

Seminarian Collection 2017 Audio Script

Hello my brothers and sisters. This is Bishop David Ricken. As I travel around the Green Bay Diocese, I am struck by the incredible beauty of this land. Over 45-percent of this Diocese is gorgeous farmland! We should have no trouble at all then understanding the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke: “The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers.” The Gospel of Luke Chapter 10. (Luke 10: 1-9). Today I invite you to hear these words for their deeper, spiritual meaning.

Through our prayers and the ministry of our parishes, 25 men from our Diocese have embarked on a journey of discipleship that leads to the priesthood. They are called “seminarians”. As Pope Francis has shared, a vocation flows from the heart of God, is a fruit that ripens in a well-cultivated field and blossoms in good soil. We can provide that “good soil” by supporting these disciples and encouraging more local men to consider the call to the priesthood.

Your prayers are working! Last month, I ordained Fr. Adam Bradley, Fr. Mark Mleziva, Fr. Matthew Rappl, Fr. Jon Thorsen, and Fr. Zach Weber to the priesthood. These five men are the largest ordination class in the last 25 years of our Diocese. We are blessed to have a growing number of seminarians and new priests to help us with our mission of discipleship, but our work is not done. We must continue to develop our relationship with Jesus. Our seminarians are encountering Jesus Christ in their own way through seminary formation. They spend their days studying, praying, and serving in parishes. I’d now like to introduce you to a few of our outstanding new priests.

Hello, my name is Father Zach Weber. I’m most grateful for the ability to celebrate the sacraments, because that’s ultimately what called me to the priesthood. Hearing my dad say things like there are special graces at daily mass and then eventually forming that habit of going to daily mass and being able to provide that for the people. Thank you so much. You’re prayers do make a difference. There’s a time when you’ll receive a letter or you’ll receive maybe a little extra financial assistance, and it’s almost always an answered prayer.

My name is Father Jon Thorsen. The seminary is one of the few places where we really receive this opportunity to integrate all the different aspects of what it means to be human and what it means to be a Catholic Christian. So I just want to thank you so much; this wouldn’t be possible without you. And be assured that we are praying for you as we know that you pray for us and we know that that makes such a great difference.

Hello, my name is Father Adam Bradley. Celebrating Mass is awesome. Just being able to share the sacraments with others and to be able to be with others who have helped me along the way, now I can step into the role of being a spiritual father to the people of the Green Bay Diocese. And that’s second to none; that’s just a huge blessing to be able to serve the people who have served me so much throughout my journey towards the priesthood.

I have gotten to know our new priests and have been impressed by their love for Jesus. I am confident each of them will be a wonderful missionary disciple for the Church for years to come. I'm excited to see how they will go out to our parishes and draw people closer to God.

As we see an increase of vocations, we also have the challenge of funding their priestly studies. Each year the cost of seminary education and formation for one seminarian is nearly \$38,000. This helps cover the cost of their tuition, room and board, insurance, other expenses, and funding for Fr. Schuster's ministry in the Vocation Office. This means our need this year is almost \$1,000,000. Our seminarians are our Hope for the Future, and we need to Help Them Today.

Please join me in supporting priestly vocations with a gift to the 2017 Seminarian Collection. If you've given a gift in the past, thank you so much, maybe you can consider sharing 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. A gift of any size will help. Whatever you are able to give is greatly appreciated.

Thank you so much for all of your prayers and financial support for our seminarians! I ask you to join me in praying within your homes, in the parishes, and our adoration chapels for our seminarians as well as for all the vocations of the Church. May God continue to help us provide "good soil" as we build up a kingdom of disciples.