

VIANNEYNEWS

SAINT JOHN VIANNEY COLLEGE SEMINARY
FALL 2019



Formation in a Modern Age

Spiritual Discipline

"Now, discipline always seems painful rather than pleasant at the time, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

Hebrews 12:11

I recently asked my four senior Resident Assistants (RA's), "For which discipline at SJV are you most grateful?"

Their answers were unanimous: "The morning Holy Hour beginning at 6:30 a.m."

In particular, I was inspired by a comment made by Frankie Floeder, a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. He said that over the past four years, he has "developed a personal relationship with each person of the Trinity" in adoration. To be able to speak of the personalities of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is a remarkable, divine gift of intimacy.

As evidence of their great love for this discipline, the RA's this year chose to make a night of adoration available every first Thursday of the month, adoring our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament from 9:30 p.m. Thursday until noon on Friday. Many of our seminarians take an hour in nocturnal adoration.

I am similarly moved by the spiritual practices of so many of you, including a faithful friend of SJV, Paula Flück. Paula passed away this fall at age 94. She was a devout Catholic, who came as a young woman from Switzerland to the United States. She was well known for her hard work and radiant spirituality.

Like our seminarians, Paula embraced a life of faithful disciplines. She rose every morning at 5:00 a.m. to pray the mysteries of the Rosary. She then went to the chapel to pray before 9:00 a.m. Mass. Her piety and joy remain a gift of inspiration to many at SJV. If I had the opportunity to ask her for which spiritual habit she was most grateful, I suspect her answer would echo our seminarians.

It is a good moment for each of us to take stock of our own spiritual disciplines, and to find renewed zeal for them. In this issue of *Vianney News*, I hope you will be inspired by the choices our seminarians, priests and alumni make each day to maintain their formation in a modern age. Their choices, and ours, today will make a lasting impact on the Church well into the future.



Rev. Michael C. Becker, Jr.

Rev. Michael C. Becker, Jr.
Rector

2019-2020 BY THE NUMBERS



Seminarians and priests gather on the library steps for the annual group photo.

107 men enrolled

42 new men

20 dioceses represented

Welcome, seminarians from the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Diocese of St. Thomas Syro-Malabar.

23 men will study in Rome this year



Welcome to SJV



Fathers Matthew Alexander
and Michael Kearney

Formator and Spiritual Director **Father Matthew Alexander** received his undergraduate degree in Philosophy at Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. He was ordained in 2015 for the Archdiocese of Chicago, and in 2017, completed his Licentiate in Sacred Theology from Mundelein Seminary. Father Alexander served as associate pastor at St. Mary of the Annunciation in Mundelein, Illinois, and as a formator at St. Joseph College Seminary in Chicago. About his new assignment at SJV, he says, “I am blessed to have the opportunity to walk with these young men as a spiritual father and, with the grace of God, to help form their hearts to be configured to the priestly heart of Jesus and the motherly heart of Mary.”

An alumnus of SJV (2009) and ordained in 2016, **Father Michael Kearney** is a priest of the Diocese of Joliet. Father Kearney received an engineering degree from the University of Illinois and worked for six years as a missionary

with Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) at the Air Force Academy, University of Missouri-Kansas City, and University of Colorado-Boulder. After missionary work, he was in formation for two years at SJV and four years at Mundelein Seminary. Father Kearney is excited to join the SJV staff as a Formator and Spiritual Director to help men encounter Christ, and to show them how to share Christ with others.

Staff and seminarians also welcomed 11 men from two dioceses new to SJV: the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Diocese of St. Thomas-Syro Malabar in Chicago.

“It is a blessing to welcome Father Matthew and Father Michael, and I am grateful that SJV can serve two new dioceses,” said Father Becker. “They enrich our spiritual and community life, and it is a gift to see our men respond with generosity.”



2015



2015



2015



2015



2015

Congratulations

to the

SJV Ordination Class of 2019

<p>Andrew Ayers Mark Botzet Joseph Connelly James Downey Louis Floeder Brandon Guenther Ethan Hokamp Marc Hopps Robert Mulderink Greg Sauer Will Summerlin Andrew Zipp</p>	<p><i>Grand Rapids</i> <i>Saint Cloud</i> <i>Saint Paul/Minneapolis</i> <i>Des Moines</i> <i>Saint Paul/Minneapolis</i> <i>La Crosse</i> <i>La Crosse</i> <i>Saginaw</i> <i>Grand Rapids</i> <i>Saint Cloud</i> <i>Lafayette, Indiana</i> <i>Saint Paul/Minneapolis</i></p>
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Photos: Alphabetical, clockwise from top left.



2015



2015



2015



2015



2015



2013



2015



Formation in a Modern Age

It is not easy for a young man to follow God in 2019, particularly if he is in college. The dominant mentality seems in opposition to the proposals of Christ and His Church. Relativism seeps into the classroom, technology often distracts, and the culture can point him in the wrong direction.

For many, college is a time of freedom from rules, parents and religion. But at SJV, it is quite the contrary. The seminarians follow strict routines of prayer, study and formation. And, instead of hiding from the Church, they embrace it. They are visible witnesses of the faith on campus, and they are living something radical.

So, what does it mean to be formed as a college seminarian during these unique cultural times? Father Michael Becker says formation begins with three basic practices:

Set an example.

“We priests have to first live our own lives with virtue and show that we are friends of God. The only way we can form seminarians in a confusing culture is to show them a good example.”

Teach the ideal.

“Young people love the ideal, and the ideal is to be a saint. They do not want a watered-down version. Our future Church leaders need an evangelistic spirit so they can share Jesus with those who have never heard of Him.”

Live a well-ordered life.

“We tell the seminarians that grace builds on nature. Be polite in conversation, practice good habits, and be on time. These small disciplines build a foundation upon which human formation can take place and a man’s character can grow.”

Freedom in Discipline

When people hear about what is required of a man at SJV, they are sometimes surprised to learn that the seminarians are happy. Living in a world in which people are encouraged to do whatever they want, seminarians like Zac Ochsenbauer find joy in the SJV proposal of routine, rules and prayer time.

“This structure gives me the freedom to not worry about what is next because the plan has been provided by people I trust,” said the senior from the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. He added, “My days are ordered toward the goal of meeting Christ.”

From 6:30 a.m. Angelus and Holy Hour to 9:30 p.m. quiet hours, every part of a seminarian’s day, including his free time, is intentional (see schedule on page 8). He is even encouraged to post a daily schedule on his dorm room door, allowing his brother seminarians to see his plan. This is a great way for a young man to think about how he wants to spend his free time, playing sports, making music, or participating in other campus activities.

“SJV taught me to set aside time for intentional leisure to do some activity that is relaxing and enjoyable, but meaningful,” Matthew Pohlman says, a senior from the Archdiocese of Omaha.

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Father Matthew Alexander leads Zachary Schmitz, Zac Ochsenbauer, Jason Diebolt and Andre Klaes in discussion.





The SJV proposal is not always easy. “At first, the regulated study hours seemed a little crazy,” said Jason Diebolt, a senior from the Diocese of Lafayette, Indiana. “I wondered why someone else should choose when I study. But, SJV has put this proposal in front of me, and I am going to take full advantage of it.”

Another discipline at SJV are the rules surrounding technology, perhaps one of the greatest distractions and temptations in the modern age. Each seminarian can use technology for non-school related reasons for one hour a day. Some men take it even a step further.

HORARIUM (SCHEDULE)

Monday – Thursday

6:30 a.m. - Angelus, Holy Hour with Morning Prayer
 7:30 a.m. - Breakfast
 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. - Class, Study and Free Time
 4:00 p.m. - Confessions Available
 4:30 p.m. - Rosary (optional)
 5:00 p.m. - Evening Prayer
 5:15 p.m. - Mass
 6:00 p.m. - Community Meal (Tues. and Thurs.)
 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. - Apostolic Outreach (Wed.)
 8:30 p.m. - Floor Meetings (Mon.)
 9:30 p.m. - Quiet Hours

Friday

11:00 a.m. - Confessions Available
 12:10 p.m. - Mass
Seminarians pray a holy hour on their own & fast from lunch & technology until 3:00 p.m.

Saturday

8:00 a.m. - Confessions Available
 8:45 a.m. - Schola Practice
 9:00 a.m. - Holy Hour
 10:00 a.m. - Mass
 5:00 p.m. - Evening Prayer (optional)

Sunday

8:00 a.m. - Confessions Available
 9:00 a.m. - Holy Hour
 10:00 a.m. - Mass
 11:30 a.m. - Brunch by Diocese
 5:00 p.m. - Evening Prayer (optional)
 6:15 p.m. - Spiritual Conferences
 7:15 p.m. - Announcements
 7:30 p.m. - Rosary and Night Prayer
 9:30 p.m. - Quiet Hours





“I overused technology when I first came to SJV,” Ochsenbauer said. “I spent a lot of my free time on social media or listening to music.” Then he and another seminarian blocked their YouTube accounts and found freedom in this added discipline.

“My free time is now more outward and less self-centered.” Ochsenbauer often organizes ultimate Frisbee and basketball games with his fellow seminarians during free hours.

Another tool that SJV has added in recent years to support men in their use of technology is Covenant Eyes, an accountability software that monitors screen activity and provides a report to a seminarian’s spiritual formator.

Rather than oppress, the disciplines at SJV foster a climate of openness and trust, a place where a man is affirmed in his discernment rather than judged. It is a place where men are free to discern their vocations because they are free from the expectations of the world.

According to Father Becker, the structure at SJV is intended to keep the seminarians grounded and focused on the reasons they are in the seminary: to grow in relationship with Jesus Christ and to become future priests.

Father Becker emphasized that, partnered with discipline, the “bulls eye” of a man’s true freedom is found in spiritual formation. “When a man bows down in humility during Holy Hour or the Mass, he is free to discern God’s plan for his life.”

Engaging the Culture

Does all of this routine and discipline mean that the seminarians live in isolation? The answer is a resounding “no.” Father Becker makes it clear that SJV is not a fortress.

“We need to engage the culture and share the Good News with people at the fringes who don’t believe in Christ.”

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He encourages the seminarians to find simple, tangible ways to live the faith in their everyday life, including:

- *Pray the Rosary while walking through campus.*
- *Elevate conversations with their classmates.*
- *Sit with someone who is eating alone.*
- *Get involved in campus ministry, student government and campus Bible studies.*

Diebolt believes that SJV men are called to participate at this very moment in time: “We want to encounter and invite everyone at the University of St. Thomas to join us. This is where we are assigned to study, pray and discern the priesthood. This is our mission.”

Regardless of time or place, Diebolt and his brother seminarians desire the ideal. They want to live well-ordered lives. They want to give their life to something eternal. These young men are a gift to the Church during these challenging cultural times.

“When a man bows down in humility during Holy Hour or the Mass, he is free to discern God’s plan for his life.”

Father Michael Becker

Spotlight on Alumni



James Baxter
Class of 2013



Nathaniel Binversie
Class of 2014

When James Baxter and Nathaniel Binversie entered Saint John Vianney College Seminary, they did not know God's plan for their lives, but they were willing to find out. Today, these SJV alumni are pouring their formation into Exodus 90, an intense spiritual exercise for Catholic men around the world.

Baxter, now married with his first child on the way, looks back at his experience at SJV with fondness. "Those were some of the happiest times of my life," he recalled. "The image that always comes to mind is of the dorms right above the chapel. The Eucharist is the focal point of the entire seminary."

Baxter and Binversie overlapped just one year at SJV, but they became close friends, and the formation they received became the bedrock for their lives. Binversie, who is also married and has three children, recalled SJV as a place where he grew in holiness, discipline, routine and prayer.

"The life at SJV was challenging. I was pushed past mediocrity and was clearly being called to become

the man God wanted me to be." Binversie saw drastic change in himself and in the men around him as they learned to live orderly lives.

After graduation, James continued his formation at Saint Meinrad Seminary in Indiana for two years before discerning the married life. Nathaniel worked three years as a missionary for Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS).

The two friends then joined the Exodus 90 movement, Baxter as Co-Founder and Executive Director and Binversie as Director of Mission. The program focuses on prayer, self-mastery and fraternity over a 90-day period with the ultimate goal of renewing the Church. In 2018, more than 16,000 men participated in the exercise. Exodus 90 groups are active in all 50 states and more than 17 countries around the world.

Baxter and Binversie are grateful to SJV for equipping them to serve Christ and His Church in this very important way.



The Road Map to College Seminary

If you are a young man or know someone who is considering the priesthood, the road to college seminary can be intimidating. You might be asking, “Where do I start?”

The first step is to contact your Vocations Director in your home diocese. Father David Blume, vocations director for the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, breaks it down into a step-by-step process for potential seminarians. Along the way, he reminds them that God is in the driver’s seat and that the priesthood is a calling from the Lord.

While every journey is unique, here is a typical route to college seminary.

1

PRAY.

Are you serious about a call to the priesthood? Are you curious about college seminary? Bring all of these questions to prayer.

2

CALL.

Don’t be afraid to call your Vocations Director. He wants to help you follow God’s will in your life. That is his job!

3

VISIT.

See for yourself. A weekend Vianney Visit at SJV is the perfect way to see what seminary life is really like. Pray with the seminarians, attend a class and experience a community meal. Ask yourself, “Can I picture myself here?”

4

APPLY.

If you are applying to SJV, you must first apply to the University of St. Thomas. Once accepted, it is time to begin applications for your diocese and for the seminary. It is important to start early in your senior year! You will need references, a medical exam, high school transcripts, letters of recommendation, sacramental certificates, a background check, and an autobiography. Don't give up! It sounds like a lot of work, but your Vocations Director will help you keep everything moving forward.

5

INTERVIEW.

The interview is an opportunity for you and your Vocations Director to review your application and to discuss face-to-face if college seminary is right for you. Don't be nervous! Remember, he knows what it is like to discern a call to the priesthood.

**NEXT STEPS.**

To begin your journey to college seminary or to schedule a Vianney Visit, contact Father Blume or your Vocations Director today: stpaulpriest@10000vocations.org or (651) 962-6890.

Upcoming Vianney Visit weekends:

November 14 - 16, 2019 • February 14 - 16, 2020

Dear Friends



Thank you for all you do for the future leaders of the Church by supporting the seminarians at SJV! It is humbling to witness your joyful generosity as you give of your time, talent and treasure to provide essential formation today for tomorrow's Catholic priests.

In this issue of *Vianney News*, we highlighted some key aspects of the formation our men receive while at Saint John Vianney College Seminary. We also recognized and celebrated the SJV alumni who were recently ordained, and we rejoiced with the men who have discerned well and discovered that God has called them to a different vocation. We welcomed men from 20 dioceses back to campus, including the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Diocese of St. Thomas-Syro Malabar who joined the SJV community for the first time. I hope that you agree that God has richly blessed SJV in many ways.

As Catholics, we know that the ultimate goal is to do all we can to ensure that we, and those in our midst, are on a path toward Heaven. God calls some to do that as priests and others to do that as lay leaders. Whatever vocation, I am confident that each seminarian will live it out in the best way he can.

I am grateful that you have chosen to walk with our seminarians as they continue their path to become joyful, Catholic leaders. May God bless you.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Tizoc Rosales". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Tizoc Rosales
Director of Advancement

tizoc.rosales@stthomas.edu
(651) 358-3345

Annual Vianney Cup a Success



For the third year in a row, the Vianney Cup was sold out, making for a full day of golf and fraternity at the 15th annual event on September 16. Thanks to our generous golfers, sponsors and dinner guests, more than \$150,000 was raised to support the essential formation for tomorrow's Catholic priests.

Golfers were joined on the course by former Minnesota Gopher and NHL Center Brian Bonin and former NFL Quarterback Brooks Bollinger. Super Bowl Champion Matt Birk gave away great prizes after dinner and encouraged everyone to support the important mission of Saint John Vianney College Seminary.



SAVE THE DATE

16th Annual Vianney Cup
Monday, September 21, 2020

New Location! Mendakota Country Club
in Mendota Heights.



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St. Thomas

SAVE THE DATE

SPRING MASS AND MAY CROWNING – SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2020

Please join the SJV community for Mass, brunch and a program as we honor Our Blessed Mother on the first Sunday in May. Event and table sponsorships are available.

For more information, contact Tizoc Rosales, Director of Advancement:
tizoc.rosales@stthomas.edu or (651) 358-3345.

