



SUMMER 2026

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THAT ENDURES:
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SAINT JOHN'S SEMINARY
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

CURRENTS

127 Lake Street
Brighton, MA 02135
www.sjs.edu
617-254-2610

“For the sake of the Gospel”

DID YOU KNOW?

SEMINARIAN POPULATION

Total Seminarians: **74**

Resident Seminarians: **49**

Religious Order Seminarians: **13**

Redemptoris Mater Seminarians: **12**

Dioceses & Religious Orders Served

Dioceses: **9**

Religious Orders: **5**

COST TO EDUCATE

\$60,000 – Total cost per seminarian per year

\$45,000 – Tuition paid by diocese/religious order

\$15,000 – Your gift makes a lasting impact

25% of every seminarian's formation is funded through donor support.

Each year, Saint John's Seminary relies on more than \$1 million in donor support to sustain our mission.

THE THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

22 Lay students enrolled

3 Dioceses represented

Graduate Degree Programs in Theology, Ministry & Evangelization

Your support helps form future priests and lay leaders for the Church!



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LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Greetings to all!

Back in the mid-1970s, a landmark self-help book by Gail Sheehy mapped out the predictable stages, transitions, and crises of adulthood from the 20s to the 50s as opportunities for growth. A bestseller, *Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life* defined a generation's understanding of adult development.

Fifty years later, we continue to appreciate—and perhaps better understand—the transitional stages of life. This remains true even in the lives of seminarians and priests. Formation in the seminary begins by focusing intensely on the seminarian's relationship with Jesus Christ. The seminarian first becomes a disciple of Christ at his Baptism; seminary formation enables him to grow as a discerning disciple, preparing for ordained ministry. He is gradually formed into a shepherd called to give his life in pastoral charity for the People of God. This development—through the propaedeutic, discipleship, configuration, and vocational synthesis stages—aims for growth in holiness, so as to become configured to Christ, Head and Shepherd, Servant and Spouse. [See: *Program of Priestly Formation, 6th Ed.*, USCCB, 2022, 118]

After seven years of priestly formation, the newly ordained priest is ready for anything. Although he may not know what life will bring or what suffering he will encounter, he knows that Jesus will be with him, whatever lies ahead. Changes will occur along the way—in ministry, relationships, health, and many other circumstances of life. With the support of his bishop and brother priests, he can recognize these transitions and adapt to them. From early priesthood to transfers, and from the middle years to senior or “retired” status, the priest continues to respond to God's ongoing call and to seize opportunities to help others encounter Jesus Christ. [See: *Guide to Ongoing Formation for Priests (Guide of Ongoing Formation of Priests*, Ascension, 2023, 87-88 & 89-103]

As I write these words, several of the transitions just mentioned are unfolding at Saint John's Seminary.

Over the past several months, applications for admission have been reviewed, interviews conducted, acceptances sent out, and the process will continue into August. The good news is that Saint John's Seminary will welcome a significant number of new seminarians this fall.

More good news: seminarians from the Archdiocese of Boston, the Dioceses of Providence and Rochester—and others who completed their studies at Saint John's—are being ordained priests. Seminarians from Boston and the Diocese of Fall River are being ordained deacons. We celebrate with all of them and pray that the next stage of their lives will be filled with God's blessings.

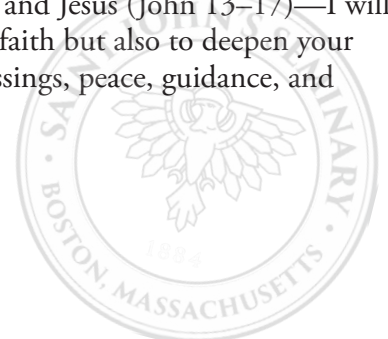
Finally, I am preparing to hand over the office of Rector and enter senior priest status. Transitioning into an older age group—often away from administrative duties—is a significant life change for a priest. However, while priests may retire from administrative roles, they remain priests forever. Those who have served as pastors often continue assisting in parishes. I will continue to live, pray, and study at the Seminary and will return to teach introductory courses in Old Testament and New Testament. I am deeply grateful to all those I have served with and hope to continue working with everyone engaged in priestly formation. On both sides of the desk, seminarians, faculty, and staff are always learning, growing, and seeking better ways to serve our Lord.

Lastly, since this is my final Currents letter to you, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for all the ways you have supported, encouraged, and contributed to Saint John's Seminary during my time here. Echoing farewell speeches in Scripture—like those of Moses (Deuteronomy 31–33), Samuel (1 Samuel 12), and Jesus (John 13–17)—I will continue praying for you. I encourage you not only to keep the faith but also to deepen your growth in it. May you and your families always know God's blessings, peace, guidance, and protection.



Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. Stephen E. Salocks, '80
Rector



FORMATION THAT ENDURES

REFLECTIONS ON SEMINARY LIFE AND THE LEGACY OF MSGR. STEPHEN SALOCKS



Mr. Ryan Bilodeau,
The Theological Institute
of Saint John's Seminary,
Class of 2018

For nearly four decades, Msgr. Stephen Salocks has dedicated his priesthood to one of the most important and often least visible ministries in the life of the Church: the formation of future priests. Over many years as a professor of Sacred Scripture, Dean of Students, Academic Dean, and eventually Rector of Saint John's Seminary, he helped guide and form generations of seminarians who would go on to serve in parishes, schools, hospitals, and communities throughout the region. While parish priests are often the most visible face of the Church's daily life, the work of seminary formation is quieter and largely hidden, and yet its impact is immeasurable. Every priest who celebrates Mass, hears confessions, anoints the sick, or comforts a grieving family was first formed somewhere, and for many priests in this region, that formation passed in some way through Saint John's Seminary during the years Msgr. Salocks served there.

At his installation as Rector, Cardinal Sean O'Malley reflected on Christ's call for priests to be "salt of the earth and light of the world," and he spoke about the role of the seminary in cultivating the interior life, virtue, discipline,

and pastoral charity necessary for a lifetime of priestly service. The image of salt and light is an ancient one, but it remains deeply relevant. Salt preserves what would otherwise spoil, and light guides those who would otherwise walk in darkness. The work of a seminary, then, is not simply academic preparation, but the formation of men who will preserve the faith, guide the faithful, and bring the light of Christ into the lives of the people they serve. For decades, Msgr. Salocks helped ensure that Saint John's Seminary remained a place where that kind of formation could take root and flourish.

I know firsthand the impact a seminary can have on a man's life, because I was one of the many young men who passed through Saint John's Seminary during the years he served on the faculty and in leadership. This year marks a decade since I discerned my path after leaving the seminary, and I have found myself reflecting often on how formative those years were and how much they continue to shape the person I am today. Seminaries are sometimes imagined as cloistered places, removed from the concerns of the world, but for those who enter, they are anything but removed from real life. They are places of formation in the deepest sense, where young men confront fundamental questions about purpose, identity, sacrifice, and faith, and where they begin to understand what it means to give one's life in service to God and to others.

My time at Saint John's Seminary was a season of immersion in prayer, theological study, and self-discovery, and during those years I came to know Msgr. Salocks not only as a professor and rector, but as a man whose love for Scripture and for his students was unmistakable. His classes were never simply academic exercises; he had a way of bringing Scripture to life, of making it feel immediate and relevant, as if the people and events we were studying were not distant figures, but part of a living story that we were still living ourselves. Outside the classroom, he was known for his steady presence, his dry sense of humor, and a shared appreciation for terrible puns, which he and I exchanged on more than one occasion. Years after I had left the seminary, when my family experienced a personal loss, I received an unexpected act of kindness from him that I have never forgotten. It was a quiet reminder of the kind of priest he has always been, a man who cared not only about forming priests, but about the people entrusted to his care. Although my discernment ultimately led me to marriage rather than the priesthood, the lessons from those years and the example of priests like Msgr. Salocks have never left me.

To understand the value of the seminary, you have to understand that it is not merely an academic institution, but a formation program that seeks to shape the whole person over time. The rhythm of seminary life is built around prayer, study,

community, and the sacraments, and gradually that rhythm begins to shape a man from the inside out. Daily Mass, confession, Eucharistic adoration, and spiritual direction are not peripheral activities; they are the foundation upon which everything else rests. They form habits of prayer and reliance on God that remain long after a man leaves the seminary, whether he leaves as a priest or as a layman called to another vocation.

Another unforgettable aspect of seminary life was the sense of community it fostered. The friendships formed there were

Long after his retirement, the fruits of his work will continue to be seen in the lives of the priests he helped form.

rooted in a shared faith and a shared journey of discernment, and those friendships provided encouragement, accountability, and support during some of the most important years of our lives. Many of those friendships remain among the most important relationships in my life to this day. Even now, I still speak regularly with some of those men. Some are priests serving in parishes. Others are married with families of their own. But all of us were shaped in lasting ways by the years we spent in that place, and we carry those years with us, often in ways we only fully understand much later.

Seen this way, the work of seminary formation matters enormously, and so does the legacy of a priest who dedicates his life to that work. A seminary does not exist simply to train men for a profession. Its task is something deeper and more lasting: to form men in faith, discipline, charity, and self-gift, so that whether they serve as priests, husbands, fathers, teachers, or lay leaders in the Church, they live lives rooted in Christ and oriented toward the service of others. The seminary is a place where seeds are planted, and only years later do you begin to see where those seeds took root and how they bore fruit.

When we think about the legacy of a priest like Msgr. Salocks, it becomes clear that his legacy cannot be measured only in the classes he taught or the administrative roles he held. His legacy lives in the priests he helped form, in the seminarians he mentored, and in the countless people who will be served by those men over the course of their priesthood. Every parish Mass celebrated by a priest he helped form, every confession heard, every hospital visit made in the middle of the night, every homily preached, every family consoled in a moment of grief becomes, in some real way, part of that legacy.

Some men pass through the seminary and carry its lessons into marriage, family life, and lay leadership in the Church. Others remain and dedicate their lives to forming those who will serve at the altar and in the pulpit. Both paths are forms of service, and both are part of the same mission of the Church.

For nearly forty years, Msgr. Stephen Salocks dedicated his life to that mission of formation. Long after his retirement, the fruits of his work will continue to be seen in the lives of the priests he helped form and in the lives of the people those priests will serve. Those of us who passed through Saint John's Seminary during those years know how much of ourselves was shaped there, and how much of that formation was shaped by priests like Msgr. Salocks. It is a debt that cannot really be repaid, only carried forward in whatever vocation we are called to live.



2014 End of Year Cookout After Closing Mass. Photo courtesy of Mr. Ryan Bilodeau.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY FOR THE FUTURE OF THE SEMINARY



Mr. Tomasz Kierul
Vice President of
Mission Advancement

As I sat in the Great Hall on May 6, and again at Woodland Golf Club on June 1, my thoughts kept drifting away from the events themselves and toward the longer journey that had brought us all to those rooms.

Both evenings were, of course, occasions to thank Monsignor Stephen Salocks for his years of service as Rector. They were moments of gratitude and reflection—moments to honor a priest whose quiet, steady leadership has shaped generations of seminarians. But they carried a second meaning as well. They were visible reminders of a community that has been built, patiently and faithfully, over many years.

When I arrived at Saint John's Seminary in 2019, one of the first real conversations Monsignor and I had was not about fundraising, or events, or campaigns. It was about relationships. Monsignor has always understood something that is easy to overlook in this work: people support institutions because they first believe in the people behind them. They give to a mission when they are convinced it is authentic. And they become involved when



We have built a larger
community of people who
believe wholeheartedly in the
mission of priestly formation.





they feel genuinely invited into something larger than themselves.

For eight years as Rector, Monsignor gave our team the freedom—and the encouragement—to build precisely that kind of community. Together we worked to widen the Seminary's circle of friends and supporters. We strengthened our bonds with alumni, deepened our engagement with benefactors, and welcomed supporters from dioceses throughout New England and beyond. We introduced new audiences to the mission of the Seminary and invited them to see, firsthand, why the formation of priests matters so much.

None of this happened overnight. It happened one conversation, one visit, one relationship at a time. And it happened because so many people gave themselves to the work.

Perhaps that is why the May 6 and June 1 celebrations felt so meaningful.

On May 6, more than 220 people gathered at Saint John's Seminary—bishops, abbots, priests, alumni, benefactors, trustees, and friends. Many had traveled considerable distances simply to be present. What moved us most that evening was the strength of our alumni community. Priests from different generations returned not only to honor Monsignor but to reconnect with the place that had formed them. Some had not been back in years; others remain closely tied to our life here. Yet all of them shared a common gratitude—for the formation they received, and for the part Monsignor played in their journey

to the priesthood. For those of us in Mission Advancement, it was a powerful reminder that our alumni are among the Seminary's greatest ambassadors. Their priesthood is the living fruit of Saint John's Seminary.

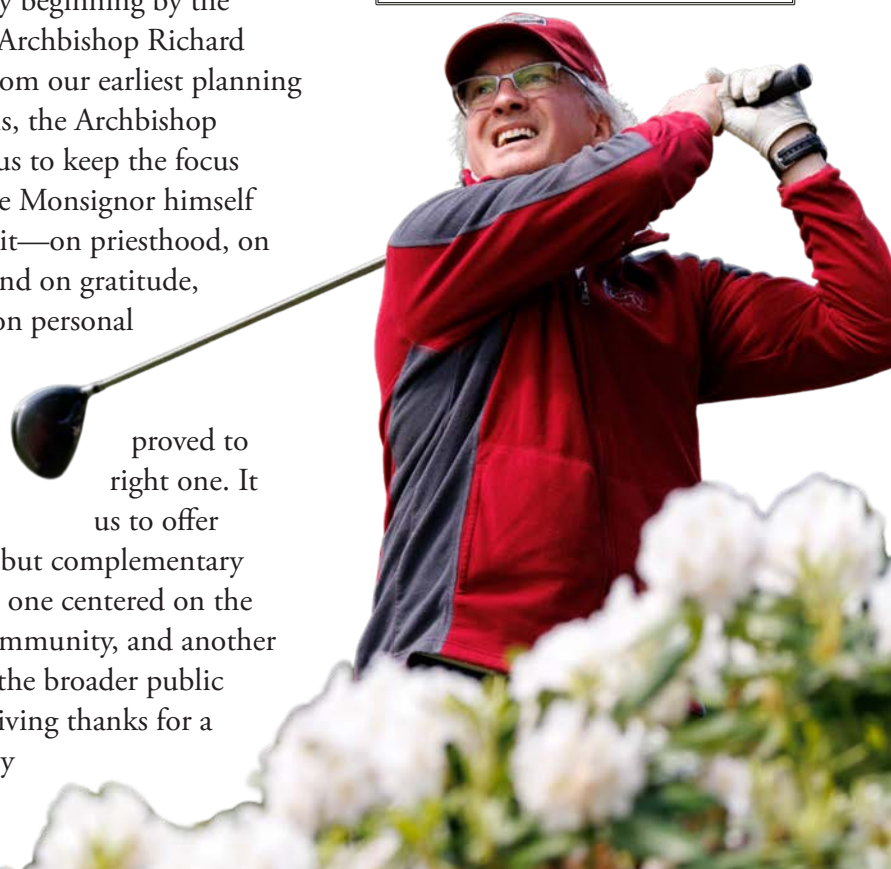
The June 1 celebration told a similar story from a different vantage point. Our 24th annual golf tournament and retirement dinner brought together benefactors, business leaders, alumni, clergy, and friends of the Seminary. What united them was a shared conviction that the Church needs well-formed priests, and that Saint John's Seminary remains essential to that work. Looking around the room, we saw people who had, in their own ways, become part of the Seminary family: some through philanthropy, some through friendship, some through their own vocational journeys. Each was contributing, in his or her own way, to the future of priestly formation.

Both celebrations were shaped from the very beginning by the guidance of Archbishop Richard Henning. From our earliest planning conversations, the Archbishop encouraged us to keep the focus exactly where Monsignor himself would want it—on priesthood, on formation, and on gratitude, rather than on personal recognition.

That instinct proved to be the right one. It allowed us to offer two distinct but complementary celebrations: one centered on the Seminary community, and another that invited the broader public to share in giving thanks for a life of priestly

Special Thanks to Our 24th Annual SJS Summer Classic Golf Tournament Committee

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service. We are deeply grateful to the Archbishop for his vision and his trust.

Nor would either evening have been possible without the committee that gave so generously of its time to bring these celebrations to life. Theirs was a true team effort—colleagues, volunteers, and friends working side by side, attentive to every detail, seen and unseen. To each of them, we offer our heartfelt thanks.

Together, these efforts helped tell a story far larger than any one individual. A story about priesthood. A story about formation. A story about the Church. And, ultimately, a story about community.

When people ask what has changed at Saint John's Seminary during Monsignor Salocks' years as Rector, we could point to a great many things. But what stands out most is the strength of the relationships that now surround the Seminary. Today we enjoy deeper engagement from our alumni. We have broadened our base of support well beyond the Archdiocese of Boston. We have welcomed new benefactors and partners into the life of the Seminary. Most importantly, we have built a larger community of people who believe wholeheartedly in the mission of priestly formation.

That community was on full display on May 6 and June 1.

Those gatherings were not simply celebrations of a rector's service. They were a testament to what becomes possible when a seminary invests in relationships, remains faithful to its mission, and invites



others to share in that mission as their own.

Monsignor often returns to the words of Saint Paul: "I do it all for the sake of the Gospel." In many ways, those words describe the journey we have walked together over these past years. As that chapter closes, we welcome our new Rector, Bishop Robert P. Reed, with gratitude and great confidence. Through his years of leadership at the CatholicTV Network, Bishop Reed has spent his priesthood widening the Church's reach—drawing new people into the faith and inspiring them to invest in its mission. That is precisely the work this community has labored to advance, and under his leadership it will only deepen and grow. The relationships we celebrated on May 6 and June 1 are not an ending but a foundation, and this community stands ready to build the next chapter of Saint John's Seminary together with him.





FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL

Msgr. Stephen E. Salocks, '80
Retirement Celebration

Watch now at:
www.youtube.com/@SaintJohnsSeminary

QR code and YouTube logo with 'Watch Now' button.

On Wednesday, May 6, the seminary community gathered for its Annual Spring Reception, this year honoring Msgr. Stephen E. Salocks on the occasion of his retirement as Rector of Saint John's Seminary.



THE TRIA MUNERA TO ACT IN PERSONA CHRISTI CAPITIS



Fr. Stanislaus Achu
Interim Vice Rector,
Professor of
Sacred Scripture

At the heart of Catholic priesthood lies a profound participation in the mission of Jesus Christ Himself. Through the sacrament of Holy Orders, a priest is configured to Christ and entrusted with the Church's threefold ministerial office—the *tria munera*: the duty to teach (*munus docendi*), rooted in Christ's prophetic mission; the duty to shepherd and govern (*munus regendi*), reflecting Christ's kingly authority; and the duty to sanctify (*munus sanctificandi*), flowing from Christ's eternal priesthood. These three offices are not merely responsibilities assigned to a priest; they shape his very identity, enabling him sacramentally, ontologically, and practically to act *in persona Christi Capitis*—in the person of Christ the Head.

In exercising the *munus docendi* the priest is called to teach *in persona Christi Capitis*, not as a speaker of his own ideas, but as one who makes present the truth of Christ. Benedict XVI explains in his General Audience of April 14, 2010, that ordinary "representation" would mean acting for someone who is absent; but in the Church Christ is "never absent." Therefore, the priest's

teaching is Christ's effective action made present to the community. This teaching is meant to orient the People of God toward divine life such that it creates and elicits faith, brings about true communion, and provides the light needed in the misperceptions and confusions of our times by presenting God's Word, the Logos, Jesus Christ himself to the world.

In exercising the *munus regendi* – the duty to shepherd or govern, this governing office is not merely administration. Pope St. John Paul II, in *Pastores gregis*, 32, presents governance as pastoral work expressed through "functions and activities" that develop in the faithful "the fullness of life in charity," to the glory of the Most Holy Trinity and in witness to God's loving presence. Hence, the priest's pastoral governance is ordered toward a common end, which is the building

up of the Church. Pope St. John Paul II again notes that when a bishop (and, by participation in ordained ministry, a priest as well) exercises sanctification, he also brings about what teaching aims at; and when he governs, he receives grace as he shapes his way of thinking according to the image of Christ the High Priest, so that all is ordered to the Church's building up (*Pastores gregis*, 32.)

In exercising the *munus sanctificandi*, the priest's sanctifying office is centered on what is "holy"—the absolute reality of God's truth, goodness, unity, love, and beauty. In his General Audience of May 5, 2010, Benedict XVI states that to sanctify a person is to put him "in touch with God," to "draw us into God's sphere." This is what a priest does as a sanctifier. Benedict XVI adds that because humans cannot create this contact by their own





power, the gift and grace a priest receives at his ordination includes “the gift, the task of creating this contact,” achieved especially in the sacraments and the Church’s liturgical worship.

From the foregoing, one sees the defining feature of the *tria munera*, their deep interconnectedness, so that when the priest teaches, he also sanctifies and governs, when he sanctifies, he also teaches and governs, and when he governs, he teaches and sanctifies. They show what priestly ministry truly is; acting *in persona Christi Capitis*, so that while exercising the priestly office, the Church gathers because Christ teaches through the Church’s Magisterium, Christ governs through pastoral governance of the Church hierarchy, and Christ sanctifies through the sacraments. In the three ministerial offices, a Catholic priest is not simply a religious educator, an organizer, or a liturgical functionary. He is a minister through whom Christ’s mission reaches the faithful: teaching the truth that saves, governing with pastoral charity

toward eternal life, and sanctifying through sacred liturgical worship and sacraments, always acting *in persona Christi Capitis*.

In this issue of CURRENTS, we recognize and honor Msgr. Stephen E. Salocks’s life of priestly service in the formation of future priests; a pastor to future pastors. He has lived and ministered at Saint John’s Seminary for almost 40 years, as a professor of Sacred Scripture, Dean of Students, Dean of Faculty, Academic Dean, and then as Rector. Through his priestly fidelity, pastoral charity, obedience, devotion and humility, he has formed generations of priests for the Ecclesiastical Province of Boston, dioceses throughout the United States, and around the world. His life and ministry have left an enduring mark on the Seminary community and far beyond it.

Through Msgr. Salocks’s decades of priestly ministry here at Saint John’s Seminary, Christ’s mission reached practically to the ends of the earth. As a professor, he taught the

truth of the Scriptures to numerous persons, some of whom are now bishops, priests and lay men and women alike. As a formator and rector, he shepherded and governed with pastoral charity all those in his pastoral care, whether seminarians or parishioners toward building up of God’s Church and eternal life. And while celebrating the sacrifice of the Mass and other sacraments, either here at the seminary or in the parish, he put numerous people in touch with God, drawing them into “God’s sphere,” into divine life. Msgr. Salocks is a priest who embodies and exemplifies how the *tria munera* sacramentally, ontologically and practically enable a priest to act *in persona Christi Capitis* – in the person of Christ the Head, leading all to God. He does it all for the sake of the Gospel (cf. 1 Cor 9:23).

Enjoy this issue of CURRENTS and the following reflections and tributes in honor of our dear Reverend Monsignor. And please pray for the continued success of the mission of Saint John’s Seminary.

FORMED IN TRUTH: THE PRIESTLY OFFICE OF TEACHING



Fr. Michael MacInnis
Coordinator of
Human Formation,
Director of the
Propaedeutic Program

The Priesthood of Jesus Christ is traditionally understood through the threefold office of priest, prophet, and king, often expressed pastorally as sanctifier, teacher, and governor. These dimensions are inseparable in the life and ministry of the ordained priest, because they flow from participation in the one Priesthood of Christ Himself. Yet among these three pillars, the role of the priest as teacher deserves particular attention in the contemporary Church. In a culture marked by confusion about truth, morality, and the meaning of the human person, the priest's mission to proclaim, explain, and embody the Gospel has become especially urgent.

Christ Himself exercised this ministry constantly. The Gospels repeatedly describe Jesus as one who taught with authority. He instructed the crowds, formed the apostles, interpreted the Scriptures, corrected misunderstandings, and revealed the Father through both word and action. His teaching was never abstract or detached from pastoral care. Rather, He taught through accompaniment, healing, mercy, sacrifice, and personal encounter. Thus, the priest, configured sacramentally to Christ, is called not merely to communicate information,



but to lead souls to communion with God through the truth of the Gospel.

The priest teaches first within the life of the parish. The parish remains the primary place where most Catholics encounter the Church's teaching ministry. Preaching at Mass is perhaps the clearest expression of this office. In the homily, the priest opens the Scriptures, connects divine revelation to daily life, and helps the faithful discern the presence of God amid ordinary struggles. Effective preaching is not simply theological explanation; it is pastoral interpretation rooted in prayer, study, and charity. A priest teaching in the parish setting may guide young couples preparing for marriage, instruct parents seeking baptism for their children, accompany OCIA candidates entering the Church, or lead Bible studies and catechetical programs. In each of these moments, teaching becomes deeply pastoral because it addresses concrete human

experiences: family life, suffering, forgiveness, vocation, doubt, and hope.

The priest also teaches through his personal witness in parish life. Parishioners often learn as much from the priest's manner of living as from his formal instruction. His reverence at the altar, attentiveness in confession, availability to the sick, and patience with those who struggle all communicate theological truths. A priest who visits the dying teaches the dignity of human life and the Christian meaning of suffering. A priest who listens compassionately to a troubled family teaches mercy and reconciliation. Even administrative leadership within the parish can become an act of teaching when exercised transparently, prudently, and with genuine pastoral charity. In this way, governance itself serves the priest's teaching mission by forming the community according to the mind of Christ.

The teaching office of the priest is also essential within the seminary.

Seminaries are not merely academic institutions; they are communities of human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation. Priests who serve as seminary professors, spiritual directors, or formators participate directly in Christ's own work of forming future shepherds of the Church. Their teaching extends beyond theological lectures into mentorship and spiritual accompaniment. A seminary professor teaching moral theology, for example, does more than explain ethical principles. He helps seminarians learn how to apply the Church's teaching with wisdom, compassion, and fidelity in pastoral situations. Likewise, a spiritual director teaches future priests how to cultivate prayer, discernment, and pastoral charity through the witness of his own life.

This educational mission within the seminary has profound implications for the wider Church. The priest who forms seminarians indirectly teaches countless future parishioners who will one day be served by those men. Formation therefore requires intellectual rigor united with holiness of life. Seminarians must see in their formators not only academic competence, but also authentic discipleship. In this sense, priestly teaching mirrors the method of Christ, who formed the apostles not only through instruction but through shared life.

The priest's office as teacher is equally visible in ministry to the poor and marginalized. Jesus consistently taught through encounters with those on the peripheries of society: the leper, the widow, the tax collector, the sinner, and the outcast. His care for the

vulnerable revealed the heart of the Kingdom of God. Priests continue this mission whenever they minister among the homeless, prisoners, migrants, the addicted, or those abandoned by society. Such ministry is itself a form of teaching because it proclaims the inherent dignity of every human person created in the image of God.

For example, a priest serving in a soup kitchen or homeless shelter teaches the Gospel not only through words, but through presence and solidarity. By learning the names and stories of the poor, he demonstrates that no person is forgotten by God.

The priest as teacher continually directs the faithful back to Christ, who alone is the fullness of truth.

A prison chaplain teaches hope and redemption by accompanying inmates seeking repentance and reconciliation. A priest working with immigrants may teach both justice and charity by defending their dignity while helping parish communities overcome fear and prejudice. In these settings, the priest often teaches most powerfully through actions that embody Christ's compassion.

At the same time, ministry to the marginalized also teaches the priest himself. Encounters with

suffering and poverty deepen his understanding of the Gospel and purify his pastoral vision. The poor often reveal dependence upon God, perseverance in hardship, and gratitude amid suffering. Thus, the teaching relationship becomes reciprocal: the priest teaches Christ to the people, while Christ teaches the priest through the people he serves.

Although the priestly offices of governor and sanctifier remain essential, they ultimately support and strengthen the mission of teaching. The priest sanctifies through the sacraments so that the faithful may live the truths they profess. He governs in order to guide the community toward unity and holiness. Yet both sanctification and governance require the illumination of truth. Without sound teaching, sacramental life risks becoming routine and governance risks becoming mere administration. The priest as teacher continually directs the faithful back to Christ, who alone is the fullness of truth.

Ultimately, the priest's teaching mission finds its source and fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the eternal High Priest. Christ taught not only from the mountain or in the synagogue, but from the cross itself, where divine love was revealed completely. Every priest participates in this same mission when he proclaims the Gospel, forms disciples, accompanies the suffering, and witnesses to truth through charity. Whether in the parish, the seminary, or among the poor and marginalized, the priest teaches most authentically when his life becomes a visible reflection of Christ the Teacher.

CHRIST THE KING: A THRONE OF SERVICE



Fr. Frank Silva
Coordinator of
Pastoral Formation

For the most part, the world is no longer ruled by kings who control the fate of the subjects in their kingdoms. How best then can Christ's mission as our King be understood and appreciated? The Scriptures contain some valuable insights to consider.

The Old Testament image of a true king is one in which he was both leader and, more importantly, servant of his people. Christ gives us the ultimate example of this kind of

kingship at the Last Supper. On the night before he was to die for us, he washed the feet of his apostles and commanded them to do likewise. Jesus governs and shepherds the kingdom of God with servant-leadership and love, rather than earthly dominance.

The Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen once spoke of the Kingship of Christ on his famous TV program. Bishop Sheen concluded the program with the dramatic sentence, "We [followers of Christ] have a king who stumbled to his throne!" He was referring, of course, to the cross. It is the cross that serves as the throne of Christ, our King. Yet, he was and is Lord of the universe.

Following Jesus' example, Christians are to live the baptismal role of King

through humble service to others. We do this by using the talents, graces, and gifts God has given us to further His reign on earth by working to establish justice in our families, our communities, and the world.

For almost four decades, St. John's Seminary has known the presence and example of a servant-leader in the life and ministry of its retiring rector, Msgr. Stephen Salocks. Regardless of the positions he has held while serving on the seminary faculty, he has exercised them in persona Christi (in the person of Christ) to teach, sanctify, and govern. By doing so he has served as a model and example to several generations of present and future priests.

THE PRIEST AS SANCTIFIER

CONTEMPLATIVES IN ACTION: FORMING PRIEST-SANCTIFIERS



Fr. Joseph Briody
Coordinator of Spiritual
Formation, Professor of
Sacred Scripture

It's a false humility that holds God doesn't care about us or that humanity is just an insignificant speck in a vast universe. It's not how God sees us. The Father cares so much He gave His only Son so that we might become His children.

This process is called sanctification, that is, the maturation by which we become holy as God is holy (1 Pet 1:16). God wants our sanctification (1 Thess 4:3). This is the work of the Holy Spirit (the "Sanctifier") who makes us holy, who makes us like Christ. Everything the Holy Spirit touches "is sanctified and transformed" (St. Cyril of Jerusalem).

The Catholic priest is entrusted with this holiness as a gift to live and share, something the Church spells out in her ordination rites, praying:

"Grant . . . your servant the dignity of the priesthood; renew deep within him the Spirit of holiness."¹

The priest is sanctified to sanctify others. He is consecrated to be Christ for others. The more a priest grows in conversion, the more he attracts others to Christ. Genuine sanctity appeals and draws others. Because it is life lived to the full, holiness perfects our humanity. A true saint, Bishop Erik Varden points out, "shows forth what a human being is with luminous intensity" (Towards Dawn, 88). There, the



fire of divine love burns brightly. Because of this, the saints are the most interesting, attractive, and vital people — the “most vivid persons of history.”² The saints make holiness attractive because in them we see holiness shining from lives like our own.

Every Christian is asked by Jesus to be holy and seek perfection (Matt 5:48; cf. Lev 19:1). This is the call the Catholic priest proposes to the world. In proposing it, he tries to live it. Often the most striking example a priest gives is the quiet witness of his friendship with Christ and his own commitment to prayer — the fruits of which overflow into all of life.

Monsignor Salocks has witnessed faithfully to this reality in forty years of service at Saint John’s Seminary. His commitment to liturgical and personal prayer has been a strong reminder of the priority of God and how “without me, you can do nothing” (John 15:5). This has been especially evident in his commitment to the “non-negotiables” of priestly life: offering the Eucharistic Sacrifice daily, praying the Liturgy of the Hours, spending time before the Blessed Sacrament, and pastoral

generosity. His slipping into Saint Charles’s Oratory for quiet prayer reminds us to seek the Lord in all things and serve Him in the daily minutiae and routine. Bishop Reed, with his joyful love of the priesthood, will continue building on this faithful legacy, emphasizing the sanctification of the priests who will one day sanctify God’s people.

Christ is our sanctification (1 Cor 1:30). The source is the heart of Christ Crucified. The stream is the Blood and Water poured out from His side for the life of the world.³ From this fount, the saints drink and live anew. The Heart of Jesus, the consuming fire of divine love, is the burning bush of our vocation.⁴ Only because He speaks first to our hearts, are we able to speak and move the hearts of others. Sanctification involves taking on the heart of Christ.

It is from this closeness to Christ’s heart that priests become contemplatives in action. Pope Leo asks priests to “preserve together mysticism and social commitment, contemplation and action, silence and proclamation.”⁶ Just think about these pairings! Mysticism, contemplation, and silence: these

are expected of the diocesan priest. From these flows the pastoral mission expressed in proclamation of the Gospel, social commitment, and action. Pope Francis expressed this same dynamic in terms of “adoration and service.”

The point is that pastoral charity and generosity are not possible without prayer because mercy is the “purest fruit” of contemplation.⁷ As the priest serves others and strives to be “poor in spirit,” he reveals the “heart of Christ . . . which every saint seeks to imitate.”

The priest’s life is to be spent with the Lord and then with His people. The priest is to have the smell of the sheep (Pope Francis) but also the smell of the Gospel (Pope Leo). Without the smell of the sheep, the closeness of credible witness is lacking. However, without the smell of the Gospel, that is, without the heart and mind of Christ, priests are of little value to the Lord’s flock. Without that smell of the Gospel, the drive and grace of evangelization are lost.

Sanctification means that the Lord dwells in us and transforms us, making holiness our true greatness and real happiness. Pope Leo XIV begs us not to settle for less than sanctity: “Aspire . . . to holiness . . . Do not settle for less.”⁹

Archbishop Henning has often referred to the ripening harvest in Boston and beyond. For the Lord’s harvest, priest-sanctifiers are needed more than ever. As Saint John’s Seminary continues to grow from the bottom up, please ask the Lord of the harvest to send more laborers to sanctify His harvest (Luke 10:2).

TRUTH, CHARITY, MISSION

THE HEART OF SEMINARY FORMATION



Mr. Joseph Beale
Seminararian,
Diocese of Portland, ME

At the Friends and Alumni Spring Reception on May 6th, Msgr. Salocks reminded those present of St. Paul's words to the Corinthians: "I do it all for the sake of the Gospel, so that I may share in its blessings." The Apostle's proclamation offers a guiding principle for men preparing for the priesthood. The Gospel demands more than knowledge; it calls for an interior disposition ordered toward charity. St. Luke similarly records in Acts 2:42 that the first Christians "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." Together, these passages provide a point of convergence for the many dimensions of priestly formation: seminary formation demands responsibility.

At the heart of becoming configured to Christ as priest, prophet, and king is a joyful ordering of oneself toward the responsibilities of sanctifying, teaching, and governing. These responsibilities are not burdens borne in isolation but responses to the joy of the Gospel. These joyful responses to the Gospel flow from Christ's triple *munera* and are responsibilities to truth, to others, and to God. Seminary formation teaches us, as future priests, to receive responsibility joyfully

because priestly responsibility entails participation in Christ's own mission.

In the Rite of Ordination, the Bishop will proclaim these words to the soon-to-be-ordained deacons: "Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you preach." Reaching this moment in priestly formation requires an enduring responsibility to truth, shaped in seminary life. Intellectual formation at the seminary cultivates a desire to come to know and love the Lord in a rich way.

Learning is not accomplished merely to meet benchmarks, but rather to help us, as seminararians, continually renew our joyful love of truth. This labor of love in the classroom and at the wood of our desks reaches its perfection in an increasing responsibility to participate in Christ's prophetic mission as teacher. For us, truth must be received before it can be proclaimed.

Rather than being responsible for creating truths, seminary formation empowers us to cultivate our responsibility to the truth, which is ultimately Christ Himself. Diligent obedience and devotion to Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition require dispositions of humility and charity. If we as future priests are to faithfully and dutifully exercise the act of teaching, we have to begin as listeners ourselves. The classroom provides us with the opportunity to persevere through challenging academic formation, preparing us to persevere joyfully and lovingly in

future ministry obstacles. Growing in our service to truth complements, and relies on, growth in charity as well. Seminary courses, refectory conversations, independent study, and the contemplation of God help form us, seminararians, to authentically proclaim what the Church teaches with growing fidelity and charity. Responsibility to truth is a joyful obligation because growing in truth means deeper conformity to Christ, who is Truth himself.

Another manifestation of responsibility in a seminararian's life is the responsibility toward others, which is most visibly manifest in pastoral sacrificial charity and fraternity. This image of responsibility helps us to continue in our configuration to Christ through his office of governance. It is charity exercised through service and leadership.

As we progress through seminary formation, ample opportunities arise for growing in leadership. This leadership, though, is one taught by Christ the King: it is authority through service. Pastoral assignments in parishes, hospitals, prisons, and other organizations teach us patience, humility, and accompaniment, which begin in our souls through quiet perseverance in prayer. Outside the chapel and our assignments, seminararians grow greatly in charity through our everyday community exercises, as a responsibility to others. Living in the seminary is an incredibly joyous privilege. Charity in our hearts swells through routine encounters in the

seminary house. Life in this holy house offers a joyous opportunity of fidelity to others for the sake of the Gospel in the image of Acts 2:42.

We, as future priests, are preparing to accompany Christ present in the faithful through joys and sufferings. In almost no other vocation can one person experience an entire life in a single day. Priests are blessed with the unique privilege of presence through invitation into the joys and sorrows of other people's lives. The small interactions in the seminary and in our pastoral assignments prepare us for the great privilege of bringing Christ into all aspects of the faithful's lives. A responsibility to others, germinated with charity, becomes joyful because loving others conforms us more deeply to Christ the Good Shepherd.

Responsibility to God is manifest in the seminary by our formation to ultimately live a life of personal offering to the Father. Fidelity in prayer, as perseverance in learning to remain with God, is one of our greatest responsibilities. The rhythm of the seminary horarium exists to cultivate fidelity in prayer and openness to sanctification.

Because the priesthood is an act of self-offering to God, we, as seminarians, learn of our responsibility to the Father to be sanctified by Him through charity. Ultimately, the responsibilities of seminary formation are not ends in themselves, but means by which future priests are configured more deeply to Christ, forming a lifelong journey of charity that begins in the seminary and is ordered entirely toward Him.

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NEW EPISODE

BISHOP BRUCE LEWANDOWSKI: THE HEART OF CATHOLIC PREACHING



with Fr. Stanislaus Achu & Bishop Bruce Lewandowski
SJSPodcast

SAINT JOHN'S SEMINARY
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



In this episode of the **SJSPodcast**, Fr. Stanislaus Achu speaks with Bishop Bruce Lewandowski, C.Ss.R., about the mission of Catholic preaching today. Bishop Lewandowski reflects on how homilies are meant to draw people into deeper friendship with Christ by meeting them in everyday joys and struggles.

He offers practical insights on homily preparation—grounded in Scripture, storytelling, and clear structure—while emphasizing authenticity and spiritual nourishment. The conversation also addresses the use of AI in preaching, with a strong reminder of the irreplaceable role of human creativity and pastoral charism.

Through pastoral stories and lived experience, this episode invites listeners to rediscover preaching as a source of inspiration, nourishment, and transformation. Listen now at www.sjs.edu/sjspodcast



Listen Now

FIERY FURNACE FURNISHES PEACE ON BIG DAY



Deacon Joseph Jasinski
Seminarian,
Archdiocese of Boston

Like anything, seminary life can sometimes feel like a grind. A seemingly monotonous march toward ordinations that, some days, feel so, so far away ... utterly distant from the “daily” at 127 Lake Street.

And then ... BAM. Ordination comes.

On the morning of May 2, I found myself being vested in a stole and dalmatic by mentor and good friend Father Siniša Ubiparipovic (SJS Class of '15) — the pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle (Millis, Mass.), the site of my first summer assignment, where I saw ordination as some pipe dream an eternity away

Yet here we are, and here I am, a deacon of some three weeks as I write this, still feeling very much the man I was before Archbishop Henning placed his hands on my head, yet simultaneously a changed, more “complete” man, experiencing a newness of joy, peace, and freedom I'd not known before.

While priestly ordination still stands about a year away, I've reflected a lot on words that Father Ryan Sliwa (another member of the SJS Class of '15) shared with my classmates and me a few years back. Father Sliwa told us how, whenever anyone asks him the standard question, “Father, what's your



Photo by Gregory L. Tracy

favorite part about being a priest?” (to which most expect a predictable reply: celebrating Mass, hearing Confessions, etc.), his simple yet profound response often surprises:

“I know exactly who I am.”

Those words give me goosebumps. Because, while I can't wait to be ordained a priest next year, ordination to the diaconate has me living a bit more of the reality Father Sliwa describes. Thanks be to God and the grace He has poured out these past five years, and in a still more abundant way during the ordination, it does feel as though I know who I am more than I ever have before.

This speaks to the security only the Lord can provide to those who accept His invitations and callings; to those who allow Him to continually refine their hearts in the furnace of His love (which is freaking painful sometimes!). Thanks to my thick skull, it took me longer than many, perhaps, to hear His voice calling me to this vocation and to accept the healing touch of the Divine Physician. Yet I can comfortably admit that while simultaneously knowing wholeheartedly that the timing was and will continue to be all part of His Divine Providence. As is often said, “Where I am at this moment is exactly where the Lord is calling me to be.” There's great freedom in believing that.

Within the flow of everyday life at Saint John's, it's been important to remember that, especially as these “furnace moments” manifest themselves in a myriad of ways:

You feel it in the chapel as you commit to chanting Lauds

and Vespers with your brother seminarians and the faculty priests. You're not the best singer ... but that's not what this is about; it's about giving glory to God, Who always accepts your best, however imperfect it may be.

You feel it as a sacristan as you and your team fulfill the behind-the-scenes preparations for Mass every morning and Holy Hour every afternoon. It may feel repetitive, but such is life; and God delights in the small acts of service — like counting out 50 small hosts for the men of the house each day — as much as the epic ones.

You feel it in Hour Six of classes on a long Tuesday, as you try to scribble down some knowledge your professor presents, despite your brain starting to feel like mush; who knows — what he's sharing might be the nugget of wisdom you desperately need one day in ministry

You feel it on the soccer field on Friday afternoon, as Nigerians, Cameroonians, Vietnamese, Indians, El Salvadorians, Mexicans, Hondurans, and reps from about a dozen other countries (it's basically a weekly World Cup) run in circles

around you as you accept the reality of an aging body. Keep going: There's nothing better than kneeling later in front of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament with a depleted body

And you feel it most, maybe, in the stuff you just don't want to do. Ugh: I forgot to respond to that email ... I really don't have the energy to talk to that guy right now ... I need to apologize to that other guy for being a jerk the other day ... I should really do some laundry.

Looking back, it's the purification that comes in those daily moments (and acknowledging God's presence within them) that allowed the Lord to work most effectively on my own heart, and that made me feel His peace so powerfully at the “big moment” of ordination.

The day before becoming a deacon, I prayed primarily with one short verse from Psalm 57: “My heart is ready, O God; my heart is ready...” Thanks to His furnace, I'm grateful to have been able to say those words in earnest, with deep faith in God, that He'll use my heart to heal and help serve His people.

I'm ready to get started.



Photo by Gregory L. Tracy

CELEBRATING THE **CLASS OF 2026**

This year, Saint John's Seminary proudly celebrates the graduates of both the Seminary and Theological Institute Class of 2026.

Throughout their years of formation and study, these graduates have grown in faith, knowledge, and service. They now move forward into new chapters of ministry, leadership, and discipleship, carrying with them the values and mission of Saint John's Seminary.

SEMINARY CLASS OF 2026

Archdiocese of Boston

Fr. Javier Padilla • Fr. Diego Alejandro Pena • Fr. Johnathan Saniuk

Diocese of Providence

Fr. Vincent (Jay) Zizza

Diocese of Rochester

Fr. David Cataline

Diocese of Fall River

Rev. Mr. Lucas daCosta

Discalced Carmelites

Br. Vladimir Guadalupe, OCD • Br. Joseph Teresa Steger, OCD

See a photo of the Class of 2026 on the back cover of this issue.



Ordination of Fathers Stephen Baruffi, Giris Azize, Javier Padilla, Diego Alejandro Pena, and Jonathan Saniuk at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, May 16, 2026.
Pilot photos by Gregory L. Tracy



Ordination of transitional deacon Lucas D. daCosta by Bishop Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption, June 6, 2026.
Diocese of Fall River photo.

Alongside our seminarians, we are proud to celebrate the graduates of the Theological Institute Class of 2026.

Through rigorous academic study, prayerful reflection, and a commitment to serving the Church, these graduates have deepened their understanding of the Catholic faith and prepared themselves for leadership and ministry in a variety of settings.

As they embark on the next chapter of their journeys, they join a growing community of lay and ordained leaders dedicated to sharing the truth of the Gospel and strengthening the life of the Church in their families, parishes, schools, and communities.

THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE CLASS OF 2026

Master of Arts in Ministry (M.A.M.)

Ellen Gunning

Michael Habeeb

Kathleen Hogan

Rodolfo Panizales

Michaela Silva

Francis X. Stanton III

Master of Theological Studies (M.T.S.)

Marian McGrath

Frederick O'Brien



Photo by Gregory L. Tracy

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The Class of 2026 leaves Saint John's Seminary prepared to serve Christ and His Church as priests, deacons, and ministers throughout New England and beyond.

Your generosity helps form the next generation of church leaders who will proclaim the Gospel, celebrate the Sacraments, and serve God's people for years to come.

To support the formation of future priests, please use the enclosed envelope, scan the QR code, or visit www.sjs.edu/class-of-2026 to make your gift today.



Class of 2026