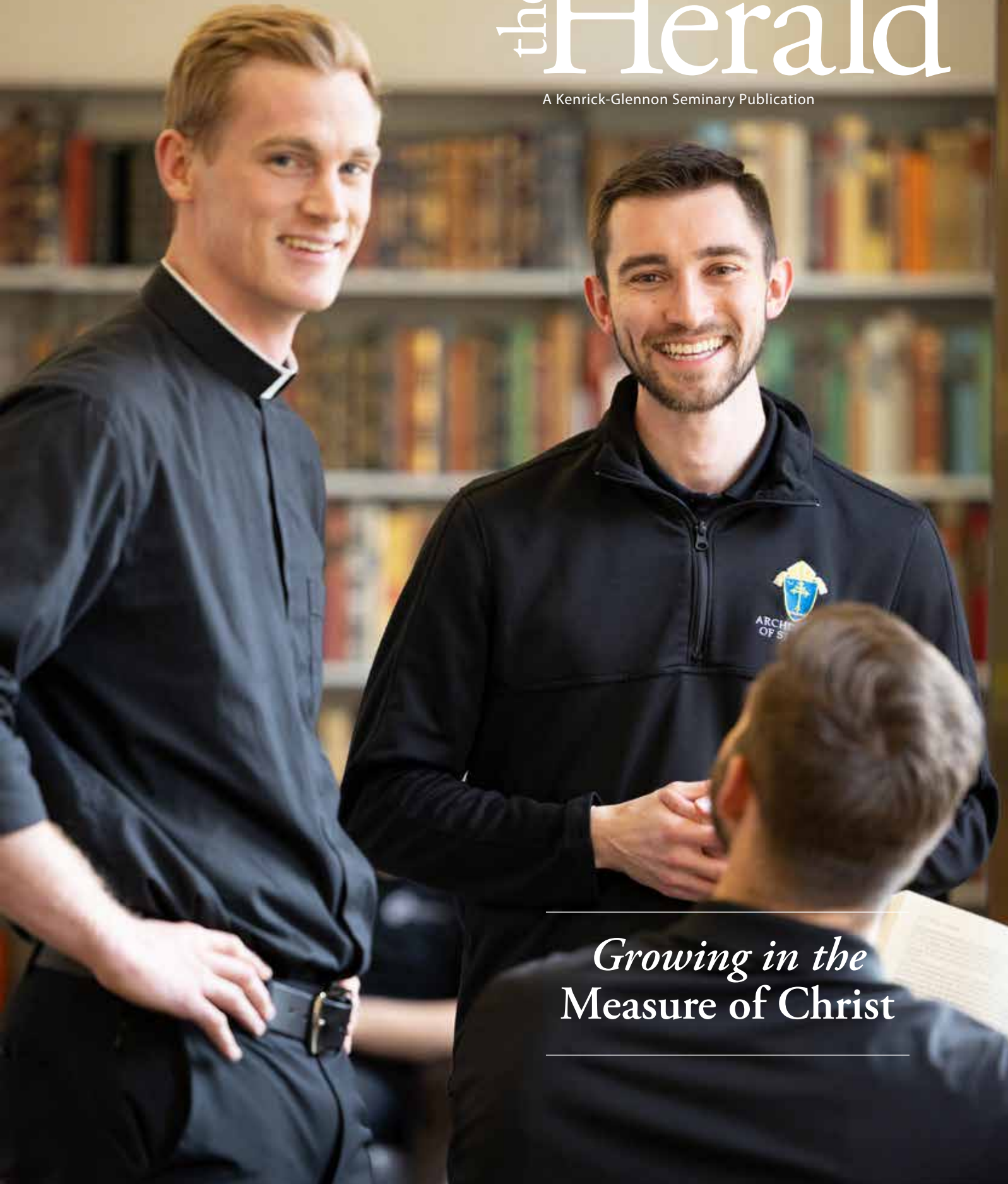


SPRING 2026

# the Herald

A Kenrick-Glennon Seminary Publication



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*Growing in the  
Measure of Christ*

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In the library, on the field, and even in the snow, our men grow not only in knowledge and holiness, but in brotherhood. Whether it's sharing a laugh, walking together through a day of classes, or braving the cold for a game of football, these moments form the bonds that sustain a lifetime of priestly ministry. Seminary formation isn't lived alone — it's forged in community.



**Cover:** Brian Johnson, Configuration II — Omaha, and Ben Borgmeyer, Discipleship II — St. Louis, stand in the seminary's Charles L. Souvay, CM Memorial Library.

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### Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Four years ago, as we celebrated the Winter Olympics, Fr. Hoelsing was preparing to begin his tenure as President-Rector of the Seminary, and the Archdiocese of St. Louis was starting the All Things New pastoral planning process. People were wondering: what comes next?

Somehow, four years seems like a natural time period: four years of high school, four years of college, four years of theological studies in seminary — and then on to the next thing.

Now, as we celebrate the Winter Olympics again, Fr. Hoelsing turns 50. (Happy birthday, Fr. Hoelsing!) It's natural for a priest to ask, at that point: what lessons have I learned in the last 25 years? And what comes next, in terms of how I spend my priestly energies in the coming 25 years?

As we stand four years out from the beginning of All Things New, having re-configured our parishes, priests are still in the early stages of asking: what comes next in terms of revitalizing our parishes around evangelization?

Within its walls, the Seminary, under the guidance of the new Program of Priestly Formation, just had its first December graduation. So, for the first time in a long time, there are no seminarian deacons in the house. That leaves the next oldest group with a question: what comes next for us in terms of house leadership?

All of these things are happening as America turns 250 and the Archdiocese turns 200. The question "*What comes next?*" seems to be all around us.

I think our tendency is to plan. And that's not entirely bad — we want to do our part! But I would encourage us to look back to the Ascension of Jesus and realize: planning wasn't the main thing then. Fervently praying and waiting for the Holy Spirit to come and show the way — those were the main things.

So, as we keep moving forward — and we will! — let's remember to pause, again and again, and ask the Holy Spirit to show us what comes next.

Most Reverend Mitchell T. Rozanski  
Archbishop of St. Louis



"As we keep moving forward, let's remember to pause, again and again, and ask the Holy Spirit to show us what comes next."







## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT-RECTOR

*“I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike.”*

*Mt. 11:25*

### Dear Friends,

We pray our share of litanies in the Seminary, especially because they can evoke the desire for something different. Litanies often reveal a contrast between slavery and freedom, blessings and curses, life and death. What we desire in the face of such contrasts heralds real conversion, particularly the movement from the “vener of virtuous habits ... a merely external and formalistic obedience to abstract principles.”<sup>1</sup>

The **Litany for Men in Christ** has been particularly helpful in this respect. Here is a sample:

*A boy wants to have fun. A man wants to do his duty. R./ Jesus, give me the grace to desire it.*

*A boy is concerned that he be liked. A man is concerned that he be respected. R./*

*A boy often shirks responsibility and is easily forgetful of it. A man desires responsibility. R./*

*A boy is quickly discouraged by obstacles. A man is not easily turned aside from his purpose. R./*

*A boy needs external discipline to stay on the right path. A man imposes his own inner discipline. R./*

*A boy looks to be praised. A man looks to express gratitude to others. R./*

*A boy whines and complains at difficulty. A man does not complain, but either acts or endures. R./*

Prayer consists of attention, so, after praying these lines, I might ask the seminarian: “What has your attention?” A young man might move into a shame-filled sense of boyishness as he realizes how parts of his heart and some of his habits fall short. Simultaneously, since a real manhood also abides in him, a different response can take shape. He can face the challenge of conversion, and progressively throughout formation, he’s on to the next parts of his heart and habits that need conversion. The Litany is meant to ignite a manful desire for what we can see in Jesus — the fullness of masculine maturity. It helps turn our attention to the sources of His own maturation.

*“And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man” (Lk. 2:52).*

Jesus matured in Nazareth, that place of secure love with his family, and he enjoyed constant and unconditional communion with His Father, the font of love that triumphs over sin and death. We only mature when we experience in the depths of our heart the inexhaustible grace of our Baptism:

*“You are my beloved...with you I am well pleased” (Mk. 1:11).*

The seminary is a kind of Nazareth, where a man can learn the secure love that casts out fear and matures him into a man like Jesus. I pray you enjoy their stories of transformation and conversion, because it’s your story, too.

In Christ,

Father Paul Hoelsing  
President-Rector



Scan here to  
pray the  
Litany for Men  
in Christ



1. Ratio Fundamentalibus Institutionis Sacerdotalis (“The Gift of the Priestly Vocation”), Section 41.

# Pulling Weight for What Matters

By Brian Johnson, Configuration II – Omaha

One of my priest role models was involved in the construction of a beautiful new chapel for a seminary. He was careful to make all his decisions regarding the design of the chapel in light of what that sacred space would communicate to those praying inside it. He chose only genuine materials to convey authenticity before God; a gorgeous canopied tabernacle to reflect a deep Eucharistic foundation; and paintings of Jesus' Baptism and Transfiguration to communicate beloved sonship.

Perhaps the crowning features in this priest's attempt to "form a chapel that would in turn form us" were the immense columns supporting not only the chapel ceiling, but also the several residential floors above it. Their exterior was made of a sturdy-looking dark wood, communicating youth and strength. Interiorly, the columns housed the massive concrete pillars which bore the weight of the structure, communicating the mature acceptance of responsibility.

## SO THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE

These pillars stood as a silent testament of the life to which we are called: to joyfully accept to carry a burden, to bear some weight so that others may live; and to take a fair share in the noble task of holding up Christ's Body the Church.

As young men in the seminary, we could hear the world encouraging us to punt responsibility down the road and spend our youth on enjoying a few commitment-free years. Meanwhile, these pillars joined the quiet voice of grace in urging us to accept responsibility and spend our youth on something that matters.

## AN ACHE FOR COMMITMENT

Being open to accepting responsibility at a young age is countercultural. There is something appealing about staving off commitment as long as possible. But if we are honest with ourselves, I believe that young people will find that committed service is exactly what we want. We are looking for something real and worthwhile that gives us a purpose in life. We yearn



for a cause worth backing, a banner worth marching under. We are aching to make a gift of ourselves to something bigger than ourselves. It is as Jesus says so thought-provokingly in Mk. 8:35: "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it." Jesus' logic here is counterintuitive, but anyone who has

tested it has experienced firsthand the distinct character of that fulfillment, purpose, and joy that one can only experience in living for others. Conversely, we find that we are most anxious, restless, and sorrowful when we are living for ourselves.

### THE LAW OF THE GIFT

Few have articulated this axiom of the spiritual life as powerfully or lived it as inspiringly as Pope St. John Paul II, who described it as the “Law of the Gift.” As *Gaudium et Spes* teaches, “*Man can fully discover his true self only in a sincere giving of himself*” (*Gaudium et Spes* 24). Acquainted with suffering from a young age, the young Karol Wojtyla could have turned cynical. Gifted with a staggering intellect and much potential, he could have become greedy and self-centered.

Instead, John Paul II became one of the most magnetic and inspiring saints of our times. How did he do this? By acknowledging that his life was meant to be a gift for others, and that he was made, like those strong chapel pillars, to bear some weight to hold up the Church. And how did he do that?! By coming “*to know and to believe in the love God has for us*” (1 Jn. 4:16). John Paul II was a man deeply in love with God, with a heart on fire for the Eucharist. Because his mission came directly from the Lord whom he loved, the burdens imposed on him by that mission were sweet.

### PERSONAL DESIRE

In my time of seminary formation, I have been blessed to experience my own small share of the joy that comes from embracing responsibility for the sake of the Lord whom I love. Like many of my seminarian brothers, I entered the seminary as a teenager, hesitant to commit myself completely to the Lord yet willing to give Him a shot. Fortunately, in my feebly



opening the door to grace just a little, God has abundantly blessed me and shown me firsthand the veracity of the “Law of the Gift.”

To be certain, my response to grace is very far from perfect, but with my brothers, I am grateful to say that I am beginning to learn the lesson taught by those pillars; I want to carry some weight for Christ and His Church. ✚



## Commitment Is Countercultural

Check out this video of Brian’s encouragement to anyone discerning their vocation.



# Redemptive Suffering *and the Saving Power of Hope*

By Garrett Hugeback, Configuration II – Sioux City



*Each seminarian in the Kenrick School of Theology works towards earning a Master of Divinity degree. They also have the option to earn a Masters in Theology if accompanied by successful completion of a masters thesis. Garrett Hugeback selected “Redemptive Suffering and the Saving Power of Hope” as his thesis topic. Here he explains the inspiration behind his choice.*

**A**lthough my childhood had its ups and downs, I don't remember having ever suffered gravely. This changed in 2019. After graduating from high school, I worked at the local lumber yard. While operating a table saw, the piece I was cutting got caught and was pulled through the blade along with my hand. I cut three of my fingers, seriously

damaging one and almost completely severing another. Days later, my older brother was tragically shot in his home and died. Although others were with him, what happened was never made entirely clear. Despite these traumas, God still called me to attend seminary that fall. I had trusted his plan for me so far and had to continue doing so.

## OUR LADY AND SUFFERING

In seminary, I began asking “Why?” Why had all of this happened to me? I was in pain, physically handicapped, impaired by painkillers, taking time out of a busy schedule for physical therapy, away from my family, mourning the painful loss of my brother, and was worried about his salvation. I struggled to trust in God’s love. I considered that either God didn’t want me there and was showing it, or God didn’t cause suffering and there was more to the story.

Mary gave me hope during this time. As Mother, I trusted in her care as she held me in my suffering. Approaching God was difficult for me, but I knew He listened to her. She revealed her own sufferings to me — the devastating loss of her Son and the horrors of witnessing His torture and death. Yet, she didn’t fight God’s plan for her; she chose to suffer and remain with Jesus rather than abandon Him. She trusted, receiving God’s plan as love, and strengthened by that love, offered herself in love. By remaining with God in suffering, rather than abandoning Him, Mary was united to Him and participated in His selfless love. She revealed that suffering is not the end; suffering endured in love results in good.

## ENABLED TO LOVE

In time, it became clear to me. God doesn’t cause suffering; God is all good. He perfectly loves us, knows what is good for us in every situation, and is all-powerful, permitting only what benefits us. God is faithful and remains with us, even in suffering. His love sustains us, and united to God, suffering becomes an opportunity to love as He loves — to share in and be transformed by His selfless love, being drawn into intimate union with Him who is Love. I began experiencing joy in trusting God and sharing in His love. I saw the good in His plan and experienced how, by embracing Christ crucified, I could be loved and love in the midst of suffering while drawing nearer to God’s heart.

Researching this topic has helped me analyze my experience and articulate the necessary roles of suffering and hope in redemption. God redeems man in love through a mutual relationship of self-gift. If man gives himself to God in loving

trust, receiving God’s will, God will fulfill him. If man gives himself for God’s sake, selflessly seeking God’s will rather than his own, man will be conformed to God in love and drawn into deeper intimacy with God. Yet, loving hurts. To completely entrust oneself to another is scary; to renounce oneself and live for another’s sake hurts. Hope is certain of fulfillment and allows one to endure suffering; man is saved in hope because it enables him to love.

## THE PRIEST WHO SUFFERS WITH

Understanding this is paramount for priests. Priests are privileged to encounter serious suffering in their ministry, opportunities to “suffer with” in compassionate love. Although this entails embracing suffering, in hope, it also means embracing Christ and His beloved. It is tempting to avoid suffering — to ignore that sick call or slip away from that crying woman. Yet, by embracing suffering with love, confident in hope, the priest undergoes his own sanctification and offers saving hope to others. Hope makes suffering a privilege; the bitterness of suffering is overshadowed by Christ’s sacrificial love burning in human hearts. Priests get rare opportunities to share in this love; by fostering hope, priests can treasure these opportunities and become beacons of light in the darkness of the world. ✚



# From Coping to Communion

By Stephen Driscoll, Discipleship II – Omaha

**B**efore seminary, my life was shaped by achievement. I was deeply invested in my career, striving to prove myself and earn status. While I loved my work, I was also restless — always searching for something deeper. That restlessness led to a career change, with me eventually serving as Vice President of Advancement at an organization whose mission I cared deeply about.

What began with hope slowly deteriorated when a new leader was appointed. I found myself caught between a mission I loved and an environment that was increasingly unhealthy. I tried to mediate, to fix, and to carry burdens that were not mine. Eventually, I faced a painful truth: I was powerless to change the situation. Unable to accept that powerlessness, I began coping in unhealthy ways. My life felt disintegrated. The stress took a toll on my mental and physical health, and I ultimately made the difficult decision to leave.

## THE PARISH, A SCHOOL OF PRAYER

That season paused my vocational discernment. Finding work and restoring my health had to come first. The next two years became a quiet but essential chapter of formation.

I joined a supportive organization where I was valued not for what I produced, but for who I was. I entered counseling and began learning something foundational for pastoral life: boundaries. I learned to recognize my limits, name my needs, and remain firm in them — not as acts of selfishness, but as necessary conditions for love.

During this time, I also became more deeply rooted in my parish. It was a place where I was known and belonged. My gifts felt natural there, and I could see how they bore fruit in the lives of others. More importantly, I encountered the Lord through prayer, the sacraments, ministry, community, and the quiet work of the Holy Spirit. I found myself increasingly fulfilled — not because I was doing more, but because I was learning to receive.

## THE SETTING OF CONVERSION

Eventually, I began the seminary application process, which demanded surrender, invited grief, and required acceptance. Through that vulnerability came freedom. For perhaps the first time, I experienced what it meant to be loved wholly. The Church and the Lord were not asking only for my strengths, but also for my weakness and brokenness. Nothing was excluded.

When I entered seminary, that freedom was tested. I struggled with insecurity and often found myself drawn into comparison and inadequacy. Yet I was surprised — and deeply grateful — to discover that seminary formation attends to the whole person: spiritually, humanly, intellectually, and pastorally. Through prayer, spiritual direction, counseling, formation, fraternity, and study, I encountered an environment marked by safety and truth.



“ Interiorly, a deeper trust is taking root. Prayer is becoming less a place of striving and more a place of rest. Where I once spiraled into fear and doubt during spiritual dryness, I now experience quiet confidence. The Lord no longer feels distant; He feels close — sometimes silent but never absent. ”

Through this process, I came to know my own poverty more honestly — especially my helplessness and powerlessness. What once felt like liabilities gradually became places of encounter. When I allowed the Lord into those vulnerable spaces, they became sources of healing and, paradoxically, strength. I experienced emotional, spiritual, and physical healing. Rather than managing my life through coping mechanisms, I began to live it through communion.

### FOUNDATION OF CHARITY

This interior transformation has been essential to my pastoral formation. Pastoral charity does not arise from self-sufficiency or control, but from a heart that has learned to receive mercy. Only by acknowledging my own need for healing could I begin to accompany others without trying to fix them or carry what does not belong to me. Healthy boundaries, rootedness in prayer, and integration of the whole person have allowed me to love more freely and faithfully.

Over the past year, I have noticed a subtle but profound shift within me. I am more present — to the people in front of me and to the Lord’s work in each encounter. Repeatedly, I have found myself thinking, “There is no place I would rather be right now.” That contentment can only come from feeling truly at home with the Lord.

At times, old patterns still surface in prayer. Questions creep in: Am I praying enough? Am I praying well? Is anything



happening? Is the Lord really there? These anxieties are rooted not in faith, but in performance and self-reliance. Through prayer, formation, and community, I am learning to recognize these thoughts as lies and return to the truth.

### TANGIBLE NEWNESS

Interiorly, a deeper trust is taking root. Prayer is becoming less a place of striving and more a place of rest. Where I once spiraled into fear and doubt during spiritual dryness, I now experience quiet confidence. The Lord no longer feels distant; He feels close — sometimes silent but never absent.

I have begun to feel at home in prayer, and therefore at home with the Lord. As I reflect on my growth, I often tell others that I feel more like myself, even as I continue becoming myself — becoming the person the Lord created me to be, becoming more fully alive. I was once told that a vocation is meant to enliven who you are as a gift to the world. I now believe that deeply.

Seminary has been one of the greatest gifts of my life. It has not perfected me, but it has integrated me. It has taught me how to live from communion rather than coping, from trust rather than control. Most importantly, it has revealed — again and again — that I am loved. And from that place of being loved, pastoral charity can take root and bear fruit for the life of the Church. ✚

# JOIE DE VIVRE: A Diocese's Journey North

With Fr. Blake Dubroc, Vocations Director for the Diocese of Lafayette in Louisiana



Ordained a priest in 2018 at the age of 33, Fr. Blake Dubroc's story of receiving and responding to a call from God is one of deep desire and yearning. Now the Vocations Director and Director of Seminarians for the Diocese of Lafayette in Louisiana, Fr. Dubroc accompanies young men through the same sacred process of discerning how love is calling them.

In addition to his work within his diocese, Fr. Dubroc also serves as the President of the National Conference for Diocesan Vocations Directors (NCDVD), accompanying brother priests in the Church's mission to send laborers into the vineyard.

As the Diocese of Lafayette has recently started sending seminarians to Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, we decided to sit down with their Vocations Director to talk about what inspires a Church from southern Louisiana to send men to the Midwest for formation.

## As a vocations director and in your work with the NCDVD, what are you seeing among dioceses and vocations directors regarding their work in accompanying men in discerning a vocation?

It's a fascinating role. Vocations directors are usually the only ones in their diocese doing the work of accompanying men in their discernment. For the priest who is a vocations director, their bishop, brother priests, and the lay faithful all have certain expectations for him. We all desire to see more priests, and in turn, being on the front lines of that mission presents unique challenges. NCDVD aims to provide a brotherhood for men in the work that affirms their identity as a father and a man who is espoused. We ourselves need to be fathered well so that we can in turn father the men discerning a call to this life. A man's relationship with his vocation director is meant to be a place of honesty and vulnerability — one that is caring, sensitive to needs, not immediately dismissive, and a place of rest. A vocations director needs to have the capacity to affirm good and holy desires that arise in a man's heart, to affirm his masculinity, and to receive them as sons. Just as discerners need this from their vocation directors, so, too, do the directors themselves.

## What does the Church in southern Louisiana look like and what are your priorities when discerning where to entrust the formation of its seminarians?

Lafayette has a rich culture of Catholicism. There are sacramental realities ingrained in the culture that even those who aren't Catholic or who haven't been evangelized receive from the Church. Everyone knows a priest. And with a distinct southern tradition, a priority of our Diocese is to form priests with a wider, universal perspective. We don't want our priests only to have a south-Louisiana lens. We want them to be formed by institutions that can receive our men in who they are as southern men, and without diminishing what sets them apart, accompany them to becoming ecclesial men.

## Why does Lafayette send to Kenrick-Glennon? What about our formation is attractive to a diocese that's culturally distinct?

We originally visited Kenrick out of a desire to diversify in education. In this regard, we also send men to six other seminaries. When I visited Kenrick, I saw that there were priests on the formation team that I wanted our seminarians to be around. I saw the whole man formed — that they take seriously the integration



of all four dimensions of formation while simultaneously caring for the man's heart. Between their work with Healing the Whole Person, formation work in groups, four onsite counselors...I saw resources that were immediately available to our men to affect their hearts. That was most attractive.

## What fruit do you see being born in the men that are receiving formation here?

I'm grateful that the Lafayette men get to share their own culture and community and create friendships with it. I get that we spice it up. We live the "Joie de Vivre," the "Joy of Living!" We can go from laughing, to the depths of our hearts, then back to cutting up. To have friends from different dioceses participate in that is like to take a seat at our dinner table. My men are becoming more rooted in who they are by being at a place where they stand out. Midwesterners have different tendencies than men from the deep south, and by being together, they're able to give and receive and strengthen. They're learning a type of language here to speak about their hearts that is, in turn, shared with brother seminarians as they return home.

## Anything else you notice or would like to add?

One thing that's important is that the men see the brotherhood of the priests at Kenrick. A particularly moving experience for me when I first visited was being invited into the fraternity that's shared among the priests on the faculty there. There was a 9 p.m. gathering in the priest lounge for in-house priests to share their day vulnerably, and it was profound. I listened to how the priests spoke to one another about the men in formation, not talking shop or analyzing, but in a really noble way. I realized our men would be loved there and have great things asked of them. The brotherhood of the priests will be reflected to the men. And it's something special I've noticed in my visits north. ✚

# What are Process Groups?

By Fr. Conor Sullivan, Psychological Consultant, Class of 2014 – St. Louis



**W**hile I studied psychology at Divine Mercy University, special emphasis was placed on experiential learning. When we learned a new skill, we would break out into small groups and practice with each other, taking turns as counselor and client. Sometimes we would fabricate likely stories of individuals seeking counseling. Other times, we would share the real details of our own lives to raise the stakes. After all, if we were going to be working with living, breathing human beings, each with their own stories, it seemed fitting that we would “go there” ourselves, sharing our own joys and sorrows with one another along the way.

## PROCESSING

Among these many transformative experiences, process group counseling stood out as a particularly powerful means of growth and healing. My classmates and I would begin our course with a lecture from our professor, and then we would proceed to another classroom and begin to “process” with each other. We were given few instructions from the group counselor besides “Let’s begin.” At first, we hobbled along, looking for ways to stimulate a sustainable and interesting conversation. Our professor, acting as our group counselor (so that he could

show us how process groups work), would make “process comments” along the way.

Simply put, a process comment is a comment about how the group is functioning in the “here and now.” For example, someone might have shared something deep and vulnerable, but the group was generally quiet afterwards. The group counselor would comment, “I notice the silence in the room. Nothing is being said, but it seems like a lot is happening.” We would take it from there. One of us might take the reins and share why we were silent: “I was quiet because I wanted to be sure that I had the right thing to say.” And so the process continued.

## RELATIONAL AGILITY

I was surprised at what was happening in my own heart as we processed. I noticed countless thoughts and feelings that I would have routinely ignored or skimmed over in the workaday world. Pausing and taking a deeper look interiorly got me thinking. I thought about where my own reactions were coming from and how they were related to my own story. I began to wonder about the stories of the others in my class. I wondered at their reactions — sometimes predictable

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and sometimes not. I found new words to describe familiar experiences that I had never named. I was excited to know that others often had similar reactions. I was humbled to be told how much I often missed of what was happening in the heart of the other.

As we moved through stages of norming, storming, and then performing, the “music” of the many relationships in the room began to present itself to us. We learned about ourselves. We learned about each other. We grew in our ability to ask relevant and helpful questions, to give meaningful affirmations, and to confront and challenge when necessary. More than anything, after navigating stormy conflicts, we began to notice that we were less afraid of them. We could trust one another more — not because we avoided conflict, but because we knew conflict was never the end of the story, much less the end of the world.

### COMPLEXITY AND REVERENCE

Now, it is a blessing that I get to facilitate these process groups for the propaedeutic men (the seminarians who are in their initial stage of formation) at Kenrick-Glennon. Over and over again, the Psalmist’s proclamation occurs to me as I witness the men work through these groups: *“I am fearfully and wonderfully made”* (Ps. 139:14).

There are many reasons why we include these groups in the typical process of formation at the seminary. The groups

help the men to get to know themselves better. By pausing and reflecting on whatever might be happening in the “here and now,” the men get to know the movements of their own hearts. They are invited to notice patterns, gifts, and growth edges. They are challenged to name familiar experiences that they may not have vocalized. They inevitably begin to learn about the hearts of their brothers. They are never forced to share, but rather are invited to notice how much or how little they trust one another.

### TRAINING FOR THE WORLD

Hopefully, by the end of these year-long groups, the men have experienced a greater sense of reverence and affection for the complexity and the wonder of what is happening in their own hearts and the hearts of each other.

Ideally, the appreciation of these movements never stops with a seminarian himself or even in his friendships and brotherhood. As the men grow in awareness and self-possession, they are able to carry their own hearts and the hearts of their brothers to the Lord in prayer in new and powerful ways. Moreover, they become better equipped to receive the hearts of the people of God, and are better able to carry them to Jesus with reverence and care. ✚



# ENERGIZED TO EVANGELIZE

## Pastoral Creativity in an Apostolic Age

By Jen Ryan, Director of Pastoral Education, Evangelization, and Apostolic Service



This is the second year of a new apostolate for our Configuration III seminarians engineered to evangelize in our apostolic age. In this stage before their diaconate ordination, the men are charged with the creation of a small, faith-sharing group in their parish assignment.

Seminarians are responsible for every aspect of the group, from determining the target audience, selecting or creating content, advertising and recruiting, facilitating, communicating, and especially succession planning: empowering parishioners to continue faith development after the seminarian has left the parish. This mission necessitates consultation with the pastor, assessing pastoral need, spiritual discernment, social networking, organizational dexterity, creativity, and a required dose of initiative.

The men quickly intuit that one of the most challenging aspects of this apostolate is recruitment. In an era when many pews are empty for Mass, how do you get people to commit to something at Church beyond their Sunday obligation? With only one academic year in their parish assignment to create and facilitate a small group initiative, CIII seminarians enter their parishes with a missile-locked focus on pastoral discernment.

Our mentoring pastors have been vital sounding boards and reality-testers for the seminarians in this

apostolate. In addition to providing feedback on their seminarian's ideas, pastors have also shared their own hopes for the parish and past successes and challenges in pastoral planning for evangelization. Granting the freedom to "fail," our seminarian and pastor teams have also accessed the freedom to dream and to try out new ideas to see what seed falls on good soil.

Last year's inaugural class targeted various audiences including middle-aged dads, young adults, and even a parish evangelization committee (to the surprise of the seminarian). They also chose different topics for discussion, from the Eucharist to Lent and everything in between. One seminarian assembled his own discussion-based curriculum on Sacred Heart devotion that culminated in couples enthroning the Sacred Heart in each of their homes.

Yes, some of the men learned, "Wow, that was hard." In fact, everyone learned. They learned from their desires, their efforts, their pastors, and they learned from the people of God. ✚

# Executing Apostolic Initiatives

By Xavier Schmidt, Configuration III – Kansas City, St. Joseph



When tasked with creating a small group at a local high school, I began with a simple question: *What will aid students in recognizing and choosing the Lord's will?*

I spent my first visit observing the school culture and meeting students and teachers. After detailed conversations with the campus minister and the school's chaplain, we decided that I would lead the "Guys Group" during study hall.

I knew that it can be tough for high-school boys to participate in something so vulnerable, so I asked the Lord to inspire in me crafty ways to attract them. The answer that came was simple and natural. The next week, I set up a table during study hall where students could approach me and the chaplain and enjoy some Oreo truffles. For the boys, though, there was a catch: if they wanted a truffle, they would have to fill out a small form selecting which topics they would want to discuss in a small group. I garnered 50 or so responses and to my surprise and delight, the topic of "How to Pray" had the most selections. Thus, a relationship with Jesus was to be our focus. Posters were made, and a first meeting was planned.

Two weeks later, it began. The 30-minute format was simple: we would read a brief article about prayer, consider it for a minute, then share how the Lord was speaking to us through it. And yes, there were snacks. I was impressed with the quality of the sharing of some of the students. They spoke about their past experiences of prayer and their desires for a richer and fuller prayer life. They were surprised and challenged by what they read: "Prayer can really be that relational and intimate?" "It's very hard to enter into silent prayer." It was a delight to walk with them a little as they encountered some new truths about prayer.

The spring semester will look different. We will meet weekly. There will be less article-reading and more fraternal conversation. We'll share how we are with Jesus and pray for each other. Two things will be the same, however: there will be food, and the Holy Spirit will continue the work of converting our hearts. ✚

# Beauty *and* Generosity

By Dr. Ed Hogan, Academic Dean



When people visit the Seminary, they often look around at the architecture and say, “It’s beautiful here.” They’re right — it is!

But I’ll often say, as a follow up: as you tour the building, remember to stretch out with your spiritual senses. As you do, you’ll notice something just beneath the surface: generosity.

That may sound strange. But the fact is, most people’s eyes light up. They have some intuitive sense of what I mean!

There’s certainly a financial generosity that supports the daily operations — including the physical beauty — of the seminary. We’re aware of that and grateful for it! Now, after sixteen years living and working in the Archdiocese of St. Louis, I’m no longer surprised by it, because people are so consistently generous with us. But I have to say, I never cease to be amazed by it! The depth of the generosity here is something I’ve never witnessed in the many places I’ve lived and worked.

But there’s something deeper going on, too. I would put it this way: there’s a psychological and a spiritual generosity that supports the work we do, as well.

Let me tell some stories to explain what I mean by that — by psychological and spiritual generosity.

A seminarian once came to me and said, “If God is infinite, and I’m finite, then no matter how much I grow, I’ll always be infinitely far away from God. That’s so frustrating!”

Another once came to me and said, “I’m writing a final paper for one of my classes. As I think about the topic I chose, and the topics my classmates chose, I notice that I’m comparing myself to them. Their topics are so much deeper than mine! It’s making me doubt my ability to go forward with priestly formation.”

Another once came to me and said, “I’m trying to control how Jesus loves me by becoming a priest.”

First, just pause for a moment. What would you say to any of those men?

Second, notice: those are deep questions! They bring the men to a pause in their vocational discernment. Just opening

up those places of uncertainty requires a deep generosity in them. It would be simpler — though ultimately less fruitful — to ignore the deep questions. And what they ask for is that we teach them to be generous with God in the places where they pause and hesitate.

Third, I can tell you from experience: guiding the men in those places of uncertainty requires a deep creativity on our part — a creativity that’s rooted in listening to the men, listening to the Lord, and building a bridge between what the man is wondering about and what the Lord is wanting for him. That listening requires a deep generosity in our hearts. The men are full of surprises, and so is the Lord, and it stretches our hearts to stay in those places and build those bridges! But if we want them to learn to do that in their parishes, we have to model it for them.

When people give money to the Seminary, their financial generosity has an effect on our ability to carry out our programs. But equally, when people hold the Seminary in their thoughts and prayers, that psychological and spiritual generosity also has an effect on us! Somehow, those thoughts and prayers create an atmosphere of generosity that shapes the Seminary. It affects the seminarians, helping them to be generous in bringing their deep questions to the process of formation. It affects those of us who guide their formation, helping us to be generous in receiving the men and the Lord’s desires for them.

And when all of that generosity is repeated on a daily basis ... yes, it forms an atmosphere of generosity here. And yes, people can feel it when they stretch out with their spiritual senses.

So, for all your generosity — financial, psychological, and spiritual — thank you! It makes a deep impact on the work we do at the Seminary. We feel that support on a daily basis. It adds a deeper layer to the beauty people experience here, and we’re grateful. ✚

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The Annual Catholic Appeal invites parishioners across the Archdiocese of St. Louis to unite as one Church, uplifting those who seek God’s grace and mercy. The generous Appeal donors make a meaningful difference in the lives of the individuals, families, and organizations who rely on their support. Kenrick-Glennon Seminary is grateful to receive a grant from the Appeal, meaning your generosity directly supports each seminarian as he prepares to bring Christ to others through a life of service. To learn more, visit [aca.archstl.org](http://aca.archstl.org).

# NEW HEIGHTS AT CONVIVIVM

On November 1, nearly 600 friends gathered at the Chase Park Plaza in St. Louis for the 33rd Annual Convivium Dinner Auction. With hearts full of gratitude, we are pleased to share that our our generous benefactors raised over *one million dollars* in support of the Seminary. This total includes an unprecedented \$300,000 pledged during the Fund-a-Need for the Footsteps of St. Paul Pilgrimage (see pages 22-23).

We are deeply grateful to all who joined us and contributed so generously. Through their donations, auction purchases, and shared commitment to the Church, our benefactors continue to make a meaningful investment in priestly formation and education.

*Please mark your calendar for the*  
**34th Annual Convivium Dinner Auction on November 7, 2026.**



# HIGHLIGHTS

In December, hundreds of friends attended our new **Advent Mission**, which replaced our traditional Advent Novena. This three-night Mission, led by our President-Rector, Fr. Paul Hosing, offered a rich and prayerful experience designed to deepen participants' spiritual preparation for Christmas.

With recent updates to the Church's Program of Priestly Formation, our seminary formation now includes a vocational synthesis phase with transitional deacons spending their final few months prior to priestly ordination back in their home diocese, adjusting to life in their presbyterate and settling into the reality of ecclesial service. We honored our deacons at a **Graduation Mass and Banquet** this past December to mark the end of their time on our campus.

Our video **"Jesus Calls Those Whom He Desires to Be With Him"** debuted at the Convivium Dinner Auction. This video features seminarians and friends of the seminary talking about our mission and the importance of priestly formation. Scan the QR code on the right to watch the video.

In January, our seminary community celebrated the **Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (Candlemas)** with a candlelit procession from the foyer to the Chapel of St. Joseph for Mass. We pray that our seminarians are formed as men who bear His light to a world longing for hope. ✚



# APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE to Greece and Turkey

Fr. Charles Samson, Assistant Professor of Biblical Theology, recently led an Apostolic Pilgrimage in the Footsteps of St. Paul to Greece and Turkey for the deacons in the Class of 2026 and several recent alumni-priests. He integrated theology, pilgrimage, and archaeology as the men visited the places where St. Paul wrote letters and founded communities of Christian faith. They read and studied his letters to better appreciate the impact, heart, and apostolic boldness of the Apostle.

Throughout their spiritual journey, Fr. Samson emphasized apostolic preaching and encouraged the deacons to grow in the love of their priesthood and identity as future ministers to their parish families.

- 1** Fr. Rob Lawson, Class of 2025 — St. Louis, celebrated Mass at the Baptistry of Lydia, which has an outdoor shrine on the river where Lydia, along with her whole household, was baptized by Paul, making her his first European convert and making her baptism the first baptism in Europe.
- 2** To the pilgrims, Istanbul felt quite different from western countries with which they are familiar, as Christians, especially Catholics, are a religious minority in Türkiye. They walked down Arabic streets and visited two mosques (one of which used to be a grand church — the Hagia Sofia — but was converted into a mosque after the Ottomans conquered the Eastern Roman Empire).
- 3** The deacons and priests trekked to Akrocorinth, a citadel built 1,800 feet above sea level and the town of lower/ancient Corinth. The view gave them a good sense of why Paul chose this city as an evangelizing hub; it was at the confluence of the Aegean and Adriatic Seas, joined (now) by the Corinth Canal, through which all sorts of humanity passed ... and, hence, through which ideas and religions could be spread far and wide.
- 4** The men knelt at the tomb of the Apostle St. John to touch his tomb and pray that they, like he, can be good priests.
- 5** Fr. Joe Martin, Class of 2024 — St. Louis, and Deacon Frankie Camacho, Class of 2026 — San Angelo, stand at the Meteora Monasteries, spectacular church complexes built on top of dramatic rock-cliffs. These buildings express the soaring devotion of those monks and nuns who so wanted to be close to God that they built monasteries high above the din of the city, closer to the heavens.
- 6** Fr. Jeff Fennewald, Class of 2024 — St. Louis, offered a windy Mass on an old Crusader parapet with a sweeping panorama of the valley of Corinth.
- 7** Fr. Eric Artz, Class of 2024, Deacon Colton Steiner, Class of 2026, and Fr. Ryan Martire, Class of 2024, all from the Diocese of Bismarck, stand in Ephesus, where the group traversed the massive archaeological site that encompasses Paul's tumultuous preaching for three years (Acts. 19: 20), the Letter to the Ephesians, the Tomb of the Apostle John, and the House of Mary.







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## OUR MISSION

Kenrick-Glennon Seminary is a proper ecclesial community of the Archdiocese of St. 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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