



SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES SEMINARY  
*New Heart, New Spirit.*

February 2008

Dear Friends of Saint Francis de Sales Seminary,

As we move through another Lent, I've been thinking about the meaning of forty in the Bible. In Genesis, it rained for forty days and nights before the flood, the Israelites journeyed through the desert for forty years before entering the Promised Land, in the Book of Jonah, Nineveh had forty days to convert before being destroyed and Jesus spends forty days in the wilderness before his ministry begins. Scripturally, forty signifies a fullness of time and also a fullness of meaning. In each case mentioned above, God was doing something new for his people, calling them from sin and slavery into the fullness of relationship with Himself.

Each Lent, we ponder that call to something new in our own lives. What is God calling me to leave behind, to surrender into his grace, to embrace with renewed vigor, to overcome for the first time? These precious forty days are our wilderness time, when we struggle to deny temptations and sin and strive to put on Christ in every aspect of our life and personality. The Paschal Mystery of death and resurrection plays itself out multiple times in our earthly journey through the desert.

Saint Francis de Sales Seminary is no exception to this pattern. As formation programs have moved to other sites and staff members have moved on, the seminary has experienced some profound and rapid change. But like Noah, the Chosen People, the Ninevites and Jesus himself experienced, new life sprouts forth from this surrender of letting go. New opportunities and possibilities arise from the changes.

As the Israelites arose from their tents one morning to find manna strewn on the ground, the heavenly food that sustained them on the journey, I look around our seminary and find many hope-filled signs that sustain me in my service as rector:

- In December, I visited one-on-one with all the Wisconsin bishops, sharing information about Saint Francis de Sales, planting the seed of possibility that, one day, Wisconsin seminarians from beyond Milwaukee will live and study here.
- We are turning the unused Meyer Hall on campus into a retreat center, thus creating a welcoming space for the increasing numbers of people who want to use the seminary's marvelous facilities.
- The Alumni Board will be offering a morning of reflection for all lay ministers, deacons and priests here in April.
- Five of our seminarians were just instituted as lectors by Bishop Callahan last weekend.
- Our dedicated staff continues to joyfully make the seminary work, despite the many challenges.
- I will visit thirty parishes this year as part of Seminary Sunday. So many pastors are enthusiastic about this project.
- I continue to enjoy, respect and admire the thirty-three men preparing for priesthood for the Archdiocese.

The question this month is: as you look at the Archdiocese, the seminary, your parish, your spiritual life, what gives you hope? What nourishes your soul in the desert? Email your response to [newheartnewspirit@sfs.edu](mailto:newheartnewspirit@sfs.edu). I would really like to hear from you! Have a blessed Lent!

Very Reverend Donald J. Hying

Previous issues of my New Heart New Spirit newsletter can be read on our website at [www.sfs.edu/newsletter](http://www.sfs.edu/newsletter).