

Seminarian Collection 2015 Audio Script

Hello my brothers and sisters. This is Bishop David Ricken. As summer winds down, I am reminded of the anticipation I felt as a young man entering the seminary. Of course, in my day, I attended High School Seminary, College Seminary, and then Major Seminary. Times have changed, but the excitement for the mission remains the same for our seminarians today. A new seminarian feels the gentle nudge of the Holy Spirit pulling him toward the seminary. The beauty is that our seminarians are given a priceless opportunity to detach from the swift currents of the world so they can learn how to listen to the whispers of God. They will never truly know if they are called until they take the risk, learn how to pray, go to class, build relationships of love, and ultimately carry forth as priests.

Ten years ago we began the annual Seminarian Collection with a theme of “Hope for the Future, Help Them Today.” Today, we celebrate ten years of hope! Ten years of men who said “yes” to Jesus Christ. Ten years of investing into the lives of young men who lead us in worship, and care for the people of Northeastern Wisconsin. I am so grateful for their commitment to the Lord, and for your prayers and financial support of them.

In just one decade, we have ordained 20 priests who celebrate Mass, and guide us into a deeper relationship with Jesus. These priests have preached the Gospel in 47 parishes, celebrated thousands of sacraments, and nourished the souls of more than 38,000 people who yearn for the love of Jesus in their daily lives. What an amazing number of deep encounters have taken place because they have said “yes”, and because you supported them.

This fall we will have 28 men studying in various seminaries, and I recently had the pleasure of ordaining Father Edward Looney. Here is what Fr. Looney had to say about his journey to the priesthood.

“Hello, my name is Father Edward Looney. One of the best things about priestly service, or about being a priest I would say, is a daily encounter with God first in my own prayer life and then in the sacramental life of the church, consecrating the Eucharist, hearing confessions, and forgiving sins. It’s being a part of other people’s lives and accompanying them as they too encounter God. I’d say this is probably one of the most privileged opportunities that I have as a priest. I am so grateful for the prayers and financial support of the Seminarian Collection. Thank you and God Bless You.”

Thank you Father Edward. I am so grateful to you and to all of our seminarians who have said “yes” to this challenging vocation. Think about it, it was exactly ten years ago that Fr. Edward started out on his journey. He is a fine example of a local parishioner, whom you supported by your gifts, and who will now serve in our local parishes. We are blessed with 28 other men who are trying to do the same thing.

With this wonderful response comes the challenge of funding priestly formation and education. Did you know that it costs nearly \$35,000 per seminarian each year to attend the seminary? This means our need this year is almost \$1,000,000. These men are our Hope for the Future, and we do need to Help them Today. Help us celebrate *10 years of Hope* by making a generous gift to this year’s Seminarian Collection. If you’ve given a gift in the past, maybe you can share a little bit more with these men this year. And if this will be your first gift to the Seminarian Collection, consider \$25, \$50, \$100 dollars, or even more. This will greatly help with the costs of tuition, room and board, insurance, funding for the Vocations office, and other expenses. Please know that whatever gift you are able to give it is greatly appreciated, and more importantly, it will bring the joy of the Gospel to people across the diocese for future decades.

Thank you for your prayers and financial support of our seminarians. May God bless you, your family, and our Church with many happy vocations of all kinds!