



SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES SEMINARY

New Heart, New Spirit.

Dear Friends of Saint Francis de Sales Seminary,

A happy and blessed 2009 to all of you! Fresh from our celebration of the Patronal Feast, I am happy and excited about the future of the Seminary. This past week, we invited our deacon, lay and priest alumni, as well as our Society members, (those who generously donate \$1,000 or more each year), to a series of events marking the feast day of Saint Francis de Sales. We were able to share with them much good news: six priests and two transitional deacons to be ordained this spring, many applicants to our Seminary programs this fall, increased levels of donor support, other diocese and religious orders ready to send us candidates. Things look very bright!

A key player in the success of our Seminary is **Fr. Jim Lobacz** and his team, **Susie Kurek** and **Jan Sikora-Tabat**, in the Vocations Office. Their work sparks interest in the priesthood among many young men of our archdiocese, their website is interesting and accessible, Fr. Jim's patient and welcoming communication with so many possible candidates, the outreach of the office to parish vocation teams, Catholic schools and groups of youth all contribute to the vitality and success of the priestly formation program. I want to offer on behalf of the Seminary and the Archdiocese a profound gratitude for everything that Fr. Jim and the Vocations Office does.

Fr. Jim Lobacz would be the first person to say that many of our seminarian candidates responded to their vocational call because someone -- a parent, teacher, priest or friend --- invited them to consider the possibility of the priesthood. The importance of that invitation, that "Did you ever think about being a priest? I think you would make a good one!" can never be underestimated in vocation recruitment.

Fr. Jim offered a wonderful report at the priest celebration of our feast day. He told us that we have 14 seminarian candidates in total, some for the college program, one in English as a second language, others for pre-theology and theology. Many of these came to us because of the encouragement of others. Can I humbly ask you to be one of those others? *Are there young people in your life whom you think would make great deacons, lay ministers, religious, priests, catechists, missionaries?* Affirming their gifts and goodness, asking them if they have ever considered a vocation in the church, is casting a positive seed into some very fertile soil.

As we have just finished Vocations Awareness Week, maybe we could think of every week as that! Jesus started his band of disciples with the bold words: Follow me! We all have the capacity to do the same. Thank you for your support and prayers,

Very Reverend Donald Hying