

POPE ST. JOHN XXIII NATIONAL SEMINARY  
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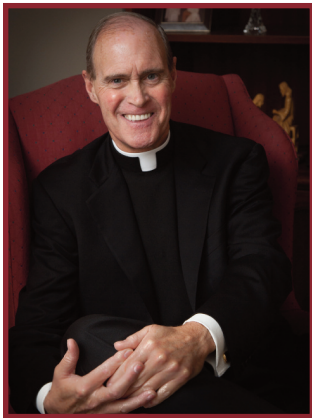
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MAY 2020

POPE ST. JOHN XXIII NATIONAL SEMINARY

FROM THE RECTOR’S DESK



Formation During Unprecedented Times

The world as we knew it has certainly changed in the last three months and words like social distancing and Covid 19 have become part of everyday life. The isolation that many have felt because of restrictions placed on our behavior has added to the anxiety many have felt since this pandemic surfaced. While the men at Pope St. John Seminary were not immune from the stress of concern for loved ones and others affected by this public health crisis, we were blessed to be able to continue our formation program without too much interruption.

We made the decision to remain in session during these past weeks but with some significant adaptations. The non-resident Faculty and Staff were asked to work remotely and to participate in class through various media platforms. We are blessed to have dedicated personnel working in the kitchen and in the building to provide essential services so that we could persevere while so many around us were forced to cease functioning. We made certain

that the Seminary was spotless, and that dining tables and surfaces were bleached before and after meals. Seminarians served the meals wearing gloves and maintaining necessary space between each man. This community has been filled with a cooperative and generous spirit which has inspired me, and I am proud of the collective efforts of our Seminary family during these unprecedented times.

For the first time in recent memory, we remained in Weston for Holy Week and we celebrated the Sacred Triduum with a sense of deep reverence and appreciation for this privilege knowing that so many were being deprived of this experience. Our Easter celebration brought great joy as we understood more vividly what Christ’s victory over death means for all who believe. We celebrated the Ordination of three of our men to the Diaconate in a beautiful Mass that was live streamed to family and friends who were prevented from being physically present. And we sent forth 12 transitional Deacons who will be ordained priests sometime in the near future with a special Liturgy of Commissioning followed by a festive dinner. All of these blessings remind us of the unique place that this Seminary is for so many people and how grateful we are to our benefactors, alumni, friends, and most of all to God, for making this house of formation a place of prayer, security, and peace.

With my thanks for all that you do to support our unique mission and asking for a remembrance in your prayers, I remain,

Fraternally,

Very Rev. Brian R. Kiely, Rector

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- Semester Highlights
  - Class of 2020
  - Alumni News

PRAY FOR VOCATIONS!



## SEMESTER HIGHLIGHTS



Executive Chefs John Bradley and Bob Eckels with the kitchen staff



Cleaning the Tables in the Refectory



Volunteering to serve Seminary meals



Holy Thursday Temporary Adoration Chapel

In this issue, we would like to bring you a “visit” to the Seminary. Many of you could not physically come and spend time with our community during the restrictions brought on by the coronavirus pandemic. As the Rector Fr. Brian Kiely stated in his opening letter, Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary did stay open and has been fully operational during the crisis. We would like to highlight for you a few important milestones that the PSJS community was able to celebrate with the seminarians as the semester progressed. We hope you enjoy the gallery in this issue that will take you on a unique visit. More than anything, we look forward to having you join us again when we can all safely do so and celebrate together as a full community.

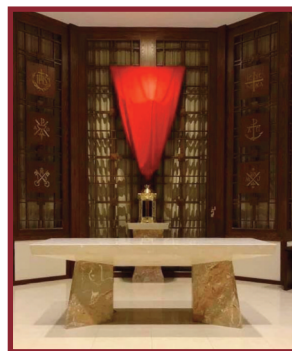
Overall, and it should first be mentioned, the health and safety of the community has been paramount. According to Fr. Kiely, “The health and well-being of every member of this community is and will remain the primary focus of our response to this situation.” Executive Chef John Bradley and his kitchen crew were able to implement new protocols when serving meals and when the kitchen both prepped and cleaned before and after meals. “We’ve always followed a strict regimen in the kitchen to ensure compliance with Board of Health guidelines, but this crisis forced us to adjust a few practices to keep everyone safe. For sure, encouraging the washing of hands. Gloves are now required in the refectory and two volunteers serve the buffet meals rather than have each man go through the line serving himself. Disposable utensils are used more readily. It has worked, and we’re anticipating keeping these practices for a long time.” Facilities Manager Chris White concurs. “We’ve always had extra cleaning supplies on hand for the men to access for special events or emergencies. Back in early

March when we saw that this virus could really have an impact, we placed bulk orders and were able to work with our suppliers to get what we needed. The men in the house have been great in helping us keep common areas clean and safe for everyone.” The house is just that – one large house - and so the community was “staying-at-home” and trips to any stores or even for a drive-through coffee were limited. Seminarian volunteers made any necessary pharmacy trips to minimize exposure for the house. No visitors were allowed in. As a result, everyone has felt that the new protocols were making a difference. The semester was able to conclude early so men could arrange to go home and be available for summer assignments, and everyone was healthy.

Believed to be a PSJS first, the Easter Triduum was celebrated on campus. At the conclusion of the Triduum, Fr. Kiely expressed to the community that, “...the entire week was made so much more poignant for me because I was able to be with you to celebrate these Sacred Mysteries, with you who have become part of my family. Even those who were not able to be physically present were joined with us in our prayers as, with noble simplicity, we recalled the Lords Passion and Death and now celebrate His Resurrection and our new life.” Seminarians prepared the altar and chapel for each part of the Triduum and made the celebration extra special. The Rectors conference room in the Learning Center was temporarily transformed into a small Adoration Chapel after Mass on Holy Thursday where the Lord resided until the Easter Liturgy. The altar in Alumni Chapel was then beautifully transformed for Easter.



Mass of the Lord's Supper



On Good Friday we commemorate the passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ



Alumni Chapel, Easter, April 12, 2020

## ALUMNI NEWS

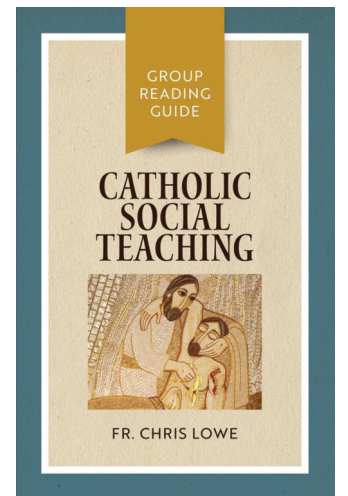
**Rev. Chris Lowe**, Class of 2015, recently published a guide on Catholic social teaching.

As summarized on the website for Amazon, *Catholic Social Teaching: Group Reading Guide* is perfect for small groups, youth ministry, or adult faith formation. This clear and accessible guide helps us understand both the “whats” and the “whys” of the Church’s social teachings and how they provide the moral compass we need to navigate our complex and increasingly polarized world.

What does the Church teach about immigration, war, caring for our neighbor, the sacredness of human life from conception to natural death, employment and labor unions, climate change, and other crucial social issues? To fully understand, we need to look beyond politics, opinions, and popular culture. We need to appreciate the Church’s extensive social doctrines, their breadth, history, and the reasoning behind them. In these five informative and enlightening sessions, Fr. Chris Lowe guides us through the Church’s official Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church and introduces us to twelve vital pillars of the Church’s social teaching.

Rev. Christopher L. Lowe was ordained for the Archdiocese of Boston in 2015. Fr. Chris was born and raised in South Portland,

Maine. He earned an M.S. in Computer Science from Worcester Polytechnic Institute and a B.S. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Maine at Orono. Fr. Chris is a widower and, prior to entering the Seminary, he worked for several technology companies in Massachusetts, including a ten-year stint at IBM. He also served as a music minister and organist at two parishes in Massachusetts - Saint Mary Parish in Ayer and Saint Catherine Parish in Westford.



**To order Fr. Chris’ book on Amazon, enter 1627855211 in the search bar.**

## MAKING RECONCILIATION AVAILABLE TO PARISHIONERS

On March 24, 2020, *The Boston Globe* shared an article written by Cindy Cantrell entitled **Chelmsford priests offer drive-through confession: ‘All specials come with a side of absolution’**. Featured in the article is a recently ordained PSJS alumnus, **Rev. Corey Bassett-Tirrell ‘19**. With the changes implemented in the Church due to COVID 19, Fr. Corey, along with the Rev. Brian Mahoney, took their cue from a priest in another state, Rev. Scott Holmer of St. Edward the Confessor Catholic Church in Bowie, Md., who came up with a great idea: offer drive-through confessions to parishioners in the parking lot of the parish. “For clergy, as well as laypeople,” Bassett-Tirrell said, “we’ve got to be creative and think outside the box.” The initiative was a surprising hit! Fr. Corey is a priest at Chelmsford Catholic Collaborative, home of the St. Mary and St. John the Evangelist parishes in Chelmsford and North Chelmsford, Mass., respectively. The practice will continue, weather permitting, every Wednesday from 4 to 6 p.m. as necessary moving forward. The Church staff helps to organize the parking lot process with all the

guidelines of social distancing being strictly followed. This is one of many ways the Church is finding to stay connected to parishioners, including the use of technology. The article goes on to state: “Instead of focusing on anxiety-producing losses, he [Fr. Corey] encourages using this copious family time to “build the domestic church at home” by praying or watching Mass on a device together.

Fr. Corey went on to say, “As a parish, we want to remain as connected as we can, and the grace of all this is using technology to its full potential to make sure people know we haven’t forgotten about them. I want people to have hope. Because while we are separated physically right now, we are not separated by prayer.” Great job, Fr. Corey! Visit our Facebook page for the link to the entire *Boston Globe* article.

Fr. Corey Bassett-Tirrell ‘19 is hearing Confessions every Wednesday from 4:00 - 6:00 PM at Saint Mary Parish in the parking lot located at 25 North Road in Chelmsford, MA.



## We are grateful for YOU, our faithful supporters!



# The Class of 2020

As we say a temporary goodbye and celebrate this class that has contributed so much to the XXIII community, the members of the class were asked to reflect on their years of formation and answer the following questions: For what are you most grateful during your years of study at XXIII? What will you look back on and miss the most? What is your most memorable moment during your seminary years? Here are their reflections...



## MAURICE CULVER

## DIOCESE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Before entering the Seminary, Mo was a Medical Officer/physician in the United States Navy, and also a Professor at Florida State College at Jacksonville.

*“I am most grateful for the friendships that I have with both fellow seminarians, and priests and staff at the Seminary. I will miss most the open accessibility to spiritual direction and the camaraderie among the community. It has all best prepared me for doing more for God’s people. I feel ready for service in Christ.”*



## MICHAEL GOODREAU

## DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD

Before becoming a seminarian, Michael worked for F.L. Roberts, a convenience store, gas station and car wash chain based in Springfield, MA for seventeen years.

*“What I am most grateful for is that PSJS existed. It is a very unique place, designed for men with different stories but where we could all relate. And the priests, faculty and staff are what helps make this place what it is. I will miss interacting with everyone here: classmates, professors, all the priests, the staff, and especially benefactors. While I will cherish all the trips to the March for Life, I will especially remember this year as a deacon, with Kevin Miller and Nick Zrallack.*

*The three of us have been to four trips to Washington in a row. And we each gave a short reflection at the Holy hour in the Crypt church of the Basilica!”*



## ANTHONY HAMATY

## DIOCESE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Prior to entering the Seminary, Anthony practiced pediatric medicine for 28 years, most of those years in private clinical practice.

*“I am truly most grateful for the fraternal love, the genuine kindness, and the personal energy of all the faculty and staff to form me to be the best priest I can possibly be for Jesus Christ. I will miss many cherished moments here, but most of all I will miss the personal interactions with all here and the “comfortableness” of being here, right down to Fr. Kiely’s handshakes three times a day!!! The one moment that seems to continuously resurface was from my first year.*

*It was near the end of the Lawn Party, when in conversation with Fr. Kiely, he gave me these words of encouragement, ‘You’re going to be a great priest.’ I have never forgotten those words. And, by God’s grace, I pray I will be. I am thankful for all who have formed me into the person I am today!!!”*



## BROTHER ANTONIO LOPEZ, CSS

## STIGMATINE FATHERS

Br. Antonio was raised in California and taught middle school for many years before pursuing theological studies in Italy and becoming a religious brother with the Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata (CSS).

*“It’s an awesome and encouraging experience to be in a house of formation where there are men who share the same desire to be of service to God and his Church as future priests. I believe the encouragement, prayers, and support from Fr. Kiely, the spiritual directors, professors/faculty, staff, and fellow seminarians is what I will always respect and I will know how good it is to surround oneself with people who continually share their care and concern for one another. Two*

*instances in particular are “most memorable” for me: The first, returning to one of my apostolate assignments as a Deacon to proclaim the Gospel and to preach during the Mass on Pentecost Sunday. My second experience, having the opportunity to baptize for the first time!”*

# SEMESTER HIGHLIGHTS



Deacons Larry Barile, Mark Harris and Stephen Ondrey



Diaconate Ordination: Fr. Kiely, Stephen Ondrey, Mark Harris, Larry Barile with Bishop Hennessey



Chalices were displayed for blessing at Commissioning Mass, April 22, 2020



Fr. Kiely blesses the Class of 2020 at the Mass of Commissioning

On April 15th, three men from our Third Theologian class were ordained to the Transitional Diaconate in Alumni Chapel. This ordination was a special arrangement developed by Fr. Kiely, with the permission of Boston’s Cardinal Séan O’Malley, and blessed by the Bishops of each diocese. The ordination of these Transitional Deacons allows these men to return to their dioceses ready to help as soon as possible in their parish communities. Deacons can baptize, witness marriages, perform funeral and burial services outside of Mass, distribute Holy Communion, and preach the homily. It is our hope these men will be able to participate in these ministries actively and soon upon return to their diocesan home. The Most Reverend Robert F. Hennessey, Auxiliary Bishop of Boston, presided over the ceremony. We congratulate and celebrate:

**Larry Barile**, Diocese of Norwich, Connecticut. Larry earned an Associate of Science degree in Respiratory Therapy and worked for the Department of Veterans’ Affairs with the State of Connecticut as the department head of cardiopulmonary services. He served the church in various ministries for over 20 years before entering PSJS. Larry will enter Fourth Theology in the fall.

**Mark Harris**, Diocese of Venice, Florida. Mark is a native of Greater Miami and worked as an educator with the Charlotte County Public School System. He credits many wonderful people that have guided and inspired him to serve God in a priestly vocation within His Church. Mark will enter Fourth Theology in the fall.

**Stephen Ondrey**, Diocese of Columbus, Ohio. Stephen grew up a cradle Catholic in a military household in Columbus, Ohio and is an identical twin. He worked practicing general dentistry for ten years before entering the seminary. Having

been away from the Church for some time, he attributes his conversion back to the Church and his vocational discernment to Our Blessed Mother, Mary, after his first pilgrimage to Medjugorje in 2011. Stephen will enter Fourth Theology in the fall.

Deacon Stephen summed up the feelings of all three men after the early ordination and before being assigned a summer parish: “Wherever it is, I’m thrilled to have the opportunity to serve somewhere in the diocese.”

Lastly, on April 22nd was the Commissioning Mass for the twelve Fourth Theologians to celebrate their completion of studies and readiness for ordination to priesthood. This is always a bitter-sweet celebration. These men have brightened the house for four years. They will not return as seminarians but will instead go forth to preach God’s word and bring many souls closer to Christ. We look forward to seeing them all again at future Seminary events when it fits their schedule. That especially holds true this year; many of us could not be with them, and we want the opportunity to warmly express our support of their journey forward and ordination to the priesthood. For sure, this will always be a memorable class; not only for their tremendous contributions to the Seminary house but also for completing their formation, uninterrupted, during a historic global crisis.

Please pray for all these men and pray for vocations!

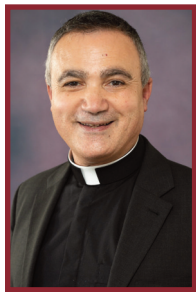


Deacons Travis Mecum, Shawn Simchock, Mo Culver and Mason Wiggins with Fr. Kiely after blessing their Chalices



Fr. Brian Kiely with members of the Class of 2020



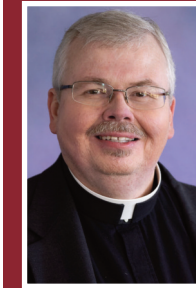


**PASQUALE LOPRESTI**

Before entering the Seminary, Pat worked for the State Attorney General as a lawyer representing the state in both criminal and personal injury as well as negligence matters. Additionally, he worked in retail property development and part-time legal research.

*“Since the age of five I thought about priesthood but never seriously explored my calling. That all changed in June 2012 with my return from volunteering in Lourdes. I made the call to my Vocation Director that would change the direction of my life. Two years of spiritual direction and discernment ultimately led me to Pope Saint John XXIII National Seminary. I am grateful that such an institution exists whereby I could pursue this calling. I will miss the daily encouragement and direction of the outstanding faculty. Additionally, the staff support was great – it was uplifting and allowed for me and my classmates to stay focused on our journey. I feel ready and well-prepared for ordination and life as a priest.”*

**ARCHDIOCESE OF ADELAIDE**



**TRAVIS MECUM**

Travis Mecum worked in the field of clinical and research Sleep Medicine for years before entering the Seminary. Additionally, he studied Vocal Performance and Music Theory/Composition while obtaining an Associate of Arts degree in Applied Organization Leadership.

*“I am most grateful for all of the amazing experiences in liturgy - Masses, Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and most especially, Adoration. Every other experience here flows from the graces received in those moments. I am going to miss my Spiritual Direction with Fr. Hoppough, and the relationships that I have developed with all of the faculty and the men - there are many spiritual giants in this House! Being here at PSJS has been such an incredible blessing. My most memorable moments outside of the Liturgy have been serving as the Chairman for Fall Follies over the past four years. It's an incredibly talented community!”*

**ARCHDIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY, KS**

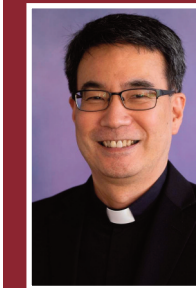


**KEVIN MILLER**

Prior to entering the Seminary, Kevin retired at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel following 32 years of service in the Army; the last twenty years as a full-time Active Guard and Reserve officer in the PA Army National Guard.

*“Reflecting back on being at the Seminary, I am most grateful for the sacred time and space to grow closer to the Lord. Gathering as a small group to pray the rosary and Hour of Mercy devotions in a variety of languages is what I will miss the most. Two events especially stand out in my mind: Forty Hours at Our Lady of Czestochowa in Worcester, Mass. and First Friday and Saturday all night prayer vigil at St Mary's in Chelmsford, Mass. Great blessings!”*

**DIOCESE OF SCRANTON**



**PETER OKAJIMA**

Before entering the seminary, Peter was the head of banking operations for a class action and bankruptcy firm and held several executive positions in various New York money center banks, including JPMorgan Chase and Citibank. Other positions included strategic planning, global client management and product management for trust services.

*“I am humbled and most appreciative of God's calling to the priesthood as well as His love and ongoing guidance and support throughout my formation here at PSJS. I am grateful that my Bishop sent me to this wonderful seminary to be surrounded by faculty and staff who are gracious and generous in their support and concern for our success and well-being. I will miss my brother seminarians and the friendship and company of so many noteworthy formators. As I write this, life as we know it has changed in a dramatic way. I don't think anyone would have envisioned the end of their seminary formation to be overlaid by the current covid-19 crisis. But through it all, PSJS has adapted and taken care of us. I'm grateful more than ever for the care, compassion, and formation that this seminary provides. There's truly no other place like it in the world.”*

**DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN**



**SHAWN SIMCHOCK**

Prior to entering PSJS, Shawn attended the Diocese of Scranton Permanent Deacon program for one year and was studying at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore MD for two years. Shawn had also worked for many years in both restaurant management and sales.

*“I am most grateful for the educational program and formation that Pope St John XXIII Seminary has provided me these past four years. The faculty is top-notch, and the friendships forged are friendships that will last a lifetime. I will mostly miss living in community and seeing all the people I have spent the last several years with on a daily basis. I am thankful for that time. The friendships are most memorable, with both faculty and staff and are the memories that will help make each day as a priest the greatest days of my life.”*

**DIOCESE OF SCRANTON**



**FRANCISCO SORDO**

Francisco has a Bachelors in Mechanical Electrical Engineering, with an MBA in Administration. He worked at Eastman Kodak Mexico for 8 years and then redirected his career working for the financial banking industry in Mexico and in Canada for 20 years before entering PSJS.

*“What I am most grateful for during my four years of formation, is the quality of the faculty and staff; Fr. Kiely's kind but direct leadership; Msgr. Mongelluzzo and Msgr. Hoppough's multiple classes and practicums; Fr. Yavarone and Msgr. Fay instruction on Moral Theology as key to my human formation, and last but not least Fr. Bellaftiore, who in his own style and personality was always eager to convey his knowledge. I will mostly miss the prayer and Masses in community, every day. What I will remember the most were the very beginning and the very end: At the beginning, men greeted me at orientation with valet service, and then brought all my luggage to my room. At the end when, due to the Corona virus, I was requested to go back to my Diocese in Canada, Dcn. Pat Lopresti and Dcn. John Croghan helped me pack my car and swap my winter tires. Both the beginning and the end exemplified for me the impact of true, humble service for others and left enduring marks on me.”*

**DIOCESE OF HAMILTON, ONTARIO**



**MASON WIGGINS**

Before coming to PSJS Mason worked in Washington DC for thirty years; 10 years in the House of Representatives for several members, 15 years in the Senate in various capacities and, lastly, with the Senate Sergeant at Arms. Mason has also worked in a law firm and as a lobbyist for a food safety organization. Originally from Florida, he has a BA and MA in philosophy and a JD and an LLM in agricultural law.

*“I'm most grateful for the good education that has taken place in a house of prayer with other mature men. I will miss the people; so many of the seminarians, staff and faculty have become good friends. Some of the best moments for me have been watching each class receiving their ministries, being ordained, and going on to serve the people of their diocese. We all move forward in serving the Lord.”*

**DIOCESE OF ST. AUGUSTINE**



**NICHOLAS ZRALLACK**

Nick worked in the St. Lucie Public School System for 18 years in a variety of roles beginning with that of a Special Education teacher. He also served as the Director of Curriculum serving the 40,000 students in the District.

*“I am most grateful for the formation provided through my seminary experience. The man that entered through these doors four years ago is fundamentally changed. The best part is that such an experience doesn't end. I will miss the daily interactions with the cast of characters at the seminary from the faculty and staff to the visitors and friends of the seminary to my brothers on this journey with me; interactions that have helped to make me a better person. A conversation one night with fellow seminarian Peter Okajima about a recurring topic – how the world needed to change - led to a multi-semester journey examining faith formation which ultimately resulted in collecting and presenting data for a diocese desiring to make that type of change. To see our random late night thoughts transform into a reality is something that only God can orchestrate and is something for which I will always be grateful.”*

**DIOCESE OF PALM BEACH**