

Seminarian Collection 2014 Audio Message

Bp. Ricken: Hello my brothers and sisters. This is Bishop David Ricken. It is my desire to help each of you on your journey as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Discipleship means we listen to Jesus, we follow Jesus, and become more like Jesus. The Lord calls each and every person to follow in different ways.

Some are called to the single life, others to married life, and still others to religious life. A seminarian is a disciple on the way to priesthood. What a bold way to be a disciple! Each year at this time, we turn our attention to the ways we can support our seminarians as they begin another year of formation at various seminaries.

We are fortunate to have a growing number of men who are on this road to the priesthood. I have gotten to know each one of them and I am struck by their joy. They are excited about the prospect of becoming disciples with a mission. Pope Francis said, “Priestly joy is deeply bound up with God’s holy and faithful people, for it is an eminently missionary joy.” In other words, their joy is in serving the people of God, and your support of them spreads that joy.

We have been blessed this year with 27 men who have said YES to this invitation. I am pleased to introduce two newly ordained priests who have chosen to follow Christ with joy, Fr. Ryan Starks and Fr. Brian Wideman.

Fr. Ryan Starks: Hello, my name is Fr. Ryan Starks. It is my honor to have been ordained a new priest for our Diocese of Green Bay this past spring. For those who have given a gift to the Seminarian Collection or who plan to give this year, I hope that you look at those of us who are newly ordained and that you say to yourself, “it’s worth it.” Because I look back on these past eight years of seminary and I know that it would not be possible for me to go through school without this collection. I have been the beneficiary of this collection in countless ways and I know now that everything that I am today comes from what I’ve been given in these last eight years.

Fr. Brian Wideman: Hello, my name is Fr. Brian Wideman. On May 31 of 2014 I was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Green Bay and I feel so blessed to be a priest and I’m so very excited to be working in a parish and sharing my own love of Jesus with the people of northeastern Wisconsin. To the people who have supported me through the Seminarian Collection I would definitely want to say, “thank you.” Because through the collection I’ve been able to focus on priestly formation which is really a 24/7 way of life, it’s not a

job, it's not going to college and so the collection helps me to really focus on the vocation.

Bp. Ricken: Thank you Father Ryan and Father Brian for your joyful witness. I'm deeply grateful for our new priests' dedication to the Church, and for their deep desire to serve the people of northeast Wisconsin.

Each year, more and more men are answering the call. With this great news comes the challenge of funding their formation. It costs almost \$35,000 per seminarian per year. This year, the direct support of our seminarians will cost more than \$900,000. These men are our Hope for the Future, and we need to Help Them Today. They are our disciples on the way to priesthood. Please consider a generous gift to this year's Seminarian Collection. Your gift of \$25, \$50, \$100, \$500 or even more will help greatly with tuition, room and board, insurance, funding for the Vocations Office and other expenses.

Thank you for all of your prayers and for your financial support of our seminarians. Your support brings more joy. May God bless our Church with many new vocations and reward you for your generosity.