

Saint Francis de Sales  
SEMINARY



# Salt *of* *the* Earth

A Saint Francis de Sales Seminary Communication  
Summer 2023

## CELEBRATING 13 NEW PRIESTS!

The Class of 2023



*The Seminary's largest class in 41 years offers 13 new priests to the Midwest.*

8 Ordination Images

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# A Word from Our Rector

## Rising to the Challenge

Dear Friends,

**P**raised be Jesus Christ! We have just completed ordination season with eight ordinations and countless Masses of Thanksgiving all over the Midwest. It is a privilege to be a part of a mission that is alive and growing! The joy that we encountered in the parish communities and dioceses of the newly ordained was infectious.

Encountering this joy did not come without challenge! The schedule was daunting, multiple ordinations, Masses of Thanksgiving, and receptions on the same weekend in different parts of the state! Our community was determined to be present and support our newly ordained.

This seems indicative of the Salesianum's situation in 2023. We are blessed with a full house of remarkable seminarians. Our men are bold leaders who are making an impact in their Teaching Parishes, in societal ministries, and in outreach to young adults. They are as enthusiastic about their studies as they are committed to an interior life of prayer. They are men of integrity, and the good news is that we will have even more of them next year!

Formationally, the faculty must be present to each man, and our facilities must support the growth of each seminarian. From implementing the U.S. bishops' new Program of Priestly Formation – which lengthens a man's time in seminary – to maintaining our historic campus, to cultivating a solid culture of discernment and fraternity, the pressures on our institution are formidable.

Some of the most pressing needs include:

- Creating a new and separate community for our inaugural Propaedeutic Stage seminarians. They will have their own housing, liturgical life, food service, and classroom space apart from the rest of the house.
- Raising funds to cover the difference between our costs and

the amount sending dioceses pay. The more seminarians we have, the more we must raise. And high inflation has impacted the Seminary too!

- Demolishing Clare Hall. The building was offered to the City of Milwaukee to house at-risk people during the pandemic. A fire on an upper floor has left it uninhabitable. In honor of the hundreds of men ordained in the building, we hope to save the two-story chapel mosaic as an outdoor shrine.
- Reroofing Henni Hall and repairing the dome. We had hoped to replace our leaking roof this summer, but the estimates came in considerably higher than expected, so the project has been postponed to the spring of 2024.

There is so more, but you get the point – Saint Francis de Sales is a blessed community with acute needs that must be addressed to ensure it can continue its nearly 180 year mission.

It is consoling to know that we have overcome larger obstacles before. The Seminary was built with small donations collected by Fr. Joseph Salzmann as the nation teetered towards the Civil War, and it thrived under the reforms brought about by Rector Fr. Aloisius Muench during the Great Depression. Our beautiful tree-lined drive was planted in the early 1930's – a spectacular investment in the future during a time of hardship!

We are now being invited into this beautiful legacy. The Lord is cultivating the desire in many men to follow him with the entirety of their lives, how can we not do everything possible to support them? Thank you for your prayers and generosity to Saint Francis de Sales Seminary. Please continue to pray for us as we daily pray for you.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Luke Strand".

Fr. Luke N. Strand, Rector





# Chosen

Five New Priests for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee

*Fr. Joseph Heit, Fr. John LoCoco, Fr. Ryan Ackmann, Bishop Jeffrey Haines, Fr. Kevin Tanel, Bishop Richard Sklba, Archbishop Jerome E. Listecki, Bishop James Schuerman, Fr. Kenneth Anyanwu, Fr. Luke Strand and Fr. Michael Courchaine delight in the joy of ordination.*

The Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist was standing room only as the Archdiocese of Milwaukee celebrated the ordination of five priests. Rev. Ryan Ackmann, Rev. Kenneth Anyanwu, Rev. Michael Courchaine, Rev. Joseph Heit, and Rev. Kevin Tanel savored all the support, including from four bishops and nearly 100 priests who welcomed them to the presbyterate. It was the first of five priestly ordinations for our Class of 2023. The Madison, Superior, Gary, and La Crosse ordinations will be featured in our next newsletter.

Links to more photographs and video of the ordination can be found at [www.sfs.edu/ordination](http://www.sfs.edu/ordination).



*The five men from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee are the first to be ordained in their class of 13 men.*



*The ordinandi lie prostrate while the congregation sings the Litany of the Saints.*



*Archbishop Jerome Listecki prays the Prayer of Ordination. Once the prayer is concluded, the men are priests.*



# Your New Priests

Meet the Class of 2023



**Rev. Ryan Ackmann • Archdiocese of Milwaukee**

**Home Parish:** St. Patrick, Milwaukee

**Teaching Parish:** St. Patrick and Our Lady of Guadalupe, Milwaukee

**Assigned to:** St. Mary, Burlington; St. Charles, Burlington; and St. Joseph, Lyons

**Rev. Kenneth Anyanwu • Archdiocese of Milwaukee**

**Home Parish:** Blessed Savior, Milwaukee

**Teaching Parish:** Divine Mercy, South Milwaukee

**Assigned to:** SS. Cyril and Methodius; St. Peter Claver; and Immaculate Conception, Sheboygan



**Rev. Michael Courchaine • Archdiocese of Milwaukee**

**Home Parish:** St. Charles, Hartland

**Teaching Parish:** St. Monica, Whitefish Bay

**Assigned to:** Lumen Christi, Mequon



**Rev. Julian Druffner • Diocese of Superior**

**Home Parish:** St. Patrick, Hudson

**Teaching Parish:** St. Jerome, Oconomowoc

**Assigned to:** Holy Rosary, Medford



**Rev. Mark Foley • Diocese of Madison**

**Home Parish:** St. Francis, Jefferson

**Teaching Parish:** St. Bernard, Madison

**Assigned to:** Immaculate Heart of Mary, Monona; Christ the King, McFarland; and St. Patrick, Cottage Grove



**Rev. Joseph Heit • Archdiocese of Milwaukee**

**Home Parish:** St. Jerome, Oconomowoc

**Teaching Parish:** Christ King, Wauwatosa

**Assigned to:** Family of Five Parishes: Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist; Old St. Mary; Three Holy Women; SS. Peter & Paul; and Our Lady of Divine Providence, Milwaukee





**Rev. Alex Kren • Diocese of La Crosse**

**Home Parish:** St. Mary, Neillsville

**Teaching Parish:** St. Dominic, Brookfield

**Assigned to:** St. Charles Borromeo and McDonell High School chaplain, Chippewa Falls



**Rev. Isaiah Schick • Diocese of Superior**

**Home Parish:** St. William, Foxboro

**Teaching Parish:** St. Peter, Slinger

**Assigned to:** St. Joseph, Rice Lake; Our Lady of Lourdes, Dobie; Holy Trinity, Haugen; and St. John the Evangelist, Birchwood



**Rev. Robert Ross • Diocese of Gary**

**Home Parish:** St. Stephen, Martyr, Merrillville, Ind.

**Teaching Parish:** St. Charles, Hartland

**Assigned to:** St. Michael the Archangel, Schererville, Ind.



**Rev. Simon Tipps • Diocese of Madison**

**Home Parish:** St. Cecilia, Wisconsin Dells

**Teaching Parish:** Holy Family, Waterloo

**Assigned to:** St. John the Baptist, Waunakee; St. Mary of the Lake, Westport; St. Michael, Dane; and St. Patrick, Lodi



**Rev. Kevin Tanel • Archdiocese of Milwaukee**

**Home Parish:** St. Theresa of Avila, Eagle

**Teaching Parish:** St. Francis Borgia, Cedarburg

**Assigned to:** Holy Family, Fond du Lac



**Rev. John Zweber • Diocese of La Crosse**

**Home Parish:** St. Joseph, Menomonie

**Teaching Parish:** St. Veronica, Milwaukee and Nativity of the Lord, Cudahy

**Assigned to:** St. Mary's, Durand; Holy Rosary, Lima; and Sacred Heart, Mondovi



**Rev. Daniel Tracy • Diocese of Superior**

**Home Parish:** Cathedral of Christ the King, Superior

**Teaching Parish:** St. John Vianney, Brookfield

**Assigned to:** St. Patrick, Hudson

# Reflections on

## Forming Missionary Priests for the Church

Rev. Dan Tracy (Superior)

Having coached high school sports prior to my six years of seminary, there is a common phrase from the realm of sports that comes to mind when I look back at this latest chapter of my life.

“Running through a brick wall.”

Now maybe I am influenced by my surroundings here in Henni Hall – there are Cream City bricks everywhere – but the sentiment of being willing to face what seems impossible and push through to the other side has definitely proven true throughout my journey at the Salesianum.

The task at hand for my 12 classmates and I departing this sacred place and stepping forth into the world as priests seems at first glance to have barriers and obstacles at every turn. However, the culture of Christ-centered formation that has been our day-to-day life inspires us to foster similar communities of disciples as we head into the parishes we will serve.

Trusting in the grace offered in the sacrament of Holy Orders, my brothers and I are eager to lay down our lives to build God’s kingdom, one day at a time. On the north wall in the sanctuary of Christ King Chapel stands the headstone of our second rector, Fr. Joseph Salzmann. This noble priest and founder of the Seminary chose for his headstone the scripture passage from Psalm 69:9, “Zeal for the Lord’s house has consumed me.”

It has been the Seminary’s role in our formation to fan into flame this zeal for the Lord and for his house, the Church. This zeal is not a spirit of frenetic activism but rather a true calling forth to share the gospel by our words, our deeds, our sacrifices, and our joy.

In his 2013 apostolic exhortation, “The Joy of the Gospel,” Pope Francis reminds all of us about the pervading presence of Jesus Christ who we must allow to be the true vine that feeds us if our missionary efforts are to bear real, lasting fruit.

“A true missionary, who never ceases to be a disciple, knows that Jesus walks with him, speaks to him, breathes with him, works with him... A person who is not convinced, enthusiastic, certain and in love [with the Lord], will convince nobody.” (Evangelii Gaudium, 266).

There will be challenges, there will be unexpected turns in the road, there will be suffering, but I am so grateful to have lived in and among a community of brothers that is convinced of Jesus Christ’s abiding presence in our lives, in our Seminary, in the Church, and in the world.



Rev. Dan Tracy (Superior)

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# Time in Seminary

## This Is My Body Given Up for You

Rev. Kevin Tanel (Milwaukee)

Less than a week before I entered seminary, someone came up to me after Mass and told me, “A good seminary will break you, but it will also build you back up again.” At the time, I thought those words were strange. What do you mean, “I will be broken?” Most every time I saw seminarians and priests, they exuded joy – the joy of belonging to and serving Jesus Christ. The idea that they were “broken” did not make sense.

As I sit here eight years later and having completed seminary, those words could not be truer. Indeed, along with every other man here, I have been broken, and there is still more breaking left to be done. It is the process of dying to self – a lifelong endeavor.

Saint Francis de Sales focuses on meaningful time in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Its daily 5:45 a.m. holy hour, despite my own resistance, was a place of deep union with Jesus Christ crucified. Every day, the Lord invited me to see Him, to gaze upon Him in the Blessed Sacrament. He invited me to see His wounds, and in doing so, He revealed a place for me to put mine. In seeing Him day after day in prayer, and in receiving Him day after day in Holy Communion, the Lord prepared me to be broken for others as well.

The Cross is at the heart of seminary formation. Although this has always been a constant place of tension, I have learned that the Cross is the only way forward. It is the only way to freedom. It is the only way to salvation. It is in embracing the Cross that we find abundant joy, because we see the One we love crucified alongside us. In seeing the Lord there alongside me, I see the One who holds my heart when it has been broken time and time again. To embrace the Cross is to offer Jesus my heart – all of it. In return, the Lord gives me His priestly heart, a heart that is willing to suffer out of love for Him and His bride, the Church. Furthermore, for all of us, it is only in embracing the Cross that Jesus is able to live in us and build us up into the Temples we were always meant to be.

The task for the rest of my life, and indeed that of every Christian, is to conform my life to the mystery of the Cross. To see the love that was wounded for my offenses, and to love Him so much that those wounds become my own.



Rev. Kevin Tanel (Milwaukee)



The Cross is at the heart  
of seminary formation.







# Diaconate Ordinations

11 New Transitional Deacons for the Church

*The Archdiocese of Milwaukee revels in eight new transitional deacons on April 22. From left: Dcn. David Sweeney, Dcn. Charles Luke, Dcn. Nicholas Dhein, Dcn. Kevin Durand, Fr. John Baumgardner, Bishop Jeffrey Haines, Fr. Luke Strand, Dcn. Denny Jacob, Dcn. Craig Richter, Dcn. Dennis Beltré, Dcn. Dominic Lazzaroni.*

People are sometimes surprised to learn that the diaconate ordination can be more daunting for a seminarian than his priestly ordination. Yet, it is at the diaconate ordination that a man first promises celibacy, prayer, and obedience. It is the first time he lays prostrate on the floor in front of the altar. He receives the sacrament of Holy Orders.

Eleven of our seminarians were blessed to receive this sacrament during the spring. The joy was palpable as they committed themselves to Christ. Please pray for these new transitional deacons as they enter their final year of formation before ordination to the priesthood, God willing, in 2024.

Links to more photographs can be found at [www.sfs.edu/diaconateordination](http://www.sfs.edu/diaconateordination).



*Dcn. Anthony Kersting and Dcn. David Drefcinski celebrate their ordination with Bishop Donald Hying of the Diocese of Madison on May 12. Photo courtesy of Joseph Ptak.*



*Dcn. Juan Altamirano rejoices after being ordained by Bishop David Ricken of the Diocese of Green Bay on May 21.*





*Men pray together three times per day throughout the summer.*

# Summer at the Seminary

## Campus Continuity

Formation is a full-time endeavor, and that includes the summer months. Seminarians participate in an array of formative opportunities around the country and the world! This can range from Spanish immersion in Latin America to Clinical Pastoral Education in a hospital setting. Some will study the riches of the universal Church in Rome, while others deepen their interior lives through a spirituality program for diocesan seminarians in Omaha.

Saint Francis de Sales remains active as many seminarians

are spending the summer here. They help on the grounds crew and assist with vocation camps. The Seminary maintains a robust liturgical life and encourages community throughout the summer as seminarians on other assignments visit when they are able. In addition, our faculty remain available for formation advising and spiritual direction.

The Salesianum is a home in the truest sense. Seminarians will always find its doors open and welcoming.



*Our seminarians sincerely enjoy being together, and they love being outdoors!*



*Seminarians help maintain the 73-acre campus during the busy summer months of lawn and garden care.*





## Scenes from the Salesianum

Ten men are instituted into the Ministry of Lector by Bishop Jeffrey Haines on March 25. Front row: Joel Kolb (Milw), Alex Becker (Milw), Nathan Budde (Green Bay), Peter Danner (Milw), Redmond Tuttle (Milw), Nicholas Waddell (Milw). Back row: Casey Cooney (Madison), Barry Meinholz (Madison), Fr. Luke Strand, Bishop Haines, Fr. John Baumgardner, John Lesniewski (Milw), Andrew Swietlik (Milw).



De Chantal Society gatherings draw large groups of faithful women to pray for vocations to the priesthood.



Dr. Matthew Levering presents "The Spirit of Truth and the Ordinary Universal Magisterium" at the Annual Lecture in Christian Ethics on February 27.



Dr. Nina Heereman leads the seminarians into Lent with an Ash Wednesday Day of Reflection on "The Desert as a School of Discipleship for Future Shepherds."

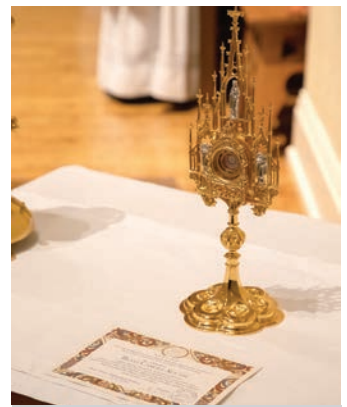




*Seminarians build a 15-foot snowman on an unexpected snow day in March.*



*The Seminary welcomes recently ordained priests to celebrate the Institution of the Priesthood with morning prayer and brunch on Holy Thursday.*



*The Seminary is gifted a relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis, an Italian teenager who created a website to teach others about eucharistic miracles. Many of the seminarians have a devotion to this holy teenager who died in 2006 at the age of 15.*



*The light of Candlemas is welcome on a dark February morning.*



*Fr. Mark Mleziva and Bishop David Ricken from the Diocese of Green Bay visit their seminarians at the Salesianum.*



*Dr. Mary Rice Hasson, J.D. speaks to the men on "Pastorally Responding to Gender Ideology" in March.*



*Deacon Dominic Lazzaroni paints in the art studio on a Desert Day. Desert Days are designed for the men to get away from studies for a few hours to pursue beauty and healthy leisure.*





## Shoremen Win!

The third time's the charm at the De Sales Invitational

*The Shoremen bring the first-place trophy home. Photo by David Bernacchi.*

The 3rd Annual De Sales Invitational was a magnificent weekend of basketball and brotherhood. The Salesianum's famous hospitality was on full display for the 12 teams that traveled to Saint Francis over February 17-19. Our tournament has become such a big deal that the St. Louis seminary brought their pep band, and the Boston seminary brought a film crew!

All of the seminarians enjoyed the highly competitive games, but there was much more to the weekend than just basketball. Our men worked hard to ensure each team was welcomed and cared for. Beautiful liturgies and excellent meals were provided and gave the seminarians the opportunity to meet other men who will one day be their brother priests.

Saint Francis de Sales' outstanding weekend was capped off with an incredible 51-48 victory by the Shoremen in overtime over St. Paul Seminary. The entire, glorious weekend was graciously underwritten by Tom & Lynne VanHimbergen, Kevin & Linda Steiner, Pat Connaughton, and Fr. Gerry Brittain.



*Aaron Siehr (Milw) leads the defense in the championship game against St. Paul Seminary. Photo by David Bernacchi.*





Archbishop Jerome ListECKI presides at Mass in a packed Christ King Chapel on Sunday morning of the tournament.



The rapt crowd watches as Tim Heyerman (Milw) shoots over a defender in the championship game.



Our two teams play each other, and no one considers going easy on their classmates.



The camaraderie among seminarians is evident, even after closely fought games.



Deacons Julian Druffner (Superior), Dan Tracy (Superior), and Alex Kren (La Crosse) exult in finally winning the tournament in their last year of seminary. Photo by David Bernacchi.



Archbishop Jerome ListECKI blesses the teams after the Shoremen win in the semi-finals.



# Outreach to Young Adults

## Men on a Mission

**S**eminarians have a keen interest in drawing young adults closer to the Lord. Whether it is bringing someone back to the Faith or helping others go deeper, our men are determined to reach out and share the love of Christ. Many of their own friends don't go to Mass, and our seminarians want to change that! They are able to provide an articulate alternative to the confusion of the secular culture – something many young adults are searching for.

In April, the Seminary community was invited to Tuesday Men's Night at the St. Paul's Catholic Student Center at UW-Madison. They joined over 125 college men for dinner and then hosted solemn vespers and Benediction. It was an opportunity to encourage young men to live a faith-filled life, whether they were considering the priesthood or marriage.

Some evangelization efforts are more individual. Joshua Miller (Milwaukee) has been leading a monthly patristics seminar called "Fides Patrum" (Latin for "Faith of the Fathers") for two years at the UW-Milwaukee's Newman Center. The free Saturday morning sessions study Church Fathers such as St. Irenaeus and St. Athanasius. Joshua, who is working towards a doctorate in religious studies with an emphasis in historical theology, is enthusiastic about teaching:

"I love teaching theology in general because it is an opportunity to share the precious riches and abundant delights of the Christian intellectual tradition with others. I have a particular passion for introducing people to the writings of the Church Fathers, which are very dear to me and filled with theological and spiritual insights for all Christians. On many occasions, participants in the Fides Patrum seminar have shared how impactful it has been in opening their mind and heart to some new (though

ancient!) way of understanding and living their faith."

Not all endeavors are overtly catechetical. The gym was packed with young adults during the Seminary's basketball tournament in February. Friends who don't go to church came to cheer on the Shoremen. Seminarians eagerly welcomed the guests into their world, giving them a close-up look at the joy our men have in giving their lives to Christ. Every game ended with both teams praying together – a powerful witness to the true priority of the players and an invitation to consider that there is a greater purpose under heaven.

This summer, you will find seminarians at Cor Jesu, Arise Milwaukee, Catholic Youth Expeditions, Brew City Catholic events and so many more. They are on a mission to bring people back to the Faith! Please pray for them.



*St. Paul's on the UW-Madison campus is filled with young men as the Seminary community leads solemn vespers.*





*The schola adds beauty to the liturgy at St. Paul's.*



*Joshua Miller (Milw) teaches patristics at UW-Milwaukee's Newman Center.*



*Seminarians and Fr. John Burns engage with young adults after a Wednesday evening Cor Jesu adoration, confession, and Mass.*



*Young men pack Miller Gym to watch the semi-finals of the De Sales Invitational.*



*The De Sales Invitational championship game draws more young adults.*

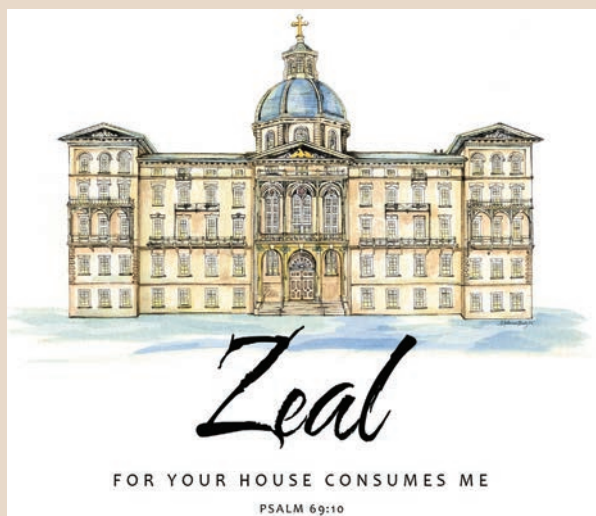


# Upcoming Events



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## Annual Seminary Dinner

Zeal for Your House Consumes Me

Friday, October 6 | Wisconsin Center

Excitement is building as the Annual Seminary Dinner approaches! The October 6 event will be more than a gala; it will be a stirring evening of faith and hope. The dinner will draw you more deeply into the life of the Seminary by introducing you to the outstanding men in formation, with their zeal on full display.

If you have never attended, this is the year to come! You will be amazed to see more than 80 seminarians who love Jesus Christ and want to be his priests. Some of their stories will surprise you!

Helping us plan a meaningful dinner are the event's co-chairs – Fr. Enrique Hernandez, pastor of St. Robert Parish in Shorewood and Holy Family in Whitefish Bay, and Beth Grusenski, a wife, mother, and longtime Seminary supporter from St. Dominic Parish in Brookfield.

Invitations will be mailed in early August. Start gathering your table of ten friends now! If you wish to register individually, we will place you at a table with others. We recommend registering early to ensure you get seats before the ballroom's capacity is reached.

Visit [www.sfs.edu/AnnualDinner](http://www.sfs.edu/AnnualDinner) for more information.



For more information or to support the mission of Saint Francis de Sales Seminary, visit our website at [www.sfs.edu](http://www.sfs.edu).

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