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# the Herald

A Kenrick-Glennon Seminary Publication



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ENGAGING  
*a Positive*  
IMAGINATION

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## LETTER FROM THE ARCHBISHOP



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**Cover:** Ben Wolf, Pastoral Internship — St. Louis, interacts with students in the 8th grade religion classroom at Mary Queen of Peace School in Webster Groves, MO.

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### Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

St. Louis's Gateway Arch is a great example of an old saying: "an architect's dream is an engineer's nightmare." Eero Saarinen envisioned the Arch with elegant simplicity; but the engineers had to solve many complex problems to make that dream a reality!

It's fair to wonder: does the same hold true as we dream of developing an evangelizing culture in our parishes?

Consider this: a new Program for Priestly Formation—the "blueprint" of seminary formation—was promulgated for the United States in 2022. Kenrick-Glennon Seminary's faculty and administration are the "engineers" responsible for the daily building of that formation program. And it's complex work! But, honestly, the daily work isn't a nightmare for them. On the contrary, though you could say the work is monumental, they seem to take great delight in it!

Or consider this: the "Salt and Light" community for Catholic young adults was envisioned by Fr. Charles Samson, Assistant Professor of Biblical Theology at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, and Fr. Charlie Archer, 2021 Graduate of Kenrick-Glennon Seminary. Turning that dream into a reality has certainly taken a great deal of work! But here, again, the work seems to be a delight to Fr. Samson and Fr. Archer.

It's true that pastors today are up against a similar issue: we all dream of parishes that are evangelizing communities, and pastors are the "parish engineers" trying to make that dream a reality. It's a daunting and complex task! And, honestly, we're still figuring out how to do it. But it's not a nightmare. It's the task that God has given us for our time, and that's exciting!

In these pages you'll see how seminarians at Kenrick-Glennon are being given a jump start on the task, and how they're responding to the complexity with enthusiasm and joy. Yes, they're being invited to dream; but they're also being taught to think through the hard work of building.

I find that re-assuring. I hope you'll also see it as a sign of great promise!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*+ Mitchell T. Rozanski*

Most Reverend Mitchell T. Rozanski  
 Archbishop of St. Louis





## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT-RECTOR

*“Again he said, ‘To what shall I compare the kingdom of God?’”*

(Lk 13:20)

### Dear Friends,

Jesus uses many images throughout the Gospels to exhort or solicit understanding. As a master teacher, it is perhaps the most effective means of moving both the mind and heart into a new relationship with Him. While essays and treatises have their place in our education, we often imagine something before we develop clear ideas. Moreover, when Jesus speaks of the kingdom of God or loving our neighbor, he does not start with the negative – what it’s not or what not to do. He regularly gives a positive picture or engaging parable of what is possible.

The need for a positive imagination in our Christian life was emphasized with my Old Testament professor, Fr. Goswin Habets. When introducing the Ten Commandments he would explain that each commandment is not simply a negative imperative. Each commandment is meant to be read with the repetition of who God is and what God has done: *“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery...”* (Ex 20:2). As a consequence of who God is and what God had done, he would gleefully assert that it is “inconceivable” to have strange gods or kill or steal. The positive reality of who God is and what God is doing defines the relationship and becomes The WAY—the first name for early Christians in Antioch.

*“Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction”* (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 1, Pope Benedict XVI).

If our formation primarily rests upon what to avoid, what not to do, or how to resist elements of life, then we would largely be building upon a void and a life ruled by negatives. To put it in spiritual terms, many folks try to live asceticism without a vibrant mysticism. The ordinary mystic is repeatedly able to articulate how their encounter with the living God has set them on a “new horizon and decisive direction.” A healthy, sacramental mysticism allows us to live more deeply in our daily reality. Celibacy, governance, scholarship, discernment — if they lack a sense of God leading with consoling love, then we miss what Christians of apostolic times so cherished: *“...what we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us...”* (1 Jn 1:3).

Every Herald, and this one in particular, is meant to be celebration of our fellowship of *“what was from the beginning—the Word of life made visible”* (1 Jn 1:1). Enjoy!

In Christ,

Father Paul Hoelsing  
President-Rector



“A healthy sacramental  
mysticism allows us to  
live more deeply  
in our daily reality.”







# Engaging a *Positive* Imagination That to Which a Man Says “Yes”

By Deacon Logan Hepp, Vocational Synthesis – Omaha



“You had so much potential.”

Those were not the words I expected to hear from a family friend when I shared with her that I was entering the seminary. Her response was indicative of the prevailing assumption in our current culture, one which all men considering the priesthood must face:  
choosing celibate priesthood = throwing away your future.

## A NEGATIVE IMAGINATION

That assumption constitutes a “negative” approach to the priesthood. Not only because it is a dispiriting way to look at anything, but primarily because it focuses on what is “lost” in order to pursue the priesthood. Certainly, any man

considering the priesthood and preparing for ordination must “count the cost” (Lk 14:25-33). Priests sacrifice a number of things to belong totally to God and serve His flock: the years spent in preparation for priesthood, the possibility of marriage and children of their own, careers, freedom to move

where and when they want, privacy, etc. Those things alone may seem daunting, and then a man discerning the priesthood must also take into consideration the vast array of duties, responsibilities, and expectations that will be heaped upon him as a priest.

Our brains are wired to fixate on survival and preservation. So, in many ways, it seems natural for us to think about the negative “threats” that are posed to the post-modern secular American worldview by a celibate vocation to the priesthood. What could possibly convince young men with promising futures to “abandon their nets” and generously prepare for ordination to the sacred priesthood? Why would we sacrifice so much?

### POSSIBILITY THAT ATTRACTS

My initial attraction to the priesthood was very simple: I heard God calling me in prayer. I was serving as a FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) missionary, going to daily Mass, praying a Holy Hour, and seeking God’s will for my life when I began to hear a not-so-subtle invitation to seriously consider a vocation to the priesthood. I trusted that God had good plans for my life, but this was a major shift in direction that required careful and attentive deliberation. As I continued to pray about the priesthood, I was filled with a sense that perhaps I was made for this. That possibility was exhilarating and led me to enter the seminary.

“A life consumed by selfish pursuits has no power to set my heart aflame. The call of Jesus Christ to enter into His own sacred ministry makes me feel like my heart may burst.”

Over the years of formation, I have been led in love to consider my life in a new way. I have come to understand the overwhelming truth that God wants all of me, not just the polished parts. The excitement that has been building around the celibate vocation to the priesthood actually involves my growing awareness of my “unsuitability” for it! He wants to



transform every part of me, but He cannot do that until I hand it all over to Him.

Much of seminary formation is about coming to know oneself. Self-knowledge leads to self-acceptance. Self-acceptance leads to self-gift. Self-gift is the foundation of any vocation. Celibate priestly life is not about being called to be a perpetual “bachelor.” A life consumed by self-interest and selfish pursuits has no power to set my heart aflame. The call of Jesus Christ to enter into His own sacred ministry makes me feel like my heart may burst. The priesthood is a call to be a father to God’s people, to be a man of virtue and authenticity. It is a call to maturity, holiness, and love. It is a call to responsibility, sacrifice, and self-gift in imitation of the only-begotten Son of God who emptied Himself to take on our nature and die for the sins of the world.

### FULFILLING POTENTIAL

Love has led me all these years. “With a brother’s kindness” (Roman Missal, 3rd ed.), Jesus has chosen me to love Him in this particular way by this particular gift of myself. I have not cast aside all of my potential and manful vitality by choosing the priesthood for which Jesus has chosen me. Just the opposite! I am fulfilling all of the potential written into every fiber of my being from my mother’s womb. Are the sacrifices and expectations incumbent upon the acceptance of this vocation full of weight? Of course. A man must not lightly enter upon this road, but I have spent years counting the cost.



# Affective Maturity and Celibacy

By Fr. Paul Hoelsing, President-Rector

The amazing thing I have discovered is that I do not possess sufficient resources to complete the task... and that has filled me with joy! The One who calls is faithful and will not abandon me! In every way that I lack, He is totally sufficient.

## SELF-GIFT TO THE BRIDE

A spiritual director once asked me, “Are you expecting Jesus to make you perfect so you won’t need Him?” It was a gut-check that I have returned to through the years. St. Paul begged for his “thorn in the flesh” to be taken from him, but the response he received was, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12:9).

The priesthood is not about some herculean effort to make myself capable of achieving great things and effecting conversion. The priesthood is about conformity to the cross of Jesus Christ; it is about being conformed to the Suffering Servant; it is about imitating the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep; it is about entering into the love of the Bridegroom in order to bring that love to the Bride; it is about surrender and abandonment to divine providence; it is about drinking deeply from the cup Christ drank to become a wellspring of life giving water in the midst of a desert; it is about denying myself, taking up my cross, and following Him; it is about being weak enough for the power of God to work in and through me.

That flies in the face of the post-modern secular American worldview, which is precisely why the priesthood attracts the imagination of young men who have so much to give. The priesthood demands a total gift of self. The men of this day and age are starving to know how to give themselves, to know that they can give themselves to some great work. The priesthood is nothing short of responding to the invitation of Jesus Christ to enter into His saving mysteries.

I am humbled and thrilled to give myself totally to Him for such a purpose, to serve Him and His Church for the rest of my life, to belong completely and uniquely to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to whom belongs all glory forever and ever. Amen. ✚

I was wandering the Gregorian bookstore when I came across a newly published doctoral dissertation in canon law.<sup>1</sup> Such publications are not normally captivating for me, but I could not put this one down. The author put into focus the real complementarity of priestly celibacy and married life.

Both require foundations in human maturity. Each vocation allows men to come alive in the “law of gift” so often repeated by St. John Paul II and likely penned by him in Vatican II’s *Gaudium et Spes*: “Man cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself” (#24). In observing how a man reveals himself in seminary formation, we see his affectivity—various thoughts, feelings, desires, mannerisms, and behaviors—give us a sense of the extent that he can make a greater gift of himself. The term “affective maturity” describes a developmental scale of mental and emotional faculties through stages of self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-possession, and then, self-gift.

Marriage requires a level of maturity and subsequent capacity for growth throughout life, so does priesthood. Consequently, we can often ask the question of seminarians: Does this man have both the capacity and desire to be a husband and father? If so, then his priesthood will have the human foundations for a celibacy that is both an offering that enlivens families and a sacrifice of having his own biological family. Primarily, however, his celibacy becomes the place of receiving intimacy from God. Far from a deprivation, his promise moves him into a yearning with God that is reflected in the hearts of husbands and fathers he serves and echoed in every Mass: “This is my body given for you.” ✚

<sup>1</sup> Geisinger, Robert. *On the requirement of sufficient maturity for candidates to the presbyterate (c. 1031.1), with a consideration of canonical maturity and matrimonial jurisprudence (1989-1990)*. Roma: Editrice Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1999.





# Leading with Vision *and* Vulnerability

By Koby Nguyen, Configuration III – Wichita

Being the president of the Student Life Association (SLA) at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary is a unique experience. The position calls for leadership among peers who are already mature, intensely motivated to conform themselves to Christ, and engage in a formation process guided by first-class priests, astute counselors, and exceptional academic professors. The president's role can be misunderstood, with perceptions falling into two extremes: undervaluing it by seeing it as an insignificant, mediatory role between seminarians and formation staff or excessively glorifying it because it is a position of leadership among remarkable individuals. Neither perspective fully captures the essence of the SLA presidency.

In reality, the president's leadership is best understood as an embodiment of the SLA's mission: assisting the seminary's formation by serving, cooperating with, and empowering his brothers to be united in the single-minded goal of becoming saints and men of self-sacrifice for God's people.

## A CAPACITY FOR VISION

The SLA presidency is a training ground for creative visioning. There is no single "playbook" for being an effective president; each person brings unique strengths and gifts, shaping their approach to the role. In the five years that I have been at Kenrick, I have seen my four predecessors lead in four different ways. One had a unique set of gifts of administration and creativity that were pertinent to the year after the COVID outbreak. Through his leadership, the community life had concrete, organized events that brought enthusiasm and union amongst the men. Other predecessors had charisms for intentionality, listening, organization, and or accessibility, each of which animated his decision-making and vision for the House during his presidency.

My leadership style emphasizes vulnerability as its cornerstone. I strive to lead with authenticity, which involves three key movements: Being attentive, acknowledging what I become aware of, and responding to what has been



acknowledged. These movements mimic three aspects of relational prayer, but it has been the way in which I have led my brothers.

Each month, I have the opportunity, in our House meetings, to address all the Kenrick students. In these addresses, I reflect on the state of the House and offer my observations of the morale and actions within the community. For example, recognizing the monotony and fatigue that often accompany the mid-semester “drag” helps us collectively resist lukewarmness and embrace these challenges as opportunities to grow in virtue and attentiveness to each other. By reframing these moments as subtle invitations to embrace the Cross, we cultivate a proactive mindset that looks beyond immediate discomfort to focus on the grace that can be gained through perseverance. The community itself is becoming more capable of sensing and thinking proactively, looking ahead rather than remaining reactive towards circumstances and trials.

### SEEING THE FIELD

In many ways, the role of the SLA president is akin to a catcher on a baseball team. The catcher is the only player with a full view of the field of play. While it may seem to outsiders that the catcher’s primary task is to catch the ball, his role is far more nuanced. With the aid of the coach and pre-game player analysis, no one better than the catcher can see the ticks and tendencies of the hitter in the box, the movements of the pitches, the confidence of his pitcher, and the exact positioning

of his players that would be most advantageous for each pitch called. Although, the catcher’s role is essential and unwavering, a great baseball team is defined far more than by one position.

Likewise, true effectiveness as the SLA president lies in enabling others to succeed, not in drawing attention to himself. Great leadership is marked by placing others in positions where they can thrive and help others succeed. Through delegation of certain leadership roles and responsibilities, I have watched as my brothers have grown, thrived, and cultivated a happier, holier community. It is not enough to be simply aware of what is happening in me or in the life of the community; it is essential that I know and see my brothers and their gifts and aid them in utilizing what God has given them. In this year alone, through delegation and the utilization of the vast pool of gifts, charisms, and creativity of the men, there have been such things as a renovation of our student center, newly established service with the Missionaries of Charity, and a strengthening of cohesiveness, especially amongst the classes, through spontaneous initiative by individual men.

### BECOMING ICONS OF CHRIST

I will never forget what my high school catching coach often reminded me: “A successful and well-played game by a catcher is known by how much he is unknown.” In other words, a great game by a catcher is reflected in the team’s success, not in the catcher’s individual actions. The same can be said for the SLA president. How great would it be if no one remembered who the president was for the 2024-2025 school year, only that it was a year of growth in communion, holiness, and priestly formation?

This principle extends beyond the seminary to the priesthood. Imagine a parish where, years later, people do not recall the priest’s name but remember that he brought them closer to Jesus and they saw Jesus in him. Is this not the goal of seminary formation? To mold men whose lives reflect the *Imago Dei*—the image of God—who Jesus Christ is? To have a positive imagination in leadership is to have an imagination that aims at having Jesus Christ reflected in the people and inspiring them to make themselves sacrificial gifts to others. Whether as an SLA president or a future priest, the goal remains the same: to guide others to become living icons of Christ. This vision of leadership, rooted in humility and foresight, reflects the heart of the seminary’s mission and the Church’s calling for her priests. ✚



# Pastoral Friendship in Parish Life

By Mrs. Betsy Fentress, Board Member

The priest acts in *persona Christi*; he represents Christ to his people; he mediates for them in the celebration of the Eucharist, and then by extension, in the pastoral life and governance of the Church.

But any sensible father knows that he can't manage the family alone.

*Rev. Eric Banecker, pastor, in True Confessions: Voices of Faith from a Life in the Church*

**F**r. Erick Banecker, a young priest in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, is wise beyond his years. He understands that what makes him a father isn't that he has a title, but a *family*, and he is called to help them flourish. How does a parish family flourish? I think St. Thomas Aquinas has a good prescription: friendship. Known as "The Angelic Doctor," Aquinas wrote a lot about friendship. With a debt to Aristotle, he taught that virtuous friendship is "to will the good of another." If we really believe that's what real friends do—*will the good of each other*—a healthy parish should freely share gifts of presence, gratitude, and empathy.

Friendship requires presence; showing up really is powerful. Consider the diocesan priest who fired up his grill and handed out hot dogs to families as they were leaving the Sunday night PSR program. The next year he had forty-two new students in his school! That casual encounter of getting to know them, and "breaking bread together," could not happen over social media or Zoom, but it could, and did, in a parking lot.

Friends know how to empathize. Just recently a pastor here in St. Louis bought several copies of an inspirational book written and illustrated by his seven-year-old parishioner fighting brain cancer. He was so moved by her resilience that he's re-selling her

books to help the family defray the cost of her treatment. His empathy is a gift to his parish; it's infectious.

Parishioners light up when their parish priest makes an appearance or expresses support. I know of two families who have had tragedies in recent years, and the word got out that their pastor showed up, quickly, at their homes. *It meant the world to them.* Only someone known as a loving and trusting "father" would be welcomed by a family that is so deeply hurting.

Friends ask for and give help. Service is the heart of parish life, requiring a steady supply of leaders and volunteers. Healthy pastors





will not be threatened or wearied by lay initiatives but will encourage and welcome them. On the flip side—if friendship reigns in a parish—a good pastor will confidently tap lay talent for parish needs. *People like to be asked to serve*; it makes them feel seen. As a good father notices the potentiality in his children, a good priest will do the same, deftly matching gifts with needs. When there's a day of service, a funeral reception, or a finance question, if he's cultivated a culture of friendship, he'll know who to call, and they will generously respond.

Some acts of friendship remain mostly invisible. One afternoon I was chatting with a former pastor when he revealed he regularly went to the nearby jail and said Mass. He always asked if any of the prisoners had served as altar boys. Hands went up, and he invited them to serve at the makeshift altar. As a parish family, we all benefitted from these hidden acts of kindness, as we do with the quiet deeds of the laity who visit the sick, assist the vulnerable in housing needs, and serve at the soup kitchen. As the body of Christ, we rise and fall together.

Authentic friendship, whether practiced in full view, or in the shadows, is the bedrock of parish life. Presence is required. No one showed up more, in *persona Christi*, than St. John Vianney, the patron saint of parish priests. His confession lines were epically long. “The priest is not a priest for himself,” he wrote. “He does not give himself absolution; he does not administer the Sacraments to himself. He is not for himself, he is for you.” So, too, should we be for him—in friendship. ✚



**MRS. BETSY FENTRESS** is one of the many laypeople who sit on the Board of Trustees, sharing with the seminary her experience in family life, parish life, and academia. The combined experience and wisdom of the Board are indispensable for the discernment of forward momentum for the institution. When sharing with Mrs. Fentress the ideas for this Spring's *Herald Magazine*, she was generously willing to put to words the image of a positive, lay-clerical relationship. In the parish, as within the seminary, “it takes a village.” We're grateful for her presence and that of the other members of the board, offering insights into what shared governance entails.



# POSITIVE ATTRACTION IN VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT

By Fr. Shane Deman, Vice-Rector of Formation



Three Kenrick Seminary graduates who are working in vocations ministry recently joined me for an online discussion about the current landscape of vocational accompaniment. We discussed trends that we are seeing and how we help young discerners cultivate an authentic and positive desire for a religious vocation.

Cultivating a healthy capacity for relationships is seen to be crucial in how one discerns a possible call to the priesthood. Helping a young man remain in supportive relationships provides him with discernment settings among friends and family members who know him well and can speak into the

strengths of his life. Yet this ability for relationship is even more important in how a man approaches prayer, as he seeks to know the Lord intimately with an attentiveness to His voice. Fr. Scott Schilmoeller, Class of 2017 and Director of Vocations for the Archdiocese of Omaha, notes that young people need *“authentic supportive Christian community where they are learning how to meet Jesus.”* Families, youth groups, Newman Centers, or faith-filled friends are necessary for one to know God personally and discern how to serve the Church generously.

## ADDRESSING FEAR

Additional challenges that can disrupt a man’s entrance into formation are a lack of interior recollection and mature self-governance. Those who get overly caught up in thoughts about the priesthood sometimes lack the initiative to begin the application process. *“There is a bit of fear to take the next step, to actually applying, or having the next conversation,”* noted Fr. Brian Alford, Class of 2011 – Springfield, IL. Such men might enjoy being part of a fraternity of men who are considering the priesthood, but who are not always willing to make a firm commitment. At the same time, some are too quick to assume a priestly vocation and might jump into seminary without first establishing proper interior roots of prayer and self-knowledge.

Even with an eagerness to serve the Church, the application phase might reveal certain areas of underdevelopment in a man’s life, which should be addressed before he enters priestly formation. Rushing a man into seminary “doesn’t do service to the man,” said Fr. Alford, and entering seminary later with a deepened sense of maturity will provide him greater freedom.

Fr. Tony Ritter, Class of 2019 – St. Louis noted that some young people worry that they will not be happy as a celibate. *“There is a fear that the Lord won’t fulfill in the deepest longings of our heart.”* Yet the joy of those who cherish their relationship with God in a consecrated state gives a credible witness that religious vocations are indeed fulfilling.

## FREEDOM TO FOLLOW

There can be widespread expectations for quick results in how many priests are getting ordained each year, which can put undue pressure on seminarians to get ordained. Yet Fr. Schilmoeller noted that *“success is walking with a man to meet Jesus in his humanity to what is the next step that is best for him.”* Patiently accompanying a man will hopefully lead him to greater self-knowledge and self-acceptance so that he can pursue God’s will with generosity. We cannot *“count our seminarians as future priests. They are men who are discerning. The seminary is not a priest factory,”* said Fr. Ritter. Those who discern out of seminary have not failed if the Lord leads them to the vocation of marriage with the support of the Church.

Such was the case with a story Fr. Schilmoeller shared over the course of our conversation. He tells of a recent trip to our seminary in which he brought a few young discerners from his diocese. That weekend just so happened to coincide with one of their seminarians’ final few days at the seminary, as the man had peacefully and joyfully discerned to leave seminary formation to pursue a call to marriage. The freedom and love of the community that accompanied the seminarian leaving formation surprised the young discerners, anticipating such a decision to be met with casting stones or having to hide. Fr. Schilmoeller was able to meet them in their awe and wonder by affirming, “No, this is what happens when discernment goes well!”

Perhaps what is most important is for a man to discern a direct invitation to the priesthood from the Lord and find joy



in responding to that call. It might seem obvious that priestly candidates have this desire within their hearts. Yet some men enter formation with guilt knowing the clergy shortage, or with an external feeling of duty based on the suggestions of others. Yet a healthy long-term commitment should be rooted in a direct invitation from Jesus to serve as one of His priests. When this personal calling is in place, a man can pursue Holy Orders with a sense of freedom and remain confident in the Lord’s love.

A healthy desire for the priesthood starts with a holistic sense of one’s own humanity and a direct calling from Christ. Any efforts to aid young people in this integrated approach will help those considering the priesthood and those who are advancing in seminary. ✚



**TO LISTEN TO THE REST  
OF THE DISCUSSION,  
check out the full conversation  
on our YouTube channel  
by scanning this QR code.**



# INTELLECTUAL FORMATION: Training Ground for Creativity

For the priest, and not only for him, but for every Christian engaged in study, the intellectual life is not just a hobby, nor merely an endeavor of personal interest. A supernatural perspective is necessary. This supernatural perspective sees the pursuit of Truth as a pursuit of God Himself. As deacons, we have the opportunity to complete a thesis in the final year of our seminary formation. Below are some of this year's deacons' project inspirations.



## DEACON DAN MAURO

Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas

The study of Theology puts us in contact with God and with His plan to save our souls and to lead us to eternal life. Early in my formation, through an introduction from Fr. Charles Samson, I encountered a Scripture scholar whose work was infused by this supernatural perspective. This scholar, a Jesuit priest who lived from 1567-1637, is Cornelius à Lapide. His work was not only imbued with a humility and reverence before the inspired word of God, but it also exuded a zeal to communicate what we need to know as Christians to reach our goal of Heaven.

I repeatedly found his commentaries incisive and illuminating. There was only one problem—the large majority of his work remains untranslated from Latin to English. Through a series of providential moments, the vision for my thesis became clear, to translate a small portion of his commentaries and to make an argument for why he is worthy of further study. I titled the work *Cornelius a Lapide and the Perennial Catholic Vision for Scripture Scholarship* to highlight that the vision the Church has for study of the Bible has always been rooted in this supernatural perspective and that this is a task also for us today.





## DEACON JAKE ROSENMEYER

**Diocese of Sioux City**

My thesis is titled *A Theology of Agriculture and its Relationship with Laudato Si'*. I chose to write on this topic because of the rural nature of my home diocese, Sioux City, Iowa. Pope Francis's landmark encyclical deals with a variety of topics on the environment and agriculture, especially how humanity has impacted the earth.

It is common for people to ask a range of questions to priests after Mass. Being rooted in intellectual formation allows us to answer those questions and respond in a positive way. Throughout my years in seminary, my intellectual formation has allowed me to cultivate a mind and imagination that allows for many possibilities in a given situation. We no longer live in a world where one size fits all. As future priests, we must be able to hone a mind that is not limited to one solution that worked in another time and place. We must be creative and use our imaginations to help our people in the best way possible. This is why my thesis topic was so interesting to me. It allowed me to take a new look at a set of circumstances I have been familiar with my whole life. It allowed me to see with new eyes the gift of agriculture and the gift of how it aligns with our faith.



## DEACON BRIAN HULA

**Archdiocese of Omaha**

The title of my thesis is *Receiving Supernatural Life and Offering Oneself to God: Harmony between Liturgy and Personal Prayer Rooted in Imitation of the Trinity*. I wrote about how personal prayer and the Mass are complementary ways in which a Catholic man or woman receives grace from God and makes an offering of his or her life back to God. I chose this topic because it corresponds with two strong desires in my own heart as I, God willing, become a priest later this year: to give people the Mass and to invite them and teach them how to pray.

My intellectual formation here at the seminary has formed me to become "multi-dimensional" in the way that I present the faith to others. This means that I am not including only factual content about the truths of our Faith – though this certainly serves as a foundation! On top of this foundation, I strive to add in "layers" to help present something rich and thought-provoking. For example, how does this truth concerning morality speak to – and satisfy – people's desires and emotions? How does a truth about the Trinity or about who Jesus is invite us to develop a more intimate and loving relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? The professors here at the seminary do a great job of using this synthetic and multi-faceted way of learning, and it is exciting and fruitful for me to implement it in my ministry. ✚

## BECOMING MESSENGERS OF HOPE

By Nick Reinagel, Configuration I – St. Louis

**“Christendom is over.”** This was stated during a “Media Literacy for Seminarians & Priests” workshop held this past January, led by KP Consulting, a Catholic strategic marketing firm that has worked with parishes and organizations across the country. At the workshop, seminarians were encouraged to begin dreaming about how to communicate the Gospel message in new and creative ways.

We live in a time where there is increased hostility towards Christianity, along with increased belief systems such as nihilism, agnosticism, and rationalism. There is an even greater increase in “nones” or those who do not profess any religion. As such, there is a great need for ministers of the Gospel to be messengers of hope, providing light to a world far from God. Due to the state of the culture that surrounds us, we were invited to imagine ourselves as pastors and consider ways we would draw new people into the Church and inspire those who are already present in the Church. *What does it look like to begin that same apostolic work that the first apostles took part in, offering hope to the world?*

Church leaders cannot minister to the people in the same ways we did when we were living in Christendom. We cannot rely solely upon the weekly bulletin to invite, inform, and evangelize the culture. We must seek counsel from the Holy Spirit regarding fresh, exciting ideas on how to communicate the Gospel with joy! Social media is a great outlet to do this and has been utilized in various ways as evident in the great work of Bishop Barron’s Word on Fire series or Fr. Mike Schmitz’s Bible in a Year podcasts. However, we are not called to be another Bishop Barron or Fr. Mike, we are called to utilize the gifts God has given each of us to communicate the Gospel message with hope.



My experience of sharing the Gospel has been fruitful through relational ministry. Just as Jesus, the perfect relational minister, spent plenitude of time with his twelve apostles listening to their stories, providing counsel in times of need, and praying with them, all the faithful are called to share the love of the Gospel. As someone who loves to dream about what the Church could look like apostolically, I am moved to contemplate the following questions centered on entering the mission field: *What would it be like for a parish to be a place of relationship? What would it look like to prioritize interpersonal communication through small group formation, radical hospitality, and personal invitation, whereby we use the spiritual gifts God has given us?*

If this begins to occur, I believe we will have parishes full of zealous missionary disciples, ready to communicate the life of Jesus to those who are sitting in the pews, those fallen away Catholics, and those who have yet to encounter the person of Jesus Christ. ✚

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Through the Annual Catholic Appeal, St. Louis Catholics can bring hope and love to our parishes, schools, ministries, and neighbors throughout the region. Your prayerful support and charitable giving through the ACA provides essential support for so many and serves as a witness to God’s love in the world. Kenrick-Glennon Seminary receives an annual grant from the Appeal, so your support directly impacts each seminarian as he prepares to bring Christ to and serve others. [For more information, visit aca.archstl.org.](http://aca.archstl.org)



## WHEN LGBT+ QUESTIONS ARISE IN PARISH LIFE

By Dr. Ed Hogan, Academic Dean

### What does it mean for me to live well in my body?

What does it mean for me to love well with my body? Where do I go—physically, psychologically, and spiritually—with my unfulfilled longings?

Those are simply human questions: we all ask them. But for a Christian who experiences same-sex attraction or gender discord those questions draw them into the drama of the Paschal Mystery pretty quickly, and pretty insistently.

At a daylong workshop in January, Anna Carter—President and co-founder of Eden Invitation—helped seminarians understand what it's like for people who experience same-sex attraction to follow Jesus and the Church's teachings, offering tips for what is often more helpful, and what is sometimes less helpful, in drawing people into deeper discipleship.

Eden Invitation is a relatively new and dynamic force in Catholic ministry for people who experience same-sex attraction or gender discord. I've been in conversation with them for several years, and even had the blessing of going on retreat with the EI community. Here are three things that stand out to me about the work of Eden Invitation, all of which were abundantly on display in the Workshop that Anna led.

One: while their key questions come from the background of people who experience same-sex attraction or gender discord, they are essentially human questions—questions that everyone

asks, and that disciples need to answer more deliberately than American culture usually does.

Two: how honest members of the EI community are about the “stuff” they're wrestling with in life, how deliberate they are in letting Jesus into that stuff, and how courageous they are in staying with him when discipleship is hard. These three points have taught me a great deal about discipleship in my own life,

because they don't apply only to sexuality. Because of their honesty, deliberateness, and courage, I have received far more than I have given in my relationship with members of Eden Invitation.

Three: the open joy with which the EI community celebrates their relationship with Jesus and the Church, and the growth of the community because of that joyful proclamation. Frankly, they are one of the best examples of evangelization that I have witnessed in the Church.

Seven years ago, Anna Carter and Shannon Ochoa (the other co-founder) imagined something that did not yet exist, and Eden Invitation was born. The result, in my experience, is not only a dynamic force in authentic Catholic ministry to people who experience same-sex attraction and gender discord, it has become a model of what discipleship could look like for the entire Church, and a model of what it could mean for seminarians and priests to imagine what does not yet exist in their parishes. ✚



*Note: I acknowledge that term “LGBT+” is a point of contention in Catholic circles. To clarify, I maintain that it is not contrary to genuine Christian anthropology when it is used—as it is here—not to label a person's identity but simply to name a person's experience and to meet them where they are.*

For more information on how the Seminary engages these topics, see the documents posted on our webpage: [kenrick.edu/pastoralapproaches](http://kenrick.edu/pastoralapproaches) or scan the QR code to the right.

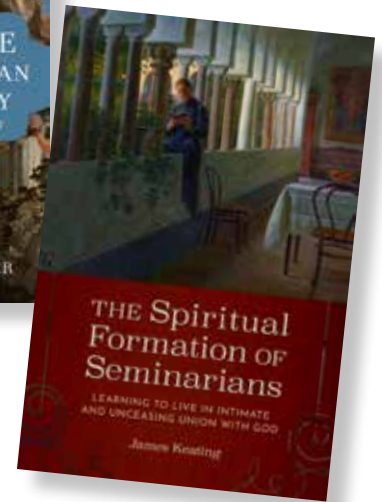
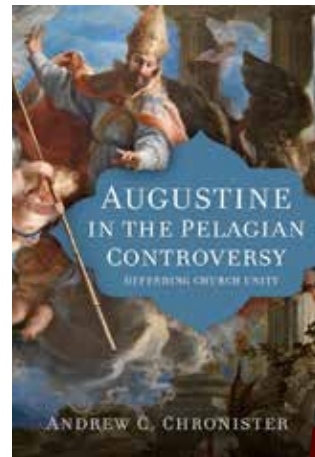




## Recent Faculty Publications

Dr. Andrew Chronister, Associate Professor of Patristics and Ancient Languages, recently had a book published with Catholic University of America Press, 2024. His work, titled, *Augustine in the Pelagian Controversy: Defending Church Unity*, analyzes both the historical context of the controversy as well as Augustine's argumentation in his anti-Pelagian works.

Deacon James Keating, Professor of Spiritual Theology, released his latest book, *The Spiritual Formation of Seminarians*, published with Catholic University of America Press, 2025. Spiritual formation is the integrating center of seminary formation. Dcn. Keating's work considers the role of spiritual direction in the cultivation of a man's interior life. ✚



## In Memoriam

Please pray for the repose of the souls of our priest-alumni who have passed away in recent months:

**Fr. Michael P. Buckley**

Class of 2014 – Colorado Springs

**Fr. Patrick J. Christopher**

Class of 1991 – St. Louis

**Fr. John C. Deken**

Class of 1972 – St. Louis

**Fr. James Knapp, SJ**

Former Faculty

**Fr. Martin J. Mulvihill**

Class of 1983 – St. Louis

**Fr. Michael W. Penn**

Class of 2003 – Jefferson City

**Fr. Gerard R. Welsch**

Class of 1966 – St. Louis

## Welcome, Mrs. Suzanne Coffey

**AS WE CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT** the new Program for Priestly Formation, Sixth Edition, and build our Propaedeutic stage experience, personnel is required to accommodate the additional groups, programs, and men receiving formation. We are happy to have the addition of a new counselor, Mrs. Suzanne Coffey, to aid in our group counseling settings, with intention for her to receive the propaedeutic stage men in individual counseling next fall. Mrs. Coffey is a Licensed Professional Counselor and a local and national speaker with over 25 years of experience working with parents and children. We are pleased to welcome her expertise to our team for the continued configuration of men unto the heart of Jesus. ✚





# THE TENOR OF A SURRENDERED “YES”

By Fr. Don Anstoetter, Director of Worship

By early May, the semester was already winding down and my summer plans were set: ordinations, academic conference, weddings, retreat, family vacation, course prep, and Eucharistic Revival. But then I received a phone call from Trudy McCaffery, the woman who directed my 30-day silent retreat the previous summer. Her request was simple: *Can you help as a spiritual director on the 30-day retreat this summer?*

I laughed at her. I could imagine no scenario in which this would work. My summer was full. It seemed *highly* unlikely I would be able to shift my calendar around to free up 30 days right in the heart of the summer. And on top of that, I felt woefully unqualified to direct the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

But when a holy woman asks you to consider some spiritual work, it's best to take her seriously! So I told Trudy I would see what was possible and get back to her in a few days. She promised to pray for me.

## SURRENDERING THE GIFT

Lo and behold, within three days, everything I needed to cover, cancel, or move fell into place. It shouldn't have been that easy! I took it as a sign God wanted me to help with the retreat. Trudy agreed.

Though I was now committed, I felt no better prepared. Good thing I didn't have much time to worry. Within a few weeks, I was at Broom Tree Retreat Center in South Dakota meeting daily with my four directees.

I was in over my head. I wanted my directees to have a great experience of the Spiritual Exercises, but I felt like the wrong man for the job. Self-doubt gnawed at me. One afternoon, I

went for a walk to hash things out with the Lord: Father, these directees deserve someone who knows what he's talking about!

Very simply, I felt God's reply more than I heard it: They deserve someone who listens to Me.

*Ok, God, You got me! I can't argue with that.*

## LISTENING TO GOD

That little lesson shaped the rest of my summer and continues to resonate with me today. The most important thing I do—the most important thing any of us can do – is listen to God.

I spent dozens of hours that summer with one ear to my directees and one ear to the Holy Spirit. I couldn't rely on my experience as a spiritual director (which is limited) or my knowledge of St. Ignatius's teaching (which is scant). I could only trust in God.

The Lord blessed the summer and brought forth much spiritual fruit. I marveled at how He used me to reach my directees. And the experience of directing the Spiritual Exercises continues daily to the way I approach my responsibilities here at the seminary.

I've learned that when I rely on myself and my own logic, the world of the possible shrinks down and fear clouds my discernment. But when I'm listening to God, He stretches my imagination, fills me with hope, and invites me into new ways of giving myself and serving the Church.

St. Paul says it best: *“Now to Him who is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine, by the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen”* (Eph 3:20-21). ✚

# Serving with a *Positive* Imagination

It has been said that having a gift for creativity is possessing an ability to see what's "not there." Formation at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary prepares men to perceive what could be. Our faculty lead this charge for the men, not only in their professional roles but also in their lives outside the seminary. Below are just a handful of ways some of our faculty are serving the Church beyond the institutional walls.

## FR. SHANE DEMAN

### Vice-Rector for Formation

Fr. Deman, in addition to his duties as Vice Rector of the seminary, serves as the Director of Seminarians for his home Diocese of Sioux City, IA. In this role, he co-hosts a podcast called "Outcast Catholic" with Fr. Travis Crotty, Class of 2020.

## DCN. STEVE FAHRIG

### Associate Professor of Biblical Theology

Dcn. Fahrig recently took over the responsibility of managing Imprimaturs for the Archdiocese of St. Louis (formerly managed by Dr. Ed Hogan from 2011-2024).



## DR. FRANCIS FEINGOLD

### Associate Professor of Philosophy

Dr. Feingold has presented papers at four Philosophy conferences this past year and has published two academic articles on the subject of "Aquinas on Angels."

## DR. LARRY FEINGOLD

### Professor of Theology & Philosophy

Over the past three years, Dr. Feingold will have presented at Priest Convocations on the topic of the Eucharist in the following dioceses: Omaha, NE; Lafayette, IN; Springfield-Cape Girardeau; Bismarck, ND; Kansas City, KS; Kansas City-St. Joseph; Nashville, TN; Memphis, TN; Springfield, IL.

## FR. DON HENKE

### Associate Professor of Moral Theology and Bioethics

Fr. Henke serves as the chaplain for the St. Louis Guild of the Catholic Medical Association and as a regular presenter on Catholic bioethics at the end-of-life for the Roman Catholic Foundation of Eastern Missouri.

## DR. ED HOGAN

### Academic Dean and Associate Professor of Systematic Theology

Dr. Hogan is publishing a textbook on Medical Ethics with his mom (a Catholic philosopher), his brother (a Catholic lawyer), and his sister-in-law (a Catholic physician), titled, *Medical Ethics in the Catholic Tradition*.

## DCN. JAMES KEATING

### Professor of Spiritual Theology

Dcn. Keating was selected by the Vatican in 2020 to serve as one of twelve members on the Vatican Study Commission on the question of women and the diaconate.

## FR. JOHN MAYO

### Spiritual Director

Fr. Mayo is currently enrolled in the American History PhD program at St. Louis University. His proposed dissertation will be a biographical history on Joseph Cardinal Ritter, Archbishop of St. Louis, 1946-1967.



## MRS. JEN RYAN

**Director of Pastoral Education, Evangelization,  
and Apostolic Service**

Jen is a part of a team with Dr. Ed Hogan that trains parishes and school leaders in accompanying people who experience same sex attraction and gender discord. There are 11 workshops total slated for the 2024-2025 academic year.

## FR. CHARLES SAMSON

**Assistant Professor of Biblical Theology**

Fr. Samson is a chaplain for the St. Louis Young Adult Group, Salt + Light. Each month he offers spiritual direction, the Sacraments, and events for young people in the St. Louis area.

## FR. JASON SCHUMER

**Vice-Rector for Cardinal Glennon College**

Fr. Schumer has been the Archdiocesan Spiritual Advisor for the Cursillo movement since 2012, assisting at more than a dozen Cursillo retreats for both men and women.



## FR. CONOR SULLIVAN

**Psychological Consultant**

Fr. Sullivan offers retreats, spiritual direction, conferences, and provides ongoing formation of Catholic Mental Health professionals in the St. Louis area.

## FR. KRIS TEATER

**Director of Spiritual Formation and Assistant Professor of Spiritual Theology**

Along with Fr. Anstoetter and Fr. Hoelsing, Fr. Teater provides the 30-day Spiritual Exercises each summer and celebrates Mass every Sunday for the Missionaries of Charity community in North St. Louis.

## MR. JEFF WISNIEWSKI

**Director of Sacred Music and Associate Professor of Music**

Jeff is the music director at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in St. Charles, MO. He and his wife, Wendy, lead a chant camp (choir) for school-aged children at the parish every summer.

## MSGR. MICHAEL WITT

**Professor of Church History**

Msgr. Witt recently recorded an entire podcast series titled, "Spiritual Masters," with Covenant Network. It considers a book by Archbishop Alfred Hughes, discussing prayer in the Catholic tradition. ✚



# In the Footsteps of Sts. Peter and Paul

By Deacon Ethan Osborn, Vocational Synthesis – Kansas City-St. Joseph

*“Because one has to pay a serious price for the Faith in an apostolic time...  
[it] is more intense and therefore more attractive...  
There is an immediate experience of the momentousness of belonging to Christ.”*



As I knelt before the pillar that is said to have held St. Paul's body during his martyrdom in Rome, reflecting on all that I had experienced over the past seven days and asking St. Paul for his intercession, these words taken from the book *From Christendom to Apostolic Mission: Pastoral Strategies for an Apostolic Age* came into focus for me in a new way.

On January 3rd, 2025, the deacon class of 2025—along with our trusted guide, Fr. Charles Samson, and Rector and Vice Rector of the seminary, Fr. Paul Hoelsing and Fr. Shane Deman—set out on pilgrimage in the *footsteps* of St. Paul and St. Peter. Our first seven days of pilgrimage in Greece were focused on where St. Paul first brought the Gospel to Europe. Our travels brought us to such momentous places as Neapolis, Philippi, Delphi, Corinth, Thessaloniki, and Athens. Traveling by air-conditioned charter bus limited the degree to which we could authentically experience the footsteps of St. Paul (which, admittedly, I am grateful for). Simply seeing, however, the distance he traveled, the hardships from the mountainous terrain that he faced, and the relics of the resistance he met on his missionary journeys (like his prison cell in Philippi, where he was on-trial in Corinth and Athens, and the monument of his martyrdom in Rome, *Tre Fontane*) really vivified for me just how much this man had to have loved Christ in order to endure all that he did to preach the Gospel.

St. Paul's joy-filled words to the Philippians are truly emblematic of this wild love that St. Paul had:

*“I want you to know, brethren, that what has happened to me [imprisonment] has really served to advance the gospel... Yes, and I shall rejoice... for Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil 1:12, 19-21).*

It seemed to me that there could not have been in St. Paul's mind any sort of question of, *What will I get out of this?* or *Will this satisfy me?* because the immediate circumstances would suggest that the answers would be, “nothing” and, “no”. No, this was a man who had lost himself in love and for whom suffering was only an opportunity to introduce someone else to this great love. He no longer lived. Christ lived through, in, and with him.





St. Paul offered this witness to everyone he evangelized in the first apostolic age. Whether to the licentious residents of affluent Corinth or to the suffering Church in Thessaloniki, his relentless zeal for souls compelled everyone to ask of him, “What could this man have possibly found that would be worth the price he had to pay?!” And likely he would respond, “It’s not what I’ve found, but *who* has found *me*.” St. Paul, who once in his Jewish zeal had breathed murderous threats against Christians, was “blind”-sided on the road to Damascus by the Messiah he was anticipating, but not the Messiah he was expecting: a Messiah Who suffered, Who died, and Who longed for every soul. An immanently approachable, wonderfully disarming, and selflessly beautiful Messiah. Jesus.

That was how the landscape of my prayer was tilled up by St. Paul while I was on pilgrimage. As a Christian in a new apostolic age, as a man preparing to share in the same priesthood that St. Paul was ordained into, the priesthood of Jesus Christ, St. Paul asked me, “Will you let yourself be found and carried away by Jesus’ love for you? Will you let belonging to Christ be enough for your life?” I hope I will. I pray that I will know only Christ and Him crucified and that the people that God sends me to will come to know Christ through me. He is the only One for whom we are made. So, whatever the price may be, nothing else will satisfy us. ✚







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## OUR MISSION

Kenrick-Glennon Seminary is a proper ecclesial community of the Archdiocese of Saint Louis preparing men for the ministerial priesthood of Jesus Christ in the Catholic Church. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and to the glory of God the Father, we seek each seminarian's configuration to the Heart of Jesus Christ, High Priest and Shepherd, so that he can shepherd wholeheartedly with Christ's pastoral charity.

## STAY CONNECTED



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