

Saint Francis de Sales
SEMINARY



Salt *of* *the* Earth

A Saint Francis de Sales Seminary Communication
Spring 2024



THE GIFT OF SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES

The Gentleman Saint Continues to Intercede.

Dozens of priests join Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKi for Holy Mass on the Solemnity of St. Francis de Sales.

4 A Holyland Pilgrimage 8 Tribute to the Archbishop 10 Human Formation at the Salesianum



A Word from Our Rector

It Is Now Our Time.

Photo courtesy of Andrew Gilicinski

Dear Friends,

I have been associated with Saint Francis de Sales Seminary for over 20 years. Six as a seminarian, then as a parish priest; 10 years as vocation director and vice-rector, and now just over a year and a half as rector. A day does not go by when I am not awed by the storied history of this remarkable institution. The vision we have received from Archbishop Henni and Fr. Salzmann, passed down from generation to generation, inspired by the charism of St. Francis de Sales himself, remains more relevant today than it was 178 years ago.

In the upcoming decades, the renewal of our Catholic faith in the state of Wisconsin will be led by priests who have been called by God and formed at Saint Francis de Sales. They will serve your families and your children's children. The Lord has made it clear that it is now time for us to write the next chapter in the history of Saint Francis de Sales Seminary: to ensure that the faithful are nourished by the sacraments, enlivened by solid

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The Lord has made it clear that it is now time for us to write the next chapter in the remarkable history of Saint Francis de Sales Seminary.

catechesis and led by authentic spiritual fathers.

As you know, through God's grace, our number of seminarians has grown dramatically, while our undersized facilities have not kept up with this growth. Our founders had the faith to prioritize the formation of priests. They knew it was the only way for the Church to grow and flourish. It is now our time to beg for the same faith and courage to set Saint Francis de Sales Seminary on a firm foundation for years to come.

A special thanks to those of you who participated in our feasibility study and a word of gratitude for your generosity at our Annual Dinner which raised more than one million dollars! Thank you for praying for us. Thank you for your attentiveness and care. We are blessed to count you as friends and honored that you are part of the Lord's bold vision for the future of Saint Francis de Sales Seminary.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Luke N. Strand
Rector



Fr. Luke Strand, Dcn. Mark Rydell, Bishop David Ricken, and Fr. John Baumgardner rejoice after Dcn. Rydell's ordination to the transitional diaconate for the Diocese of Green Bay on Nov. 25.

Looking to the Future, Discovering the Past

Experts Work to Preserve Our Historic Campus

As Saint Francis de Sales continues to discern the Lord's will for our campus, many steps are being taken. The Seminary engaged owner's representative Steven Chamberlin to help guide us through the process of addressing structural and mechanical concerns, along with the need for expansion to accommodate our increased enrollment.

After research, proposals and interviews, the steering committee then brought on the architectural firm Ramlow/Stein to begin the conceptual design stage for Henni Hall and our antebellum campus.

Lynch Development Associates undertook a feasibility study to ascertain if sufficient funding would be available for the renovation. Our dedicated supporters responded wholeheartedly and enthusiastically! We are humbled by the tremendous show of support for our mission! See the box below to access an executive summary of the study. Over the next few months, we will be aligning the development and architectural recommendations into a master plan which we can present to the community.

One early, exciting result of this process came in December when Conrad Schmitt Studios carefully removed the tapestry and linen that covered the 19th century painting on the back wall of Christ King Chapel. We were overjoyed to discover the mural was intact and more brilliant than anyone expected! While there is some water damage — which is probably why it was covered in 1952 — Conrad Schmitt declared it a Christmas miracle that the 1888 painting was in such outstanding condition. God is good and the future is bright!



The mural depicts the episcopal ordination of St. Francis de Sales, and the great saint's face is still radiant! The Seminary's founders are included in the painting, and the Salesianum is pictured in the background. The tapestry "I Make All Things New" has been carefully preserved and will be hung at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist.

The Results Are In!

Feasibility Study Generates Excitement



Thank you to everyone who participated in our recent feasibility study. The results were extremely gratifying! If you would like to see an executive summary of the study, visit sfs.edu/study or use this QR code.

We are grateful to the faithful people who helped us complete this important research.



Fraternitas

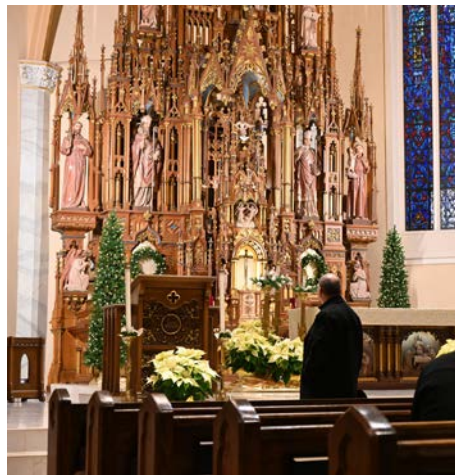
A Wisconsin Pilgrimage

The Seminary community celebrates Mass with parishioners at the magnificent St. Mary in Marytown.

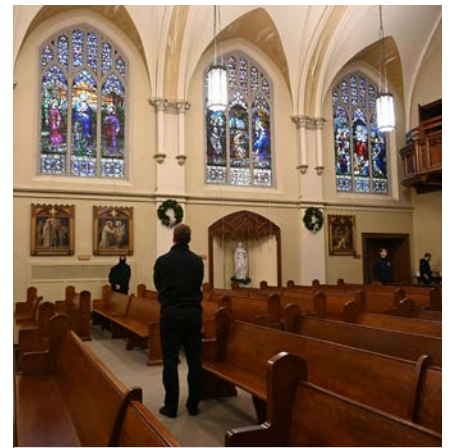
Our seminarians' plans for a Christmas-break pilgrimage to the Holy Land were canceled after the attacks of Oct. 7. Ever resourceful, our men adjusted their sights to the Holyland closer to home. This beautiful, if little-known, area of Wisconsin has magnificent churches built by immigrants more than 100 years ago.

The Seminary rented a bus and took the men to see churches in Port Washington, Sheboygan, Fond du Lac and other points in between. The seminarians are familiar with the basilicas and national shrines in our state, but these unique churches have a history and grandeur all their own.

The excursion was named "Fraternitas" because it was a time for building fraternity as the men explored treasures within the state where most hope to serve together as priests.



Seminarians marvel at the intricate high altar in Holy Name of Jesus in Sheboygan.



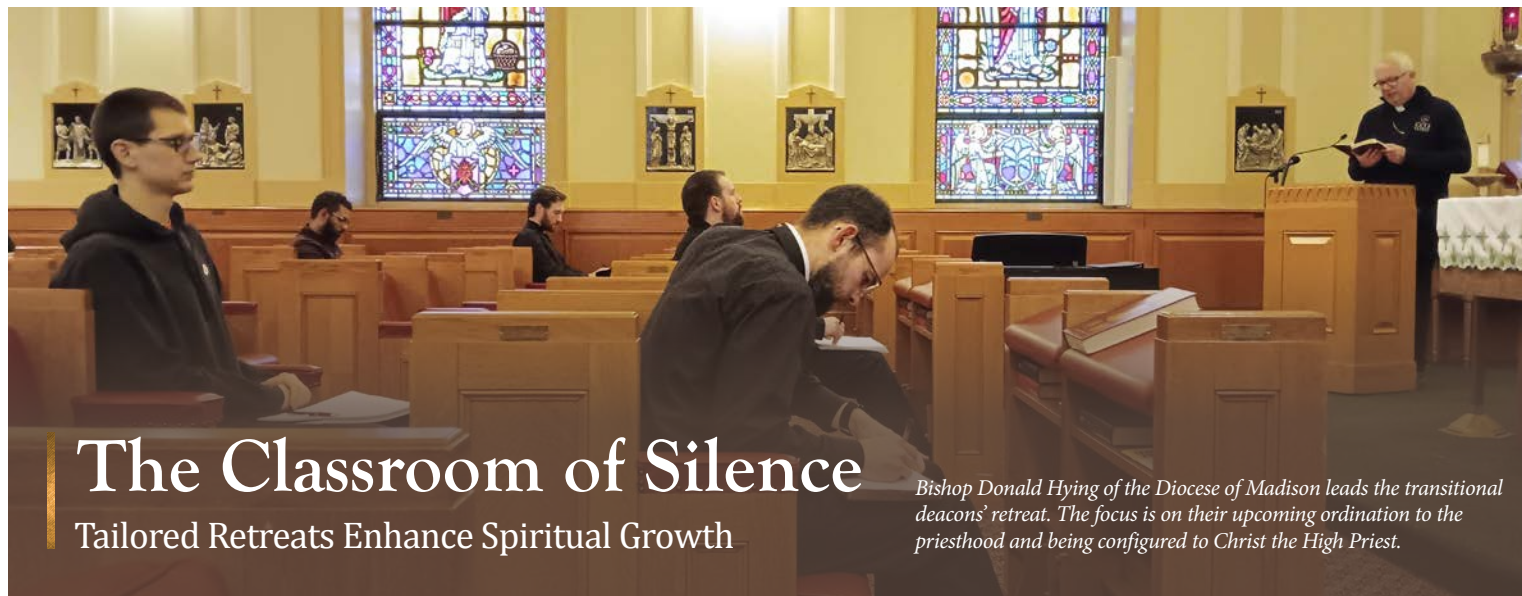
The stained-glass windows at St. Clement in Sheboygan tell the stories of the Evangelists and Pope St. Clement.



The Capuchins at St. Lawrence Seminary High School in Mount Calvary host our men for lunch and a tour.



Each church provides a place for quiet prayer during the Octave of Christmas.



The Classroom of Silence

Tailored Retreats Enhance Spiritual Growth

Bishop Donald Hying of the Diocese of Madison leads the transitional deacons' retreat. The focus is on their upcoming ordination to the priesthood and being configured to Christ the High Priest.

Rev. Robert J. Kroll, S.J.
Director of Spiritual Formation

Retreats are essential to the spiritual formation of our seminarians. Saint Francis de Sales begins each seminary year with a Day of Recollection, and several “Desert Days” punctuate the academic calendar. We schedule two Spiritual Renewal Days annually, one in the fall and the other on Ash Wednesday, during which a guest presenter offers conferences and individual meetings. In recent years, young women religious have led the Ash Wednesday renewal days.

Seminarians make a five-day silent retreat every January. A cleric from outside the Seminary community preaches conferences and makes himself available for private spiritual direction and confession. The transitional deacons preparing for priesthood and the men nearing diaconate ordination make separate retreats. These allow the men to pray about the seriousness and meaning of their impending commitment to Christ and to the Church.

Retreats provide seminarians an opportunity to step away from the activity and noise of daily life, and step *into* the “classroom of silence” (Matthew Kelly) in order to “be still and know that I am God” (Ps 4:10).



The rest of the seminarians enter into silence at Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House.



Fr. Luke Mary Fletcher, CFR of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal (pictured with Fr. Rob Kroll, SJ) leads this year's retreat at Bellarmine.



Fr. Ken Omernick of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee leads the retreat for men about to be ordained to the transitional diaconate. The men reflect on their new identity as clerics and their promise of lifelong celibacy in imitation of the Lord.



Formed in Wisconsin for Wisconsin

Deacon Anthony Kersting (Madison)

Support from fellow seminarians is life giving as we strive toward a common goal together.



The Kersting Brothers: Br. Basil, Luke, and Dcn. Anthony.

I remember the day I joined the community at Saint Francis de Sales: Labor Day, 2021. Nations had raged. Kingdoms were shaken. For the last several years the world had been given over to pandemonium. Meanwhile, dislodged and displaced, tossed about on the waves of this madness, several Madison seminarians — I among them — sailed for safer haven and, washing up like so much flotsam on the shores of Lake Michigan, found harbor on the solid and hallowed grounds of the *Salesianum*.

Thus unceremoniously unmoored, and now thrust upon my third seminary in so many years, I had my apprehensions. Be that as it may, I could never have imagined a more welcome reception than the one we received from the gracious men of this noble institution. Though personally unknown to nearly everyone at Saint Francis de Sales, we were received with open arms as if long-separated brethren. Thankfully, after many years' transience, I could now look forward to the stability of three years on native soil in the very state in which I hoped one day to serve as a priest.

I first entered seminary formation for the Diocese of Madison in 2018, having moved to Madison two years prior. I accepted a position at St Paul's Catholic Student Center, having been introduced to the pastor by my brother Luke, who had been pursuing a PhD at UW Madison since 2011. He had completed his undergraduate at the University of Dallas that same year.



Singing songs of worship in the schola is a way seminarians “unite together in holy, sacred friendship.”

When he left U.D., I had joined. Four years later, my younger brother would carry on the Kersting presence at U.D. as I departed. Leaving one brother, I followed another to Madison.

After two years of campus ministry, I finally decided to enter seminary. That summer, Luke was married. Not long afterwards, and somewhat to my surprise, my younger brother would follow — not me, or our older brother, but our Lord’s call to join the Franciscans. Soon he took the habit and his name changed to Brother Basil (it rhymes with “razzle-dazzle,” as he is often reminding people). His religious order, Franciscan Friars of the Holy Spirit, serve the Diocese of Phoenix on the Native American reservation. Yet, strangely enough, Br. Basil is currently in priestly formation at the same seminary where I started out — so, in one way, I suppose he did follow me.

My brothers’ examples of pursuing the Lord’s vocation and holiness of life encouraged and inspired me in my own pursuit (and perhaps some healthy competition was at play as well). No one chooses his brothers; they are a gift. Now that we are grown, the Lord has graciously granted the gift of true friendship amongst us brothers. At the same time, He called each of us to particular vocations and has different things in store for each of us. He scattered us about different places and states of life.

Though I can always rely on my brothers, I will not always have them with me, nor will they always be able to relate to my particular vocation. And yet, true friendship is paramount to living out one’s vocation. The words of our patron St. Francis de Sales come to mind: “For those who live in the world and desire to embrace true virtue it is necessary to unite together in holy, sacred friendship.”¹ By means of true friendships with like-minded individuals who share our state in life we will

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What a great privilege and blessing
to be formed alongside the men who
will serve this region with me!

mutually “encourage, assist, and lead one another to perform good deeds,” which will lead to the flourishing of the Christian life.

“You are the salt of the earth,” the Lord says to His disciples. To be the salt of the earth we must go out to earth’s ends, scattered like the seed in the Parable of the Sower. Seminary means seedbed — or as our founder Fr. Salzmann referred to it, a “nursery” for priests. A nursery fosters growth, but the plant is not meant to stay there. When the time comes, it is meant to put down roots to be enriched by and to enrich the native soil.

What a great privilege and blessing to be formed alongside the men who will serve this region with me! In a very short while we shall be planted in the soil of our particular churches. I will take great comfort in knowing that these men are not far from me, that I can call upon them when in need; that we strive toward a common goal, that we share a common hope, “until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.”² Until that day, God prosper the work of the Salesianum!

¹ St. Francis de Sales, “Introduction to the Devout Life,” III.19.

² Ephesians 4:13

An Archbishop for All Seasons

The Salesianum Wishes Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKi a Happy 75th Birthday!

As Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKi reaches the age of 75 and sends his letter of retirement to the Holy See, we look back on his 14 years of loving guidance and leadership of the men of Saint Francis de Sales. Thank you, Archbishop, for your fidelity, fortitude, and zeal for our mission!



Archbishop ListECKi exults in the Shoremen's national championship victory in 2023. He was presented with the trophy in front of more than 2,000 people at the Annual Seminary Dinner.



A basketball player himself, the archbishop blesses seminarians after a hard-fought game in the semifinals of the 2023 De Sales Invitational.



As president of the Seminary, Archbishop ListECKi signs the document installing Fr. Luke Strand as rector in 2022.



Always willing to offer his support in any way, the archbishop films a scene for a 2015 seminary video with Bishop Donald Hying and Cardinal James Harvey.



Archbishop ListECKi offers words of encouragement to his Milwaukee seminarians in 2020.



During his first year in Milwaukee, the archbishop gets to know his seminarians Ryan Pruess, Philip Schumaker and Patrick Burns at a hockey game.



Archbishop Listecki checks in with then-college seminarian Kevin Tanel after Mass at St. Joseph's College Seminary in 2016.



Archbishop Listecki participates in the Ice Bucket Challenge with seminarians doing the honors in 2014.



The archbishop presides at the Rite of Admission to Candidacy for Holy Orders in 2020. It is something he does every year for seminarians of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.



Archbishop Listecki and his brother bishops of the state of Wisconsin and their SFDS seminarians meet in a first-of-its-kind gathering in 2019.



Every spring, the archbishop consecrates the chalices of the Milwaukee seminarians before the men are ordained to the priesthood.

Human Formation at Saint Francis de Sales Seminary

Growing in Capacity to Love

Rev. John Baumgardner, S.T.L.

Vice-Rector and Director of Human Formation

The late Cardinal Francis George once described Human Formation as simply this: "growth in our capacity to love." He writes: "We do not plan our lives ... it is a question of growing into relationships that we did not choose but that Christ chooses for us."

The Gospel of Matthew recounts the question of the righteous at the final judgment: "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?" (Matthew 25:37-39) These are just a few of the people that God often unexpectedly places in our life for us to choose to love. Priestly life is filled with many others: the young and the "experienced" (not old!), students and workers, believers, atheists and everyone in between. Have I grown in my capacity to



Doing the dishes is an act of self-gift.

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I would describe Human Formation
at the Salesianum as an
“apprenticeship in self-gift.”

love? Have I said ‘yes’ to laying down my life for those people that God’s plan, not mine, has chosen for me to love? These questions deeply matter for the priestly formation of a man, because ultimately, they are the questions that will matter on judgment day before our Lord.

The *Program for Priestly Formation* describes Human Formation in general terms: “The human personality of the priest is to be a bridge and not an obstacle for others.” As “the humanity of the Word made flesh was the *instrumentum salutis*, so the humanity of the priest is instrumental in mediating the redemptive gifts of Christ to people today.” Thus, the seminary fosters the growth of a man who is a free person, of solid moral character, prudent and discerning, and is a man of communion. He is to be a good communicator, someone who relates well with others, a good steward of material possessions and a conscientious public person. Human Formation also prepares seminarians to make the lifelong commitments of celibacy, simplicity of life, and obedience. Each seminarian meets with their priest formator every three weeks. In this way, just as no man is the same, this approach to a seminarian’s wholistic growth is also highly individualized.

What sets Saint Francis de Sales apart? Thanks to the hard work of Fr. Luke Strand and the formation faculty over the years, I would describe Human Formation at the Salesianum as an “apprenticeship in self-gift.” There is a saying: “Under pressure, you don’t rise to the occasion,



Fraternity runs deep at the Salesianum.

Photo courtesy of Andrew Gilicinski

you fall to your highest level of preparation.” The best preparation offered to the men here at Saint Francis takes its most important form in the daily, shared life of the Seminary. There is no “silver bullet” or perfect program, but rather an environment where each man is known, loved, encouraged, and at times challenged. Perhaps the best preparation we offer our seminarians is allowing a space to both “be human,” but also provide countless opportunities for being called to step out of themselves and make a generous self-gift.

Some examples of daily life at the Salesianum that call forth a self-gift are the house jobs and work groups that every seminarian is assigned. The floors are swept and dishes are done – by seminarians. The gym is cleaned, guests are welcomed and prayed for – by seminarians. Responsibility calls forth virtue and leadership. Efforts to foster fraternity are encouraged, blessed, and even initiated by the faculty. Thus, Human Formation at Saint Francis de Sales is less of classroom learning and more of an apprenticeship. It is a home where prayer, virtue, work, study, fraternity, and the Cross run very deep. Six years in a home like this can radically allow God to shape a man’s heart and every fiber of his being. Six years in a home like this can profoundly prepare to a man to make a generous self-gift of himself over, and over, and over again as a priest of Jesus Christ.

On judgment day, Jesus tells the righteous that whatever “you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.” Have I grown in my capacity to love? Have I truly said ‘yes’ to laying down my life to the people that *God* (and not me!) has chosen for me to love? Human Formation at Saint Francis de Sales is an apprenticeship in self-gift, a daily preparation to generously serve the people that God will choose for us as priests. Faculty and seminarian alike share in this life, for ultimately all of us are but humble disciples preparing to one day meet the Lord.



Guests are welcomed to Saint Francis de Sales by seminarians



Helping with the laundry calls forth virtue.



Celebrations for Our Beloved Patron Saint

Two Festive Events Mark the Solemnity of St. Francis de Sales

The chapel overflows with benefactors who have come to pray with the Seminary community.

We celebrated the solemnity of St. Francis de Sales mindful of the amazing generosity of our donors and appreciative of the thousands of priests who were formed here. Through the intercession of St. Francis de Sales, we prayed that all those who support the mission of the seminary will be blessed with health and well-being throughout the year. St. Francis de Sales, pray for us!



Our men sincerely enjoy the opportunity to meet and thank those who support their formation.



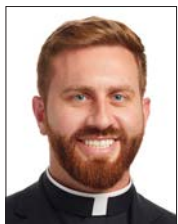
Fr. Luke Strand welcomes benefactors to the after-Mass luncheon where they will be served by grateful seminarians.



Priests appreciate the long-standing tradition of coming home on Jan. 24 to honor St. Francis de Sales.

Vocation Office News

Grateful to Serve the Mission of the Vocation Office



Fr. John LoCoco

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

In a homily early in his pontificate, St. John Paul II described the vocation of a person as a dialogue: "It is a dialogue between Christ and an individual, in which a personal invitation is given" (February 10, 1986).

Having served as the Vocation Director for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee for the past three years, it has been a true privilege and honor to witness firsthand this dialogue take place. In many ways, the role of the vocation director is simple: Stay out of the way! For it is truly God's work at hand, remembering that we have not chosen Him, but He has chosen us (John 15:16).

To all of those who have supported me through their prayers, time and resources, I am so grateful. I beseech you to continue that same support as the Archdiocese of Milwaukee welcomes its newest Vocation Director, Fr. Michael Malucha.

In Christ,
Fr. John LoCoco

New Director, Same Mission



Fr. Michael
Malucha

On June 1, 2024, we welcome Fr. Michael Malucha to the Vocation Office as the new Vocation Director for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Fr. Malucha will succeed Fr. John LoCoco, who has served in this capacity for three years.

Fr. Malucha was ordained in 2021, after completing his seminary formation at the Pontifical North American College in Rome and Saint Francis de Sales Seminary. After ordination, he served as associate pastor at the then Family of Four parishes in downtown Milwaukee for one year while completing additional graduate studies in dogmatic theology. He then was reassigned to Holy Family Catholic Community in Fond du Lac where he has been serving as associate pastor for the past two years, while also ministering at St. Mary's Springs Academy this year.



Archbishop ListECKI and Fr. John LoCoco host 108 young men, 31 priests, and our 42 seminarians at the St. Andrew Dinner in December.

Save the Date – Upcoming Vocation Office Events

Please invite young men who may be called to the priesthood to any of these events.

Come and See

March 15-17
Saint Francis de Sales Seminary
Ages 18-35

Wojtyla Day

May 11
Hartland, WI
High School

Camp de Sales

Middle School Day Camps
June 22, July 25, August 6
Saint Francis de Sales Seminary

High School Overnight Camp

June 23-26
Saint Francis de Sales Seminary

Canoe Trip

July 26-28
Wisconsin River
Ages 18-35

Visit www.thinkpriest.org for more information and to register.

Contact the Vocation Office at vocationoffice@sfs.edu or 414-747-6437 with any questions.



Scenes from the Salesianum

Eleven men are instituted into the Ministry of Acolyte by Bishop James Schuerman on Nov. 11. Front row: Nicholas Waddell (Milw), Joel Kolb (Milw), Alexander Becker (Milw), Nathan Budde (Green Bay), Redmond Tuttle (Milw). Back row: Luis Reyes (Madison), Barry Meinholz (Madison), Casey Cooney (Madison), Bishop Schuerman, Fr. Luke Strand, Peter Danner (Milw), John Lesniewski (Milw), Andrew Swietlik (Milw).



Our seminarians join thousands of other young adults at SEEK24 in St. Louis.



Our propaedeutic stage seminarians spend three weeks in poverty immersion and service in the Dominican Republic.



Devoted women pray for vocations to the priesthood at the November de Chantal gatherings.



The faith and talent of our men is on full display during the Festival of Lessons and Carols in December.



Seminarians pray during an all-night vigil for the Solemnity of All Saints.



Bishop Robert McClory of the Diocese of Gary offers Mass for the seminary community in December.



The Shoremen celebrate their flag football victory over Nashotah House Theological Seminary.



After more than 40 years of faithful service and high quality work, the Seminary regretfully closes its print shop. Manager Alan Lancour (center), Mark Fenelon and Kevin Chelminiak have served with distinction and will be deeply missed at the Salesianum.



The annual procession on All Souls' Day gives the men time to pray in our hallowed cemetery for all those who have gone before us in faith.

2024 Events



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Annual Seminary Dinner

Friday, Oct. 4 • Baird Center

Our Annual Seminary Dinner is always a special night. It offers grace upon grace to the Seminary and to those who attend.



This year's dinner will be extraordinary. Set in the spectacular new fourth-floor ballroom of the Baird Center, the evening promises to exceed all expectations as it draws you into the mission of the Seminary. Meet your seminarians! See all your Catholic friends! Learn how the Lord is renewing the Church through the Seminary! It will be an inspiring and hope-filled evening.

We hope you will join us! Invitations will be mailed in early August. We expect to reach capacity, so a quick response is recommended. Visit sfs.edu/AnnualDinner for more information.

Pallium Scholarship Benefit

Monday, June 17

Wisconsin Country Club

Our annual golf outing returns to the majestic Wisconsin Country Club in June. It is a fun-filled day of golf and good friends, all in the name of raising critical funds for priestly formation. Mark your calendar now because this event has become so popular, the golf has sold out the last three years in a row! If you're not a golfer, plan to join us for the delightful cocktail reception afterwards. It is sure to be a highlight of your summer! Visit sfs.edu/Golf for more information.



Support the Seminary!

Be part of our mission to form priests in the image of Jesus Christ.



Please pray for us and keep Saint Francis de Sales Seminary in mind as you plan your charitable giving. Checks made payable to *Saint Francis de Sales Seminary* can be mailed to: 3257 S. Lake Drive, Saint Francis WI 53235

Secure online contributions can be made at sfs.edu/donate or using the QR code.

Every gift is appreciated by the men who will serve as your priests!

For more information or to support the mission of Saint Francis de Sales Seminary, visit our website at www.sfs.edu. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and X to keep up to date with the latest news and photos.

414- 747-6400