

# VIANNEYNEWS

SAINT JOHN VIANNEY COLLEGE SEMINARY  
SPRING 2021



THANK YOU, FATHER BECKER  
WELCOME, FATHER KELLY



Dear Friends,

For the past 12 years, I have had the privilege of serving Saint John Vianney College Seminary (SJV), first as a Formator and then Rector. This has brought incredible blessings and joy to my priestly ministry. I am proud of the men who have come through SJV sincerely discerning their vocation and offering their lives to the Lord.

As I conclude my tenure at the end of May, I am filled with gratitude for each of you who have supported the mission of providing essential formation for today's young and valiant Catholic priests. I have grown in affection for you and sincerely desire that every diocese would flourish with priests and lay leaders who are truly in love with Jesus Christ and filled with evangelical zeal!

The SJV community is like a spiritual family, with a certain way of life. Our home is a place of self-discovery, ascending union with God, maturity into manhood, and a school of virtue. With guidance from the Holy Spirit, this home provides a foundation upon which every young man comes to know and express himself as a beloved son of God. To witness that transformation in the seminarians has been a great privilege.

I want to thank our sending Bishops and Vocations Directors who have entrusted their seminarians to our care. I am confident that your sons will shine with the light of God and attract many to the Gospel. I especially want to thank Archbishop Bernard Hebda for your confidence in me to serve the Church at SJV.

Thank you to our lay and ordained alumni serving the Church throughout the world. You gave so generously of yourselves at SJV, and I see that same spirit in your parishes and professional lives today. May the fraternity you experienced at SJV live on in your new homes.

I also have a special place in my heart for our present seminarians. I see your daily commitment to the Lord and your brothers under this roof. I pray that your charity and zeal will always be used for the good of others.

I owe a debt of gratitude that I can never repay to the SJV priests and staff. Your dedication to Christ and this community, as well as the joyful fulfillment of your duties, make SJV a remarkable college seminary. I have every confidence that you will continue to extend your gifts and hospitality to everyone who walks through our doors.

Finally, I give thanks to the many friends and benefactors who have shared your prayers, love, and treasure to sustain and strengthen this house of formation. Your generosity provides an environment where men discerning the priesthood can discover for themselves what it means to be Men in Christ, Men of the Church, and Men for Others.

Together, let us pray for our new Rector, Father Jon Kelly, his staff, and future seminarians, that they will flourish under the protection of Our Blessed Mother in this place that I have been honored to call home.

Sincerely Yours In Christ,



Rev. Michael C. Becker, Jr.  
Rector



# HANDMAIDS SERVE SJV

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While much of a man's formation and experience at SJV are built around brotherhood, there is a need for a little sisterhood as well.

For the past few years, the priest staff have prayed about how to incorporate this into the SJV formation program. Father Becker started a conversation with Mother Mary Clare Roufs, foundress of the Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus, and prayers were eventually answered when two Handmaids joined the SJV staff this year.

Every Tuesday, Sister Anna and Sister Margaret Joy are at SJV ready to serve. Sister Anna, who has her master's degree in Religious Education, teaches the SJV men how to teach the faith and analyzes their teaching styles. Sister Margaret Joy supports the administrative staff. Both attend midday Mass and lead afternoon Rosary.

"They bring into our house what St. John Paul II called a 'feminine genius,' " Father Becker says. "The joy barometer goes straight up when they are here."

Mother Mary Clare and five other women were part of the community when the Handmaids were officially established in 2010. Currently there are 30 sisters in the order, 21 of whom live at the Motherhouse in New Ulm, and nine other professed sisters reside in either Duluth or Hopkins. Of those who live at the Motherhouse, six novices and six postulants are in formation.

The order's charism is to live in imitation of Mary as handmaid, virgin, bride, and mother in the diocesan life of the Church, carrying out the New Evangelization in parishes.



Four of the Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus take a break while on campus. Sr. Margaret Joy (far left) and Sr. Anna (second from left) serve at SJV every Tuesday. Sr. Mary Angela and Mother Mary Clare Roufs (far right) are also pictured.

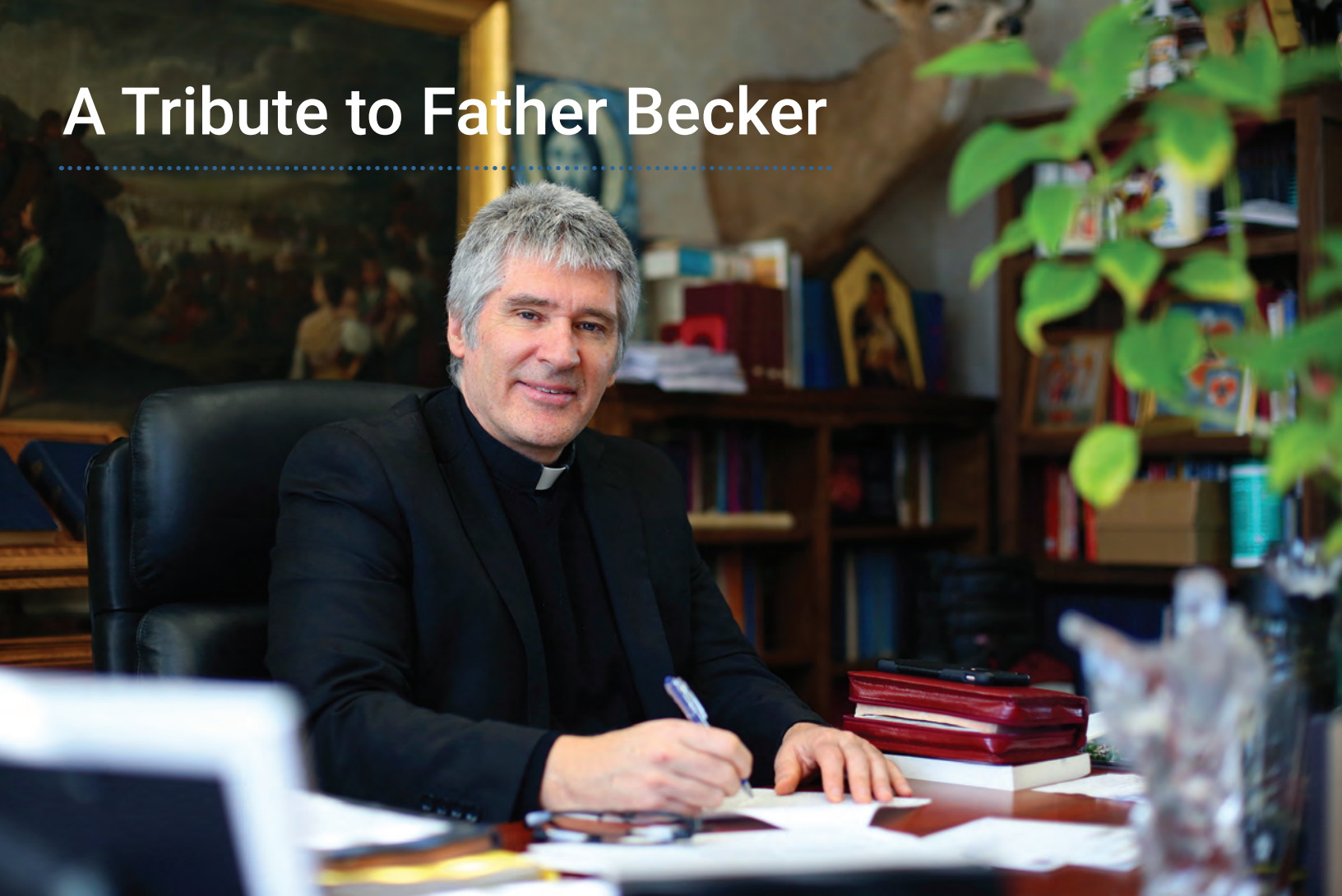
While SJV is not a parish, the seminarians serve local parishes by teaching religious education and will one day serve their parishes as ordained priests or lay leaders.

Most importantly, the Handmaids provide a "ministry of presence" at SJV, as articulated by their apostolic vision: *The most important aspect of our apostolic life in the diocese is the resounding witness of our consecrated presence, for 'what counts most is not what religious do, but who they are as persons consecrated to the Lord.'*

"The motherly dimension of the Church is essential for the spiritual life and is particularly present with the religious sisters," said Christian Stiles, a seminarian from the Diocese of Lansing. "I have come to know Sister Anna this past year as a beautiful example of this dimension."

# A Tribute to Father Becker

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When you walk into Father Becker's office, you know you are encountering a unique, profound man. Walls are lined with books, a bicycle rests alongside the desk, icons of Jesus hang on the wall, taped-up reading glasses rest on the table, and two mounted bucks in the right and left corners of the office meet your gaze.

There are several reasons Father Becker has made a great Rector over the years, but one quality stands out: his confidence and freedom to be himself. Whether he is telling an "Ole and Sven" joke, giving a passionate homily at Last Chance Mass, or entering into a deep, prayerful silence, Father Becker's genuine, humble leadership is evident.

The freedom to be his own man comes from a confident knowledge of the Father's love

for him. And when you walk around SJV, you see the same trust in God's love instilled in the seminarians. "Father Becker affirms you and gives you a spirit of joy and peace in who you are," said Zachary Ochsenbauer, a senior from the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

Although it feels like home today, Father Becker never expected to be the Rector at SJV. His previous assignment at St. Michael's Catholic Church in St. Michael, Minnesota, was where he met Bill Malkowiak, a transplant from New Jersey. Malkowiak immediately saw something unique in his new parish leader and friend: "Father Becker has a special gift in connecting with people and encouraging men to engage in the community."





Father Becker enjoys a light-hearted moment with Father Jon Kelly and a group of seminarians on campus.

Father Becker played in the parish basketball league, regularly hunted with parishioners, and even showed up for Malkowiak's son's playoff baseball game to cheer him on.

"He engaged in very visible areas to make connections with men, with an awareness that it would engage the broader faith community," Malkowiak said. These God-given gifts would one day make Father Becker an ideal Rector of a college seminary.

This became a reality in 2009 when Father Becker received a call from the Chancery. "A call from the Chancery was not always a good sign for a Pastor," Father Becker said with a laugh. Father Becker was asked to serve as a Spiritual Formator at SJV. "I loved the people at St. Michael's so much, and I wanted to stay," he said. "But I desired to do God's will."

After shedding good-bye tears with his beloved parishioners, Becker packed his bags to serve under Rector Father William Baer.

"SJV was active, busy, and cutting-edge," Becker recalled. "If Father Baer had an open night, he would start a new ministry

of outreach." He also noticed a trait of his predecessor: Father Baer would have prepared 20 percent of a talk to give in front of hundreds of people, and he would finish the next 80 percent on the spot. "Father Baer had a certain brilliance about him," he fondly remembered. "His talks were so entertaining."

Most importantly, Becker saw that Father Baer challenged the seminarians to rise to a great ideal that included 6:00 a.m. Morning Prayer, 40-hours of classwork, daily Mass, and pastoral outreach most nights. "It was an ideal so great that the seminarians had to rely on God for help," Becker said.

After one year as a Formator, Father Becker was asked to become the eighth Rector of SJV. "I just tweaked Father Baer's agenda a little bit," Becker said. "I wanted to allow a little more room for contemplative life so guys could process their vocational call."

One of those seminarians was Stephen Durkee who began at SJV during Father Becker's first year. One day, Durkee challenged the new Rector to a one-on-one basketball game.

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Father Becker vests SJV alumnus Father Stephen Durkee before Durkee'

To his surprise, Father Becker agreed. The matchup drew a crowd of seminarians and a lot of excitement. "Becker ended up winning," Durkee said, "But it was very close." Moving forward, the two played pick-up basketball once a month.

For the next four years, Becker became an important figure in Durkee's journey to the priesthood. He checked in on Durkee frequently and encouraged him to grow in holiness. "In seminary, it makes a big difference when a priest asks you to grow up in a loving, fatherly way," Father Durkee said. "Father Becker wanted what was best for me."

Ordained in 2017, Father Durkee is now the Director of Priestly Vocations for the Diocese of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and sends his seminarians to SJV. He has a tradition of inserting quotes in his Bible from important people in his life. One of them is what Father

Becker said to him just before his ordination: "You are going to be one beloved priest because you have the faith, prayer life, social skills, good humor and humility that attracts. I love you, too, my son and brother. Now, go convert some youth!"

During Father Becker's tenure, more than 500 seminarians were in formation at SJV. They have gone on to serve in a myriad of ways, including as priests, fathers, dentists, missionaries, lawyers, and teachers. SJV continued to grow and thrive as one of the largest college seminaries in the country under Father Becker's leadership.

Although the job was a lot of work at times, it was balanced by the way in which the seminarians brought fun and joy into his days. When asked about his favorite memory, Father Becker laughed and recalled the time a seminarian dressed up as Pope Francis. His brother seminarians drove him around campus in a "Popemobile" waving Vatican flags and singing to celebrate Francis' election to the papacy.

"I had a big smile. I loved their zeal and pride for the Church," Father Becker said.

Looking back on his time at SJV, Father Becker has seen the maturity and growth in holiness in so many men, himself included. "I am more abandoned to God's will," Father Becker said. "Early on, I wanted everyone to be priests, even men whom God was not calling to that vocation. Over time, I allowed Jesus to call the shots. When a man is called to marriage, I rejoice."



Father Becker cheers on the SJV JAXX during the annual Rectors' Bowl.



Father Becker delivers a homily in the SJV Chapel.



As his leadership style grew, Father Becker also became more comfortable asking for help along the way. That meant assigning staff priests to areas where he thought they would excel and asking seniors to take on leadership roles in guiding the new men.

Most importantly, Father Becker grew in gratitude to his Heavenly Father. "I am grateful to God for His loving grace and the adventure of ministering with and through Jesus," he said.

As Father Becker completes his final weeks as Rector, he has one desire for his legacy: "I hope that when history looks back on this time, they will say holy saints were born at Saint John Vianney College Seminary."

Next, Father Becker will begin a well-deserved sabbatical to finish a book he is writing, entitled *To Fulfill All Righteousness*.

Although his office will be emptied of the books, bike, icons, broken glasses, and bucks, the culture, legacy, and joy Father Becker showed to so many people will live on for generations.





# Meet Your New Rector

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FATHER JONATHAN KELLY NAMED  
NINTH RECTOR OF SJV



On January 22, Father Jonathan “Jon” Kelly, formator and spiritual director, received a phone call from Archbishop Bernard Hebda informing him that he had been chosen to serve as the ninth Rector of SJV. Father Kelly thanked the Archbishop and the Lord for this new opportunity before slipping into the barber chair to get his hair cut.

The poignant and the mundane. Father Kelly smiled.

“God chooses us for particular times,” Kelly said. “I am confident that He will help me and the priests at SJV to respond generously and courageously at this time.”

Father Kelly succeeds Father Michael Becker who concludes his tenure as Rector at the end of May.

## In the Beginning

Baby Jonathan took his place in the Kelly family in 1973 behind five sisters and one brother. His parents, Richard and Mary, raised their family in the Diocese of New Ulm in Southern Minnesota. His father was an attorney and a judge; Mom was a homemaker. Spare time was spent together on the family’s hobby farm.

Kelly went to Catholic grade school through fourth grade and attended public and private schools until he transferred to Georgetown Prep, a Jesuit boarding school in Rockville, Maryland as a sophomore. Kelly ranks among a list of distinguished Georgetown Prep alumni that includes Supreme Court Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh. It was during high school when Kelly began to sharpen his skills as a golfer.

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Father Kelly is pictured with his family near the grotto on the farm in Southern Minnesota.





Father Kelly competes in the Pro Golf Tour in 1996.

Returning home to Minnesota for college, Kelly attended the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Business and became a walk-on member of the men's golf team. By the end of first semester, Kelly had a full golf scholarship. He later earned the MVP award and was named Team Captain by senior year.

The Catholic faith instilled in him by his parents remained with Kelly through college.

"I would always go to Sunday evening Mass at the university parish after a weekend golf tournament," Kelly recalls. "But faith did not inform all of my choices at that time. There were inconsistencies in my life and faith."

Upon graduation in 1996 with a degree in Finance, Kelly qualified for the Professional

Golf Tour in Canada and South Africa where he competed against some of the world's top golfers.

"It did not go very well," Kelly recalls with humor. "A local reporter once described my game on the Canadian Tour, 'As Kelly went north, his game went south.' God very clearly closed that door for me. I am glad because I would not have been mature enough to handle that kind of success."

Two and a half years later, Kelly left the golf tour and returned to his high school *alma mater* to work as a prefect. From there he joined an investment banking firm in Baltimore and then Piper Jaffray in Minneapolis, giving him the opportunity to live closer to home. After four years, the world of finance called him back to the East Coast once again where Kelly says, "The insanity of New York woke me up, and I realized I was at a crossroads."

## The Road to Ordination

In a 2011 interview with the *Catholic Spirit* prior to his ordination, Kelly looked back on his experiences in the finance industry with gratitude and recognized that time as a turning point on his journey to the priesthood:

"I liked what I did and had the fortune of working with people of great integrity," he told the *Spirit*. "But I felt a sense of growing unfulfillment in the work. So, I started asking deeper questions."

Kelly regularly attended Mass at Our Lady of Czestochowa in Jersey City where he got to know the pastor, Father Tom Iwanowski. Through Father Tom's encouragement, Kelly





Father Kelly (second from right) is pictured with fellow pilgrims on retreat in Croatia in 2004. Also pictured (left to right): Father Michael Becker, Tony Wolf from the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, a pilgrim from Scotland, and Joseph Kelly, Father Kelly's older brother.

registered in the parish, joined the finance council, and got involved in other parish activities. "The seeds were being planted," he said.

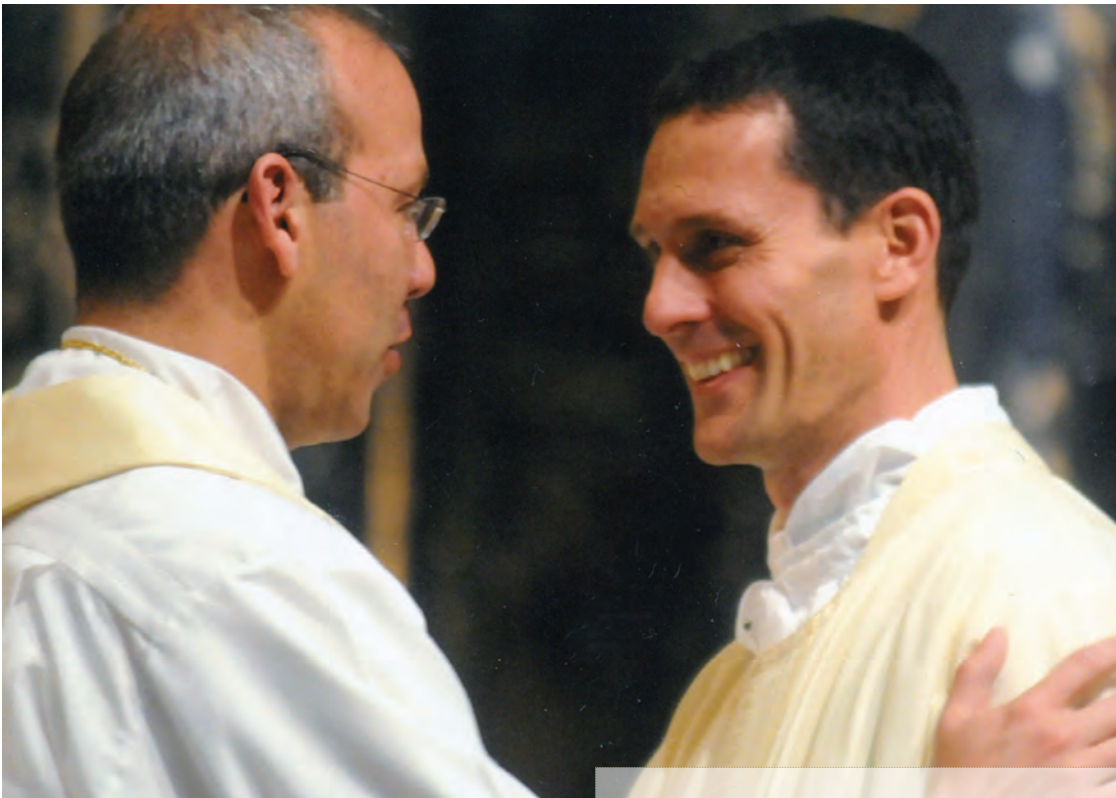
In 2004, Kelly's brother, Joseph, invited him to go on a five-day retreat in Croatia. There he met for the first time Father Michael Becker, then-pastor of St. Michael Catholic Church in St. Michael, Minnesota.

"The retreat was a powerful experience," Kelly recalled. "I was 30 years old, and I experienced the peace of Jesus, the peace that the world does not give. I knew He had to be the foundation of my life."

Kelly left his job in New York, moved back to the Twin Cities, and began to consider the priesthood. He spent the summer living at a rectory with Father Becker and three other members of the Companions of Christ, a fraternity of priests and seminarians in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. His time with them confirmed his decision to pursue the priesthood, and he entered The Saint Paul Seminary in the fall of 2005.

One of the most pivotal players in Kelly's ordination story, in addition to his parents, his brother and Father Iwanowski, is Father Becker: "From the beginning, I knew Father Becker was alive and fulfilled and he invited me into that kind of life as a priest."

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Father Kelly is congratulated by Father Juan Miguel Betancourt, SEMV, on his ordination day in 2011. Betancourt is now Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut.

## Priestly Ministry Begins

Six years later, Father Jon Kelly was ordained on May 28, 2011. He asked Father Becker to vest him during the Mass.

Kelly was assigned to All Saints Catholic Church and School in Lakeville under the prayerful and dynamic leadership of Father Tom Wilson.

“For three years I lived a beautiful, broad experience of parish life,” Kelly said. “I was able to minister through all of the sacraments - from baptism to anointing of the sick and the funeral Mass. I was privileged to participate in many ‘story-of-a-soul’ experiences.”

In 2014, Father Kelly was assigned to serve as Formator and Spiritual Director at SJV where Father Becker was serving as Rector. Their personal and spiritual relationship, firmly rooted in the Lord, set the stage for

their professional relationship at the college seminary: “Father Becker and I had already built our relationship on what was most important. We could seamlessly transition this into our life and work at SJV.”

Father Kelly was excited to work with undergraduate men discerning a call to the priesthood. “So much in life is timing,” he said. “I can think of other priests who would be great in this role, but the most important question is not who is the best candidate, but rather who is God calling to do the work. When I got the call, I had confidence that God would bring out the needed capacities for whatever He was calling me to do.”



"Where one alone may be overcome, two together can resist.  
A three-ply cord is not easily broken." Ecclesiastes 4:12

## A Vision for SJV

Like his mentor, Father Kelly became a member of the Companions of Christ in 2010 and models this way of living at SJV. Praying, working, and sharing the rhythm of life with the same cohort of priests and seminarians allows him to go deep which fits his personality and makes space for meaningful formation.

"Authentic Christian community and strong priestly fraternity are so important for our seminary," he adds. "And we enjoy each other. I want to give us space for creativity and even healthy conflict, which, if we are committed to seeking God every day in prayer, will always be resolved. My hope is that this example blesses the whole seminary."

Recently Father Kelly gave the keynote presentation during a virtual Vianney Visit for prospective seminarians and their Vocations Directors. Entitled "Come Follow Me," he explained it to the young men this way:

"Seminary life is not a 9-to-5 invitation. Rather, it is a call to live in community where home and school are one and formation permeates the environment. It is a meal together, a floor meeting, a moment to throw the frisbee or the football, or a spontaneous conversation in the hallway."

Father Kelly is also focused on building upon a solid program of formation begun by Father Becker and his predecessors, one that responds to the needs of today's seminarians.

"Our high school and college men are in a different place today than their counterparts were five to 10 years ago," he said. "Technology, secularization, and family dynamics present

more and more challenges. We are sensitive to that and yet we embrace the fact that God has chosen us to live in such a time as this."

Also recognizing that significant cognitive development takes place between the ages of 18 and 24, SJV sits at the nexus of where a young man is discerning the priesthood or married life. Father Kelly believes that human formation is critical for success and the very place where priest mentors can make the greatest impact. Drawing upon the wisdom of the university's patron saint, "St. Thomas Aquinas said that grace elevates and perfects nature. We want to

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Father Kelly believes formation takes place in all settings. Here he is pictured in conversation on a warm spring day with seminarian Zachary Ochsenbauer, a senior from the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.



create the best environment for a young man to attain self-awareness so that he can make a gift of himself in service and love.”

To enhance his own gifts of formation, Father Kelly has earned certificates in Spiritual Direction and Seminary Formation at the Institute for Priestly Formation (IPF) in Omaha, Nebraska, and the Seminary Formation Council in Boynton Beach, Florida. He has also served as a Formator and Adjunct Faculty during the summer programs of the IPF for priests and seminarians.

Another goal of Father Kelly’s is to translate these skills into contemplative leadership at SJV. “The first line of my job description is to be the leader and spiritual father of the seminary,” Kelly says. “I love that! It is such an honor for me to walk with these courageous young men. I am humbled and thrilled for the opportunity to encourage them to not be afraid and to form them to be Men in Christ, Men of the Church, and Men for Others.”



Top: Kelly enjoys a day of fishing with his older sister Elizabeth.

Bottom: Father Kelly is pictured more recently with his sister Elizabeth, managing editor of *LOGOS*, adjunct professor in the Department of Catholic Studies, and award-winning author and nationally known speaker.



## A Little More About Father Kelly...

**Favorite food:** Indian food from Ghandi Mahal in Minneapolis

**Favorite book:** Whatever I am reading. Currently it is *Anatomy of the Soul* by Dr. Curt Thompson and *Live Not by Lies* by Rod Dreher.

**Favorite movie:** *Raiders of the Lost Ark*

**Favorite music:** Violin Features on Pandora

**Favorite saint:** St. John Vianney (of course!)

**Favorite church:** Crypt of St. Francis in Assisi, Italy

**Scariest moment:** Narrowly escaping a green mamba on the golf course in Africa.

**Fun fact:** Before I was a priest, I competed in several triathlons with my brother, Joseph, including one that required us to swim across the San Francisco Bay from Alcatraz Island. We like to say: “We escaped from Alcatraz.”



# Spotlight on Alumni



## Father Mathias Thelen – Class of 2006

*Ordained for the Diocese of Lansing in 2010, SJV alumnus Father Mathias Thelen serves as Spiritual Director at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, is Pastor of St. Patrick Church in Brighton, Michigan, and is President and Co-Founder of Encounter Ministries. For more information, visit: [encounterministries.us](http://encounterministries.us) or [encounterschool.org](http://encounterschool.org).*

### Describe your experience at SJV.

**Father Thelen:** It took a lot for me to break up with the girl of my dreams and sign up for college seminary. Any nervousness was easily dispelled the first week I arrived. The atmosphere of joy and the encouragement I discovered at SJV made growing in holiness and in love with God seem effortless at times. My years at SJV turned out to be some of the most memorable and formative of my life.

### Describe your formation at SJV.

**Father Thelen:** I thank God for the compelling witness and genuine spiritual fatherhood of the priest faculty. I was so moved by the formation at SJV that a dream of my priesthood was to be on faculty at a seminary. God fulfilled this dream when I joined the faculty at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit in 2014.

### Did you recognize your spiritual gifts at SJV?

**Father Thelen:** My Rector, Father Bill Baer, named and called out the spiritual gifts he saw in me and shared with me about the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. I can honestly say that his personal investment around the gifts of the Spirit changed the direction of my life.

### What advice do you give to a young man considering college seminary?

**Father Thelen:** First, don't hold back from God. Only He can fulfill you. Second, allow Christ to love you, to redeem you, to save you. Keep your eyes on Jesus and you will see Him do tremendous things with you in your weakness. Finally, stay close to your mother Mary who most perfectly leads you on the path to Jesus.

### A favorite SJV memory.

**Father Thelen:** I will never forget the night that Pope Benedict XVI was elected. We all went on the roof of the seminary (Campus Security didn't like that too much.) where we professed our allegiance to our new Holy Father. Then we marched through campus with the Vatican flag singing songs of joy and devotion to God.

## In Memoriam



In January, the SJV community mourned the loss of alumnus Bailey Lauret from the Diocese of Sioux Falls. To all who knew him, Bailey lived as a man of Christ, a man of the Church, and a man for others.

During his time at SJV (2015-2017), Bailey resided on the fifth floor, which is dedicated to Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati. He had a great devotion to the young Italian Catholic, mountaineer, and social activist who was beatified in 1990. Bailey adopted Frassati's motto, "*Verso l'alto.*" Translated "toward the top," these words represent a constant striving to reach the summit of eternal life.

Bailey was serving as a campus missionary in Tennessee when he died at the age of 24, the same age as his patron Pier Giorgio Frassati. May he rest in eternal peace of the Lord.

# Getting to Know the SJV Seminarians

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**Alexander Marquette**

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**Age: 21**  
**Home Diocese:**  
**Saint Paul and**  
**Minneapolis**

**Age I first considered priesthood:** 10

**Someone who influenced my faith:** My Religious Education teachers, Deacon Ron Freeman and Karla McBrady. Without their guidance, I would not have made it to seminary.

**Favorite saints:** St. Augustine, St. Padre Pio, St. John Paul II, and St. Maria Goretti.

**Why I love being Catholic:** Christ said that He came so that we might have abundant life (John 10:10), and there is no greater way to experience this life than to encounter God himself. Being Catholic makes this encounter so available and attainable.

**What I like best about SJV:** The brotherhood. It is the group of guys with whom I celebrate, lean on in , and who hold me accountable to a high standard of living.

**Favorite college course:** Philosophy of God

**Current apostolic outreach:** Facilitating Tommie Catholic.

**Majors:** Philosophy and Catholic Studies, with a minor in Spanish

**Favorite food:** Spaghetti alla Carbonara from Trattoria Vecchia Roma in Rome.

**Hobbies:** Reading; playing frisbee, baseball, volleyball, and hockey; climbing trees; hunting and playing with my dogs; and playing the drums and piano.





**Andre Klaes**

**Age: 22**  
**Home Diocese:**  
**Grand Rapids**



**Conrad Espino**

**Age: 21**  
**Home Diocese:**  
**Chicago**

**Age I first considered priesthood:** 7

**Someone who influenced my faith:** Father Vincent O'Malley, a Vincentian priest from West Michigan.

**Favorite saint:** Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati

**Why I love being Catholic:** I love the sacraments and the immense beauty present in the faith.

**What I like best about SJV:** The devout and holy priests on the formation staff.

**Favorite college course:** Astronomy

**Current apostolic outreach:** Resident advisor of third floor

**Majors:** Philosophy and Catholic Studies

**Favorite food:** Pad Thai

**Favorite book:** *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien

**Surprising fact about me:** My goal is to visit all the national parks with my brother.

**Hobbies:** Backpacking, hiking, rock climbing, reading, shooting sports, and woodcarving.

**Age I first considered priesthood:** 13

**Someone who influenced your faith:** My mom. She was the one to teach and encourage me to pray.

**Favorite saint:** St. Thérèse of Lisieux

**Why I love being Catholic:** Being Catholic informs every part of my life, from what I do on Sunday to what I do thing in the morning to which stickers I put on my laptop.

**What I like best about SJV:** A friend of mine once noted, "SJV seminarians have a boisterous joy about them." I am grateful for living in this joy.

**Favorite college course:** Contemporary Philosophy

**Current apostolic outreach:** Hosting a once-a-week campus Bible study on the Gospel of John.

**Majors:** Philosophy, with a minor in Catholic Studies

**Favorite food:** My mom's Salisbury steak with cream of mushroom sauce.

**Favorite book:** *Story of a Soul* by St. Thérèse of Lisieux

**Surprising fact about me:** I once modeled for DePaul University. My face can be spotted on trains and buildings throughout Chicago.

# Dear Friends

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Thank you for the many ways you partner with SJV as we carry out our important mission of providing essential formation today for tomorrow's Catholic priests and lay leaders!

Whether this is the first *Vianney News* you have read or the 50th, you are a part of a more-than-50-year tradition of forming future leaders for our Church and world. With your prayerful and financial help, we continue to form Men in Christ, Men of the Church, and Men for Others.

Many of you have had the joy and privilege, as I have had, of working with Father Michael Becker, who concludes his final year as Rector of SJV at the end of May. Like the Rectors before him, Father Becker brought his own skills, experience, and God-given talents to the role. In each instance, God knew who SJV needed at that time.

This issue of *Vianney News* is part tribute, part farewell, but never goodbye to Father Becker. One of his enduring traits that I will carry with me is his fervent desire to raise up saints. He wants Christ for you and you for Christ. Period.

As God would have it, one of the many people Father Becker's priesthood impacted was Father Jon Kelly, soon-to-be ninth Rector of SJV. This issue shares how these two men met, how they impacted each other, and how they have served the Church together for the benefit of God's kingdom. It has been a joy to see them work together, learn from each other, and make each other better.

Many of you have also had the joy of meeting Father Kelly. While we do our best to introduce him to you in this newsletter, I encourage you to come and get to know Father Kelly. His amazing call to the priesthood is inspirational. I have often described Father Kelly as a humble, holy priest – one who hopes to inspire other young men to be the same.

Please join me in thanking Father Becker for his heroic years of service to the Church and wishing him well in his future assignments. Please also join me in welcoming Father Kelly and praying for him as he assumes his new role at SJV and continues the important mission of providing essential formation today for tomorrow's Catholic priests.

May God bless you,

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

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# Honor Mary, Pay Tribute to Father Becker, Support the Mission

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At this time of year, Father Michael Becker typically invites you to the annual Spring Mass and May Crowning, an event which generates significant support for SJV. Given current COVID restrictions, we are unable to gather a large crowd at this time. However, when the SJV priests celebrate Mass during the month of May, they will remember your intentions in prayer. The SJV community would also like to recognize Father Becker as he concludes his tenure as Rector in May.

Please join the many people who have been inspired by Father Becker's leadership and tireless work to form future leaders for the Church by honoring him with a gift to SJV.

## Ways to Make Your Gift:

### Online:

[semssp.org/sjvdonate](http://semssp.org/sjvdonate)

### By Mail:

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(memo: May Gift Fr. Becker)

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If you would like to make a gift of stock or if you have any questions, please call:  
Tizoc Rosales, Director of Advancement, at  
(651) 358-3345.

Thank you, and may God bless you!

## The Memorare in May

Please join the SJV community throughout the month of May by praying the *Memorare*.

*Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me.*

*Amen.*

**Please send us your prayer requests. The SJV priests and seminarians would be honored to remember your intentions in May: [semssp.org/about/requestprayers/](http://semssp.org/about/requestprayers/)**





## SAINT JOHN VIANNEY COLLEGE SEMINARY

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[nhjohnson@stthomas.edu](mailto:nhjohnson@stthomas.edu) or  
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