

VIANNEYNEWS

SAINT JOHN VIANNEY COLLEGE SEMINARY
DECEMBER 2021



GRIDIRON GLORY: Inside the relationship
between SJV and University of St. Thomas football



Fr. Colin Jones Fr. Matthew Alexander Fr. Michael Kearney Fr. Jonathan Kelly Fr. Paul Gitter Fr. Joseph Kuharski

Dear friends and patrons,

Greetings from Saint John Vianney College Seminary!

I am delighted to write to you for the first time as Rector, and I am filled with sincere gratitude and fresh energy as I discover the many supporters and benefactors who demonstrate their ongoing confidence in us through their resources, service, and prayers.

This year, we welcomed 23 new men, and I am already impressed with their courage as they step forward to answer God's call to consider the priesthood. Their fervor, diligence in pursuing the truth, authenticity and love of the Lord should fill us all with hope for the future of our Church.

The bold proclamation from Mordecai to Queen Esther has been running through my mind often in these early days: "Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this" (Esther 4:14). At SJV, we embrace the challenges of secularism and division with hope in the hand of God, who directs us with mercy and power.

It will require holiness, courage and creativity for the Church to become the radiant light and source of true and eternal hope once again. We consider it an honor that God the Father, in His perfect and sovereign providence, would choose us and entrust us to live and serve Him and His Church in times such as these.

We are humbled and thankful for your support in forming future Shepherds eager to bring home all who are lost. Please know that we remember you in our prayers and we thank you for all you do to help our critically important mission flourish.

Please remember us as we remember you in our daily prayers!

Sincerely Yours In Christ,

Fr. Jonathan Kelly
Rector, Saint John Vianney College Seminary

Brothers in abundance

How a college football team and a college seminary have formed a unique bond

Glen Caruso felt something missing.

This was what every NCAA Division III football coach dreams about. The championship game in picturesque Salem, Virginia. Fancy team hotels. Gourmet meals. A national television audience. The Appalachian Mountains peeking out of the background.

But as his team began warming up for the 2012 title game, the University of St. Thomas coach felt surprisingly homesick.

Then, as the sun set on Salem Stadium, Caruso saw the silhouettes coming over a ridge outside the venue.

First, a giant hammer constructed out of cardboard and duct tape. Then a wrench comprised of the same materials. Then a giant UST flag. All carried by a group of boisterous college seminarians sporting hard hats and painted-on beards.

Then the coach heard the chants. Caruso's Crew had arrived.

"It shouldn't feel like home, because it was a big moment," Caruso said of his program's first-ever national championship game appearance. "But in a moment, you went from feeling out of sorts and uncomfortable away from home to just -- I don't know, kind of like a mother's hug or a warm blanket, just made you feel good."

Both St. Thomas, Saint John Vianney College Seminary and the Catholic Church as a whole have learned in recent years that a lot can change during a short amount of time. But the presence of Caruso's Crew – the group of SJV seminarians that leads the



Members of Caruso's Crew cheer during St. Thomas' homecoming football game against Valparaiso.

St. Thomas student section at football games – has not only withstood the test of time.

It's also become a source of unity and fraternity between a seminary, a football team and a university.

"I think it blesses all that are involved," said seminary rector Fr. Jonathan Kelly.

Many traditions changed when UST transitioned all its sports to the Division I level earlier this year. The unprecedented jump from the Division III world to major college sports has come with challenges and sacrifices.

But those are nothing new to a collegiate athlete, who spends most of his or her waking hours either studying or preparing for the next competition.

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They're also quite familiar to a college seminarian, who forgoes the usual comforts and social experiences of American college life in order to discern a higher calling.

Kelly knows. Before entering the priesthood, he was the captain of the nearby University of Minnesota golf team and subsequently played on multiple professional tours.

"I would say the first thing is learning to make sacrifices... for the sake of the community," Kelly said, "but then also for what will be the trajectory of with your life. And I think the young men that are discerning a call to the priesthood are learning that at an early age. One of the challenges, I think, of our culture is to be too independent and to have an extended bachelorhood experience. And these men, right out of the gates, are giving their lives to something greater and beyond themselves."

Said Caruso: "Catholic traditions are a part of how we grow our program, how we grow our men and how our culture is sustained. You know, we've only been [coaching] for 14 years here at St. Thomas, but the traditions that are carried from the Catholic Church into the school into our program give it roots that feel like it's thousands of years old, even though it isn't."

Setting the foundation

Part of St. Thomas' move to Division I in all sports has been the perpetuation of a new rallying cry: "Roll Toms." It's an adaptation of the University of Alabama's famous "Roll Tide" slogan, and it is plastered across UST athletics facilities and on merchandise available in the campus store.

Turns out it's not the first ode to the powerhouse Crimson Tide to make its way through St. Paul, though.

There are a few different versions out there of the genesis of Caruso's Crew, and thus the unique bond between St. Thomas' football

team and the seminary a short walk away from O'Shaughnessy Stadium. All of them involve then-rector Fr. William Baer walking into Caruso's office shortly after the coach's 2008 arrival and telling him "we're here to support you."

That year, Caruso began speaking to the seminary community at the beginning of each semester. He still does today.

"We talked quite a bit about wanting to work tirelessly for each other, and with a humility and selflessness that is rarely replicated," Caruso said of Baer, who passed away in 2018. "And I think a lot of those same core principles that we wanted to have to hold up our program are ones that the seminary also feels very near and dear and close to their heart. ... The idea of a blue-collar mentality kind of gained some traction. And I expected there to be some sort of tenets of that."

"But God bless our seminarians, they took it to a whole new level, right?"

Which is where the Alabama ties come in.

According to SJV graduate Fr. Dan Westermann, the Caruso's Crew motif was born when Zach Greenwell transferred in from Mobile, Alabama – the same year Caruso took over as coach. Greenwell – now Fr. Zach Greenwell and a Crimson Tide fanatic – brought ... with him the school's "Rammer Jammer" cheer, which includes the phrase "Rammer Jammer yellowhammer."

The yellowhammer is Alabama's state bird. But Greenwell once took it literally and built a large, yellow hammer out of – you guessed it – cardboard and duct tape and brought it to an Alabama-Auburn rivalry game.

When the guys at SJV heard that story, the ideas started popping.

"We figured we should build a big purple and silver one for UST," said Westermann, now



Caruso's Crew had a heavy presence behind the set of ESPN's "SportsCenter On the Road" ahead of the 2015 rivalry game against St. John's University.

the pastor at St. John the Baptist Parish in Ypsilanti, Michigan. "We had all kinds of fun with it."

Miraculously, the same hammer appears at just about every home game and select road contests as well. It and the other props have been reconstructed and smothered with duct tape too many times to count.

The construction theme became even more prevalent when St. Thomas began building the Anderson Student Center right next to the stadium. Hard hats, overalls and flannel shirts on seminarians at football games soon followed. So did paint-on beards to complete the ensemble – St. John Vianney seminarians are required to be clean shaven.

"It wasn't any one 'aha' moment," Westermann said. "It was really just organic growth, all from this one guy that built the hammer. From there, we just went all out, as often was the case at SJV. If something's good, we're gonna take it and run with it."

It's evolved into the mainstay of the gameday experience at what's now a Division I Football Championship Subdivision football destination.

There are organized chants led by the seminarians. "Hammer!" is shouted after big hits. "Saw!" comes out when UST's running back slices through the defense. "Wrench!" means the Tommies just got the ball back on a turnover.

Sometimes, they'll throw a classmate up in the air cheerleader-style. Others, they'll open up a lunchbox and pretend to take a break from their construction shift during a timeout.

There are rules, too. No cussing. No booing. No celebrating penalties against the other team. Positive vibes only.

"I think that follows the idea of 'OK, we didn't earn the yards,'" said current seminarian and Caruso's Crew regular Dominic Schoenle. "You've got to get it by hard work."

St. Thomas has certainly done that, amassing a 126-21 record and two Division III championship game appearances since Caruso's 2008 arrival. Caruso has been named National Coach of the Year six times in 14 seasons.

And the seminary has been right there alongside him.

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When ESPN's "SportsCenter" aired live from St. Thomas and archrival St. John's University's game in 2015, Caruso's Crew could be seen – and heard – right behind the set.

When COVID-19 led to a cancellation of UST's first planned game as a Division I program earlier this fall, over 2,000 fans came out for an impromptu scrimmage and

"When he arrived, he brought a depth and a breath of faith into our locker room and rejuvenated it in a way that I didn't even know it needed to be rejuvenated," Caruso said. "Being able to have someone on the team who walked the walk with his brothers in the seminary and his brothers in the football locker room. And to see those to be able to come together at a place like the University of



Seminarian Jordan Roberts, No. 23, was the Division III national offensive player of the year in 2015.

pep rally at O'Shaughnessy Stadium. The SJV seminarians present were the loudest.

"At the game, you can hear them, you can feel them," Caruso said. "But it's more so not just the noise that they create; they bring a positivity, and really, they get the entire student section going."

There's even been the occasional seminarian on Caruso's roster. After all, every young man at SJV is a UST student, and therefore eligible to put on the pads.

One of them, Jordan Roberts, transferred in from South Dakota State in 2015. He was named Division III's offensive player of the year and led the Tommies to that year's national championship game.

St. Thomas and St. John Vianney was priceless for me."

Building the brotherhood

That coming together goes well beyond the student section.

In addition to Caruso's annual talk with the seminarians, several players attend Mass on Saturday mornings before home games at SJV. The seminary's "Last Chance Mass" on Sunday nights was originally created for football players who may be coming back from a long road trip Sunday morning.

They shake hands when they see each other on campus. Both groups are known for sitting in the front of class and carrying themselves with a mature but friendly demeanor.

“The relationship between SJV and the football team is this unique kind of brotherhood,” said Crew member Zach Schmitz. “There’s this mutual respect and honor that they know that we have their back completely no matter what the situation is. And we know that when we’re on campus that they’re going to support us as well.”

The relationship will only continue to grow, and on a larger national stage, as St. Thomas seeks to cement itself at the Division I level.

A new layer in 2021 was Kelly’s appointment as team chaplain. Caruso asked him to serve in the role shortly after Kelly was announced as rector.

“There was really no way I could say no,” Kelly said.

In eight years as a priest formator and now rector, Kelly has provided spiritual direction

for several football players. He also oversees Bible Studies that include the team and members of the seminary.

It’s all a central part of what makes St. Thomas football St. Thomas football, Caruso says. And the engagement in public, social life in an authentic, human way, Kelly says, is a primary step in discernment for men finding out whether or not they’re called to be a Catholic priest.

“I think Coach Caruso and I both have a privileged place of watching young men come into themselves and flourish,” Kelly said. “At such an important age when they are making major decisions that will shape the rest of their lives and impact the lives of many others, I think I can speak for coach and say there is no place we’d rather be.”

Saint John Vianney College Seminary Rector
Fr. Jonathan Kelly was named the
St. Thomas football team’s chaplain in 2021.





Q&A

WITH ONE OF SJV'S
PSYCHOLOGICAL
COUNSELORS

In 2020, Saint John Vianney College Seminary launched a new initiative: to provide more accessible counseling for each seminarian “so he can grow in self-knowledge and self-possession so that he can make a free gift of himself to God in love,” according to Rector Fr. Jonathan Kelly.

Today, Catherine Mollner MA, LP, SEP and Dan Stokman MA, LPCC -- both top-tier counselors who are also devout Catholics, come one day a week to meet with SJV seminarians.

“We do evaluations with each seminarian at the end of each semester,” Kelly said. “I have been really impressed with the men who have met with Catherine. They have grown in self-knowledge and made the most of all the resources provided to them.”

We sat down with Mollner to learn more about her and her role at the seminary.

Q: Give us a little background on your career and credentials.

A: I am a Licensed Psychologist with 30 years of experience in mental health. I earned a Master's at St. Mary's and have pursued specialized training in models of therapy that integrate the multi-faceted aspect of our humanity including thoughts, behavior, emotions and the body. I incorporate my training in these therapy models in my work with the seminarians.

Q: What is your role with Saint John Vianney College Seminary?

A: I provide on-site therapy sessions for the seminarians. Sometimes being away from home and the transition to college is difficult. Strategies that were useful previously may no longer be effective. Often, we can "know better" but struggle to "do better" consistently when approaching the difficulty only at the level of thinking and doing. Through integrating all aspects of the human person, I enjoy helping the men heal from past hurts or struggles, gain freedom, cultivate joy, and work their way through difficult circumstances. I also meet with the priests [on staff] once a month to provide information about mental health issues and discuss the intersection between formation, spirituality and psychology.

Q: Why is it so important to have an in-house counselor on site at the college seminary during these times?

A: While I am happily surprised at how effective psychotherapy can be virtually (online), sitting in a room together facilitates a deeper and more connected experience. Additionally, many barriers are removed with being on site, including ease of scheduling and transportation. I'm just a walk down the hall. I think being on site increases comfort level and overall makes the process of seeing a therapist less daunting.

Q: How does it work practically?

A: The priests meet regularly with the seminarians in formation meetings and spiritual direction. If something arises and they think therapy would be useful, they provide contact information, and the seminarian reaches out. Generally, 50-minute therapy sessions take place once every two weeks for a semester. Information discussed during therapy is confidential.

Q: What has been your experience thus far working with the seminarians?

A: I love being here! Clearly, the men are well loved and supported. The therapy is supported by their faith and love for the Lord. I enjoy integrating the teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith into the conversations I have with the men. At a conference for psychotherapists it was said, "If it is true, it is Catholic, and if it is Catholic, it is true." Frequently during a session, I will suggest something informed by my training as a psychologist, and we will talk about how what we are exploring in therapy is similar to what has been presented in [philosophy or theology classes or spiritual direction with priestly staff].

Q: In what ways does this mental and emotional health impact the men's future as potential priests?

A: The journey of formation, discernment and the vocation of priesthood requires emotional, relational and spiritual maturity to live freely, fully and resiliently. One way to think about mental and emotional health is by how well we can recognize and accept the reality that exists ... which may differ from the reality we think should exist. And then how gracefully we can shift from Plan A to Plan B. This ability is facilitated by discovering and operating from our authenticity and knowledge of the truth that we are created in the image and likeness of God. This awareness provides the foundation of mental health and the platform for continued growth to cultivate vocations.

Through their eyes

Parents of seminarians call their experience a blessing – but it isn't always easy

Jennifer Sustacek still remembers taking her son Ryan to Early Childhood Family Education classes when he was a toddler. During one breakout session, the instructor asked a poignant question, one that still resonates with Sustacek today.

“What is it that you want for your child?” The mother of Saint John Vianney College Seminary alum and current Saint Paul Seminary seminarian Ryan Sustacek didn't answer with a particular career in mind. She didn't think of a specific income tax bracket, a certain suburb or a definitive image of who her son would become.

“I just wanted him to be happy,” she said. “That was it.”

Years later, her prayers – and the prayers of many a parent who has raised an eventual seminarian – have been answered.

“He has found his joy and his happiness,” says Jennifer, a hospice nurse in St. Michael, Minnesota. “That's all I wanted for him when he was a little kid, and now he's found it at the seminary.”

Barb Kratt had a similar prayer for both her sons as they were growing up. Both entered seminary life. One, Andrew, discerned a marriage vocation and now has a wife and a son. The other, Will, graduated from SJV in 2019 and is also in formation across Summit Avenue at The Saint Paul Seminary.

“I'm a firm believer, almost to the point of bias, that God really hears the prayers of

moms,” Barb Kratt said. “I prayed God would send adult Catholic Christian men into my sons' lives always, who will guide them. That was always the No. 1 prayer so they would choose God and have ways to get through life. I have to say He's come through. It chokes me up when I think of how He came through. The men that have entered my sons' lives are pretty amazing.”

That includes Will's fellow seminarians and priest formators at both SJV and The Saint Paul Seminary.

But this isn't a purely rainbows-and-butterflies experience. There can be fear of the unknown when a child charts a course that's increasingly countercultural. And discernment of a deep, spiritual call isn't always comfortable.

Parents carry that cross with their children, too.

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It's known in most Catholic circles as “the vocation story.”

Every seminarian you'll ever meet has one. They all involve an intimate call from the Lord. But they're all unique. Some young men know they're called to discern from an early age. Some don't hear God inviting them till later. Some hear it and push back. But they all end up answering.

That's just one angle, though. Every parent has a vocation story, too.

Barb Kratt's involves sitting at a luncheon with fellow parents of first-year Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis seminarians and hearing a talk from Archbishop Bernard



Will Kratt, left, son of Barb Kratt, graduated from SJV in 2019.

Hebda. To that point, Barb felt somewhat isolated. After all, not many moms' kids choose to consider a life of celibacy, obedience and rigorous spiritual development.

Even some family members had less-than-savory comments about her son's direction. She worried he'd experience similar negativity throughout the rest of his life.

"I wasn't quite sure what I was getting into," Barb Kratt says. "But that luncheon and how warm and welcoming and inviting all the parents were really made me realize I'm not alone."

She also had questions.

"What is this gonna look like? What does your day look like? Will I even get to see you," Kratt remembers asking as Will considered where to go after high school. "Another question in the back of my mind was, 'How

long is this gonna last?' I just had to sit back and watch and listen and support and pray."

Jennifer Sustacek's fears were even more pronounced.

"I didn't want him to die alone," she said.

Her work as a hospice nurse had shown her too many people who do. She and her husband Steve admit not fully understanding what seminary life and the priesthood entails, to the point where Ryan had to do some convincing before they'd allow him to enroll at the seminary.

But after attending the funeral of former SJV rector Fr. Bill Baer – who married the Sustaceks 25 years ago – in 2018, the hearts and minds of Ryan's parents were put at ease.

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"I remember walking into the Cathedral and it was a beautiful, snowy day," Jennifer said, "and what we witnessed that day was the Holy Spirit speaking to us. The amount of people who came and the amount of love in that church for Fr. Baer was so evident and so profound, we walked out and I looked at Steve and said, 'I'm a thousand percent OK with whatever he discerns.' He has a community in the Church and his seminarian brothers. ... That's been so beautiful for him."

Said Steve: "All that fear went away."

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Steve Sustacek works as a data scientist and, like his wife, is a cradle Catholic. But when Ryan started talking about entering the seminary, dad realized he had some homework to do.

"They give you a book when your son discerns to go into seminary," Sustacek said. "The book talked a lot about priests and how joyful they are. That kind of put some peace on my heart, too. I could see priests aren't sitting home alone praying by themselves. They're living very joyful fulfilling lives, maybe even more so than married life."

It also helped that the rector at SJV at the time of Ryan's discernment was Fr. Michael Becker – who previously served as pastor at St. Michael Catholic Church when Ryan was growing up.

"We look now at what Ryan does with his brothers, he's busy," Jennifer said. "He's active and he's happy and he's joyful. It's really, really amazing to see. He makes us want to be better people. I had said to someone recently that isn't that the goal of a priest?"

Said Ryan: "Growing up, in discernment, and throughout seminary, I regularly heard the phrase, 'Ryan, I want you to do God's will

in your life. Whatever that is will make us the happiest.' How reminiscent of the Blessed Mother's words: 'Do whatever He tells you' in the Gospel of John."

There's no magic formula to raising a young man who has the type of relationship with Jesus that would lead him to consider the priesthood. But conversations with the Sustaceks, Barb Kratt and other parents for this story yielded the following trends:

Community: The Sustaceks live in St. Michael, a thriving Catholic town northwest of Minneapolis that sent four other men in Ryan's graduating class to the seminary. The Catholic community there goes to an annual family summer camp and has dozens of youth ministry activities – some of which Ryan led during his high school days. For Barb, Will always had "great friends" that she would have over for pizza occasionally so she could get to know them.

Prayer: Both the Sustaceks and Kratts had prayer built into their daily routines. From an early age, their sons knew both the importance of it and how to make it a habitual practice.

Openness: Steve and Jennifer poke a little fun at themselves about it now. Ryan actually had to set up a meeting with Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis director of vocations Fr. David Blume to answer some of their questions. "He had to work on his discernment, then work on his parents," Steve said. Both they and Barb Kratt mentioned SJV's biannual Vianney Visits for prospective seminarians as pivotal in both their sons' discernment and their role as parents.

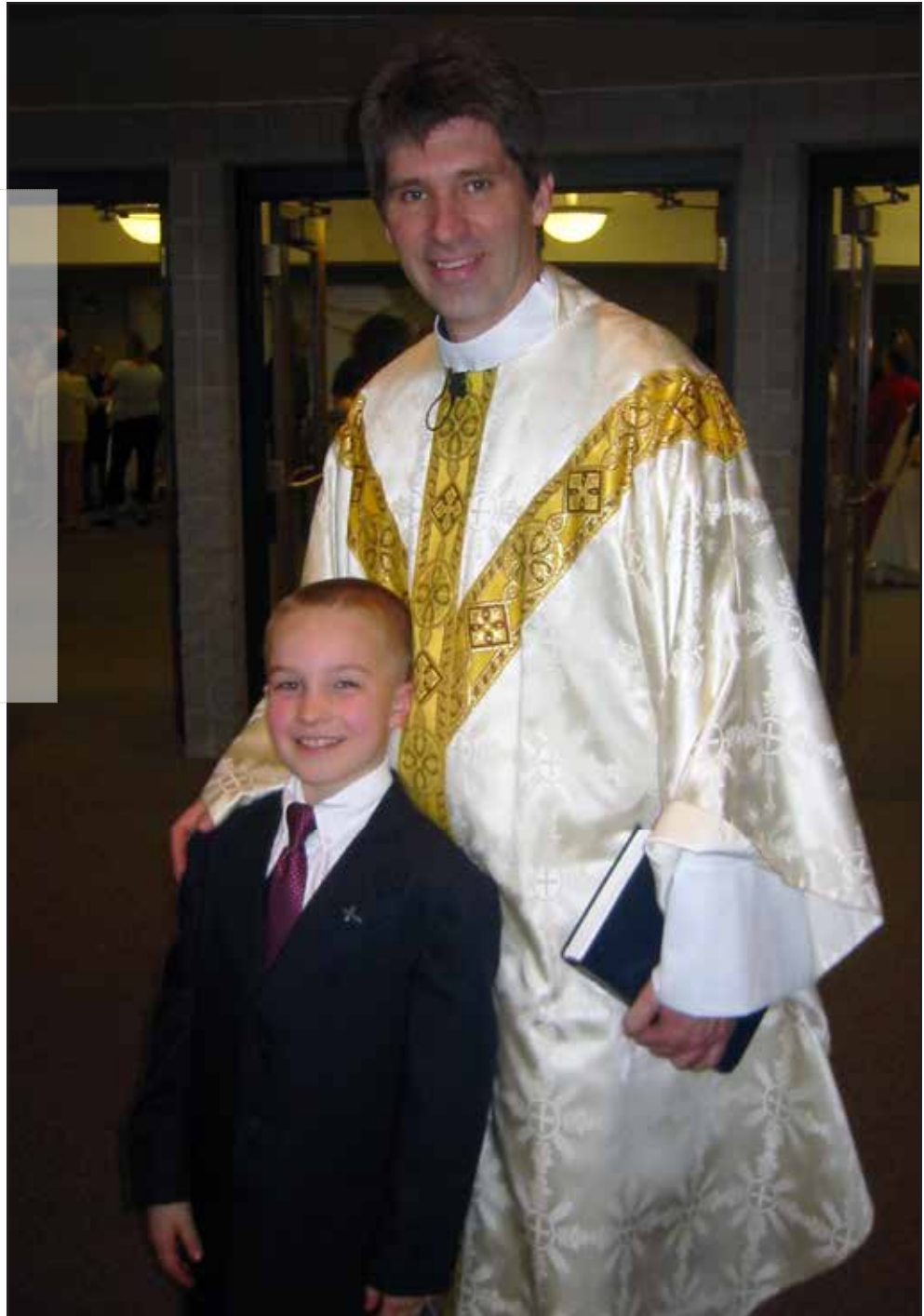
"In truth, (Will) was so involved in youth groups at church and went to so many [Vianney Visits], it just seems like a logical next step for him to explore God's will in his life," Barb said.

And while it's not always an easy, seamless journey, there's a lot more in it for parents than just knowing their kid isn't off having the typical "college" experience.

"The amount of discernment guys put into this isn't just, willy-nilly, 'I think I'll be a

priest because dating didn't work out,'" Barb Kratt said. "They really understand what they're doing and why they're doing it. I get to see them give away themselves, bit by bit. It helps me. Honestly, there's this selfish component where I honestly feel so blessed because I'm growing, too."

SJV alum Ryan Sustacek has known former rector Fr. Michael Becker since Ryan was a child growing up in St. Michael, Minnesota.



Stepping onto the field

Congrats to Our

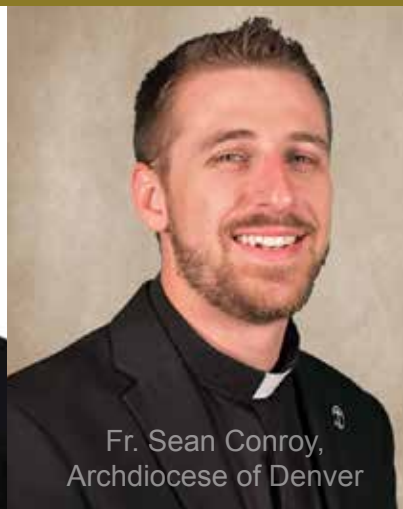
SJV Alumni Ordination Class of 2021



Fr. Max Carson,
Diocese of Des Moines



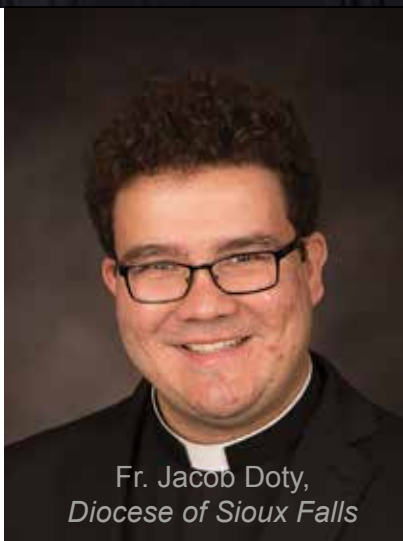
Fr. Miguel Colunga-Santoyo,
Diocese of Lansing



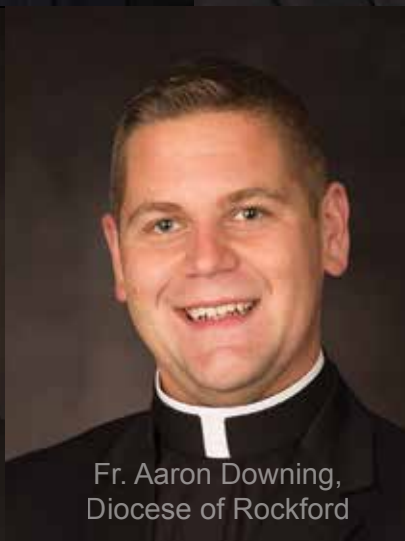
Fr. Sean Conroy,
Archdiocese of Denver



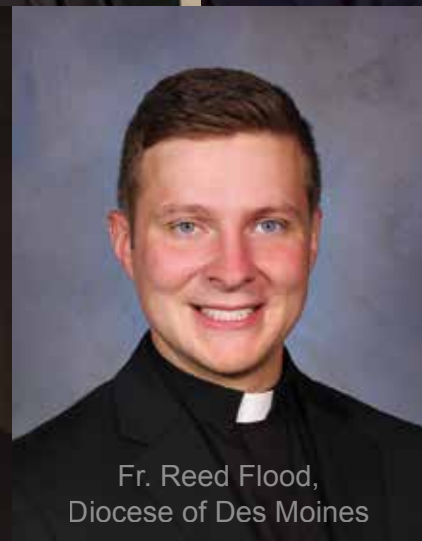
Fr. Jacob Degele,
Diocese of Bismarck



Fr. Jacob Doty,
Diocese of Sioux Falls



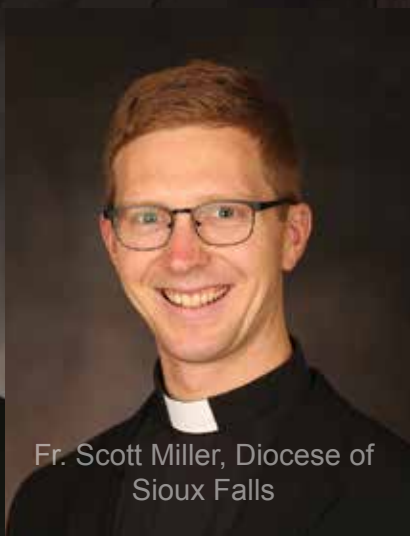
Fr. Aaron Downing,
Diocese of Rockford



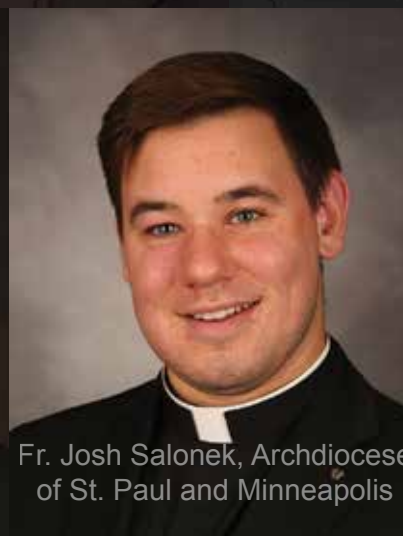
Fr. Reed Flood,
Diocese of Des Moines



Fr. John McFadden,
Diocese of Rockford



Fr. Scott Miller, Diocese of
Sioux Falls



Fr. Josh Salonek, Archdiocese
of St. Paul and Minneapolis



Fr. Kevin Wojciechowski,
Diocese of Saginaw

Saint John Vianney College Seminary also welcomed two new members to its team this year.

Archbishop Bernard Hebda assigned Fr. Colin Jones to SJV as a formation advisor in June 2021. He is a vibrant priest and a gifted teacher who easily connects with seminarians and other students on campus. He is an alumnus of SJV and completed a licentiate in Biblical Theology at the Angelicum in Rome. He was ordained in 2018 for the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis and had been serving as the associate pastor at Holy Name of Jesus in Medina since 2019. Jones will be a full-time formation advisor with additional responsibilities that include co-teaching the seminarian-only Catechism class and advising the new men in academic formation as SJV's "intellectual formation lead."



Mike Roesch was hired as director of business and operations at the end of August. Since 2018, Mike had been the administrative specialist for the John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, D.C. Prior to that, he served as the vice chancellor for the Diocese of Evansville for three years following a five-year stint as director of the University of Evansville Newman Center. Roesch has a BA in Political Science and Theology from the University of Notre Dame and a Master's from the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family at the Catholic University of America. Mike and his wife, Joanna (a Minnesota native), and their 2-year-old son, Thomas, moved to the St. Paul area in August.



Building for the future

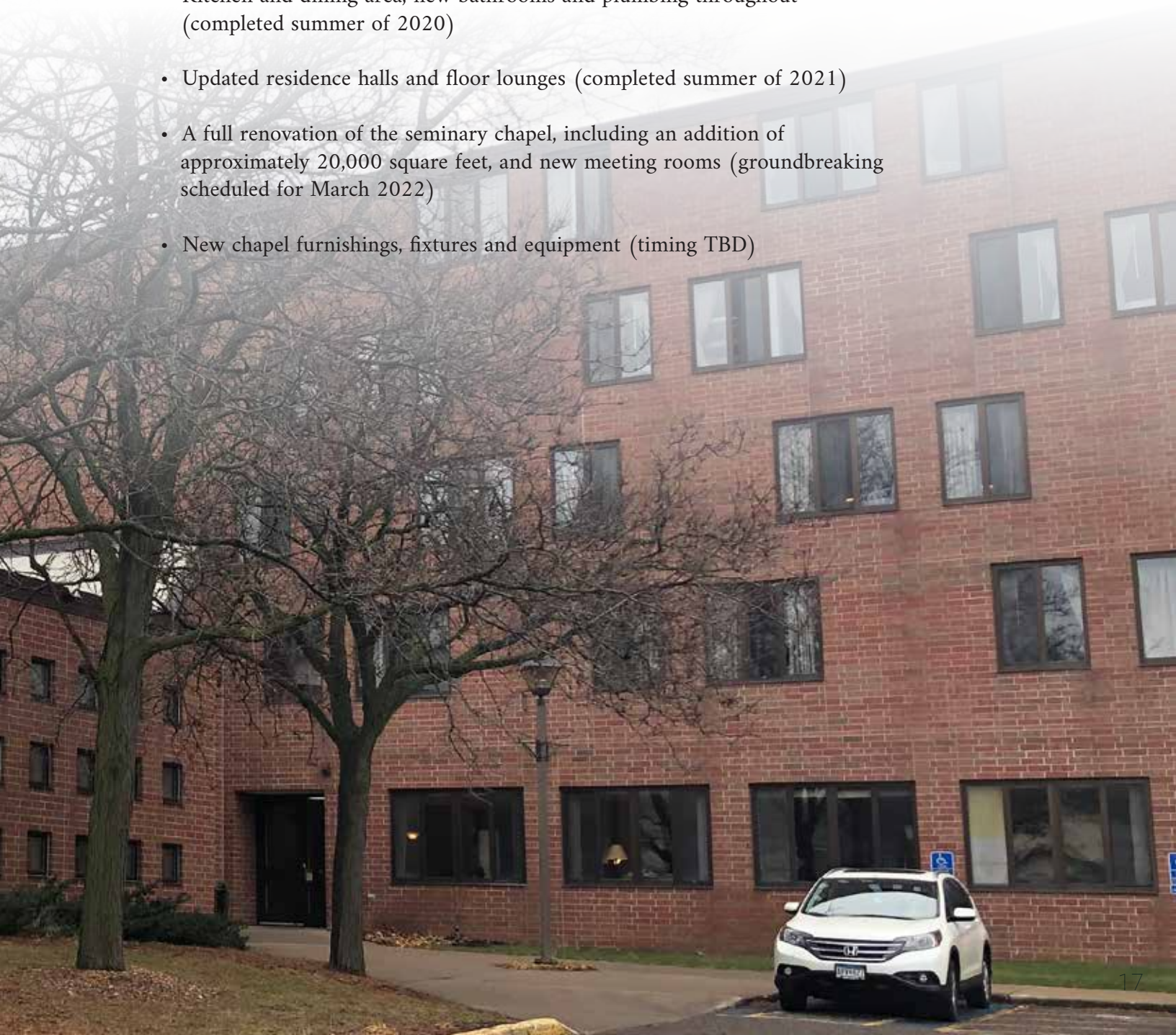


Any priest who attended St. John Vianney College Seminary will tell you: The seminary is more than just a building.

It is a home where seminarians become well-rounded men of faith and learn to make a sincere gift of themselves to others. The environment where they pray, study and build community is an important part of their discernment process.

With that in mind, SJV is currently in the midst of an extensive renovation project to reimagine its facilities. The upgrades include:

- Kitchen and dining area, new bathrooms and plumbing throughout (completed summer of 2020)
- Updated residence halls and floor lounges (completed summer of 2021)
- A full renovation of the seminary chapel, including an addition of approximately 20,000 square feet, and new meeting rooms (groundbreaking scheduled for March 2022)
- New chapel furnishings, fixtures and equipment (timing TBD)





Spotlight on Alumni

Father Dan Westermann – Class of 2010

Aside from serving as a founding member of “Caruso’s Crew” – the group of Saint John Vianney seminarians who don construction gear and get loud at University of St. Thomas football games – Fr. Dan Westermann’s most vivid memories of college seminary life include he and his classmates’ frequent rosary processions around campus.

“I think a lot of people thought we were crazy for doing that,” said Westermann, now the pastor at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

But Westermann has always been comfortable in the public eye. He decided to discern the priesthood early, joining SJV at the age of 18.

He was born and raised Catholic in a town called Pinckney, about a half-hour’s drive northwest of Ann Arbor.

Westermann first thought about becoming a priest when he was in second grade. But it wasn’t until a “Kairos” retreat his senior year of school where he felt like the Lord was really speaking to him.

After graduating from SJV in 2010, he spent four years at the Pontifical North American College in Rome before his June 2014 ordination.

His current parish performs Catholic campus ministry for both Eastern Michigan University and nearby Washtenaw Community College. After his time at SJV, it’s a place in which Westermann is comfortable.

After all, he and fellow seminarian Zach Greenwell – now Fr. Zach Greenwell – are credited with helping create “Caruso’s Crew.”

“It was just a blessing to have a place where we exercised a lot of influence,” said Westermann, who added the Crew’s public presence at football games prepared him well for pastoral ministry. “We were just very visible ... we could really steer the student section, and it was really cool because we focused on not being negative – no vulgarity or trash talk and stuff like that. It was a way to maintain a really positive fan experience there.”

From the Office of Institutional Advancement



**SAINT JOHN VIANNEY
COLLEGE SEMINARY**

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus asked, “Does anyone put new wine into new wine skins?”

In a similar way, I think this applies to the building campaign taking place at Saint John Vianney College Seminary. The effort is a collaborative effort with The Saint Paul Seminary and is called the Joyful Catholic Leaders Campaign.

University of St. Thomas football coach Glen Caruso calls SJV a “factory of hope.” Think about it. In addition to a full college undergraduate course load, the men at SJV commit to a rigorous spiritual formation program that includes a daily holy hour and Mass, weekly formation meetings, evangelistic and service projects, and annual missionary trips on their semester breaks. Why would a young man embrace an intense schedule like this? Very simply, to see if he is being called to serve the Church for the rest of his life as a Catholic priest. This is hope (i.e. the new wine) for the future of our Church.

But no one puts new wine into old wine skins. And up until two years ago, the SJV building was definitely an old wine skin. One goal of our current capital campaign – dubbed the Joyful Catholic Leaders campaign -- is to transform what was a tired dormitory into a genuine seminary facility. In the spring of 2022, we hope to initiate phase three of a four-phase strategic facility renovation plan. Phase three is an addition to the current facility that will enable us to provide the very best formation for decades to come.

When the work is completed, it will provide meeting rooms for small group gatherings and spiritual direction, as well as a dining and kitchen area that enables the men to share meals together. It will provide rooms for all of the priest formation staff to live in residence. It will provide separate spaces between the residential rooms and administration offices.

Most importantly, it will create a new chapel that will provide for increased numbers of seminarians, but also communicate to every seminarian this is the heart of the seminary.

In the coming months, we will be sending out an invitation to participate in this important project. In advance, we ask for your prayers for its success. The capital campaign is more than a fundraising effort. It is an important strategic initiative that will help SJV seminarians answer the call of God in their lives for decades to come. It is the new wine skin for the new wine.



SAINT JOHN VIANNEY COLLEGE SEMINARY

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semssp.org/vianney

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Every year, SJV's new men and seniors make a pilgrimage from campus to the Cathedral of Saint Paul.



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