

IMMACULATE
HEART OF MARY
SEMINARY

SPRING/SUMMER 2025 NEWSLETTER



Behold, how good and how pleasing it is for brothers to dwell as one. Psalm 133:1





Letter from the **Rector**

There's a prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours that has been coming to mind for me regularly in recent weeks: "In the midst of life's countless changes, strengthen us with your never changing love" (Wednesday Evening Prayer, Week I of Ordinary Time). Paradoxical as it may sound, change is constant, and changes can sometimes come at us at a bewildering pace. We find ourselves looking for a still point, a center to which we can cling, lest "things fall apart . . . [and] mere anarchy be loosed upon the world," to use the magnificent words of Yeats. Thankfully, that center has been given to us in the "never changing love" of God, manifested supremely in Christ Jesus, who "is the same, yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8, NABRE). Whatever might be swirling about us, God's fidelity is firm. As our new pontiff reminded us in the Mass for the beginning of his ministry as successor of Peter, "the Lord never abandons his people."

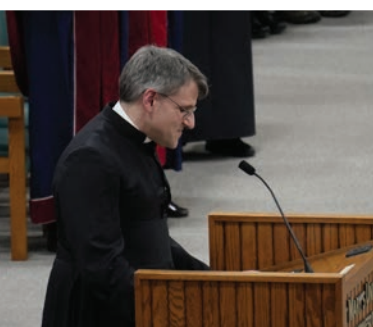
As our new pontiff reminded us in the Mass for the beginning of his ministry as successor of Peter, "the Lord never abandons his people."

Rev. Robert Horihan
Rector

To be sure, the change of pontiffs is a profound change that we have experienced as a global Church. And yet, the very succession that marks the papacy is a sign of God's constancy to us through the history of the Church. When Pope Leo said the words quoted above, he did so with such energy and conviction that I found myself drawn into the great mystery he was articulating, the mystery of the Lord's ever-faithful and ever-present love which accompanies us at every instant of the journey.

On a more local level, the IHMS community is anticipating its own series of changes: as the summer unfolds, I will draw my tenure as rector to a close, Fr. Jason Kern will assume that office, and Fr. Matt Wagner will join the community of formators. In addition, that change which marks every formation year will transpire once again as a new crop of men enters the community to engage more fully the possibility that God may be calling them to priesthood.

And in the midst of all such changes, whether they be on a global, local, or personal scale, we can be utterly confident that one constant always remains: the Lord's intense and immense love for each and every one of us.



2025 Seminarian Graduation

'25

It is once again our great pride and joy to congratulate another group of Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary graduates. It has been a pleasure to watch them succeed over many late nights, group study sessions, philosophy debates, and fellowship events. The graduation weekend celebrations began with a baccalaureate Mass at St. John Vianney Chapel where graduates, formators, and family could give thanks and recognition for the success our students have seen over their time at IHMS. Commencement was held the following day, and students had

the opportunity to shake the hands of Saint Mary's University (SMU) President Fr. James Burns, SMU Board of Trustees Chair Gregory Stevens, and IHMS Rector Fr. Robert Horihan as they received their bachelor's degrees in philosophy. We would like to thank all those who have supported our graduating seminarians throughout their journey at IHMS and Saint Mary's, including parents, faculty, professors, and donors. We ask that you continue to keep them in your prayers as they continue their education next year.

— Nicole Weninger



IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY SEMINARY

2025 Seminararians

DIOCESE OF CROOKSTON



- + Most Rev. Andrew Cozzens
- 2 Seminararians
- Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
- 405 Miles
- 6 hr 27 min

DIOCESE OF SAINT CLOUD



- + Most Rev. Patrick M. Neary C.S.C.
- 4 Seminararians
- Cathedral of St. Mary
- 181 Miles
- 3 hr 26 min

DIOCESE OF RAPID CITY



- + Most Rev. Scott Bullock
- 2 Seminararians
- Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help
- 612 Miles
- 8 hr 35 min

DIOCESE OF SIOUX CITY



- + Most Rev. R. Walker Nickless
- 4 Seminararians
- Cathedral of the Epiphany
- 307 Miles
- 4 hr 45 min

DIOCESE OF WINONA- ROCHESTER



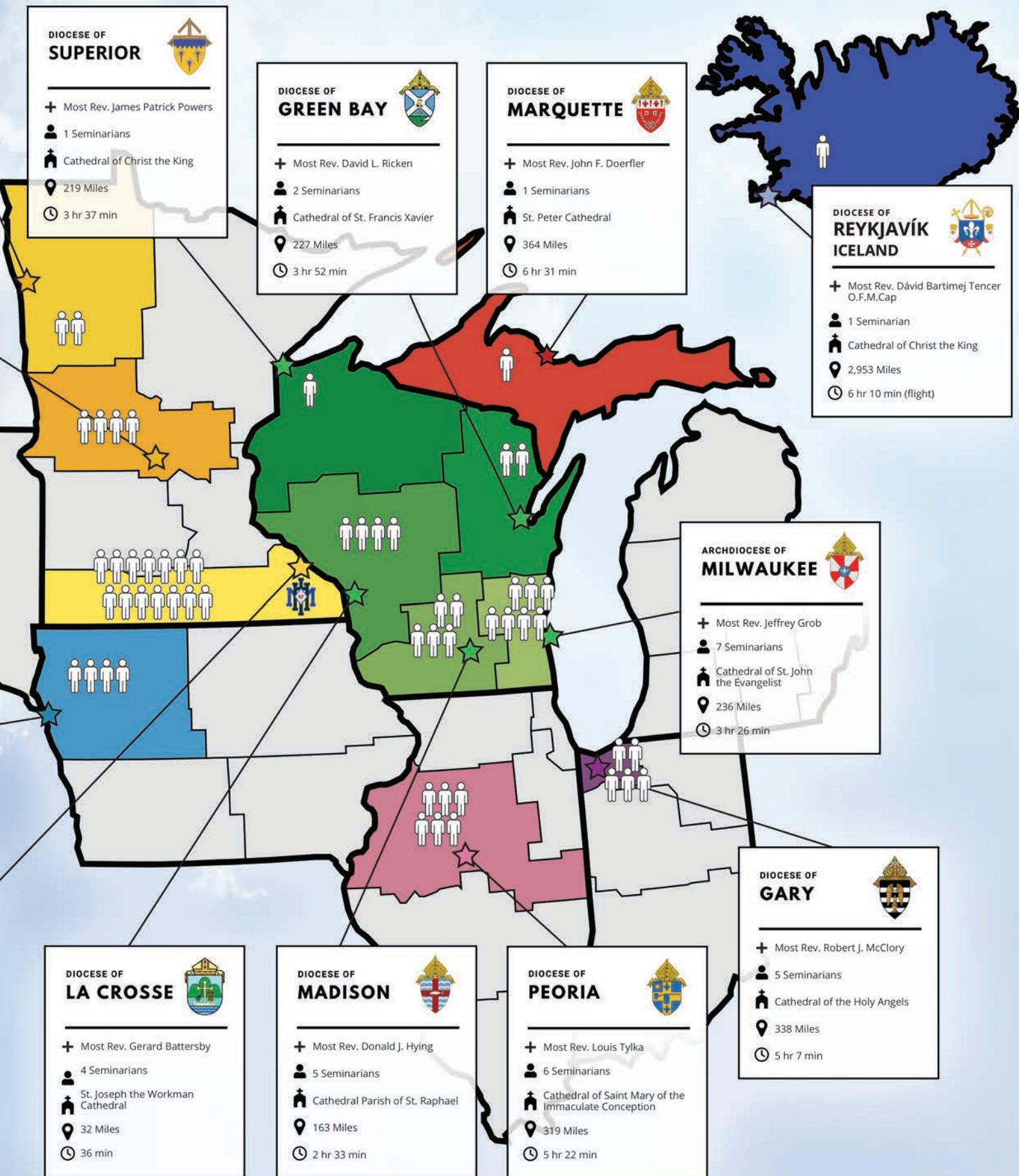
- + Most Rev. Robert Barron
- 14 Seminararians
- Cathedral of the Sacred Heart & Co-Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist
- 4 Miles / 43 Miles
- 9 min / 52 min

LEGEND

NAME OF DIOCESE



- + Bishop
- Number of Seminararians at IHMS
- Cathedral
- Distance from Cathedral to IHMS
- Time from Cathedral to IHMS



BISHOPS & RECTOR DINNER



On April 25th, 2025, Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary (IHMS) had another successful Bishops and Rector Dinner at the Rochester International Event Center. The evening was full of laughter, music, and a strong sense of community, as IHMS gathered to celebrate and honor God's work through our seminary. Bishop Robert Barron of the Diocese of Winona- Rochester, alongside Rector Fr. Robert Horihan, served as hosts of the evening. Together, they presented Bishop Patrick Neary of the Diocese of St. Cloud with the Immaculate Heart of Mary Award, an annual honor bestowed to someone who has made a significant contribution to promoting priestly vocations. Other bishops in attendance included Donald Kettler, bishop emeritus of the Diocese of St. Cloud, Bishop Gerard Battersby of the Diocese of La Crosse, and Bishop David Tencer of the Diocese of Reykjavik in Iceland.

Bishop Patrick Neary was our keynote speaker and shared his incredible journey from his youth to seminary to the priesthood. Bishop Neary was ordained to the priesthood in 1991 at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the University of Notre Dame. After working as a parish minister, he began working in the Office of Campus Ministry at Notre Dame, later serving as rector of Moreau Seminary in 2004. In 2010, he was appointed to lead the seminary in Nairobi, Kenya. Bishop Neary shared a moving story of having the seminary building site torn from their grasp only to have God bless them with a fully furnished seminary nearby. He subsequently served for six years as district superior of Holy Cross in East Africa, headquartered in Uganda. After returning to the United States in 2018, he became pastor of Holy Redeemer Parish in Portland, Oregon. Pope Francis appointed him as the 10th Bishop of the Diocese of St. Cloud on December 15, 2022, and he was formally installed February 14, 2023.

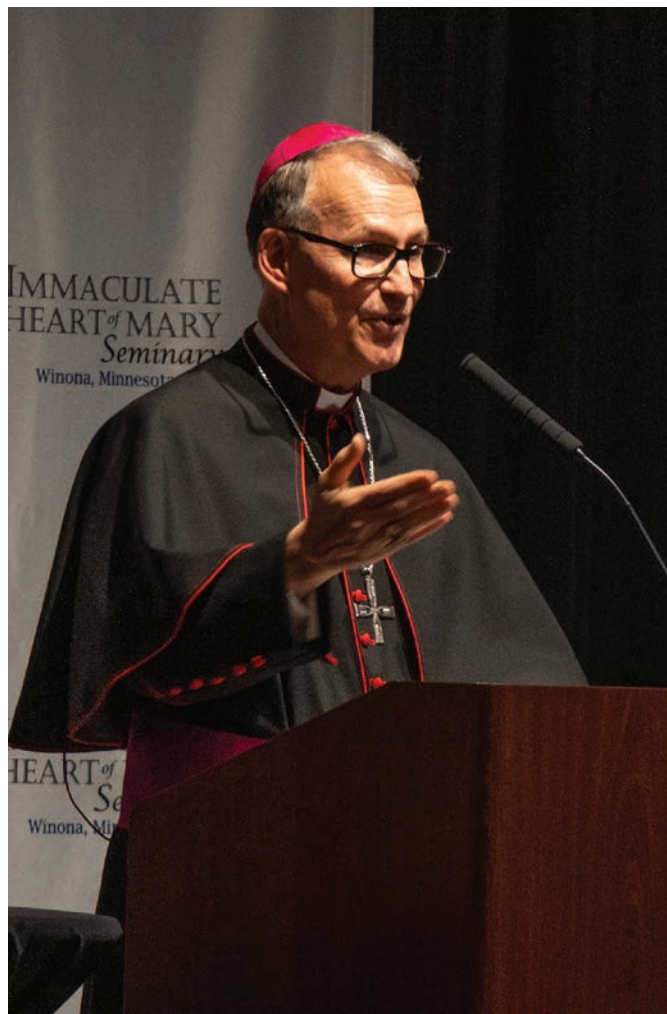
Throughout the evening, attendees remarked on Bishop Neary's warm sense of humor and praised his engaging keynote address following the award presentation. Reflecting on his vocation, Bishop Neary credited his family and other priests for shaping his journey to the priesthood. He encouraged us all to be inspirations to others: "If you see a young man who would make a good priest – tell him!" Among his memorable anecdotes, we were treated to an amusing story about unintentionally blocking the phone number of the Apostolic Nuncio, who was calling to inform him of his appointment as bishop of Saint Cloud.

The dinner was a joyful and uplifting celebration, as IHMS seminarians had the opportunity to meet and personally thank their benefactors. Guests enjoyed a delicious meal featuring options of sliced beef tenderloin, herb crusted pork, or spinach and wild mushroom ravioli. Live music was performed by seminarian-led ensembles beginning with "Immaculate Jazz" welcoming guests during the social hour. After dinner, the Schola Choir performed two beautiful Latin hymns: *Tenebrae* by T.L. de Victoria and *Creator Alme Siderum* by Richard Burchard, both reflecting key moments in the liturgical calendar.

The Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary community extends heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated in and contributed to this year's Bishops and Rector Dinner, including those who were unable to attend. Your prayers and continued support are deeply appreciated.

We look forward to welcoming you to next year's Bishops and Rector Dinner on April 17, 2026!

– Nicole Weninger



Save the Date

Please mark your calendars for next year as we will host the
23rd Annual Bishops and Rector Dinner on April 17, 2026.

We hope to see you there!

Senior Q&A

John Assaf

Diocese of Peoria

What is your fondest memory of IHMS?

My favorite memory is going camping in the bluffs over a free weekend, eating meat, and hardly being able to sleep due to the cold and wind. Although it doesn't sound fun, waking up at 4:00 am to guys singing "Country Roads" after a sleepless night left me with a fond memory that I will not forget.

What advice would you like to give to next year's propaedeutic class?

Formation is best lived out in joy. Joy is not elsewhere; it is right here, because here and now is where the Lord is.



David Bauer

Diocese of Winona-Rochester

What is your fondest memory of IHMS?

I have greatly enjoyed the brotherhood at IHMS and am going to miss all the time spent with the guys. I will especially miss all the hunting and fishing Winona has to offer!

What advice would you like to give to next year's propaedeutic class?

My advice for next year's propaedeutics is to cherish your time at IHMS. Life will always have its difficulties and there will always be more work to do. Even during the craziest weeks, take the time to be with a brother and laugh! Your four years will fly by, and you may not have these guys in your life once you leave! In the end, somehow all the work will get done!





Nicholas Daubner

Diocese of St. Cloud

What is your fondest memory of IHMS?

The IHMS experience has given me many fond memories, but two stand out the most: the fraternity and the formation classes. Fraternity is always present—whether we’re camping in the bluffs or having meaningful conversations, there’s a genuine fraternal love that binds us. We rejoice in one another’s triumphs and share in each other’s sorrows.

When it comes to formation classes, what I find most memorable is the personal sharing of each formator. They offer stories and insights gleaned through years of experience. I’ve come to deeply appreciate and cherish their loving guidance, and I will carry it with me as I continue forward in formation.

What advice would you like to give to next year’s propaedeutic class?

Even though we have not met, and I do not know you personally, I know IHMS has something specifically for you. Your presence here is a testament that God has called you for a reason. Whether or not you continue to the priesthood, this is where He has guided you now, and He will continue to lead you into deeper self-discovery, greater discipline, and a more intimate relationship with Him. Your being here is no mistake. Embrace formation, and your vocation will embrace you. Know that I will be keeping each of you in my prayers.



Gianni DiTola

Diocese of Gary

What is your fondest memory of IHMS?

My fondest memory at IHMS is twofold. I have loved and continue to love the various fraternal events. Whether it’s playing football, soccer, basketball, pool, or watching a movie, it is great to live in a house with men striving after God’s heart. In particular, I have loved to cook with other men. One weekend, for a house potluck, we made over 200 ravioli by hand for the entire house to enjoy. That continues to be a memory that I deeply cherish.

What advice would you like to give to next year’s propaedeutic class?

If you believe that it will get easier, think again. It does not get easier; you simply get better. Live in freedom, follow the joy.



Senior Q&A

Paul Guertin

Diocese of St. Cloud

What is your fondest memory of IHMS?

My fondest memory of IHMS is going camping with my brothers over the years. These camping trips have been an amazing time of fraternity, rest, and spiritual renewal.

What advice would you like to give to next year's propaedeutic class?

My advice to next year's propaedeutic class is to devote yourselves to the relationships the Lord invites you into while in seminary, most especially with Christ, our Blessed Mother, the saints, and your brothers. Also, remember that the Lord is asking for your trust more than anything else, especially during the first few months of seminary where new men undergo numerous changes and transitions.



Nicholas Huza

Archdiocese of Green Bay

What is your fondest memory of IHMS?

My sophomore year, after finals a group of us went camping. After a very satisfying meal of bread and chuck roast cooked over a fire, and after reminiscing about the past year, we all went to bed. Now, for context, it was late April, and during the day it was 75 degrees. However, there were many people, including myself, who were not really prepared. Those who were wise and brought enough blankets or sleeping bags ended up giving them to those who had very little. Furthermore, most of us were sleeping in hammocks which only made things worse. When it dropped to 40 degrees and got very windy, almost none of us ended up sleeping. At some point around 3-4:00 AM some guys got up and decided any attempt at sleep was in vain. Pretty soon, most of the guys were sitting around the fire, wrapped in whatever blankets we had, drinking coffee, telling stories, and singing as loud as we could. It is one of the best memories I had at IHM, and it shows that with grace that joy can be found anywhere.

What advice would you like to give to next year's propaedeutic class?

Be docile to the Holy Spirit. Always take the time to pray at the beginning of anything you do. Remember that the most loving trinity is with you in everything you are doing. Do everything with and for Jesus.



Timothy Kujawa

Diocese of Winona-Rochester

What is your fondest memory of IHMS?

The shared love for the Lord that everyone has in the house and the amazing conversations that stem from that.

What advice would you like to give to next year's propaedeutic class?

I would tell them to fully enter into the formation experience and hold nothing back!



Jake Lozon

Diocese of La Crosse

What is your fondest memory of IHMS?

My fondest memory of IHMS was my apostolic at the nursing home. I loved talking with the residents and was privileged to bring the Eucharist to the homebound. The most impactful memory was being with a dying man whom I got to know throughout the year. In his final days, I was able to bring him Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist the day before he died. This was both a profoundly sad and joyous moment.

What advice would you like to give to next year's propaedeutic class?

My advice for next year's incoming men is to be joyful and allow the Lord to mold your heart. Don't stress about your academics, give them to Jesus. Above all, trust in Him with a confidence that leads to nothing but more confidence.



Senior Q&A

John-Paul Philips

Diocese of Winona-Rochester

What is your fondest memory of IHMS?

What stands out most is the bond between the formators and us seminarians—it's something really special. Also, I'll never forget the day I wiped out on my electric unicycle while learning to ride it in September 2024. I hurt my face pretty badly and was trying to avoid Fr. Marty Schaefer... only to walk straight into him. A core encounter, you might say. But what stuck with me most was how much my brother seminarians cared for me that day. That's IHMS in a nutshell.

What advice would you like to give to next year's propaedeutic class?

You don't have to have it all figured out. Surrender your discernment to the Holy Spirit, stay close to Jesus, and walk alongside Mary. God will do marvelous things in you, with you, and through you—He just asks for your fiat to the formation process. That's all!



Ryan Pierce

Diocese of Gary

What is your fondest memory of IHMS?

One of my fondest memories of IHMS has been camping in the Winona bluffs with my brother seminarians. It is a wonderful time to get outside, get dirty, and take a break from the normal routine of studies. It is always fun to cook chuck roast over the fire and eat like a caveman!

What advice would you like to give to next year's propaedeutic class?

Do not be afraid to give all of yourself to formation. We have such a good Heavenly Father that is never outdone in generosity. *Matthew 7:9-11*



Jon Stone

Diocese of Crookston

What is your fondest memory of IHMS?

I am particularly fond of my memories of camping in the bluffs during our free weekends. This was an impromptu tradition that started with Paul Geurtin and me during our freshman year. Since then, it has become a popular activity amongst the seminarians.

What advice would you like to give to next year's propaedeutic class?

The advice I would give to the incoming class of seminarians is to be mindful as to why they are at the seminary: to follow Christ. In the midst of discernment, academics, and fraternity, it can be surprisingly easy to lose sight of the point of seminary formation. Turn your mind and your heart to the Lord constantly and He will guide you.



Bastien Wolfe

Diocese of Madison

What is your fondest memory of IHMS?

My fondest memory at IHMS was the half marathon last year. It was a blast to organize, and it was so fun to run with my brother seminarians.

What advice would you like to give to next year's propaedeutic class?

The advice I would give to next year's propaedeutic men would be: When an opportunity for prayer in the day presents itself, outside of the scheduled times, take it! Prayer is the most indispensable part of the day, so when free time presents itself, use it to be with the Lord.



Cooking at the Seminary: Give us this day our daily bread.

Blase Gebes

Discipleship III, Diocese of Rapid City



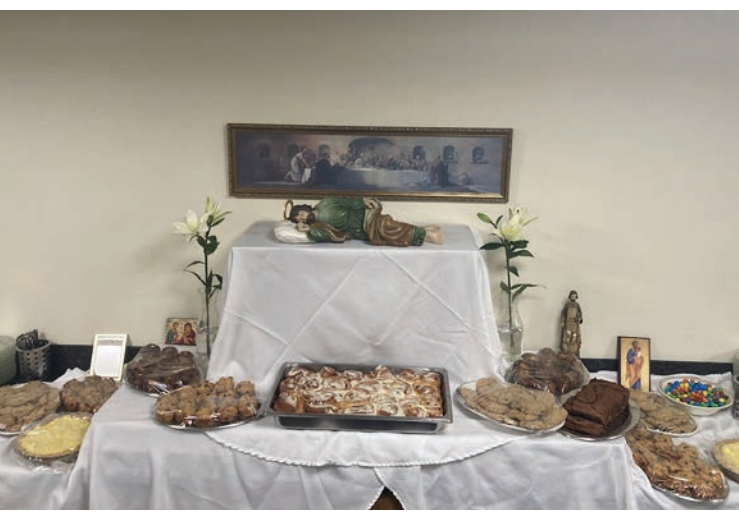
This year, it has been a joy for me to bring the taste of my home to the seminarians at IHMS. Beginning my first year here, I started making large batches of white artisan bread which has always quickly disappeared. This year saw a plethora of meals from scratch that I organized including donuts, breakfast sausage with biscuits and gravy, brats, a whole American-Italian dinner, and a Polish dish of kielbasa and cabbage called Kapusta. My dad taught me how to bake bread and stuff homemade sausages of all kinds. My mom taught me how to cook everything else. Cooking for my family of ten growing up is not much different than cooking for sixty men. Of course, feeding a small army of men is no small task, so many helpers are needed.

I have been humbled by the generosity of my brother seminarians with their time in preparing and cleaning up after these meals. Having the kitchen bustling with helpers and filled with joyous banter that comes with a cheerful, grateful community is one of my fondest memories at IHMS.

We are blessed to build community through this opportunity to give of our time and talent while bringing our family recipes to the seminary tables. Since 2020, the Discipleship I class takes responsibility once a week to organize and cook for Mancake Monday. Mancakes are manly, made-

to-order pancakes with protein powder, a special blend of spices, various toppings and fillings, and weekly mystery ingredients for the entire seminary to enjoy. Every Sunday evening, we gather with our brother seminarians from our respective dioceses to celebrate the Lord's Day with prayer and food. One amazing project fellow seminarian Joseph Bartosh put together was the St. Joseph's table to celebrate his feast day on March 19. The St. Joseph's table finds its origins in Sicily where Catholics bake confectionary breads and sweets for the broader community in thanksgiving for St. Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus.

The communal aspect of cooking has brought freshness and joy to the seminarians. At the dinner table and in the kitchen, we are continually reminded of our dependance on God and our benefactors for their generosity in making our formation possible. Praying the Our Father daily in community reminds us of God's constant graciousness and fatherliness as we place our trust and all our cares on Him during our time of priestly formation. As we are nourished by this physical bread at the table and the Eucharist at the altar, we praise God for the outpouring of His Fatherhood and follow the example St. Joseph has given us in our journey to priestly fatherhood.



Propaedeutic Poverty Immersion

by William Kahle



This summer, the propaedeutic class will be scattered across the United States in six groups of two doing a poverty immersion. For three weeks, we will be working with the organization 'Christ in the City'. Christ in the City focuses on the human interaction with those who are homeless and in poverty. We will be in the streets engaging with the homeless, showing them deep love and respect. This pastoral ministry is about showing those cast out from society that they are children of God, deserving to be shown the dignity of being a child of the Father. In the streets, we are to be like Jesus Christ with those who were cast out, bringing them love and joy through our attempt at reflecting the love of Jesus we have received and continue to receive.

The groups of men are:

William Kahle and Cameron Vareberg (Gary, Indiana)

Joshua Braun and Lorenzo Roxas (Dayton, Ohio)

Jack Jensen and Jesse Larson (Dallas, Texas)

Roy Graf and Joseph Bartosh (Tampa Bay, Florida)

Anthony Sibbel and Thomas Lambrecht (Boston, Massachusetts)

Aidan Holycross and Caleb Indahl (Detroit, Michigan)

[Read on for an account of a few of our propaedeutic poverty immersion pairs:](#)

Summer of Service

📍 Tampa, FL

Roy Graf & Joseph Bartosh

On May 18th, we arrived in Tampa, Florida, for the Summer of Service program with the Christ in the City missionaries. This is a three-week mission focused on building relationships with the poor in the city of Tampa. Our team breaks into three smaller "street teams" that go to different parts of the city to interact with the poor each day. Our mission is to befriend these people as they go through troubling times and try to bring a little joy to their day. On Wednesday evenings, we get to visit the poor at the parish hall and serve them dinner. We also make "blessing bags" which contain simple snacks and water, so we may hand them out to the poverty-stricken individuals we come across.

In just a few short weeks, we have been blessed to experience and serve God through the poor and are beyond grateful for this opportunity.

Dallas, TX

Jack Jensen and Jesse Larson

Jack Jensen, and Jesse Larson, first year seminarians from the Dioceses of Sioux City, Iowa and Superior, Wisconsin respectively, had the pleasure of doing a summer of service for Christ in the City in Dallas, Texas. Arriving on May 18th, they spent three weeks doing outreach to the homeless and a local nursing home while also growing in community life with their fellow missionaries.

"Christ in the City was an amazing experience. It was a chance to put some of our pastoral skills to use by going to a new place and meeting new people. The bulk of our ministry involved walks on the streets of Dallas. When we weren't on the streets, we were taking classes that assisted our ministry and growing in community with the ten other missionaries who joined us for the three week summer of service. This combination of serving the poor while staying rooted in a solid community and prayer life created a good environment for growth in the human and pastoral dimensions of formation," says Jesse.

Jesse's favorite memory of this trip was meeting a couple friends on the street. The man was helping a woman take care of her puppy. The man shared deeply about his faith and enjoyed discussing the Bible with Jesse's group. Although they were living on the street for a time, they were hopeful that the Lord would provide for them.

Jack's favorite memory was when he met an older man who sat on a bench at the park. After he first met him, Jack went back the next day, and to his surprise, the man was on the same bench. Jack sat down and had an hour-long conversation with him and said that he reminded Jack of his grandpa. The next day, they took him to Chick-fil-A where they bought him a coffee and some fries. This was a great experience getting to spend time with him and bring some joy into his life.

Jack and Jesse had a great experience with Christ in the City and are looking forward to bringing what they learned into their second year of seminary formation.

Detroit, MI

Aidan Holycross and Caleb Indahl

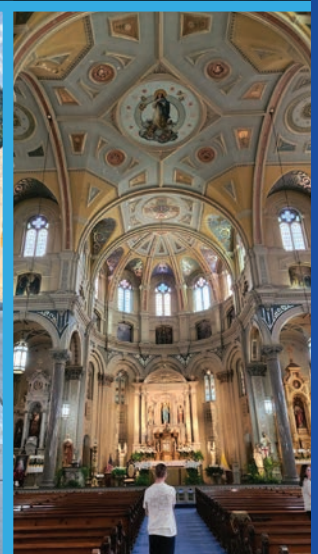
Hello everyone, we are Caleb and Aidan, and we just finished three weeks of serving the poor on the streets of Detroit. You might be wondering why we wanted to go to Detroit. As Caleb and I went to roll the dice to figure out our location, we said, "As long as we don't get Detroit, it will be fine." Thankfully, God's timing and plan is always better than our own, even if we do not want it. The time we spent in Detroit was a gift from God.

We worked with an organization called Christ in the City, and their mission is to bring Christ to those in need. A few saints they model are Mother Teresa and John Paul II. Spending time in Detroit was a blessing, allowing us to grow closer to Jesus through the poor. Most of our time was spent in the community with our fellow missionaries. During this time, we lived, prayed, and served together. The focus was our relationship with Jesus, each other, and the poor. Some highlights of our time include the friendships we formed in our community and with the poor we encountered on the streets. In addition, we were blessed with amazing churches to visit every day and attend Mass at.

One of the many beautiful ways we experienced prayer together was through the Liturgy of the Hours. The Liturgy of the Hours is a prayer that priests pray every day and a prayer that the lay faithful are encouraged to pray as well. Furthermore, a religious Sister of Mercy taught our community about our new pope and Catholic social teaching. Finishing our time in Detroit has taught us how much God has provided for us: everything from having a roof over our head to being provided tickets to a symphony and art museum that we never would have asked for. God certainly is good and will provide, even if you do not expect it!

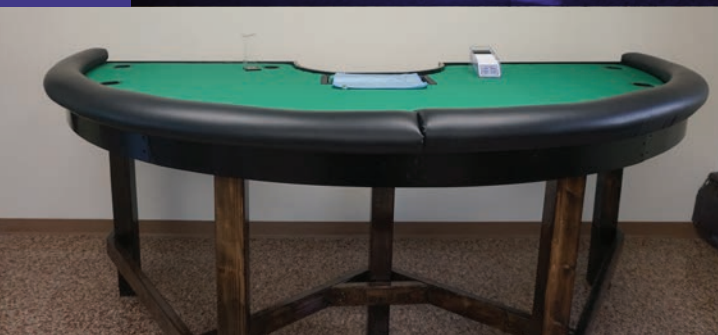
For the remaining stories, refer to IHMS Facebook throughout the remainder of the summer.

Propaedeutic Poverty Immersion



Rec Room "Face Lift"

Changes and updates happening at IHMS



The IHM Rec room is a place of fraternity and fun. It is a place to relax from our studies, come together to watch a movie, play games, and to simply be together. Unfortunately, a pipe burst earlier this year, but due to the diligence of many men in the house and our maintenance man, Tom Walters, we were able to get room back to proper order. During the process, however, we realized that the room needed a "face-lift:" a new coat of paint and a new table were just the thing. This unique table has green felt, a faux leather arm bar, dark stained legs, and semi-circular shape. If you have not guessed it already, it's a poker table!

The building process started with problems, continued with other problems, and resulted in still more problems. Nevertheless, with the assistance of over ten of our seminarians, we learned a great deal building it from the ground up. It became a wonderful addition to the Rec Room, bettering fraternity for the whole house. It seats up to nine players face to face who

discuss not only the game at hand but the bond that brings us together as brothers. It has brought, and continues to bring, men from all stages of formation together in ways other forms of recreation do not.

Fraternity is a crucial part of formation at IHMS; the men here take it very seriously, always searching for new opportunities that allow themselves to grow together spiritually and emotionally. The Rec Room also features a pool table, ping-pong table, space for board games, and recliners to enjoy movies in. This new table has proved to be an excellent addition to the already vibrant space. In summary, a poker table is probably not what you think of as being fruitful in a seminary, but because it is always fake money, it has been and continues to be a special addition to the Rec Room among many other changes that help us to strengthen our fraternity and become better men.

— Samuel Miron

Where Are They Now?

Position Changes within IHMS

Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary has recently experienced several changes among its formation staff. Following the departure of Rev. Jeffrey Dobbs, we were pleased to welcome Rev. Matthew Fasnacht as Director of Spiritual Life in July 2023.

Looking ahead to the summer of 2025, IHMS will undergo additional staffing transitions. After nearly a decade of dedicated service as rector, we will bid farewell to the Very Rev. Robert Horihan as he begins a new chapter as rector of the Co-Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in Rochester, MN. Succeeding him will be Rev. Jason Kern, who currently serves as Vocation Director.

We are also pleased to announce that Rev. Matthew Wagner will join the IHMS formation team as Assistant Dean of Formation and Adjutant Judicial Vicar for the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, beginning August 1, 2025.

Before they take on their new roles, we had the opportunity to speak with Revs. Horihan, Kern, and Fasnacht about their transitions and their continued service to the Church.

Fr. Robert Horihan: IHMS Rector 2016-June 30, 2025

What is your favorite memory of working at IHMS?

While I am not sure I would call it my “favorite” memory, one recurring experience that I have appreciated is the moment I sit down after delivering a homily, especially on Sundays. The first thought that usually occurs to me is, “was that even semi-coherent?” Then I sense Jesus calling me to let it go, reminding me that whatever the merits—or lack thereof!—of the homily, I am about to provide the greatest possible service I can to the men by leading them through the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

What are you most looking forward to in your transition to working in a parish?

A fresh start is always a blessing: a new beginning and an opportunity to be enriched by Christ in new ways. I know I will be enriched by the people of the parish, and I dare to hope Christ will make use of me to enrich them in turn. I look forward to a collaborative effort with the people of St. John’s in witnessing to Christ and proclaiming the Gospel.

In particular, I am very excited about Sundays. The vitality of the parish community becomes so evident as we all gather together, and it is a wonderful moment for a priest as he gets to encounter so many of the faithful from so many walks of life.



Fr. Robert Horihan



Fr. Jason Kern



Fr. Matthew Fasnacht

Fr. Jason Kern: IHMS Vocation Director July 1, 2017- June 30, 2025; IHMS Rector July 1, 2025

What are you most looking forward to in your new role as rector?

I am looking forward to continuing the strong formation program we have for men in propaedeutic and discipleship stages of formation for priesthood. I have been blessed to serve as a formation advisor to many of the IHMS seminarians and am eager to continue those relationships as the Rector. It is a supreme gift to me to be able to witness the ways that Jesus works in the hearts of these men and I am deeply humbled how he uses me and my priesthood to serve them.

What will be your primary focus coming into this role?

My primary focus as Rector will be to facilitate this deepening relationship between the men and the Blessed Trinity. I desire for the men at IHMS to know the call of God deeply in their own lives and for them to see the path forward for integration, healing, and deepening friendship with God. The greatest blessing to my priesthood has been journeying closely with others through life on the path of discipleship and friendship with the Lord Jesus.

Fr. Matthew Fasnacht: IHMS Director of Spiritual Life July 1, 2023

Please describe your role as Director of Spiritual Life and what your job duties/expectations are.

As Director of Spiritual life, my role is to coordinate the spiritual direction of all the seminarians at the seminary. I give spiritual direction to 24 seminarians and make sure the other seminarians receive spiritual direction from other priests in the area. I also do other smaller jobs at the seminary, such as teaching formation class and assisting the rector in other formation responsibilities. I am also Director of Liturgy at the seminary, which means that I assist the rector in liturgical tasks for the seminary.

What do you enjoy most about IHMS and your role as Director of Spiritual Life?

I really enjoy giving spiritual direction to the seminarians. It is a wonderful thing to watch these young men grow in their prayer life as they increasingly learn how to pray better and surrender their heart and their life more to the Lord.

Is there anything that you particularly appreciate now that you live amongst the seminarians?

I enjoy watching them grow in spiritual maturity. I also appreciate getting to know them personally and caring for them. As my time goes by here it feels more and more like a family. Spiritually speaking, the seminary priests are the fathers of these young men, and it feels like a father-son relationship.

What is the most challenging aspect of your role and/or living amongst the seminarians?

It's kind of like living with your parishioners in one big house. Because of this, seminary priests must be very intentional about taking time to rest and get appropriate personal time and space for leisure.

Farewell Fr. Horihan

You will be missed!

What is your favorite memory with Fr. Horihan?

- ▶ My favorite memories are his uncanny ability to recall in perfect detail quotes and references to both movies and the highest intellectual references. – **Fr. Kern**
- ▶ It was nice to be able to talk about Metallica with him, and it's a pleasure to meet with a fellow metalhead like himself. – **Stephen Ferrazzano**
- ▶ My favorite memory with Fr. Horihan is the propaedeutic summer programs we had with him where he would teach on prayer, the Bible, literature, and great works of film. It was a blast and he was so informative. – **Nathaniel Devlin**

What piece of wisdom has Fr. Horihan given you that you will take with you in the future?

- ▶ Fr. Horihan helped me to understand the utter necessity of constantly turning our minds and hearts to Christ. To keep our eyes fixed on Jesus is essential, for it is through Him that we receive a supernatural Love, through Him that we receive our identity, and it is through His guiding hand that we come to know His will for our lives. – **Jon Stone**
- ▶ Fr. Horihan has been an amazing mentor and spiritual father to me and I will always take with me in the future his witness to living a joyful Christian life. Thank you, Fr. Horihan! – **Nathaniel Devlin**
- ▶ To embrace your passions and invite others into them joyfully. It's inspiring and helps me to imagine my priesthood and how God will use my passions and joys. – **Michael Rahm**

Do you have any additional messages for Fr. Horihan?

- ▶ I just want to say how deeply blessed I've been to spend three years of formation under Fr. Horihan's guidance. His leadership, wisdom, and care have shaped me in ways I'm only beginning to understand. I truly would not be half the man I am today without his influence. – **Leo Marcotte**
- ▶ I pray for all the best in his future endeavors. He was an integral part in our formation and still continues to do so. – **Stephen Ferrazzano**
- ▶ Fr. Horihan, thank you for being a wonderful spiritual father to me over the past year of seminary formation. Your joyful, hardworking, and loving priesthood really does show itself clearly inside you. I am grateful for all of your prayers, encouragement, conferences, homilies, and Masses that you have presided over as well. Finally, I wish you all the best as you transition into your new assignment at the Co-Cathedral in Rochester, and please know of my prayers to you. Thanks again! – **Joseph Bartosh**

Our seminarians and staff had more to say!
Read all of their comments on Facebook.





BEHOLD,
how good and
how pleasing it is
**FOR BROTHERS
TO DWELL AS ONE.**

Psalm 133:1



UPCOMING EVENTS 2025

July 12

New Propaedeutic Seminarians Move-In

July 27–August 1

Seminarian Trip to the Boundary Waters

August 22, 25, 28

Seminarians Return

September 2

Saint Mary's University of Minnesota Fall Semester Begins

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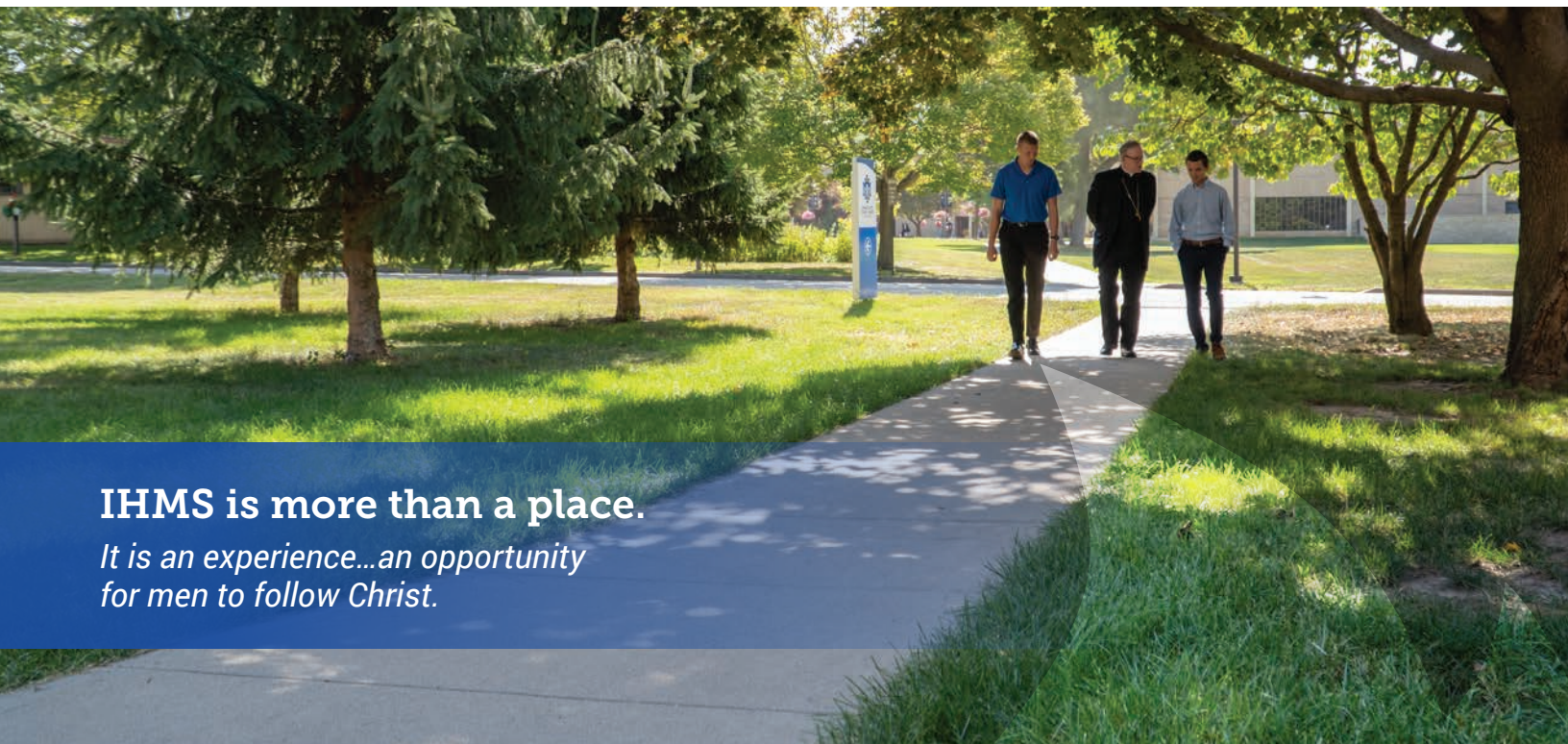
Please let us know of others who should receive the IHMS Newsletter or if you have an address change.

Please let us know if you are an alumnus of IHMS. We are always looking for alumni spotlight stories, please share yours!



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IHMS is more than a place.

*It is an experience...an opportunity
for men to follow Christ.*

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Diocese of Green Bay, Diocese of La Crosse, Diocese of Madison,
Diocese of Marquette, Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Diocese of
Peoria, Diocese of Rapid City, Diocese of Reykjavík, Diocese of
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