

Love ONE ANOTHER

BY: ARCHBISHOP JEROME E. LISTECKI



January 26, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This past Sunday, I had the privilege of celebrating the patronal feast of Saint Francis de Sales Seminary. Normally, this feast is celebrated with the priests of the Archdiocese, as they have an opportunity to return to the place that helped form their priesthood in service to the People of God. This year, because of the pandemic, the celebration was limited to an in-house event.

We are very proud of our seminary. Having worked in seminary formation for the first 25 years of my priesthood in the Archdiocese of Chicago, I can testify to the quality of our program and the caliber of the young men invited by God to respond to His call. As I travel throughout the Archdiocese, many people comment about their esteem for the newly ordained and their dedication to the congregations they serve.

In the history of the Church, whenever the Church needed reform because it had strayed from the Gospel mandates, its reform began in the seminary. It only makes sense that those entrusted with the care of the faithful – our priests – would have instilled in them a challenge to live the Gospel faithfully.

The readings for the feast of St. Francis de Sales were very appropriate to the message of vocation. The Gospel was from Mark, about the call of Jesus, inviting the Apostles to follow Him and become fishers of men. The spirituality of St. Francis de Sales is beautiful because it challenges individuals to seek holiness in the tasks that God has already given them in their journey through this world. St. Francis discovered that holiness was not reserved to the religious or clergy; instead, it is an invitation to find God's work in whatever station of life a person occupies.

Saint Francis de Sales Seminary has produced some great intellectuals, tremendous pastors and wonderful administrators, all who serve Christ's Body, the Church. In its history, the seminary was also home to a beatified person, Solanus Casey, who is on his way to sainthood. And Joseph Walijewski, whose cause is being promoted by the Diocese of La

Crosse, may also join those saintly ranks. I knew Fr. Walijewski personally, and I can readily witness to his kindness and gentle manner.

The one characteristic these remarkable men shared was their humility. They were not the brightest, not the most skilled in administration, and certainly, their seminary professors would never dream that they would be bishops. But, they were holy men who wanted to serve Christ's Church in love. They achieved what we all seek: that the holiness of our lives will draw others to Christ.

St. Francis de Sales had everything that the world would consider valuable: status, influence, and fortune. His father wanted him to embrace the "good life." For Francis, the good life was found following Christ in His Church. He did so with the virtue of humility and said often, "not what I want but what God wants." What better example is there for someone studying for the priesthood.

We must promote and support vocations in the Church. We will need the leadership of competent priests and, most especially, of men who serve with humility and love. They need our prayers and we need their willingness to serve as ordained clerics. Saint Francis de Sales Seminary has enriched the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Together, let us all listen to His call to LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Jerome E. ListECKi
Archbishop of Milwaukee

