

PATH TO THE PRIESTHOOD

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE

SPRING 2019

Greetings FROM HOUGHTON!

Along with the rest of the UP, we had a pretty fierce winter! The hope I want to propose to you, though, isn't the oh-so-slowly melting snowbanks—it has to do with the wonderful young men who are studying for the priesthood in our diocese, our Yooper seminarians.

As Vocations Director, it is my privilege to work with them, to accompany them on their journey of discernment and preparation for the priesthood of Jesus Christ! It's a challenging task, but a joyful one. I wear a number of hats, as I also pastor St. Al's in Houghton, and St. Anne's in Chassell. I am keenly aware that to fully cooperate with the Holy Spirit's movement in our diocese, I need your help. This new newsletter is a step toward communicating the joys and challenges of the vocations apostolate in the UP.

Please pray for our seminarians as you learn about them and their journey of discernment. **Consider joining Yoopers for Seminarians 2019 by making a donation to support the critical work of building a culture of vocations throughout the UP.**



Fr. Ben Hasse | Vocations Director



Supporting Seminarians

Jim and Michelle Rivard of Cornell have always prayed for their children's vocations. "As the children grew, we saw blessings of them embracing their Catholic faith. To whatever God called them, we supported and encouraged them to follow Him," said Michelle. By the grace of God, two of the Rivard children, Ben and Tyler are currently seminarians for the Diocese of Marquette. The cost of a seminary education, like many private colleges, is steep.

While Ben and Tyler are required to pay a significant portion of the cost of college, the diocese, through Upper Peninsula Catholic Services Appeal (UPCSA) and other donations, covers close to half of their costs. Once seminarians complete a bachelor's degree, the diocese pays the total seminarian education expenses for the extended degree required. As seminarians, these men give their time and talent to serving. An integral and important piece of their formation involves spending their summers in a variety of internships where they receive modest stipends for their service. "Without generous support, this would not be easy or possible. As a family, we are extremely thankful," said Michelle.

The average annual cost to educate a seminarian in our diocese is about \$40,000. College-level men in formation are responsible for at least half of their tuition, fees, and health insurance. The diocese covers room and board and books. For pre-theology and theology seminarians (those who have earned an undergraduate degree), the diocese covers 100 percent of their educational expenses and health insurance.

For many years, most of the cost of educating seminarians has been provided by UPCSAs. A number of endowments have been made to support seminarian education including the recently established Seminarian Endowment Fund. This fund assists in educating men in formation for the priesthood to serve the Diocese of Marquette. One future goal is to grow the seminarian endowment fund so we are well equipped to support even more seminarians.

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YOOPERSFORSEMINARIANS.ORG



How Does a Man Become a Seminarian?

Long before ordination day, a candidate for the priesthood goes through a long journey that involves at least six to eight years of education and formation! A significant moment occurs when he contacts the Vocations Director to express an interest in pursuing the priesthood. Many men discerning the priesthood will attend a seminarians retreat, visit a seminary, and walk for months or years with his pastor and the Vocations Director. Once a man resolves to pursue priesthood, he must first be accepted as a seminarian by the bishop. There are no “free agents” in the seminary process! This application process involves:

- ✝ Formal **background check**
- ✝ **Psychological and physical exam**
- ✝ Written **application, essays and recommendations**
- ✝ **Meeting with the Bishop**

If accepted as a seminarian, that man’s application is then forwarded to the seminary. If a seminarian has already earned a bachelor’s degree, he begins as a pre-theology seminarian and the process is about six years. A man who is starting seminary immediately after high school attends seminary for eight years. The first four years are focused on philosophy and the last four years are theology courses.

How Does a Seminarian Become a Priest?

Priestly formation is more than academic instruction; there are four pillars that focus on the seminarian’s growth.

Intellectual

Equips all that is necessary to proclaim, teach, and defend the faith

Spiritual

Learns to live in intimate and unceasing union with God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit

Human

Aims to form a man into a bridge (not an obstacle) to spread the Gospel; a man makes a gift of himself and is able to receive the gift of others

Pastoral

Makes seminarians true shepherds of souls after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, teacher, priest, and shepherd

In addition to time spent at seminary, seminarians typically spend at least a full summer in a parish internship, and some will spend a pastoral year in parish life. During their summers, seminarians also volunteer at summer camps, serve as Totus Tuus missionaries, make pilgrimages to the Holy Land, attend spirituality seminars, travel abroad for cultural immersion and language training, and more. These varied experiences are integrated through regular meeting with a spiritual director and a seminary formator. Please keep our seminarians in your prayers as they walk this prayerful journey of discernment and growth.

A CALL TO HOLINESS: MEET THESE MEN



DEACON MICHAEL KOWALEWSKI

is originally from Rhode Island. He is completing his formation at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology, Hales Corners, Wisconsin. He also studied two years at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit. His home parish is Sacred Heart in L'Anse. During his seminarian training, he served at Sacred Heart Parish, L'Anse; St. Ann, Baraga; St. Kateri Tekakwitha, Assinins, and Sacred Heart Catholic School with Fr. Corey Litzner. This past summer he spent at St. Mary, Norway and St. Barbara, Vulcan with Fr. Tim Ekaitis. He will be ordained to the priesthood at 3:30 p.m. on May 31.

DEGREES

BA History, Rhode Island College
MA Religious Studies, Providence College
MDiv, Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology

"One of the many exciting things about being ordained to the holy priesthood is apostolic succession, sharing an unbroken connection that goes all the way back to Jesus Christ and his 12 apostles. Jesus commanded his apostles to make disciples, baptize, and teach his Way."

- DEACON MICHAEL KOWALEWSKI



BROTHER ROMEO CAPPELLA, CCL

is from the Detroit area. He completed his college studies at Sacred Heart Major Seminary and is finishing his Master of Divinity there as well. His home parish is the Companions of Christ the Lamb, a religious order, in Paradise, Michigan. He has spent time serving in CCL's retreat ministry and has served at St. Joseph Parish in Sault Saint Marie with Fr. Mike Chenier. Upon ordination to the diaconate (May 31), he will serve as a deacon in the diocese and work with CCL in the coming year.

DEGREES

BA Philosophy, Sacred Heart Major Seminary
MDiv, Sacred Heart Major Seminary

"I'm looking forward to offering the Sacrifice of the Mass, offering Jesus' Body and Blood to the Father, Jesus — a pure victim, a holy victim, a spotless victim, and witnessing to Jesus' love as an ordained minister; a love that a cold world needs."

- BROTHER ROMEO CAPPELLA



THOMAS MERKEL

grew up in the Iron Mountain/Kingsford area. He is working on his Master of Divinity at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit. His home parish is St. Mary & St. Joseph in Iron Mountain. He received an undergraduate degree in accounting from Northern Michigan University, where he was involved in Catholic Campus Ministry. He has served at St. Joseph Parish in Sault Saint Marie with Fr. Mike Chenier and at the Keweenaw Catholic Community with Fr. Abraham Mupparrathara. After ordination to the diaconate (May 31), he will serve at St. Ignatius Loyola in St. Ignace with Fr. Francis Ricca.

DEGREES

BA Accounting, Northern Michigan University
MDiv, Sacred Heart Major Seminary

"After my internship this past summer, **I am really excited to be a priest.** I can't wait to spread the good news of the gospel to people. There are many hurting people in today's world and Jesus is the one who will heal them."

- THOMAS MERKEL



Yoopers for Seminarians
Vocations Office, Diocese of Marquette
1004 Harbor Hills Drive, Marquette, MI 49855



NEWSLETTER SPONSOR



Bishop John F. Doerfler cordially invites you

TO THE

Ordination to the Priesthood
DCN. MICHAEL KOWALEWSKI

Ordination to the Diaconate
BR. ROMEO CAPPELLA
MR. THOMAS MERKEL

FRIDAY, MAY 31
3:30 P.M. EDT

St. Peter Cathedral
311 W. BARAGA AVENUE
MARQUETTE, MICHIGAN

LIGHT RECEPTION TO FOLLOW