presbyteral Council.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Belleville on Oct. 10, 2024, presided by Bishop Donald J. Hying, with the Rev. James Murphy as homilist. Interment was at St. Bernard Parish Cemetery. Memorials may be made to St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Belleville, and to the Diocese of Madison, specifically for the support of retired priests.



Rev. James Kuhn, '71, of the Diocese of Madison, died on September 28, 2024, at the age of 79.

Father Kuhn completed his general collegiate studies at St. Pius X Seminary, Loras College, and his philosophical and theological studies at Theological College. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Cletus F. O'Donnell on May 15, 1971, at Nativity of Mary Church, Janesville.

Father Kuhn began his ministry as a parochial vicar at Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, Beloit; Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish, Sun Prairie; Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Madison; and St. Patrick Parish, Madison. He also served as an instructor at Beloit Catholic High School.

Father Kuhn served as pastor at St. Francis Xavier Parish, Lake Mills, with mission to St. Mary Magdalene Parish, Johnson Creek; St. Luke Parish, Plain, with mission to St. Patrick Parish, Loreto; St. Lawrence Parish, Jefferson, with chaplaincy to St. Coletta School, Jefferson; St. Thomas Parish, Montfort, with mission to St. John Nepomucene Parish, Castle Rock; St. Norbert Parish, Roxbury; St. Joseph Parish, Fort Atkinson; St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, Beloit; and St. Patrick Parish, Janesville, from which he retired as pastor emeritus.

The Mass for Christian Burial was celebrated at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church in Madison on Oct. 8, 2024, by Bishop Donald J. Hying, with Rev. Bart Timmerman as homilist. Mausoleum interment was at Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Janesville. Memorial donations may be made to the Diocese of Madison, specifically for the support of retired priests, and to the Cathedral of St. Bernard of Clairvaux for the renovation of the cathedral.

In September, Vanderbilt Press posthumously published *The Kingdom of the Poor: My Journey Home*, by **Charles Strobel**, '70, of the Diocese of Nashville. Father Strobel passed away on Aug. 6, 2023 (a full obituary can be found in the Fall 2023 issue of *The Crossroads*, p. 34). In this publication, Strobel sets out to explain why he was born. According to Vanderbilt, the memoir, "reveals a people narrative and the occurrences that led Father Strobel to epitomize *Matthew 22:39*: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"



Monsignor James Hannon, '87, of the Diocese of Baltimore, died on October 6, 2024, at the age of 71.

Monsignor Hannon began his discernment to the priesthood at St. Paul Latin High School, a seminary high school, and then continued in the program when it transferred to Cardinal Gibbons High School in Baltimore. He then attended St. Mary's Seminary College for two years before completing a bachelor's degree in theology from what is now Loyola University Maryland in Baltimore.

A talented musician, Monsignor Hannon was a cantor at Our Lady of the Fields. He also worked as a teacher at Seton High School in Baltimore and the Institute of Notre Dame in Baltimore and as director of religious education at St. Andrew by the Bay Parish in Annapolis. He then returned to the seminary to complete a master's degree in divinity from Catholic University while in formation at Theological College. He was ordained to the priesthood in May 1988.

He served as associate pastor in several parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Baltimore before being appointed pastor of multiple parishes in western Maryland, where he served faithfully until his appointment as associate director and then director of clergy personnel for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. He was honored with the elevation to the title of monsignor in 2015. During his tenure as director of clergy personnel, Monsignor Hannon was appointed vicar for the Western Vicariate and served until his appointment to his final assignment at Our Lady of Grace Parish in Parkton in 2019. He took medical retirement in 2022.



May the Lord support us all the day long, till the shades lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in his mercy may he give us a safe lodging, and holy rest, and peace at the last.

— **St. John Henry Newman**

The Mass of Christian Burial on Oct. 10, 2024, was celebrated at Our Lady of Grace Parish by Bishop Adam J. Parker, who was an altar server at Monsignor Hannon's first Mass in 1988. Monsignor Robert Hartnett preached the homily. Interment was at St. Peter Cemetery in Westernport, Md. Memorial donations may be made in Monsignor Hannon's name to the Archdiocese of Baltimore Special Care of Retired Priests.



Rev. Kenneth W. Haydock, '81, of the Archdiocese of Seattle, died on March 20, 2024, at his home in Greenhaven Senior Care in Edmonds, at the age of 78.

He attended St. Joseph Grade School, where the Sisters of the Holy Names planted seeds for a priestly vocation. He then entered the Oregon Province of Jesuits for a brief time after graduating from Seattle Preparatory. Later, he received his B.A. from Seattle University. He went to seminary at Theological College and obtained a master's degree from Catholic University in 1980 (having graduated early, he is still

considered part of the class of 1981). Father Ken was ordained on December 6, 1980, at Sacred Heart Parish in Bellevue by Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen.

His first assignment was as an associate pastor at Sacred Heart Parish in Bellevue in 1980, followed by associate pastor for St. Mary Magdalen Parish in Everett and then pastor in 1985 at St. Joseph Parish in Vancouver, where he championed a new building plan for the church, which eventually grew into the second largest parish in the archdiocese. The celebration of the Mass was very important to Father Ken, and he worked diligently to build a music and choral program that eventually became "Bravo Vancouver Chorale," resulting in several CDs and the chorale making performance tours in Europe. In his time at St. Joseph, he initiated a ministry to seniors called the "Golden Fellowship," bringing seniors of the parish together for prayer and companionship. Honoring the sacrament of matrimony, he started the annual "Celebrate Marriage Mass" and dinner specifically honoring those celebrating milestone anniversaries each year.

Father Ken was then appointed pastor of Holy Rosary Parish in Edmonds in 1996, where he remained for 20 years. During these years, Holy Rosary became one of the largest and most vibrant parishes and parish schools in the archdiocese. Under his leadership, a new parish hall was built.

Father Ken had a deep compassion for the sick, the home-bound, the poor, and the dying. He would carry around a small notebook to write down people's prayer intentions or their names so that he could include them in his daily prayers. He was always "on call" and would drop whatever he was doing to minister to the dying. It was no surprise then that Archbishop Brunett appointed him vicar for charities, chairman of the Board of Directors of Catholic Community Services and Archdiocesan Housing Authority. Father Ken

was a collector of books and fine art. In 2014, he donated his 10,000-volume philosophy and theology library to Saint John Paul II Seminary in Washington, D.C. In 2015, Theological College awarded him its Alumnus Lifetime Service Award, in recognition of “a lifetime of priestly service as an educator, social advocate, and liturgist in the tradition of the priests of St. Sulpice.” He accepted the award from then-rector, Rev. Phillip Brown, P.S.S. (see photo on p. 35).

Father Ken’s last pastoral assignment was at St. Bridget in Seattle, before his health necessitated taking senior priest status in 2018. He spent his last few years in care facilities, where he made new friends with his charm and intelligence, which could not be inhibited by physical limitations. His life was marked by St. Joseph, growing up in St. Joseph Parish in Seattle, building the “new” church at St. Joseph Parish in Vancouver, and spending part of his last full day on earth, March 19th — the Feast of St. Joseph – with brother priests at the spring luncheon for senior priests in Edmonds.

The Mass of Christian Burial was held on April 10, 2024, at Holy Rosary Parish in Edmonds, presided by Archbishop Paul Etienne, with homilist Bishop Frank Schuster. Interment was at Calvary Cemetery in Seattle.

In his memory, donations can be sent to Catholic Community Services of Western Washington or the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, P.O. Box 398, Marylhurst, OR 97036. Condolences can be sent to: Sr. Linda Haydock, Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, 708 N. 128th St., Seattle, WA 98133.



to earn a master’s degree from Iowa State University. A later vocation, he joined the seminary at Theological College and graduated in 1998. He was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Dubuque on May 23, 1998, at the Cathedral of St. Raphael, by Most Rev. Jerome Hanus, O.S.B.

Father Jim began his ministry as associate pastor of the Church of the Nativity, Dubuque, as well as chaplain of Stonehill Care Center. He then became pastor of Iowa Falls and Eldora and then ministered at Dougherty, Rockford, and Rockwell. He served at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Ames,

as well as the parishes of Hanover, Dorchester, and Waukon. He retired from active ministry in 2020, after serving at the parishes of the Archangels Cluster Parishes of Winnebago and Hancock Counties in the northwestern corner of the archdiocese.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at St. Thomas Aquinas, on that saint’s feast day, Jan. 28, 2025. Interment was at St. Lawrence Cemetery in Otter Creek.



Rev. Mark Cunningham, ’99, of the Diocese of Albany, died on September 10, 2024.

Mark Cunningham was educated at the State University of New York at Albany and at Union College, Schenectady. He taught English for 24 years at the Stillwater and Watervliet High School before entering Theological College in 1993. He was ordained on January 16, 1999, by Bishop Howard J. Hubbard at St. Patrick’s Church, Watervliet.

Father Cunningham’s assignments included St. Mary’s Hospital, Troy; Christ the King Parish, Guilderland; and St. Francis de Sales Parish, Herkimer. He also served his home parish of Blessed Sacrament, Mohawk, as its sacramental minister, and Our Lady of Hope Parish in Fort Plain. He served as dean for Herkimer County and was active in diocesan efforts to enhance the well-being of his brother priests.

He enjoyed teaching English, and he continued for many years to help students prepare for the SAT test. He also enjoyed Broadway theatre, opera, chocolate, and traveling. He visited with President George H.W. Bush in Kennebunkport in 1990 and had a private audience with Pope St. John Paul II in Rome in 2003. He also saw Queen Elizabeth II in London at the “Trooping of the Colors” during her 90th birthday celebration in 2016.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on September 17, 2025, at St. Francis de Sales Church. Interment was at the Mohawk Village Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to St. Francis de Sales Parish, 219 Bellinger St, Herkimer, NY 13350; Blessed Sacrament Church, 71 E. Main St., Mohawk, NY 13407; or the Priest’s Retirement Fund of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, 40 N. Main Ave, Albany, NY 12203.



Sister Ann Stango, a Sister of Charity of Saint Elizabeth and former faculty advisor at Theological College, died February 5, 2025, at McAuley Hall Health Care Center in Watchung, N.J., at the age of 86.

Sister Ann entered the Sisters of Charity on September 6, 1955, and was a member for 69 years. She graduated from the College (University) of Saint Elizabeth, Convent Station, N.J., with a B.A. degree in mathematics; from Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Mass., with an M.A. degree in mathematics; from The Catholic University of America with an M.A. degree in theology; and from Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C., with a D.Min. degree in theology, Church, and society.

Sister Ann taught in New Jersey at Saint Margaret of Scotland School, Morristown, and Saint John Cathedral High School, Paterson. She also lived and worked in a low-income housing development during the late 1960s in New Jersey. She began her outreach ministry at Operation Extension in the Diocese of Paterson and then as a member of the Parish Apostolic Team at Saint Vincent Martyr Parish in Madison.

Sister Ann became a teacher/advisor at Catholic University and a counseling associate and faculty advisor at Theological College from 1972 to 1982. She was the first woman to serve

on the formation staff for the seminary at TC and she received a Distinguished Alumnus Achievement Award from Catholic University.

She was director of Ministry Programs, College (University) of Saint Elizabeth, Convent Station, N.J., and then served as the general secretary for the Sisters of Charity, Convent Station, N.J. Sister Ann was an assistant to the president at the Hospital of Saint Raphael, New Haven, Conn., and vice president of mission at Saint Joseph University Medical Center in Paterson, N.J. She was director of ministry programs at Saint Anthony’s Hospital, Saint Petersburg, Fla., and then went to Saint Joseph’s Hospital in Tampa as an educational specialist for Ministry, Spirituality, and Ethics.

Sister Ann has been described as a highly intelligent, competent, and dedicated religious woman. Her family and friends were especially important to her, and she enjoyed their visits.

The Mass of Christian Burial on Feb. 13, 2025, was celebrated at Holy Family Chapel, Convent Station, N.J., with interment at Holy Family Cemetery. Contributions may be made to the Sisters of Charity Development Fund, P.O. Box 476, Convent Station, NJ, 07961. ■

BEQUESTS

Theological College recognizes with gratitude the generous bequests of Rev. Thomas McGrath (’59, Syracuse) and Rev. Kenneth Haydock (’81, Seattle, see p. 35) who acknowledged the lifelong impact of TC’s formation program on their fruitful ministries.

(Father McGrath’s remembrance may be found in the Spring 2024 issue of The Crossroads, p. 31.)



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

THE CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY
OF AMERICA 

Alumni Day 2025

SAVE
— the —
DATE

10.08.25

5:15 p.m. Alumni Day Mass

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

7 p.m. Alumni Recognition
and Award Dinner

