

Seminarian Collection 2016 Audio Script

Hello my brothers and sisters. This is Bishop David Ricken. Lately the focus in our great diocese has been on discipleship. It is my hope that everyone around the diocese starts talking to each other about their lives as disciples, and about their love for Jesus Christ. Whatever challenges we face, we face them with Jesus at our side. It is His love and mercy that help keep us strong. This is the essence of the Good News.

Our seminarians are learning all about discipleship as well. They are eager to serve in the diocese and share their stories. I hope you get to meet them from time to time in your parish. Jesus told us in Luke's Gospel the Father is pleased to give us the Kingdom. It's time we build a kingdom of disciples. What an exciting mission!

Our local seminarians are good men. They spend their days at seminary studying, praying, serving in parishes, and growing in their own discipleship. During the summer months many of our seminarians are serving in parishes throughout northeast Wisconsin. I know there are young men who feel the gentle nudge of the Holy Spirit pulling them toward the priesthood. You can help these disciples by praying for them and encouraging them to consider the call to priesthood. We are really blessed to have 25 men who will attend seminary this fall.

Recently, I had the pleasure of ordaining two exceptional men. Fr. Michael Thiel is from St. Raphael's Parish in Oshkosh and Fr. Scott Valentyn is from St. John Neponmucene Parish in Little Chute. I am so happy to introduce Fr. Michael Thiel and current seminarian Deacon Matthew Rappl.

Hello my name is Deacon Matthew Rappl. As a seminarian my journey to the priesthood has been one of great joy. Your prayers and support of the Seminarian Collection has made my journey to the priesthood possible. I am really most thankful for the witness of the priests that I have been able to be with. I am thankful for the men that I have been able to grow with, to study with and to experience seminary formation with. But also in a special way, I am thankful for the generosity of the people who support the seminarians through their prayers and especially through their financial generosity. It does not go unnoticed, it is really deeply appreciated. On behalf of all my fellow seminarians, thank you for your continued support of this important collection. God bless you.

Hello my name is Fr. Michael. One of my favorite scripture passages comes from the Prophet Joshua. Joshua says, "as for me and my house we will serve the Lord." When I think about my own desire to be a priest I think about a desire to lead people and a desire to serve people, but ultimately that leading, that serving it is not just directed towards people it is directed towards God. So as for me and my house, as for me and my people we will serve the Lord. For everybody who has helped and supported me and all of the other seminarians along our journeys to the priesthood, I want to offer my appreciation and my gratitude for everything that you have been able to do for us.

I would really like to thank Deacon Matthew Rappl for his dedication to his studies and for answering God's call. Deacon Matthew, Fr. Scott Valentyn and Fr. Michael Thiel are great examples of how discipleship is working. The faith journey they have taken would not have been possible without your prayers and support of the Seminarian Collection.

Did you know it costs nearly \$38,000 per seminarian per year to attend the seminary? This means our need this year is almost \$1,000,000. If you've given a gift in the past, thank you, maybe you can share a little bit more with us 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 Fr. Schuster's work in the Vocation 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 Gospel of Mercy to people across the diocese.

Thank you for all of your prayers and financial support for our seminarians – it is working! May God continue to build up the kingdom of disciples.