

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

*The* **Crossroads**

The Alumni Magazine for Theological College | Spring 2026



LILLY GRANT

GRADUATE REFLECTIONS

NEW BREVIARY



In recognition of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops voted to consecrate the U.S. to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in June 2026.

TC is celebrating the centennial of this statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, carved in Italy by an artist named Pellegrini and anonymously donated in 1926. It was originally located in the seminary chapel next to the high altar.

Sacred Heart of Jesus  
Designed and carved by Italian artist  
Pellegrini, 1926



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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:** This painting, *Jesus of the Eucharist* (2025) by Rev. Peter Wm. Gray, P.S.S., hangs in the TC refectory.

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A grant of over \$7 million will be shared with Theological College to serve its mission of forming pastoral leaders able to meet the challenges of the 21st century.



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**RECTOR'S CONFERENCES**

This year's Rector's Conferences on the virtues and grace at the heart of the priesthood offer inspiration for alumni and seminarians alike.



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## A Wonderful New Chapter

Father William J. Kerby is little known today but was a prominent figure in the early days of The Catholic University of America. He joined the faculty in 1898 as its first professor of sociology and became a national leader in the Church's engagement with the most pressing problems of the day. One of Father Kerby's interests was offering a vision of the priest required for the contemporary world. To that end, he suggested that what the Church needed, above all, were "considerate" priests. By this he meant priests who not only had the attributes of sanctity and intelligence, but a capacity to engage in the discernment — that is, consideration — of the actual needs of people living in complex situations and facing the challenges of an ever-changing world. Such a priest would not be governed by rigid adherence to a fixed ideology but instead would be animated by the love of Christ and neighbor and would communicate pastoral charity in whatever environment he might be placed.

The seminary has long been a pioneer in this dimension of formation, and we strive to continue to do so. Earlier this academic year, the Lilly Endowment awarded the School of Theology and Religious Studies (TRS) a grant whose overall purpose includes the enhancement of Theological College's program in pastoral formation. On the facing page, Professor Susan Timoney speaks about the grant. For my part, I would like to highlight what it means for Theological College (TC).

The Lilly's Endowment's "New Wineskins" program, part of its Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative, is an opportunity for Theological College (along with partner seminaries) to avail itself of the resources that an association with a major university can offer. Through collaboration with the Busch School of Business, the Archdiocese of Washington, and of course TRS, TC seminarians will be equipped to assume significant pastoral responsibilities soon after ordination. In addition to training in management, finance, and personnel issues, seminarians will learn in an environment in which the virtues and disposition necessary for the authentic exercise of spiritual leadership can be fostered.

This is truly an exciting time to be a member of the TC community. Our tradition of creative and innovative priestly formation is not only continuing but entering a wonderful new chapter. Father Kerby's dream of a cohort of true priests of Christian consideration is being realized. This would not be possible without your prayers and support.

May the Lord guide us all forward onto the path before us,

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



Father Bud hosted the first meeting of the New Wineskins Project in Viëban Hall in February.

*“In addition to training in management, finance, and personnel issues, seminarians will be in an environment in which the virtues and disposition necessary for the authentic exercise of spiritual leadership can be fostered.”*

## The New Wineskins Project: Forming Pastoral Leaders for the 21st Century

**Susan M. Timoney, S.T.D.**

*Associate Professor of Practice in Pastoral Studies*

*Associate Dean for Graduate Ministerial Studies*

*Director, D.Min. Program*

*Principal Investigator: Sheen Preaching Initiative & New Wineskins Project*



Susan Timoney is the principal investigator for the New Wineskins project.

In 2025, the Lilly Endowment invited member schools of the Association of Theological Schools to consider what the Church will ask of its pastoral leaders in the decades to come and how schools and other Catholic organizations might collaborate to create innovative formation programs that better prepare pastoral leaders.

The School of Theology and Religious Studies (TRS) welcomed the opportunity to ask some of its stakeholders about potential new initiatives that could contribute to the aims of the grant. TRS chose to consider pressing challenges related to leadership with The Catholic Project, bishops with whom the school works closely, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, and the Paulist Fathers Communion Project. For the bishops, TRS will design study days around the most challenging theological questions, offering bishops an opportunity to learn and dialogue. In collaboration with the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, a program for first-time leaders will be developed to better prepare consecrated men for leadership positions within their respective communities. The project with the Paulist Fathers focuses on preparing clergy and lay leaders to address the impact of polarization on Church life and on developing effective modes of dialogue and resolution. The seminary program is the largest collaboration, with six member seminaries: Theological College; St. Patrick's in Menlo Park, Calif.; Mundelein Seminary in Chicago; Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in St. Louis; and St. Vincent Seminary in Latrobe, Pa.

Seminary programs in the U.S. have been designed to prepare men for the priesthood by training them in the science of God, beginning with a foundation in philosophy, and moving on to contemplating the mysteries of the Catholic faith, to develop a deep understanding of God. This intellectual formation remains indispensable. One cannot teach what one does not know.

In more recent decades, however, the Church has recognized that other areas of knowledge and experience

“Seminarians will learn about parish finances, human resources, safeguarding, running meetings, and other pertinent topics in an active, hands-on way.”

are equally indispensable for priestly formation. In the *Program for Priestly Formation* (the PPF, currently in its 6th edition), these are the areas of human, spiritual, and pastoral formation. Men arrive at the seminary today in different states of knowledge and experience than they did 25 or 30 years ago. They are often not as prepared as previous generations were for the complex interpersonal, intergenerational, and intercultural work involved in being a parish priest. The practical demands and diverse skills needed to run a parish today are not insignificant, and they directly bear on the man’s vocation.

The 2022 National Study of Catholic Priests, published by The Catholic Project at Catholic University, indicated elevated burnout among young priests and widespread concern about the rates at which young men are leaving ministry within their first five years. Forty-five percent of priests ordained in the year 2000 or later reported that they “are expected to do too many things that go beyond my calling as a priest.” The respondents could have meant many things by this, but it is reasonable to speculate that some priests see those tasks that are not directly sacramental as “extra.” It may also be the case that the men have not been well-prepared for those tasks.

The initiative aims to make a difference in this area. It will entail a deeply collaborative process among the school and the seminaries to develop a “pastoral laboratory (lab)” program to equip seminarians with the skills of pastoral leadership and parish administration. Seminarians will learn about parish finances, human resources, safeguarding, running meetings, and other pertinent topics in an active, hands-on way.

Men who are ordained today often have very little time to adjust to life as a priest before they are asked to assume the additional responsibility of becoming a pastor. Within one to two years, these men must move from a situation where their days are structured around study and prayer, fully supported

by others (in seminary), to being a pastor of souls responsible for a multimillion-dollar budget, possibly a school in addition. Anecdotal evidence abounds that young priests are not prepared for this leap and that this unpreparedness can lead to crises.

In February 2026, a group of rectors, vice rectors, and pastoral formation directors gathered at Theological College and Catholic University to discuss and map out a plan for the pastoral lab. Through dialogue and a shared process, the group determined that what is really needed for priests is a ten-year plan. This plan would introduce seminarians to concepts of leadership from the very beginning of their time in the seminary and help them to develop and grow in administration skills through the first few years of their priesthood.

Good leadership is the result of knowledge and skills that mature in the integration of a priest’s intellectual, spiritual, human, and pastoral skills. This initiative will enable seminaries to teach knowledge and skills through case study, pastoral simulations, shadowing skilled leaders, and shared problem-solving experiences. The emphasis is on dynamic learning that helps seminarians and young priests recognize their natural gifts for leadership, the skills they need to develop, and the opportunities to complement their own knowledge and skills with those of their parishioners, staff, volunteers, and co-workers.

The Lilly Endowment’s award of \$7.1 million enables all of these collaborations to use the best available resources to create innovative new programs that can be tested and assessed for effectiveness as they begin to impact pastoral life in the decades to come. ■

## SEEK-ing to Encounter the Lord

Theological College seminarians and alumni were among the facilitators and attendees at the national five-day SEEK conferences held in January in Columbus, Ohio; Fort Worth, Texas; and Denver, Colo. This annual Catholic young adult conference is organized by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS). It is designed as an invitation to explore life’s deeper questions and encounter Jesus Christ through prayer, fellowship, and sacraments. The conference is one of the largest regular gatherings of Catholics in the world, this year hosting over 26,000 participants.



Left: Father Benjamin Grothouse (‘24) carries the monstrance for Adoration at the Fort Worth SEEK conference.

Above: Deacon Stephen Parker (center) at the Ohio SEEK conference with seminarians from his own St. Augustine Diocese.

### Deacon Stephen Parker Diocese of St. Augustine

Walking out of SEEK’s afternoon “impact sessions,” in which figures such as Father Mike Schmitz, Arthur Brooks, Sr. Mary Grace, S.V., and Scott Hahn reflected on authentically living out the Christian life, is like being swept up by a current in the sea. This current in Ohio was more than 16,000 young people, families, and their chaplains from all over the world who are on fire for their faith. What made a particular exit on the third day of the conference notable was that I ran into a familiar face, Cameron Huhlein, a second Basselin and TC seminarian from the Diocese of Birmingham. After discussing our respective talks for a short while, we ran into another TC seminarian, Trenton Thieneman, a third Basselin from the Archdiocese of Louisville, who appeared just ahead of us on the escalator of the Convention Center.

However, these sporadic encounters with brothers from Theological College halfway across the country in Columbus were not what made SEEK special. Neither was it the

wonderful presence of nearly 60 Catholic bishops and hundreds of priests and seminarians. What made SEEK special were the countless encounters these thousands of people had with the Lord through the sacraments — daily Mass, confession, and Eucharistic Adoration. All of the talks, witnesses, and friendships along the way nourish and make incarnate that relation with the Lord. As a seminarian and deacon participating in SEEK this year, it was wonderful not only to experience and witness such important encounters, but also to now be of service to personally guide participants to the One who yearns for their hearts. While SEEK lasts just a few days, its impact sets the tone for college students as they return to their universities for their spring semesters, and for others returning to their daily lives as young professionals or to their families. For us seminarians, it both nourishes us and gives us a glimpse of the people we will serve for the rest of our lives. ■

## Graduate Witnesses

Theological College's 2026 Deacon and Basselin Scholar Graduates

### Theologian Reflections

**Rev. Mr. Stephen Parker**  
*Diocese of St. Augustine*

The past four years at Theological College have been some of the best of my life because, in them, I have been formed closer to the heart of Christ and his will for my life. I recall arriving at Theological College with little expectation, aside from knowing this would be the place of my theological formation.

What I found at TC was a rigorously bountiful academic life at The Catholic University of America, a fraternal group of seminarians and formators who sought to shape and encourage my priestly character, and the opportunity to fully embrace that uniquely personal priestly character in parishes, hospitals, basilicas, and pastoral work both on campus and in the greater D.C. area. Additionally, the entire formation program was directed toward allowing the Lord to mold and grow my own heart into a heart like his own, so that I may bear his presence in a world in desperate need of his love. I am profoundly grateful for my time here at TC, and I look forward to continuing to return to the place where Christ formed me into the man and priest he desires me to be.

**Rev. Mr. Blake Ryan Thompson**  
*Diocese of Fort Worth*

There is a saying among priests that the best way to look at seminary is in the rear-view mirror. However, leaving Theological College is a bittersweet experience. On the one hand, I am eager to begin priestly ministry and to return home to my diocese but, on the other hand, I will miss the formators and students who made my time here one filled with blessings and laughter.

Over my years of formation, I've encountered priest formators who exemplified fatherhood and some who did not — and I can truly say the priests currently on faculty here at Theological College exemplify fatherhood. I've never had



From left, Class of 2026 graduates Deacon Blake Thompson and Deacon Stephen Parker.

cause to doubt their love of Jesus Christ, their commitment to their vocation, and the example of their way of life. The TC men of today are blessed to have, living alongside them and walking with them in their vocations, examples of who a pastor ought to be. I am thankful for having had that same experience. And I hope, by the grace of God, to be a spiritual father who leads people to Christ with the same conviction that they do.



Basselin scholars who have earned their Ph.L. degrees, from left, Wheeler Wilson, Trenton Thieneman, Christopher Hanrahan, Liam Leonard, and Nicholas Broussard.

### Basselin Memoirs

**Nicholas Broussard**  
*Diocese of Lafayette*

**Thesis**  
"Von Hildebrand and Aquinas on Love"

**Director**  
Michele Averchi, Ph.D.

As I look back on my three years at Theological College in the Basselin Scholars Program, many great memories come to mind. The kids I taught for my pastoral assignment will always hold a place in my heart as my first class, and I will always remember fondly the conversations the Basselins had at the breakfast table, in the Basselin Library, in the newly instituted Basselin Lounge, or just sitting down in the hallways. The intellectual challenge of the program is a great gift, but it will be the friendships I have fostered here that I will miss most. My friends in the program and on the Catholic University

campus have been some of the greatest blessings in my formation and in my life, and I can't wait to see where life takes each of us.

Lately, some of the Basselins have taken a personalist "turn" in the philosophy we study; we've become more sensitive to the fact that each human person and heart is an inexhaustible mystery, and this has had a tremendous impact on me in my time in the program. Gabriel Marcel writes that it is love and love alone which actualizes our personhood (or as G.W.F. Hegel puts it, we have to be called "you" before we can say "I"), and this is what I carry with me as I leave the program. I chose my thesis topic because I was bothered by the fact that while love essentially involves willing the good of someone, that cannot be all it is. Love must proclaim the beloved to be beautiful, precious, and delightful. And this is what I want to share in my priesthood: because God loves us, he not only wills our good, but also declares us to be fundamentally good, cherished, and delightful.

**Christopher Hanrahan***Archdiocese of New York***Thesis**

“Aristotle, Hegel, and the Political Animal: An Analysis and Comparison of the Political Thought of Aristotle and Hegel”

**Director**

Steven Waldorf, Ph.D.

As I look back on my time at Theological College, I recall the many wonderful experiences I have had. Although my time here has been short, it has been fundamental to who I am as a person today. Through the education in philosophy and the formation I have received here, I have profoundly changed the hermeneutic through which I understand myself and the world. Coming to Theological College with some prior education in philosophy, I was met with the fullness of the history of philosophy and I have reoriented my understanding of myself and the world in which I live.

The help I received from the faculty of Theological College was instrumental in this shift. Without the guidance and support of the formators here, I would have surely been lost in a world of mystery. Fortunately, through the guidance and aid of the faculty and my seminarian brothers, I was able to enter fully into my studies, which gave me the tools I needed to grow. I will use the skills and knowledge gained for the rest of my life. And the friends I have made are now lifelong brothers. I am forever grateful to Theological College and all it has given me!

**Liam Leonard***Diocese of Lake Charles***Thesis**

“Leibniz on Judgment”

**Director**

Thomas Marré, Ph.D.

I believe my time in the Basselin Scholars Program has been very fruitful for me in a number of ways. I suppose the most obvious has been the philosophical education given to me by the program, which has shaped my perspectives on a variety of topics that I hope to further investigate well after my time here has finished. Also fruitful have been my pastoral assignment opportunities, assisting the Missionaries of Charity and serving the parishioners of St. Patrick's in downtown Washington, D.C. An experience that I'll never forget was when I was helping the Missionaries of Charity and one of the sisters told me, “You understand why we don't invest more in TVs, nicer furniture, or more equipment: it is because we believe that the greatest gift that we can give to those we serve is Christ present in ourselves.” These words have stuck with me as I consider the importance of serving others, a standing reminder of how God is present in all acts that we undertake with love.

However, without downplaying the importance of academic and pastoral formation, I believe my greatest source of growth is attributable to my fellow third Basselins, who have helped me in ways they'll never know. Each of them has supported me through my trials in the program and I am eternally grateful for their fellowship and guidance.

My time in the Basselin program seems like it began only yesterday, and its coming to an end feels surreal. I thank God and the prayers of the Blessed Mother for guiding me through these past three years, for all of the lessons I have learned, and for all of the challenges that have made me a better man.

“I believe my greatest source of growth is attributable to my fellow third Basselins, who have helped me in ways they'll never know.”

**Trenton Thieneman***Archdiocese of Louisville***Thesis**

“Thomas Aquinas and the ‘Essence that is Esse’ Argument for the Real Distinction”

**Director**

Michael Gorman, Ph.D.

I have said many times that The Catholic University of America has one of — if not *the* — best schools of philosophy in the world. I remember when I was applying for the Basselin Scholars Program, I first visited the seminary for an interview weekend. I was picked up from the airport by three third-year Basselins. By this point, I had studied philosophy for two years and had nearly enough credits to graduate with a B.A. Despite this, the Basselins in that car spoke at a level far above my knowledge. They were able to cite important philosophers, whom I had never heard of, from various time periods with great detail and precision. Looking back on it, I wish that I could remember exactly what was said in that car ride, because I believe that my education at Catholic University has made it possible for me to understand and engage at that level of conversation.

To say that becoming a Basselin increased my ability to have philosophical conversations is certainly true, but it only captures the beginning of what this college has done for me. It is insufficient to suggest that the college has changed my philosophical views. It would be more accurate to say that it has improved the way that I approach every aspect of my life. This is difficult to qualify, but the simplest way to put it is that I have come to realize, more than ever, the significance of beauty in the expression of truth and goodness. I recently asked myself why Theodore Basselin founded this program. What does philosophy have to contribute to priestly ministry? My answer is that the philosopher, when he approaches his field correctly, is able to have a unique encounter with the beautiful. As Plato puts it, he has been given the ability to step out of the cave and to see the beauty of the sun. The goal of the philosopher, especially the philosopher in pastoral ministry, is to share this beauty with the world. Were it not for this program, I am not confident that I would be able to do that, but being here at TC and being a Basselin has made this mission possible. I am deeply grateful for this.

**Conrad (Wheeler) Wilson***Diocese of Orlando***Thesis**

“Hegel's Reconciliation”

**Director**

Michael Rohlf, Ph.D.

I came to Theological College because I wanted to spend more time studying philosophy before moving on to the more advanced stages of priestly formation. I had the sense that there is more to existence than filling one's role; it is also important to be able to understand that role in relation to the whole, and oneself in relation to one's role. It is this comprehension that really provides richness to a person's existence, no matter what their vocation is. Whether someone is a construction worker, a mailman, or a schoolteacher, their sense of personal satisfaction is going to come from knowing the meaning of the part they play not only in the grand scheme of things, but most especially in the lives of the people around them. This sort of comprehension also requires a knowledge of the human project at large, which, reaching down into our intimate personal relationships, provides each of us with a meaningful part to play in the context of our immediate proximity — for those who are around us, our neighbors. It is not so important that we are useful to a large number of people but, rather, that we can provide a sense of belonging for our neighbors, thus bringing them into the communion of the one big man, Jesus Christ.

The Basselin Scholars Program has certainly helped me to see every person as a dignified member of the human family, and it goes without saying that the tools and the ways of thinking I have picked up here will go a long way should God bring me to the finish line of ordination. What people want is to be accepted by others and share a place in the community, to know that they can do something that is of use to someone. And this is also what makes the Basselin program special — that we stick with each other no matter what obstacles present themselves. The august history of our program is proof that most of the time, and in most every context, the best possible way to be of use is not to make oneself a person of import or to accomplish many things, but it is instead to offer an encouraging word just to keep our neighbor going. People like to be noticed, so that is my recommendation after five years of philosophy — to notice people and compliment them, right to their big, beautiful faces.

# SEMINARY LIFE

## Spring Semester Highlights

The seminarians' *horarium* — a daily life of prayer, sacraments, academic studies, pastoral placements, and fraternal involvement — conspires to form a man of God possessing a deep faith, integrity, wisdom, discretion, and charity, all built upon the rock of love. Here are a few highlights from this semester's formative events.



### March for Life

Father Bud joined TC seminarians and the 150,000 participants for the 53rd Annual March for Life down Constitution Ave., ending at the U.S. Supreme Court building.



### Iron Seminarian

Amos Stinson (1-T, Louisville) was the 2026 Iron Seminarian champion, with sweeping victories in all three competitions of darts, ping-pong, and billiards. Lane Tschirhart (2-T, Fort Worth), Community Life Committee chairman, bestowed the coveted trophy and blue titleholder's vest. (For more on TC athletics, see p. 17.)

### Institution of Ministries

This past February, six TC seminarians were instituted as acolytes and six as lectors at a rite presided by Bishop Juan Esposito-Garcia. From left: acolytes Nicholas Hoelscher, Xavier Polisetty, Cuong Le, Peter Nguyen, Lane Tschirhart, Harrison Frey; lectors Samuel McPeak, Sy Tung Ho, Noah Yankovich, Amos Stinson, Joseph Ytem, Jake Nadeau.



### Honduras

Nine TC seminarians spent their spring break on different teams and in various towns of Honduras, serving the people of God there. Some are pictured here being blessed by the rector of the seminary of the Diocese of Comayagua.

### Research Day

On April 15, five third Basselin scholars presented their theses for Catholic University Research Day (see pp. 7-9 for titles of their work).



### Cardinals on Campus



At the end of March, Cardinal Robert McElroy (above) was welcomed for Solemn Eucharist and fellowship for his first visit to Theological College as the new Ordinary of the diocese.

Cardinal Wilton Gregory (right) celebrated TC's Ash Wednesday Mass and offered his final farewell after years of support to the community as Ordinary of the Archdiocese of Washington and, therefore, the First Superior of the seminary and Chancellor of the University.

Cardinal Seán O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap. (far right), presided at the annual Catholic University Deans' Vespers for the three ecclesial faculties—philosophy, theology, and canon law.



# Rector's Conferences

**The Heart of the Priesthood: Faith, Hope, Charity, and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

**Noah Yankovich**  
*First Theology*  
*Diocese of Charleston*

Throughout this year's series of seven Monday night Rector's Conferences, one clear theme stood out: priestly life needs more than just talent, personality, or structure. It must be shaped by grace, guided by virtue, and ultimately given over to the Holy Spirit. Together, these talks offered a vision of the priesthood that is both challenging and beautiful. They make it clear that a priest is not mainly a manager or religious professional, but someone who is gradually configured to be like Christ through faith, hope, charity, and openness to the Spirit.

*The first conference* set the stage by describing priestly formation as essential for spiritual survival. Seminarian Samuel McPeak, of the Diocese of Richmond (co-sponsored by the Archdiocese of the Military Services), pointed out that the biggest challenge in priestly life is not just external pressure, but the temptation to depend only on oneself. He warns, "I have come to believe that the great danger in the priesthood is a certain kind of Pelagianism. We think we can do it by ourselves." Burnout, discouragement, and collapse show what happens when priesthood is managed by willpower alone. A priest's identity must be grounded in grace. That is why forming

virtue and being open to the Holy Spirit are not optional; they are indispensable.

Next, the discussion considered the older seminary model, which, despite its flaws, often succeeded in teaching discipline, sacrifice, and a steady way of life. These habits helped men learn how to endure, obey, pray, and keep going. Some parts of that tradition – some "treasures" – are worth bringing back because they teach self-giving rather than just self-expression. Priestly formation needs not only sincerity but also habits that can support a vocation for a lifetime.

The story of Catholic chaplains in Vietnam elucidates this. Their courage reflected not just natural bravery, but a special kind of priestly courage that came from their sacramental identity. They went into danger because they believed they brought what was most essential to dying soldiers: absolution, anointing, Eucharistic comfort, and Christ's presence. Their priesthood called them to sacrifice. This ideal can be summed up: "A physician will be considered guilty of criminal neglect if he refuses the assistance of his art to the human body; far greater indeed would be the guilt of a priest who would refuse or neglect to help immortal souls at the very moment when their eternal destiny is to be determined forever" (Wilhelm Sockums, *The Priesthood*). The heart of this theology is that the priest takes risks because he is responsible for souls, and nothing is more important than helping a soul reach God.

*The second conference* expanded the discussion by placing virtue in a wider cultural context. Father Stevens posited that heroism, endurance, and even civilization do not just happen; they need to be formed. In a culture that has largely forgotten the language of virtue, seminarians need to rediscover that virtue is what makes a person truly

human. The aim is not just to follow rules, but to restore the image of God in people. Virtue shapes desires, strengthens judgment, and makes real freedom possible. Without it, people become reactive, divided, and easily influenced by their surroundings. Priestly formation should not just teach information; it must shape character.

This naturally leads to the theological virtues, which are not just private feelings but are deeply connected to the Church. Faith, hope, and charity belong to the Church first, before individuals make them their own. No one believes, hopes, or loves in Christ alone; these things happen within the Body of Christ. Faith is not just agreeing with ideas, but trusting in the living Christ, who is trustworthy and true. Because Christ is Truth, real faith leads to confession, proclamation, and witness. A priest cannot keep faith only inside; if it is genuine, it must show itself in words, preaching, and action.

*The third conference* focused on hope as an essential part of life. Father Stevens put it simply: "We cannot live without hope." He used Viktor Frankl's story and the experiences of concentration camp prisoners to show that when people lose their sense of the future, they start to fall apart. On a natural level, hope helps people keep going. On a spiritual level, hope opens the soul to something much greater — not just survival, but eternal life and becoming like God. Christian hope is not just optimism or positive thinking. It is trust in God's promises, even when they seem impossible from a worldly view.

That is why despair is so harmful. Despair is not just sadness; it is the belief that God's mercy is not enough for me, that his promises cannot reach my real life. In response, the priest must be a witness to hope in a tired and cynical

*"Faith gives us God's truth, hope gives us God's goodness, but in love, we achieve God himself."*

culture. As Father Stevens said, "Be prepared, have a reason for your hope."

*The fourth conference* took a detour from the theme of virtue to celebrate the elevation of St. John Henry Newman to the rank of Doctor of the Church. Father Stevens views the new Doctor of the Church as a model for the intellectual life of a priest. St. John Henry Newman is admired not just for his intelligence but for his holy humanity. "He had a genius for friendship," which is important because it shows that truth is shared not just through arguments, but through real personal connection. St. John Henry Newman's motto, "*Cor ad cor loquitur*" ("Heart speaks unto heart") shows that learning in the Church is always personal. His conversion to Catholicism is an example of brave obedience to truth. He did not twist evidence to fit his own ideas, but followed the truth even when it cost him comfort and status.

This connects to the distinction between private judgment and conscience. Private judgment puts the self first, while conscience listens for God's voice. For seminarians, this means that learning should not just make them clever but should lead to humble obedience to truth.

*The fifth and sixth conferences* focused on charity as the highest theological virtue. Charity is the greatest because it completes the others. "Faith gives us God's truth, hope gives us God's goodness, but in love, we achieve God himself." Faith and hope are necessary, but they are fulfilled when we are united with God through love. That's why love is more than just a feeling or warmth

between people. We are told in John's first epistle that "God is love." (1 Jn 4:8) If that is true, then love starts with God before it shows up in human relationships. The teachings about the Trinity and the Incarnation matter because they protect the truth about God's love. If we misunderstand God, we misunderstand love.

This idea became even clearer when the rector stated, "Love is an absolute necessity. You absolutely need it to live." Love is not just something extra in life; it is essential. He explains this both for individuals and for the Church: people can have all their needs met but still wither without love. Lonergan's three conversions — intellectual, moral, and religious — help explain how people open up to love over time. First, they learn the truth, then choose what is good, and finally surrender to God as the highest good. Priestly formation should help men go through these stages, because the priest's role is to share God's love with others. The true measure of this love is not self-expression, but the Cross: "The Cross is the objective measure of love."

*The seventh conference* shifted the focus to a more pastoral approach. It showed that charity is more powerful than just respect, especially for priests. Respect might get people to follow rules, but it usually leads to the bare minimum. Love, on the other hand, helps people trust, make sacrifices, and accept hard truths. And Father Stevens asserted, "All good teachers want to be loved." Priestly life is not about wanting to be popular, but about a deeper truth. People accept



This year, TC offered opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration four mornings per week, with all-day Adoration on Wednesdays, as well as all-night Adoration on Weekends of Recollection. Pictured here, Deacon Blake Thompson incenses the monstrance.

ministry is not just about being correct, but about sharing truth with love.

The same conference explained that a priest is meant to be a channel of Christ's love. Obedience, celibacy, and simplicity are not just rules; they are ways to help the priest love more freely and widely. Father Stevens then made a helpful distinction about the gifts of the Holy Spirit: "A virtue allows you to act. A gift allows you to be acted upon." Virtue teaches the priest to row, while the gifts teach him to raise the sail. Both are needed. Priestly life requires action, discipline, and moral effort, but also openness to God's guidance.

Altogether, these conferences presented a clear vision of priestly formation. A priest should be shaped by discipline, strengthened by virtue, grounded in faith, supported by hope, perfected in charity, and open to the Holy Spirit. Only then can he become what the Church truly needs: not just an efficient worker, but a living sign of Christ's love in a broken and hurting world. ■

# Pastoral Supervisors Appreciation

Suzanne Tanzi

Over the 2025–2026 academic and formation year, seminarians have been welcomed at 14 local parishes, four campuses, two hospitals, and one prison for ministry assignments. In gratitude for the leadership and guidance in each of their placements, Theological College hosted our valued mentors in pastoral work at the Pastoral Supervisors Appreciation Vespers and Banquet on April 14.

Father Jaime E. Robledo, P.S.S., coordinator of pastoral formation, spiritual formation, and liturgy, presided at Evening Prayer. He reflected with appreciation on the pastoral ministry program that Father Gerald Brown, P.S.S. (1938–2024), formally introduced at TC in 1971. It is one of the country's first supervised pastoral ministry programs and was incorporated into Catholic University's School of Religious Studies program for all seminarians. Fifty-five years later, following the directives of the Magisterium and in response to the cultural and human challenges priests are facing today, the program continues to evolve and grow. Father Robledo acknowledged with deep gratitude the indispensability of the pastoral supervisors. He said, "We thank you supervisors for your vocation, your ministry, and your generosity in collaborating with our mission of forming pastors to serve the people of God. Gathered here is a community of living stones who offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. This evening we pray together that our hearts burn within us for Jesus, who talks and walks with us on the road of this mission."

*"Father Charlie speaks directly to the heart of parishioners living and working in a complicated environment during challenging times of their lives. He has provided a model of Christ the Good Shepherd who goes out to seek lost sheep and bring them back to the flock."*

An exemplar of the qualities of a superior pastoral formator, Father Charles Gallagher, pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Washington, D.C., accepted the Rev. Gerald L. Brown, P.S.S., Award for Excellence in Pastoral Ministry Supervision. A priest for 16 years, he recalled that from his childhood he had great admiration for and eventual aspiration toward diocesan parish ministry, inspired by his first pastor, Father Rick Gancayco in Hyattsville. His love for parish work has only grown with the years, some of which he has shared with TC seminarians in teaching pastoral homiletics and in hosting them for ministry assignments at Immaculate Conception.

His mentee of two years, Deacon Stephen Parker, commented, "I have had the distinct joy to witness Father Charlie's paternal charity to all parishioners and to me as I learned to operate the OCIA program, to take on marriage and baptism preparation, and to offer Sunday homilies. His personal guidance on the priestly life has been invaluable, and all the while I was also learning up close, by example. Father Charlie speaks directly to the heart of parishioners living and working in a complicated environment during challenging times of their lives. He has provided a model of Christ the Good Shepherd who goes out to seek lost sheep and bring them back to the flock. I look forward to emulating this model of the priesthood in my own ministry after ordination!" ■



Father Charles Gallagher, pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish, accepted the 2026 Excellence in Pastoral Supervising Award from TC Rector Father Bud Stevens, after a moving recognition by his mentee, Deacon Stephen Parker.

## About Father Charlie

Father Charles Gallagher grew up in Hyattsville, Md. He went to parochial grade school and then to The Heights School in Potomac. He graduated with a degree in Philosophy from Fordham University in the Bronx, and did most of his seminary formation at the Pontifical North American College in Rome.

After his ordination in 2010, he served as assistant pastor at St. Peter's on Capitol Hill for the summer before returning to Rome to complete his licentiate. In 2011, he became assistant pastor at St. Mary's in Rockville and then pastor of Our Lady of the Wayside in St. Mary's County. In 2017, he was appointed pastor of Immaculate Conception as well as chaplain to the Catholic students at the George Washington University Newman Center. In 2019, he became full-time pastor of Immaculate Conception. Father Charlie also teaches pastoral theology at The Catholic University of America to TC's first-year theologians and others.

### Father Gallagher expanded upon the collaboration with Theological College:

*My parish has been partnering with Theological College seminarians for four years now. They bring to the parish a desire to learn, a readiness to improve, a love for souls, and a willingness to accompany people, no matter the challenge. My hope is to introduce them to as many diverse aspects of parish life as possible. They have a lot of opportunities to learn about how I prepare couples for marriage by shadowing me during pre-Cana meetings. We also discuss effective pastoral approaches when obstacles arise. We have a robust young adult ministry here and TC seminarians can learn effective approaches in reaching out to young professionals. In short, the seminarians are a great help to me and they bring life and vitality to the parish, so our partnership is very valuable for Immaculate Conception.*

# Student Government Association

## Social Justice

Chair: Cameron Huhlein  
(2-B, Birmingham)

This past semester, the Social Justice Committee continued its partnership with the Catholic University Students for Life. Each Saturday, we joined the Students for Life in praying outside of a local Planned Parenthood clinic. During Lent, we collected donations for Catholic Relief Services with the CRS Rice Bowls. We also led a successful annual spring Diaper Drive, a competition between classes in gathering the most materials to support mothers with small children through the DC Diaper Bank. And the committee sponsored a fundraiser at our Spring House Party to benefit Mary's Meals, a global effort that joins with local communities in need to provide meals to children in schools in countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean.



The Theological College Schola led the music for the Deans' Vespers, this year presided by Cardinal Seán O'Malley.

## Prayer and Worship

Chair: Peter Nguyen  
(2-T, Fort Worth)

This semester, the Prayer and Worship Committee continued its Thursday evening Holy Hour at the St. Vincent de Paul Chapel on campus, the weekly rosary, and the addition of the Tuesday evening "Praise Nights" organized by Peter Mallampalli (3-T, Pittsburgh). The committee helped organize attendance at the Prayer for Life Vigil at the St. John Paul II Shrine from 3 a.m. to 5 a.m. before the March for Life. For Lent, we provided meditation books for the Theological College community, this year's reading being *The Passion of Christ through the Eyes of Mary*, collated from St. Anselm of Canterbury and other writers. Also in Lent, the TC Schola led the university community in choral accompaniment for the annual Deans' Vespers, this year presided by Cardinal Seán O'Malley. In Spring, we had the privilege of welcoming Rev. Dustin Dought (TC '13) as a speaker on the new *Liturgy of the Hours* that will be released in the next few years (see p. 18).

*"These light-hearted events bring our community together for much needed moments of fraternity and recreation."*



The "Casino Night" Spring House Party, hosted by the Community Life Committee, assisted the Social Justice Committee in raising more than \$2,300 for the Mary's Meals charitable initiative.

## Community Life

Chair: Lane Tschirhart  
(2-T, Fort Worth)

In February, the Community Life Committee (CLC) kicked off a month of friendly competition with Superbowl Squares and the Superbowl party in Viëban Hall. Theological College and St. Mary's seminarians played together at the Josephinum's annual basketball tournament, and athletes joined St. Mary's again in the spring for the Annual Vianney Cup, achieving a second-place win. The CLC also headed up the Mardi Gras party and welcomed the Lunar New Year ("Year of the Horse") with a liturgy and dinner organized by the Vietnamese seminarians. The Iron Seminarian tournament was enjoyed by all, as was the "Casino Night" Spring House Party. These light-hearted events bring our community together for much needed moments of fraternity and recreation.

## More on Athletics

In addition to the Vianney Cup collaborative second-place soccer victory, athletes brought glory to Theological College by defeating the St. John Paul II (JPII) Seminary in the first round of the CUA intramural basketball playoffs. The Ravens were led by star player Amos Stinson, who had 1,000 steals and didn't allow a single completed pass near the top of the key. The Ravens got out to an early lead and maintained an approximate five-point margin for the entirety of the 30-minute affair, thanks in large part to the lights-out shooting of Matthew Fichter, who took 15 shots and made every single one. JPII played hard and played well, but could not break the Raven's lockdown 2-3 defensive scheme, masterminded, of course, by none other than Amos Stinson, hailing from the basketball capital of the world, Louisville, Ky.

Here at TC athletics, basketball division, we bid farewell to Wheeler Wilson — half point guard, half center, and, as one teammate commented, "half extraterrestrial." Wheeler's competitive spirit animated the various Ravens teams throughout the year, inspired as always by his tremendous sense of fraternity and perpetual levity. With his tenure as a Basselin scholar at an end, he will join the ranks of the Saint Vincent de Paul teams next year as a theologian. ■



TC seminarians joined their brothers at St. Mary's for a second-place Vianney Cup soccer tournament win.

# New Liturgy of the Hours

Peter Nguyen

Second Theology, Diocese of Fort Worth

On February 24, Theological College was pleased to welcome Rev. Dustin Dought ('13, Diocese of Lafayette) for a presentation on the new *Liturgy of the Hours* that will be released in stages across the United States, beginning in early 2027. Father Dought has been involved in the process of the publication of the new *Liturgy of the Hours*, as the executive director for the Secretariat of Divine Worship at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). As the *Liturgy of the Hours* constitutes a major part of the spiritual life at Theological College, the seminary community was eager to hear cutting-edge information on the first revision since its initial English publication in 1975. Since then, the promulgation of *Liturgiam authenticam* in 2001 gave initiative for the revision of the *Liturgy of the Hours* so as to be faithful to the Latin typical editions. In particular, Father Dought noted a desire for consistency between the *Liturgy of the Hours* and the current *Roman Missal*, as well as congruence in content, structure, and meaning with the Latin texts. After these translations for the individual elements of the breviary were completed by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, they were sent to the USCCB for approval and then, finally, to Rome for confirmation. Ascension Press and Word on Fire have been tasked with the publication of the four-volume set of the *Liturgy of the Hours*, with other publishers tasked with publication of the extracted versions.

Father Dought offered an in-depth explanation of the composition of the individual elements in the new *Liturgy of the Hours*. The psalms will be taken from the *Abbey Psalms and Canticles*, a revised version of the *Grail Psalter*, which is currently in use in the first edition of the *Liturgy of the Hours*. *Abbey Psalms and Canticles* has been made optional for liturgical use and is available for purchase through Ascension Press and Magnificat Inc. Father Dought noted that the revised texts will be printed in the new breviaries with the flex and asterisk symbols. He also pointed out that the *Gospel Canticles*, as well as the “*Te Deum*” hymn and the Marian antiphons will be printed in the new breviaries in both English and Latin. Readings from Scripture will be taken from the *Catholic American Bible*, a new revision of the *New American Bible*



The USCCB's Father Dustin Dought explains to the TC community what to expect with the new *Liturgy of the Hours* and other important resources for prayer and liturgy.

(*Revised Edition*), currently in use in the lectionary for Mass. Father Dought mentioned that the lectionary for Mass will also be revised so that the *Liturgy of the Hours* and the readings at Mass are consistent. The *Catholic American Bible* is set to be released on Ash Wednesday of 2027. Hymns in the new *Liturgy of the Hours* are taken from the *Divine Office Hymnal*, published by GIA Publications. The texts for these hymns are direct translations of the original hymns from the Latin typical editions. Other extrabiblical texts in the *Liturgy of the Hours*, such as rubrics, antiphons, responsories, intercessions, and orations have been newly translated, or imported from the *Roman Missal* when necessary.

At the conclusion of his presentation, Father Dought answered questions from the seminarians and faculty. He cautioned that the new breviary is “a human work that is prone to error” and while not every concern or desire can be handled perfectly, he hopes that it will be successful in accomplishing its goal in the sanctification of the day. We certainly hope that the new *Liturgy of the Hours* will be fruitful for the Theological College community and beyond in its appreciation of Scripture. ■

**For more information on the new Liturgy of the Hours, please visit:**

[usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgy-of-the-hours/liturgy-of-the-hours-second-edition](https://usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgy-of-the-hours/liturgy-of-the-hours-second-edition).

# THEOLOGIANS FOR OUR TIMES

## Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (1895–1979)

Rev. Gladstone Stevens, P.S.S.

Rector



Fulton Sheen shares a joke with students in a classroom where he taught during his 23 years as a Catholic University philosophy professor. The classroom, dedicated to him in 2015, is McMahon Hall room 112 (photo taken in 1950).

One of the reasons I was delighted to accept the appointment as rector of Theological College was that The Catholic University of America was for a time the teaching home of one of my great spiritual and philosophical heroes, the Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. I was overjoyed when I heard that he is to be beatified on Sept. 24 of this year, and I would like to share some reflections on this remarkable man.

It is difficult to summarize his thoughts in a few words. Fulton Sheen's literary output was enormous, in addition to the countless messages he delivered over radio, television, and public appearances during the course of his long ministry. He wrote on every conceivable topic relating to faith, morals, and public policy. But I would like to suggest that a constant theme that appears in all of his works is the need for the defense of reason. Sheen recognized that reason is foundational for any truly human civilization and that when the cause of reason is vitiated, mankind's very existence is threatened.

One book that speaks to me most powerfully about this concern is *The Cross and the Crisis*. The timing of its

publication, in 1938, is not incidental for understanding its content. This was just after the Munich crisis and Sheen, like many thinking persons, recognized that the appeasement of the Nazi regime was, at best, only a temporary reprieve and that a world-wide catastrophe was a real possibility. *The Cross and the Crisis* is not so much a philosophical treatise as it is a *cri du coeur* from a passionate shepherd. Sheen is using the “Parable of the Prodigal Son” as a way of diagnosing the modern history of the West. Like the eponymous son in the story, the Western world has squandered its patrimony — namely, the heritage of the classical and Christian tradition. The fate of this child and the fate of European civilization are parallel; both are now in a land of shadows and deprivation. Sheen writes, “Carried away by false freedom, Western civilization began to spend the capital which the Spiritual Father had divided unto it.”

According to Sheen, the son's salvation came when he came to his senses and returned to his father's house. He arrived, through painful suffering, at the realization that only in the father's house is there true life and substance. For Sheen, this is the only path of hope for people today. The father's house is the Church. Only in this house can we find the fullness of truth, moral clarity, and the authentic meaning of freedom. Again, Sheen writes, “The Church refuses to identify freedom with either the absence of restraint or indifference to truth... she insists that freedom has something to do with Truth.”

Sadly, we know that the world did not heed Archbishop Sheen's warnings and descended into the abyss soon after the book's appearance. His words, however, are still with us and the call remains the same. Let us pray that, through his intercession, we learn the lessons of history and journey again to the Father's house, the House of Life.



Placed in the refectory hallway at TC, this second-class relic of a 1961 letter from Pope St. John XXIII to N.Y. Auxiliary Bishop Fulton Sheen, who was then National Director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, was a gift from alumnus Rev. Matthew Paratore ('09) of the Diocese of Metuchen, N.J.



While in Rome, Father Chris enjoyed a special visit with TC Basselin alumni studying there: from left, Jack Kristensen ('23, New York), Jakob Pohlman ('23, Worcester), Patrick Sweeney ('24, Washington), and Liam Daigle ('24, Worcester).

## My Sabbatical: Journeying as a Pilgrim of Hope

Rev. Chris Arockiaraj, P.S.S.

Thomas Merton, the author of *The Seven Storey Mountain*, wrote: *The geographical pilgrimage is the symbolic acting out of an inner journey. The inner journey is the interpolation of the meanings and signs of the outer pilgrimage. One can have one without the other. It is best to have both. (Mystics and Zen Masters, p. 24)*

The sabbatical–Jubilee Year 2025 and beyond was a significant period for me as a priest, formator, and teacher mindfully pursuing a spiritual and pastoral journey toward holiness and graceful aging. The U.S. Sulpician Province generously granted me a first-time sabbatical experience. I recognized the timely need and tremendous value of the sabbatical to renew and replenish myself after 30 years of priestly ministry and after the great loss of both my parents in the recent past.

As Thomas Merton counseled, I have taken this time to attend to both my inner journey and outer pilgrimage. To this end, I made two pilgrimages in Spain and a sojourn in Rome and Chennai.

### The Cave of Manresa

One of the saints who continues to inspire and challenge me is St. Ignatius of Loyola. He is also my baptismal patron saint. After his conversion, Ignatius desired to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He left Loyola and walked to Barcelona to sail to the Middle East. But he discerned that he should delay his trip and stayed at a cave in Manresa (close to Montserrat) for 11 months in 1522. It was there that he wrote and started practicing his “Spiritual Exercises.” I had the opportunity to spend a few days at the cave listening to my spiritual yearnings and God’s mysterious plan for my life. It was a time of serenity and peace. I could connect Ignatian humanism (finding God in everything) and pastoral tools of the Catholic Reformation with the French School of Spirituality’s methodology and charism.

### The Monastery and Our Lady of Montserrat

Montserrat, located between Manresa and Barcelona, is a unique Marian shrine that has received a huge number of pilgrims every year for the past 1,000 years. At the statue of the Blessed Virgin of Montserrat, Ignatius surrendered his aristocratic dress and his army sword. This symbolic action of disarming oneself signifies “*Totus tuus ego sum, et omnia mea atua sunt*” (“I am totally yours and all I have is yours”), a popular phrase from St. Louis-Marie de Montfort, one of the saints of the French School of Spirituality. I had the opportunity to renew my own *fiat* to God, which I originally made on the day of my ordination, following the examples of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saints de Montfort, Ignatius, and Pope John Paul II. The monastery of Montserrat was founded

in 1025 by Benedictine monks. I was blessed to visit the monastery on its millennium jubilee and concelebrate a Sunday Mass with the monks at the Shrine of Our Lady of Montserrat, the patroness of Catalonia. It was also a great opportunity for me to learn about the rich culture, food, language, and people of the Catalonian region.

### El Camino de Santiago de Compostela

It is believed since the ninth century that St. James the Greater, the brother of St. John and an apostle of Jesus, was buried in one of the small far western towns of the Roman Empire. Every year, thousands of pilgrims from all over the world walk, bike, or sail using different routes starting from France, Portugal, Italy, and the United Kingdom to reach the burial place and Cathedral of St. James at Santiago de Compostela. I had the great experience of walking the French route (*Camino Frances*). The entire walking trail passed through the breathtaking green region of Galicia.

It was fascinating to get to know the people of Galicia. I made some friends on the way and conversed with people from the U.S., Germany, Taiwan, and Spain. Every town hosting pilgrims has a parish church that offers daily Mass at 7 p.m. I had the opportunity to join some small groups who prayed the rosary along the way. Some days seemed to be long as the extended walk without resting places was exhausting. But it was immensely rewarding when I finally reached the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. With a profound joy and sense of fulfillment, I witnessed the other pilgrims who followed different routes coming together around the cathedral with a sense of catholic solidarity. I had the opportunity to concelebrate Solemn Mass and admired the use of one of the largest thuribles (*botafumeiro*) in the world.

Jesus called St. James, “the son of Zebedee and his brother John. . . . So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him.” (*Mk 1:19-20*) St. James’ example is an inspiration and challenge for me to practice the spirit of kenosis and the missionary discipleship that are at the core of the French School of Spirituality. After my pilgrimages in Spain, I travelled to Italy to refresh my academic expertise in pastoral theology and psycho-spirituality.

### Sojourn in Rome

I spent a couple of months in Rome, the Eternal City, the unique hub of pontifical universities, as part of refining my continuing intellectual formation. I audited a course

and attended some conferences. I visited the Gregorianum, Lateranense, Salesianum, Angelicum, Santa Croce, and Urbaniana. I also visited a couple of dicasteries of the Roman Curia. I was excited to meet the alumni of Theological College in Rome, especially our former Basselin scholars at the North American College. During this Jubilee Year of Hope, I passed through the Holy Doors of all major basilicas and prayed for various intentions, including for TC and the Society of St. Sulpice. I was blessed to take part in the Jubilee of Synodal Teams and Participatory Bodies and the Jubilee of the World of Education with the papal audience and Mass for the proclamation of St. John Henry Newman as “Doctor of the Church.”

### Visit to Chennai

I spent about two months in Chennai, my birth city in India. I visited the St. Thomas Cathedral Basilica built on the tomb of St. Thomas, the apostle to Chennai. I had quality time with my friends and family. I prayed at the tomb of my parents and contributed to some charitable initiatives.

This sabbatical year has been fruitful and effective for me to enrich my ongoing spiritual and emotional renewal so as to better serve God and God’s people with greater fidelity, as Pope Leo XIV exhorts in his letter, “*A Fidelity that Generates the Future*” (Dec. 22, 2025). ■



### On Priestly Life and Ministry

In March, Father Bud Stevens presented on *The Program for Priestly Formation* (sixth edition) and its origins in *Optatum totius and Presbyterorum ordinis* at St. Mary’s Seminary & University’s two-day academic “Symposium of the 60th Anniversary of the Vatican II Decrees of Priestly Life and Ministry.”

# ALUMNI



Father Kyle Vance ('22, Archdiocese of Washington) celebrated a Mass this spring for the TC community.

## Class Notes

### 70s

**Rev. David Terrence (“Terry”) Morgan**, B ’72, originally of the Diocese of St. Augustine, shares that he is retired and living with family, enjoying a quiet contemplative life in the beautiful Piedmont region of Georgia.

Committee of Higher Education’s working group focused on the relationship between bishops and theologians. He will retire in July as president-rector of St. Mary’s.

**Monsignor Marc B. Caron**, ’89, of the Diocese of Portland (Maine), has just completed his first academic year as director of the Center for Continuing Education at St. Mary’s Seminary & University. He previously served his diocese as vicar general and moderator of the Curia. His new book, *The Diaconate Revisited: Questions and Developments Since Vatican II*, was recently published by CUA Press.

**Very Reverend Anthony Chandler**, KCHS, ’89, was appointed in 2025 as presbyteral moderator of Saint Gregory Church in Samuels, while continuing to serve as pastor of Holy Spirit Church and Saint Leonard Church, both in Louisville, as well as vicar for priests and director of priest personnel.

### 80s

**Rev. Phillip Brown, P.S.S.**, ’89, of the Diocese of Bismarck and president-rector of St. Mary’s Seminary & University, has an article forthcoming: “Who Owns the Church” in a *Festschrift* for Rev. Robert Kaslyn, late dean of the School of Canon Law of The Catholic University of America. Father Brown is also a consultant to the USCCB

### 90s

**Rev. Donald Ouellette**, ’90, of the Diocese of Worcester, was appointed associate pastor of St. Aloysius Parish and St. Augustine Mission in Gilbertville and Wheelwright in 2025. Prior to that, he served as associate pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish in East Brookfield, St. Joseph Parish in North Brookfield, and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish in West Brookfield.

### 10s

**Rev. Matthew Fish**, ’11, of the Archdiocese of Washington, in 2025 was appointed pastor of Saint Jerome Parish in Hyattsville, Md., after having served as parochial vicar at Mother Seton Parish in Germantown.

**Rev. Mark Hebert**, B ’14, of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, in 2025 was appointed pastor of Christ the King Church in Houston. He previously served as priest-secretary to Cardinal Daniel DiNardo before his retirement.

**Rev. Curtis Seidel**, ’14, of the Diocese of Spokane, in 2025 was reappointed pastor of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish and St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Walla Walla. He was also appointed administrator of St. Mark Parish in Waitsburg and St. Joseph Parish in Dayton. He will continue to serve as president of Walla Walla Catholic Schools.



Father John Hawkins (B ’18), of the Diocese of Cleveland, parochial vicar at Holy Family Parish in Stow, Ohio, enjoyed a visit to the seminary prior to touring D.C. with students from his parish school.

**Rev. Steven Walker**, CHC, LT, USN, ’14, of the Diocese of Arlington, continues to serve as an active-duty chaplain in the First Marine Division for the Archdiocese of the Military Services.

**Rev. Kyle Ratuiste**, ’15, of the Diocese of Spokane, has been appointed administrator of St. Charles Parish in Spokane, while continuing to serve as diocesan director of vocations.

**Rev. William Wuenschel**, ’15, of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, was appointed last July as senior parochial vicar at Christ the Divine Shepherd Parish, serving St. Bernadette Church in Monroeville and St. Susanna Church in Penn Hills.

**Rev. Anthony Amato**, ’17, pastor of St. Peter’s Catholic Parish in Shortsville, Phelps, and Clifton Springs, was invested in the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem in St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City in October. Read about Father Amato’s experience here: <https://catholiccourier.com/articles/shortsville-priest-joins-order-charged-with-supporting-holy-land/>

**Rev. Daniel Waruszewski**, ’17, of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, has been appointed co-spiritual director of the Pittsburgh *Cursillo* Movement while continuing to serve as parochial vicar of Saints Martha and Mary Parish, Hampton/Richland.



Father Matthew Kiehl (’15), Diocese of Richmond’s vicar for vocations, right, with Martin Beers (1-T), at a recent visit to campus.



Father Wesbee Victor ('21, Archdiocese of New York) recently celebrated Mass for the TC community.

**Rev. Wesbee Victor**, '21, of the Archdiocese of New York, was appointed administrator of St. Joseph–St. Mary Immaculate Parish in Staten Island in 2025. He previously served as parochial vicar at Holy Name of Jesus–St. Gregory the Great Parish in Manhattan.

**Rev. Armando Herrera Dos-Reis**, '22, of the Diocese of Richmond and the Archdiocese of the Military Services, has been assigned to the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Ky., after having served as parochial vicar at Our Lady of Lourdes in Henrico, Va.

**Rev. César García**, '23, of the Diocese of Dallas, was appointed chaplain in July 2025 of Bishop Lynch High School in Dallas, while continuing to serve as parochial vicar of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Richardson.

**Rev. Nicolas Rapkoch**, '23, of the Diocese of Raleigh, was appointed administrator in Sept. 2025 of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Raleigh, after having served as parochial vicar of St. Thomas More Parish in Chapel Hill.

**Rev. Michael Villavicencio**, '25, of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, completed his S.T.L. degree at the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family in May and has been assigned parochial vicar at the Church of the Incarnation in Rio Rancho.

**Rev. Aaron J. Kelly**, B '18, of the Diocese of Rochester, has been assigned priest-secretary to the Most Rev. John S. Bonnici. He was previously parochial vicar at St. Kateri in Irondequoit and will continue to serve as a judge in the diocesan tribunal.

**Rev. Zachary Sullivan**, Pre-T '18, of the Diocese of Worcester, was ordained on June 7, 2025, and appointed associate pastor of St. Mary Parish in Shrewsbury, Mass.

**Rev. David Egan**, 19, of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, was appointed pastor of Saint Aidan Parish in Wexford in 2025, after having served as administrator there.

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**Rev. Michael Kieler**, '21, of the Diocese of St. Augustine, graduated from Military Chaplain School in fall of 2025 after having served as a parochial vicar of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Jacksonville and on the diocesan liturgical commission. He is now serving as Navy chaplain on the U.S.S. Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) and is a resident priest at the Mission Basilica San Diego De Alcalá.



Father Armando Herrera Dos-Reis ('22, Richmond), far left, at the Archdiocese of the Military Services Chrism Mass with Archbishop Timothy Broglio, Sam McPeak (1-T, Richmond), and Joseph Ytem (1-T, Charleston).



Father Elias Hazkial ('24, Maronite Eparchy), who is studying at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, recently met with Fr. Chris, who was on sabbatical in Rome.



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## In Memoriam



**Rev. Hugh MacDonald**, '64, of the Archdiocese of Hartford, died on April 8, 2025, at the age of 86.

Father MacDonald studied for the priesthood at St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield, St. Mary College in Baltimore, and Theological College, as well as at Trinity College in Hartford, where he earned an M.A. in English. He was ordained a priest in 1964 by Archbishop Henry J. O'Brien and was assigned to St. Patrick Church in Collinsville as a curate in 1964. From 1967 to 1983, he served as a professor of English and Latin at St. Thomas Seminary. From 1983 to his retirement in 2017, he served at three parishes in the archdiocese. From 2017 onward, he was a priest in residence at the Church of the Resurrection in Wallingford. An avid reader, he was known for his informative and deeply engaging sermons, his kind solicitude toward all, and his love for the Church.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on April 14, 2025, by Archbishop Christopher J. Coyne. Interment is at St. Mary's Cemetery in Hamden. Gifts in his memory may be sent to the Church of the Resurrection.



**Rev. Lawrence Canavera**, B '63; TC '67, of the Diocese of Green Bay, died on October 25, 2025, at the age of 86. He was ordained a priest in 1967 at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral by Bishop John Grellinger.

Father "Larry" Canavera began his ministry as assistant at Immaculate Conception Parish in Florence for his first summer. He then served on faculty at Sacred Heart Seminary in Oneida, until 1976. During this time, he earned a master's degree in Guidance and Counseling from Catholic University (1970), also completing a Doctor of Ministry from McCormick Theological Seminary (1981). Father Canavera served on the Priest Personnel Board in 1971 and then as its chairman in 1972. In 1976, he began full-time work for the Diocesan Office of Planning and Services and later as the director of Parish Council Service and Development Office. In 1979, he served on the Advisory Board to the Wisconsin Catholic Conference.

In 1991, Father Canavera was appointed pastor of St. Philip the Apostle Parish, Green Bay, where he served for 15 years. During this time, he also served on the Advisory Board for Parish Directors until 1998. In 2006, he was named parochial vicar of St. Patrick Parish, Menasha, as well as St. John and St. Mary Parishes, Menasha. In 2010, Father Canavera was appointed parochial vicar at St. John Nepomucene Parish, Little Chute, where he served until receiving senior status in 2012. In his final years, he was cared for at St. Paul Manor in Kaukauna.

An avid outdoorsman, Father Larry was a dedicated priest who preached about the need to love and care for everyone, a practice he embraced in his own life. "God loves all" was one of his favorite concepts to live and teach. He was the devoted founder of the local Friends of Haiti, established in 2000. He remained actively engaged in its mission, fostering compassionate outreach and sustainable support for the people of Haiti.

The funeral was celebrated by Very Reverend Michael Ingold, regional vicar, with Reverend Robert Kabat as homilist. Interment was at the Niagara Cemetery. In lieu of floral expressions, please direct any memorials to: Friends of Haiti, or directly to any other organization supporting the poor.



**Monsignor Thomas J. McSweeney**, '71, of the Diocese of Erie, died on Feb. 18, 2024, at the age of 79.

Monsignor McSweeney earned his B.A. in philosophy at St. Bonaventure University in New York and completed his studies for the priesthood at Theological College and The Catholic University of America, earning both a B.A. in sacred theology and an M.A. in drama.

While still in formation, he scripted and hosted the educational PBS series, *Man Alive*. Ordained on July 3, 1971, Monsignor McSweeney was assigned to Gannon University, where he founded and chaired the Department of Theatre and Communication Arts, WERG-FM, WETG-TV (Channel 66), and the Erie Diocesan Communications Center. For the next nine years, he and life-long friend and colleague Monsignor Henry Kriegel celebrated the TV Mass for shut-ins each Sunday morning, live at WICU-TV.

Monsignor McSweeney taught at Catholic University from 1991 to 1996, while completing his doctoral studies at the University of Maryland. His scholarly work on Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen appears in *The Encyclopedia of American Catholic History* and several academic journals. He served as the national director of The Christophers, a Catholic media outreach headquartered in New York City, from 1996 to 2001. During that time, he hosted the nationally syndicated television program *Christopher Close-up* and wrote the internationally circulated newspaper column, "Light One Candle."

From 2001 through 2015, McSweeney frequently appeared as a religion analyst and commentator on MSNBC/NBC and included live television analysis of the elections of two popes and the deaths of Pope St. John Paul II, John Kennedy Jr., and Cardinal John O'Connor. MSNBC also turned to him as a prominent analyst of the appalling issues affecting the Catholic Church during the clerical sexual abuse crisis.

Monsignor McSweeney also played the lead in musicals and dramas and directed productions for 60 years, including with the USO Branch of Entertainment in Germany. He taught American Drama in Poznan, Poland, for the State

Department for six months in 1969 and 1970. He also filled the post of theatre critic for three years at the *Erie Daily Times*' "Weekender." Monsignor frequently attributed the success of his ministerial work in communications and evangelization to these foundational experiences in the theater.

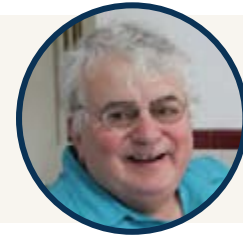
Monsignor McSweeney served as sacramental assistant at the Erie parishes of St. Jude, Holy Rosary, and St. Mary, as well as St. Patrick Cathedral (New York City) and Holy Trinity in Georgetown, Washington, D.C. He served as pastor in Erie at St. John the Baptist and Holy Trinity parishes. He was honored with the title of "Monsignor, Chaplain to His Holiness," by Pope Saint John Paul II in 2000.

Monsignor was a national board member of both the Catholic Press Association (CPA), and UNDA, the International Catholic Television and Film Association. He received several local and national awards for his service to the Church through the media, such as the President's Medal (CPA), the Distinguished Alumni Award of the Catholic University of America, the Archdiocese of New York's Medal for Excellence in Catholic Media, and Erie's Golden Rooster Award as "Ad Man of the Year." In 2023, he received the Service to Journalism Award from the Western Pennsylvania chapter of the National Press Club.

Before his retirement in 2014, Monsignor was the director of the Office of Communications for the Diocese of Erie and a member of the bishop's administrative cabinet. He initiated *Faith* magazine and *FaithLife* newspaper as the premiere evangelization tools for the diocese, revamped the diocesan website, and brought the Catholic Church of northwest Pennsylvania into the digital age through social media.

During his retirement, Monsignor McSweeney was appointed by Erie Bishop Lawrence Persico to the post of postulator in the cause of the sainthood of Dr. Gertrude A. Barber and remained actively involved in promoting Barber's canonization until his death.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by Bishop Lawrence T. Persico of Erie on Feb. 25, 2024.



**Rev. Louis T. Natalizia**, '79, of the Diocese of Providence, died March 16, 2025.

In preparation for the priesthood, he had studied at Providence College before entering formation at Theological College. Father Natalizia was ordained a priest in 1980 by Bishop Louis Gelineau. He served in seven parishes in the diocese until his retirement in 2014. In addition to his other duties, Father Natalizia served as chaplain for St. Raphael Academy in Pawtucket (1986–88). Father Natalizia was an avid learner and was fluent in five languages. He gave his life to serving God, his parishioners, and had a positive impact on so many throughout his life.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on March 20, 2025, with interment in St. Ann Cemetery in Cranston. Memorial donations may be made to Hope Hospice & Palliative Care, 1085 North Main Street, Providence, RI 02904.



**Rev. William Brailsford**, '04, of the Archdiocese of Washington, died on April 15, 2025, at the age of 64.

Father Brailsford was first assigned as parochial vicar to St. Ann's Parish, Washington, D.C. In 2007, he was appointed as chaplain to Sibley Hospital, Washington, D.C. In 2010, Father Brailsford was appointed parochial vicar at St. John Neumann, Gaithersburg, Md., and in 2011 he was appointed director of Pontifical Mission Societies for the Archdiocese of Washington and as chaplain to the Little Sisters of the Poor. In 2013, he lived in residence at Resurrection Parish, Burtonsville, Md., to address health issues. In 2014, he was appointed parochial vicar at Resurrection Parish in Burtonsville. In 2019, he went on medical leave and in 2020 he moved in residence to St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Derwood, Md. Father Brailsford was known for his care and concern for those with physical, mental, and emotional needs, and was widely known as a wonderful confessor.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by Bishop Evelio Menjivar-Ayala on April 29, with interment at All Souls Cemetery in Germantown, Md. Memorial donations may be made to "Upgrading Our Parish Home for Our Children's Children," the St. Francis of Assisi (Derwood) Capital Campaign.



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