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# POPE ST. JOHN XXIII NATIONAL SEMINARY

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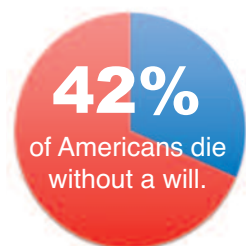
## HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT YOUR LEGACY?

*"Wills reflect the character of the writer and their relationship with family, friends and the world at large. Their nature, prejudices, interests, virtues and vices can be found in the pages of a will". -Anonymous*

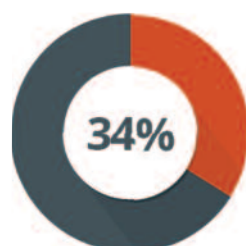
Have you thought about your legacy?  
Or stated another way, what's in your will?

Less than 10% of Americans have named a charity in their will—not surprising since less than half have a will! Research indicates the motivation behind a will or a bequest with a charitable component includes: "giving back, wanting to make a difference and a passion for the organization". Bequests represent over \$25 billion annually and are the largest gifts a charity will receive.

In our case, it offers the opportunity "to live on through the mission of our Seminary." Consider including a bequest to PSJS in your will. For additional information please contact the Development Office 781.899.5500 or psjs.edu



42%  
of Americans die without a will.



34%  
of donors learned about their bequests from their charity



\$0  
the cost during a donor's lifetime to make a gift in their will



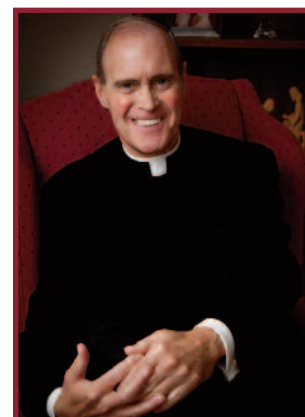
while 69% of donors change their wills...



...only 25% change a gift in their wills

Source: PlannedGiving.com

## FROM THE RECTOR'S DESK



### A Year of Firsts!

As my second year as Rector of Pope St John XXIII begins, I'm reminded of all the "firsts" of the past year! For me of course, virtually everything last year was a first - here at home it encompassed: admissions, evaluations, Trustee Meetings and ATS accreditation. On the road the "firsts" were about building relationships through national conferences, alumni meetings, and visits with Bishops and Vocation Directors. Having travelled to many of the Ordinations of last year's class I was able to visit with the Archbishop of Miami and the Bishops of Albany, Brooklyn and Pittsburgh.

Additionally, attending the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors in New Orleans and the National Association of Theological Schools in Chicago forged relationships that will help further increase our enrollment. This year we admitted 23 new seminarians from 30 dioceses and 5 religious communities bringing our total enrollment to 73 seminarians—the largest in 15 years!

Some of the other "firsts"; record Lawn Party revenue—almost \$300,000, and for the first time the Seminary hosted a very successful Red Cross Blood Drive! In mid-October the Most Rev. Roy Campbell, Jr. '07, the newly ordained Auxiliary Bishop of Washington, returned to celebrate his 10th Anniversary and deliver a presentation at Alumni Days.

In this issue you will also hear from a number of seminarians sharing many of their first-time experiences from their summer assignments.

Another was the renovation of our front office reception and administrative space—the "first" in over fifty years! I should add that we are planning several more upgrades in the coming year to address the space needs associated with our increased enrollment. We have included a legacy article which encourages you to consider including PSJS in your estate plans.

As always, I thank you for your prayerful and generous support.

Very Rev. Brian R. Kiely, Rector

#### WHAT'S INSIDE:

- Meet the Class of 2021
- Alumni Days: Bishops Campbell and Murphy
- Pastoral Assignments Home & Abroad
- Estate Plans and Your Legacy



## Lawn Party Record Year!



The 36th PSJS Lawn Party was attended by over 350 people and raised close to \$300,000—both records! Taking the podium following words of welcome and gratitude by Seminary Rector Father Brian Kiely, Chair John Corcoran spoke on the importance of the Seminary, which he referred to as a “really special place. “It’s also a place that, to the outside world, is not always that well understood. There is a perception sometimes that when a man comes to the seminary, the man has somehow stepped out of society.” Instead, the “men who are here in formation have, in fact, put themselves in the middle of it.”

Corey Bassett-Tirrell '19, a seminarian studying for the Archdiocese of Boston spoke of his vocation journey. He is a former Episcopalian who was received into the Catholic Church in 2005 and had worked in the funeral business and in parish ministry as a musician and communications specialist. He liked the work, but, he said, “all along the way, there was a very persistent angel that kept tugging on my sleeve. To live, work and pray at a place filled with so many fine men from so many different backgrounds, has made clear to me that God can do infinitely more than asked

for or imagined,” he said.

Additionally, Deacon Maurice M. Culver '20, a seminarian of the Diocese of St. Augustine, spoke of his secular upbringing and not entering the Catholic faith until a friend invited him to attend a midnight Mass. “As I entered the vestibule of the church, a sense of peace welled up from within me, and at the same time, the thought -- I'm home,” he said. He had a career as a Navy physician, college professor and then a permanent deacon - studying canon law. Soon, he began to feel that “my day job was getting in the way of my weekend Church life,” and decided to pursue priesthood. “Well, here I am.”

Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley offered a blessing and said, "vocation stories are like a retreat. It reminds us how God's grace touches people's lives and completely changes the course of their life." In all four of the dioceses he has served in, said Cardinal O'Malley, “I have been blessed to have graduates from this Seminary, and all of them were outstanding priests."

**SAVE THE DATE**  
37th Annual Lawn Party  
Wednesday, September 26, 2018

## Alumni Days at PSJS

On Oct. 17-18, the PSJS community welcomed their alumni back for Alumni Days. This is always a great opportunity for the priests to reconnect, swap stories and notes “from the field”, and to refresh and deepen the commitment they made when they attended the Seminary. Featured speakers this year included Most Rev. William Murphy, Bishop Emeritus of Rockville Centre, NY, - and former faculty member - and Most Rev. Roy Campbell, Jr. '07, newly ordained Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Washington...and 10th year reunion member!



Bishop Murphy speaking in the Alumni Chapel

Catholic social teaching requires us to support a person’s right to live where they choose to call home. According to Bishop Murphy, we can best offer our support to both groups through

education, by making our stand known to political parties, and by being just who we are – the Catholic Church. Solidarity is necessary.

Wednesday morning, Bishop Roy Campbell, Jr. of the Class of '07 addressed the community and spoke of his own personal journey to priesthood and then the Episcopate. He encouraged the men in their own journeys as they walk with God and are called to pastor God’s people. “The Lord is patient”, said Bishop Campbell. He first heard the call at age seven; he entered the Seminary at age 55! Bishop Campbell underscored that really we are not looking at a ‘late’ vocation; instead, men at PSJS have answered the call when the Lord was ready. He reminded the seminarians that they are a work in progress and advised them to love God’s people for they will love you back; to be open to His spirit and to be patient with yourself.



Bishop Campbell '07 - the third PSJS Bishop alumnus



### DANIEL CAUGHEY

DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE, NY

Before I was accepted to Pope St. John XXIII Seminary, I had been teaching science for 31 years. I earned my B.S. in Geology and then while working on my M.S. in Education, I met my wife of 25 years. After her death in 2013, my plan was just to continue my ministry as a Permanent Deacon--I was ordained in 2004.

By the grace of God, He changed my plans. With the promptings and encouragement of my pastor, spiritual director, and Bishop, and with a great deal of prayer, I discerned that the Lord was calling me to study for priesthood.

PSJS was chosen as the right place for me as it had so much more to offer a man with my life experiences and background.



### JOHN O'DOWD

ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON, MA

Born, raised and educated in Ireland, I emigrated to Boston, MA back in the mid-1990s, a year after graduating from University College Dublin with a B.S. in Electronic Engineering.

An encounter with Christ, after work one evening, in the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at St. Anthony's shrine, downtown Boston, awakened me to Christ's healing and transformational power, imbuing a deep sense of purpose and direction, that has given ultimate meaning to my life ever since.

I consider my life experience as a lay Catholic invaluable while working as an engineer for many years, my encounters with the poor and suffering in travels to Peru, El Salvador, Haiti and the Philippines and especially the two years while working as a hospital chaplain for the Archdiocese of Boston where I encountered more intimately the love of Christ for those struggling with illness, drug addiction, loneliness, grief, mental illness, anger and lack of meaning and purpose in life. I hope to let this rich life experience inform my formation as a seminarian and my life as a priest accompanying the People of God.

My vision for priesthood in today's Church is inspired by St. Paul: “For we do not preach ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for the sake of Jesus”. (2 Cor 4:5)



### GUY DORMÉVIL

DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT, CT

I am a native of Haiti where I worked as an Immigration Inspector for many years. Upon my arrival in the U.S., I earned my degree and lived in Connecticut for some 30 years. I was married for twenty-nine years, until my wife lost her battle to cancer in 2015. I am a devoted father of two grown children, a son and a daughter.

I have always been active in the Church serving as an altar server, youth minister, prayer group leader, liturgical minister, Eucharistic minister and charismatic group leader. I also served on my Parish finance council, advisory council, and as a trustee. After the death of my wife, just as the Risen Christ petitioned Peter for a second time to care for His sheep; He came back to me. When my Pastor invited me to consider a priestly vocation, I felt I couldn't delay any longer. Two months after I met with the Vocations Director for the Diocese of Bridgeport, I resigned my job of 26 years to follow the will of God.

PSJS has provided a warm welcome and the camaraderie of brotherhood. I pray that God will bless me and my brother seminarians with the grace needed to be the Lord's voice for the New Evangelization Initiative of the Catholic Church.



**THANH T NGUYEN**

**DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD, MA**

I was born in Vietnam and have been here in the U.S. for 4 years. Before becoming a seminarian and studying for the Diocese of Springfield, I was a religious brother of St. Joseph Congregation in Vietnam and afterward I was a Benedictine monk of Christ in the Desert in New Mexico.

After having studied with two different Orders, I found that I desired to become a diocesan priest rather than a religious brother. Having just entered Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary for my first year of Theology, I am very happy with PSJS; it is a peaceful and blessed place.

*"To be a priest is to follow the calling from God and to become a person of prayer and service. Seeking God first will convert my life every day to be a better and more holy person. Serving the people of God as Jesus the High Priest did, rather than to be served, is an excellent example for me to follow".*



**AIDAN TOOMBS**

**DIOCESE OF HELENA, MT**

I am studying for the Diocese of Helena, which includes all of western and north central Montana. That Diocese has 57 parishes spread over 51,922 square miles!

Prior to joining PSJS I worked as a research scientist for 10 years in the fields of diagnostics and genetic testing. After that I then went to law school, and for the past nearly 10 years I've been working as an attorney, representing clients in the areas of biotech, pharmaceuticals, and diagnostics.

It was after many years of prayer and discernment, it was suggested that I consider PSJS for my priestly formation.

My Bishop, the Most Reverend George Leo Thomas, is a strong supporter of late vocations, and it was his recommendation that I attend PSJS. I'm especially grateful to be here - it is both a blessing and a privilege.



**ELVIN TORRES**

**DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN, NY**

I was born in The Dominican Republic in 1984 and am studying for the priesthood for the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York. In 2011 I received my degree in Philosophy from the Pontifical University Catholic Mother and Teacher in the Dominican Republic. During the past few years I taught Human and Religious Formation in the Dominican Republic and in 2016 I obtained my degree in Teaching Enablement.

As a young boy about seven years of age, I remember going to Mass with my family. I was intrigued with the priest's presence, his reverence and the love he displayed for Jesus Christ. It moved me and at that moment I felt something special that I did not understand. As a teenager I felt a deeper calling to the priesthood, however at times I also found myself wondering what it would be like to have my own family.

After years of prayer and discernment I decided to follow Jesus Christ. I look forward to my formation here at PSJS and giving my life to the service of God and His people.

## Welcome Class of 2021!



**ANDREI CASTRILLON**

**DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD, MA**

Born in Romania, my family moved to Peru when I was an infant. I was raised in a Catholic family with long Peruvian Catholic traditions such as the Lord of Miracles, St. Rose of Lima and St. Martin de Porres. Even as a child I always felt the maternal protection of our Holy Mother, the Virgin Mary.

In Peru I worked as a lawyer in the fruit industry and also in advertising services for several years. However, what was in my heart for so long did not disappear and ultimately turned my soul towards God to begin a new way in my life. My vocation path was long but God in his infinite wisdom provided just what I needed, a seminary specializing in older vocations. The formation program here at PSJS will help me grow in a life of virtue and prayer through the sponsorship of the Diocese of Springfield.



**JOHN CROGHAN**

**ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER, CO**

I was a seminarian for two years in my late teens, but I left to pursue a career in engineering. I worked as a mechanical engineer in the aerospace industry on many different civil and defense related projects, both aircraft and spacecraft. I vividly recall working on projects supporting the U.S. military, and working on the team that built the cameras for the Hubble Space Telescope.

After many years, I returned to seminary in 2016 and participated in the Spirituality Year as part of the formation program at St. John Vianney Seminary in Denver, and was then admitted to PSJS to complete my Theology studies for the Archdiocese of Denver.



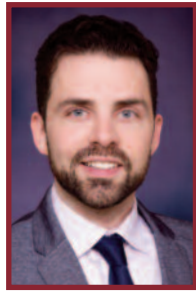
**STEPHEN ONDREY**

**DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS, OH**

I grew up a cradle Catholic in a military household in Columbus, Ohio. I am an identical twin, and the last of six children. I worked as a genetic researcher at The Ohio State University for several years before moving on to a career in dentistry. I have been practicing general dentistry for the past ten years.

I attribute my conversion back to the Church and my vocational discernment to Our Blessed Mother, Mary, after my first pilgrimage to Medjugorje in 2011. It was in Medjugorje that I renewed a great love for Jesus in the Eucharist, and returned to daily Mass and the sacraments, especially the sacrament of reconciliation after 23 years. I continue to hold a strong devotion to Our Lady, and love the written works of St. Louis de Montfort where the Saint says of Mary:

*"Our entire perfection consists in being conformed, united and consecrated to Jesus Christ. Hence the most perfect of all devotions is undoubtedly that which conforms, unites and consecrates us most perfectly to Jesus Christ. Now, since Mary is of all creatures the one most conformed to Jesus Christ, it follows that among all devotions that which most consecrates and conforms a soul to our Lord is devotion to Mary, his Holy Mother, and that the more a soul is consecrated to her the more will it be consecrated to Jesus Christ."*



**DAN MCHALE**

**DIOCESE OF ALBANY, NY**

My vocation journey began in my junior year at Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh, New York, during a period in my life where the Catholic faith of my youth was no longer a priority. One weekday morning I heard a voice telling me to get out of bed and go to Mass. I did, and recall standing there questioning my sanity as Mass began. Then it hit me, “You are a priest forever in the line of Melchizedek.” The Responsorial Psalm made me ask myself: “Am I supposed to be a priest?” After lengthy discussions with a long-time parish priest and the Vocations Director from the Diocese of Albany, I dismissed the idea for almost a decade.

I then went on to earn a Masters in History and taught at Mount Saint Mary College and SUNY New Paltz for ten years. A health crisis in 2014 drew me back into serious discernment for the priesthood. The following year I applied for seminary study and served a fruitful and faithful pastoral year assignment in a suburban Albany parish. I am now ready to pursue my vocation for the Lord here at PSJS.



**JOHN DUDEK**

**ARCHDIOCESE OF DETROIT, MI**

Almost 33 years ago, I entered Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit but left shortly afterward. My journey after leaving Sacred Heart has been blessed with a 26-year career as a Middle School and High School Special Education Teacher.

My two daughters provide the love and support that any parent would be proud to have. My younger attends Michigan State University; the elder daughter graduated from American University and is currently working for the 911 Museum in New York City.

With the encouragement of my Pastor, Msgr. John Zenz, and Sacred Heart classmate, Fr. Gerard LeBoeuf, I find myself to be a seminarian once again after 30 years. I know how fortunate I am to be attending PSJS. The staff and faculty are committed to the success of every individual who walks away from all they know in order to answer God's call.

I pray that one day I will be able to use my talents, knowledge, and experiences as teacher, husband, and parent to evangelize the Grace and Mercy of God’s Infinite Love.



**BERNARD GARDZALLA**

**DIOCESE OF SCRANTON, PA**

I first felt an attraction to the priesthood in my early childhood and then throughout the ensuing years; always blocking it out, never believing it was a possibility for me.

Pursuing a very busy career in music and music education, I was very successful, but often frustrated and never fulfilled or at peace. When the occasional thoughts of priesthood came, they were easily blocked out with work. Something was missing. Finally, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, I achieved clarity in the realization that I could not ignore this call. My discernment led me to Pope St. John XXIII Seminary.

Whereas before I often doubted my decisions, I am now confident that all my past experiences are what God planned for me. Be not afraid, and listen to His voice.



**ROBERT VOILAND**

**ARCHDIOCESE OF DETROIT, MI**

I initially began college studying electrical engineering, but soon found myself pursuing a more hands-on vocation and entered an electrician apprenticeship program at General Motors. In subsequent years, I received my Master Electrician and Electrical Contractor licenses. I retired after thirty years with General Motors, working there in a variety of fields including construction, computer networking and general electrical maintenance.

My plan after retirement was to continue my career as an electrician with my own company. That quickly changed, however, when I began to care for my aging parents and some other family members. During this time, I realized that what really mattered to me, even during my career as an electrician, were the people in my life. At this same time, I was also learning more about my Catholic faith and falling deeply in love with Jesus and his Church. The desire to more fully serve Christ became a strong motivator on how I should spend the rest of my life. I enrolled in undergraduate philosophy study at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit with the goal of later applying for the diaconate, but was encouraged by priest friends to consider aiming higher—the priesthood.

After much prayer and continued discernment during my studies at SHMS, I applied for and was accepted as a seminarian at PSJS. It seemed like the right fit and everything I have experienced about PSJS has reinforced my belief that I am in the right place.



**CARMINE CARUSO**

**ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK, NY**

I obtained a B.S. Degree in Civil Engineering from the New Jersey Institute of Technology, Newark, NJ and worked in commercial/ retail construction for major clients such as Home Depot, Walmart, Kohls, Bed Bath & Beyond in the Mid-Atlantic region.

I entered Cathedral Seminary House of Formation (Douglaston, NY) in August 2015 and spent two years studying Philosophy at St. John’s University in Queens. I presumed that I would be moving onto Theology with my classmates to St. Joseph’s Seminary in Dunwoodie, NY. However our “God of surprises” informed me one day through my Vocation Director that we would visit PSJS XXIII in mid-February to visit the Seminary. After our visit we both believed it a better fit and my Vocation Director promised if accepted he would have Cardinal Dolan visit the Seminary. He doesn’t know I am holding him to his promise!



**LOUIS DELOUKER**

**DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NY**

I was raised with my two sisters in a seaside community on Long Island, New York. I earned my B.A. from Hobart College and worked for the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) for 17 years where I prepared forensic investigations of brokerage firms for compliance with federal securities laws. My commitment to protect the investing public led to a promotion to work with FINRA’s home office in Washington D.C.

After growing closer to God through daily Mass and prayer, I realized that I was being called to priesthood. In 2017 with the guidance and recommendations of my Bishop and Vocation Director of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, I was admitted to study for priesthood at Pope Saint John XXIII National Seminary.



**BR. ANTONIO LOPEZ, CSS**

**STIGMATINES**

I was born and raised in California and taught middle school for many years before pursuing theological studies in Italy. I am a religious brother with the Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata (CSS). Since pursuing God’s will by discernment and answering His call, I have experienced God’s abundance of blessings for walking in His path of love. Even in the difficult times, recalling God’s love and mercy strengthens my hope in His love and concern for me. As a religious brother, I receive great joy and happiness when I can share or be of service to others while I am also growing in the Love of God.

Love is reciprocal. I believe that if God is calling me to priesthood, this will be a greater call of service in sharing faith, hope, and love for His greater glory.



**MARK A. HARRIS**

**DIOCESE OF VENICE, FL**

I was raised and educated in the Pinecrest-Palmetto area of Greater Miami. I earned undergraduate degrees in Commercial Art (A.S.) and Business Marketing & Management (B.S.) at Florida Metropolitan University and a Master’s degree in Education (M.A.) at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield Connecticut. Most recently I worked as an educator with the Charlotte County Public School System.

I give thanks and praise to Our Lord for the many wonderful people He placed along the way to guide and inspire me to serve Him in a priestly vocation within His Church.

*“I am greatly honored and humbled to be blessed with the opportunity to attend Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary. I am also thankful for the gracious assistance and direction of our admirable Bishop Frank Joseph DeWayne, and the generous support of the people of the Diocese of Venice.”*



**ALEX OLZEWSKI**

**DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN, NY**

I am entering PSJS having transferred from the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception in Huntington, NY. Before entering seminary I worked in the finance and banking industry. I felt the call to priesthood at an early age, perhaps 7 or 8, when I was an altar boy. One day during Confession, the priest asked me: “Have you ever thought about becoming a priest”? It made me realize that I needed to take action. However, I remained passive and did not pursue it.

When my mother was diagnosed with a terminal illness and given a 15 month life expectancy, I put my priestly discernment aside. It was during her care that I truly appreciated the value of doctors and nurses as healers of the body. They treated my mother for ten years beyond her initial diagnosis. When a priest arrived to give my mother her final blessing, it seemed like a visit from an angel. I realized then the only thing greater than a healer of the body is a healer of the soul. That led me to actively pursue the priesthood.



**YUNIOR GONZALEZ-DIAZ**

**DIOCESE OF COLORADO SPRINGS, CO**

I was born in Camagüey, Cuba and became a US citizen in 2009. In 2001 I obtained my B.A/B.S. degree in Elementary Education (Science) and worked as an elementary school teacher in Mexico for three years. After coming to the United States, I obtained a teaching position in Maryland but soon left my teaching career when I felt God’s call to the Franciscan way of life. I entered the Franciscan Conventual Order in 2009 and held the position of CRE (Coordinator in Religious Education) and Youth Ministry for the Archdiocese of Washington D.C. After five years of discernment I felt that God was pulling me in a different direction which led me to the diocesan priesthood.

I’m currently a seminarian at Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary studying for the Diocese of Colorado Springs. I feel that I can become a good diocesan priest with all the lessons and riches I have gained from Franciscan spirituality. My faith in our Lord and Savior will give me the encouragement and strength necessary to dedicate myself to the Church, and her people who are faithfully living the Gospel.



**PETE SCHEFFER**

**DIOCESE OF FALL RIVER, MA**

Most of my life has been spent in Service to the Nation both in and out of uniform. A graduate of West Point, and a combat veteran in the Global War on Terror, I also served (following my military retirement) as a US Diplomatic Peace Treaty Inspector in the Holy Land, and then (for the past eight years) as an Assistant Professor of Strategic & Operational Studies at the US Army’s Command & General Staff College in Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas.

Though my life has followed a *Long and Winding Road* across the globe, I have not been a stranger to hearing God’s Call toward a priestly vocation. After declining entry into the Jesuit Novitiate in 2011, my Jesuit Vocation Director, Fr. Louis McCabe, S.J., told me to not be surprised if I happened to hear God’s Call again. Lo and behold, a few years later, while driving to Kansas City, Missouri in order to fulfill my weekend Catholic Social Service Supervisory duties, I heard the sound of the Holy Spirit in the voice of Ken Watts on EWTN Radio (Vocation Boom Segment) who spoke about “late vocations” and Pope St. John XXIII Seminary (PSJS) – and thus, at that moment (recalling Fr. Lou McCabe’s words) – began my trek toward PSJS. I exited the *Long and Winding Road* and entered instead onto *A Road Less Traveled*; a road I pray and believe will lead me to new and greater Service in Christ. As the Jesuits say: *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam...*



**BRANNON LEPAK**

**ARCHDIOCESE OF OKLAHOMA CITY, OK**

My career in education began in 1999 teaching English as a Second Language full-time to college and adult students.

Many years later, a sustained interest in prayer and a wish to enter more deeply into the pursuit of God led me to consider a religious vocation. I spent three years (2012-2015) in formation with the Order of Preachers as a Dominican friar, studying philosophy and theology. The desire to serve as a priest kept growing through discernment and spiritual direction. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at a perpetual chapel was a great source of grace and inspiration.

I eventually applied to the diocesan ministry, was accepted and now have the great opportunity to study for priesthood at PSJS.

# SEMINARIAN ASSIGNMENTS AT HOME AND ABROAD

## GUATEMALA - BRUCE BARNETT '19



In 2013 Pope Francis called on the world's priests to stay close to the poor and marginalized and to be "shepherds living with the smell of the sheep." In the summer of 2017, Rafael

Ghattas and I, both seminarians from the Diocese of Charleston, took Pope Francis' words to heart and spent the month of July living with the sheep of San Pedro, Guatemala. This was the first time two seminarians were sent to San Pedro, Guatemala, to live at the San Pedro Apostol Catholic Church and attend Spanish School. Bishop Guglielmone wants all of his priests to know Spanish in order to serve the growing Hispanic community in South Carolina.

During my stay, I observed that even though the people are very poor, they were very friendly, and worked very hard. The family unit is very strong and neighbors help each other. In many cases, it is the only way to survive.

It was evident that religion plays an important role in the everyday life of the people. Almost every person in San Pedro volunteers in some way at the Church. There were forty altar servers, groups of men that cleaned and decorated the church, women's prayer groups, wearing colorful traditional dresses, were in the church every morning. There were multiple choirs that observed religious feasts with music, dancing and fireworks. The beauty inside the church was a stark contrast to the living conditions outside the church.



In addition to studies, there were many opportunities to explore – one day Padre Benjamin, the priest of San Pedro Apostol, took us to a seminary and we attended a memorial Mass for the late Fr. Stanley Rother of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma. He was brutally murdered 36 years ago during the Guatemala civil war while ministering to the poor. The Vatican has since recognized his martyrdom as the first American-born martyr, on Sep. 23, 2017 (see accompanying Oklahoma City article).

The Spanish School teachers had many questions about the Catholic Church and we quickly became aware of the many religious and cultural differences between Guatemala and the United States. For example, there are

no second-career seminarians in Guatemala. Many of the questions were very basic and I felt like I was teaching RCIA again, except in Spanish. The biggest difference, though, was the hunger that the Guatemaltecos had for learning more about their faith.

Throughout my assignment, I found myself reflecting on the words of Pope Francis. While Pope Francis's emphasis on the plight of the poor and marginalized has brought new energy to the work of service and social justice in the Catholic Church, there still is much work to be done in many Hispanic countries. I know that God sent me to San Pedro to learn more than just the language. As difficult as it was living in San Pedro amongst very poor conditions, I now understand better what Pope Francis is talking about, and I am sure that I will be a better priest for the experience. I never will forget the people of San Pedro. Gracias a Dios. Gracias a Padre Benjamin. Gracias a la gente amable de San Pedro.

## CHINA - MICHAEL COVEYOU '18

This summer I had the opportunity to travel to China as part of a Catholic Passionist sponsored study group, which was looking into the impact of evangelization in China. We visited Hong Kong, Xi'an, Shijiazhuang, Tianjin and then finally Beijing. I was amazed how many of the Chinese people were plugged into consumerism and materialism and are struggling with many of the same challenges we have here in the States.



We visited numerous churches and religious houses of formation. On one occasion, on the feast of Corpus Christi, the parish had a eucharistic procession around the church grounds. Many passersby would stop and watch as there is great curiosity in China about different aspects of religion. This is a good sign and opportunity for evangelization. The challenge comes with numerous governmental religious laws which restrict evangelization efforts. For example, while it is against the law to demonstrate any religious expression outside of church grounds, the enforcement, however, seems to vary by province. With China representing about 20% of the world's population, I believe, it has great potential for spreading the Word of God. For the Catholic Church to be truly universal, the people in China must be highly valued as children of God. Please pray for the conversion of the heart of China.

## PORTLAND - PETER ADAMSKI '19, JIM BATES '18 AND GUY DORMÉVIL '21

These men from PSJS were among seventeen seminarians from the Diocese of Bridgeport, CT, spending a week in Maine serving those in need.

This is the first time that seminarians from the Diocese of Bridgeport have gone on a mission trip together. Bishop Frank Caggiano, who joined the seminarians at the end of the week, looked at it as a way to help the seminarians bond with one another. "When seminarians go out in service, it gives them the opportunity to make God's love real in the lives of people who are in need, but it also gives them an opportunity to work together to build a sense of fraternity and to deepen their own love of each other, because they're going to need each other to be good and holy priests."

"Putting into service your faith is so important. Faith without action is meaningless," said Peter Adamski. "This is what all Catholics are called to do. We all have been baptized into a royal priesthood. We are to care for our brothers and sisters in the world".



Divided into small groups, the seminarians rotated among four service opportunities: the St. Vincent de Paul Soup Kitchen, the Catholic Charities' Threads of Hope thrift store, the Community of the Resurrection, and the homes of clients of the Catholic Charities' SEARCH program, which serves the elderly and those with disabilities in five counties.

Guy Dormévil said he learned the importance of helping others while he was growing up in Haiti. "To show people some love is what it's all about, because that is what people are looking for. They are looking for someone who cares about them, someone who can share with them."

"It gives me a chance to work with my brother seminarians, get to know them better," said Deacon Jim Bates, "Also, seminary life can be very insular and coming out into a place like this and helping people gives you that sense of this is what we're here for. This is what God called us to do."

## OKLAHOMA CITY - BRANNON LEPAK '21

As a seminarian of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City I was briefly called back home from my studies at Pope St. John XXIII to attend and serve at the beatification of Fr. Stanley Francis Rother. It was not only the largest but also

the most joyful Mass I have ever attended.

Seeing the 12,000 faithful in attendance, who had come from far and near, was a foretaste of heaven, where all beings will know and worship God. The response to the beatification was overwhelming, with thousands of people filling the overflow seating in adjacent halls and hundreds more flowing out into surrounding hotels, restaurants, cafes and other venues to watch the event live on EWTN. From within the heart of this great community of witnesses we all honored the life of the first US-born martyr. I am very grateful to have been able to attend this life-changing beatification and to have seen so many followers of Our Lord Jesus Christ celebrating together.



## HEALING MINISTRY - ED SHIKINA '18

During my summer assignment, I encountered a ministry that I did not know about – healing ministry. I saw a film where Catholics prayed over people resulting in miraculous healings – fearlessdocumentary.net. I did not know that Jesus still heals people today just as miraculously as He did when He walked this Earth, other than a few rare exceptions here and there. I learned that Jesus gives baptized Christians the authority to command healing in His name and that He gives some the charismatic gift to heal miraculously. After I attended a healing ministry class, where I learned a prayer model for how to effectively pray over people, I asked for the Holy Spirit's power to work through me. Suddenly, I began to see miraculous results, especially debilitating pain immediately vanishing. People were suddenly feeling much better after I prayed over them, not just a short-lived, feel-good moment, but chronic pain disappearing for good! I don't know where this ministry will go or what God wants me to do with it, but I hope that this will help others to see the miraculous possibilities that God is granting His people today.

