



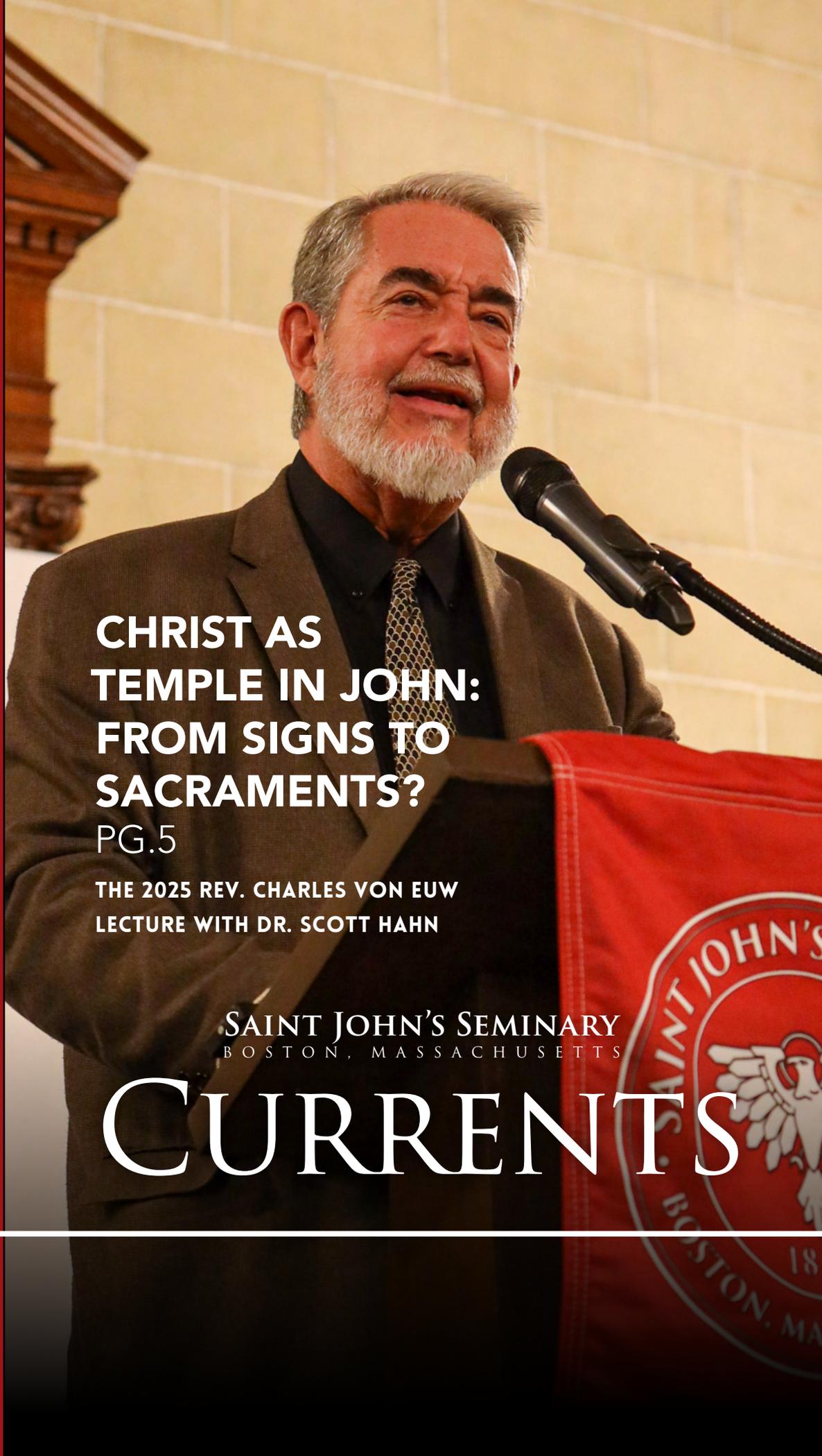
WINTER 2026

**A CELEBRATION
OF ADVENT
THROUGH
COMMUNITY,
MUSIC,
AND PRAYER**
PG.4

**FORMED AT
THE TABLE AND
THE ALTAR**
PG.7

**CATHOLIC AND
FAITHFUL AI?**
PG.9

**PACKED WITH
PURPOSE,
INVITE BRINGS
FRIENDS AND
FATHERS
TOGETHER**
PG.13



CHRIST AS TEMPLE IN JOHN: FROM SIGNS TO SACRAMENTS?

PG.5

**THE 2025 REV. CHARLES VON EUW
LECTURE WITH DR. SCOTT HAHN**

SAINT JOHN'S SEMINARY
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

CURRENTS

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

DID YOU KNOW?

SEMINARIAN POPULATION

Total Seminarians: **74**

Resident Seminarians: **49**

Religious Order Seminarians: **13**

Redemptoris Mater Seminarians: **12**

Dioceses & Religious Orders Served

Dioceses: **7**

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!



Pg. 5

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LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Greetings to all!

It has been a busy January at Saint John's Seminary (SJS). The Christmas-New Year's break gave way to the SJS Invitational Basketball Tournament, then, the January Canonical Retreat, the MLK Workshop, the annual pilgrimage to Washington, DC to March for life, and, yes, the beginning of Second Semester Classes. The weather outside has indeed been frightful, but inside, seminarians, faculty, and staff have continued the study, work, and prayer of priestly formation.

As I begin my last semester in the Rector's Office, I am frequently being asked about my thoughts as I finish my nearly four decades of service to SJS. Quite frankly, I don't know where to begin. I arrived at SJS as a new seminarian 50 years ago, and I have lived most of my adult life here. Two years after I was ordained, I was sent by the seminary and archdiocese to work toward a degree in Sacred Scripture. Almost 39 years ago, I returned to join the seminary faculty as professor of New Testament.

Saint Paul reminds us that we are called to God's purpose. In Romans 8:28, Paul specifically says that we are "called according to his purpose." God's purpose for calling us certainly includes his intention to save us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But God's purpose is broader than personal salvation, as wonderful as that might be. We are called to adore and praise God, making Him the center of our life, not just in church but in all activities. We are called to communion, children of God who strive to build loving, supportive relationships with other believers, learning to care for God's family (the Church, the Body of Christ). We are called to discipleship, to follow the way of Jesus Christ, growing spiritually and become more like Jesus through learning and spiritual maturity. We are called to service or ministry, and to use our unique talents and gifts to serve others and contribute positively to the world. And, thus, we are called and shaped for mission, to evangelize, and to share God's love and message with others, participating in His work in the world.

God's call and the various dimensions of mission that follow are foundational for every disciple of Jesus Christ! Those who are called by God to the priesthood are especially aware of the call and mission they have received from our Lord. We don't respond to the call and fulfill the mission without the blessings and graces that God gives us to do so.

For me, I can think of no place where that is truer than at Saint John's Seminary. I can honestly say that, as a seminarian, as a graduate student, as a faculty member, and, then, as rector, I have found that God has given me the graces and the blessings to answer his call and to do the best I can to fulfill the mission, as well as the missions within the mission, that he has given me.

I am also immensely grateful for the many good, faithful, and competent faculty, staff, and seminarians with whom I have lived, worked, and prayed.

That is all that I want to say right now. I am sure I will have more thoughts to share with you in the next newsletter.

Please know that all of us at Saint John's Seminary are grateful for your interest, your prayers, and your support. May our Lord continue to bless and protect you all.



Sincerely yours in Christ,

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





A CELEBRATION OF ADVENT THROUGH COMMUNITY, MUSIC, AND PRAYER

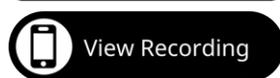
On Saturday, December 6, and Sunday, December 7, 2025, the Seminary community welcomed guests for its annual ADVENT LESSONS AND CAROLS celebration. Under the direction of Tristan Smith, Director of Sacred Music, the full assembly lifted their voices in some of the most cherished hymns of the Advent season, creating a prayerful and reverent atmosphere. The Seminary Schola offered beautiful choral meditations throughout the services, including *Lo, How a Rose and Angelus ad virginem*, selections drawn from the 1974 album directed by Msgr. Francis Strahan. As a seminarian at the time, present rector of Saint John's Seminary, Msgr. Stephen Salocks, sang with that Schola. Music Director Tristan Smith noted, "There are many settings of those two beloved selections in existence, but I wanted to find the same arrangements used on the 1974 album." These meditations enriched the proclamation of Scripture and drew hearts more deeply into reflection on the approaching feast of the Lord's Nativity. Lessons and Carols is more than a beloved Advent tradition; it is a meaningful moment of evangelization and an opportunity to foster vocations to the priesthood and other forms of ministry within the Church. By opening our doors to the wider community, we invite all who attend to encounter the beauty of the Church's prayer, grow closer to Christ, and reflect on how He may be calling them to a deeper life of service. Following each service, guests gathered in the seminary refectory for a light reception, sharing fellowship and warm conversation as we continued our Advent preparation for Christmas.



Umass Lowell Catholic Student Union



Watch a recording of
Lessons and Carols on
our YouTube Channel by
scanning the QR code.



CHRIST AS TEMPLE IN JOHN: FROM SIGNS TO SACRAMENTS?

THE 2025 REV. CHARLES VON EUW LECTURE WITH DR. SCOTT HAHN



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

INTRODUCTION

On Friday evening, November 21, 2025, a large crowd gathered in the seminary refectory for the annual Rev. Charles Von Euw Lecture. The night brought together clergy, scholars, and the faithful. Parents of seminarians mingled with enthusiastic high schoolers and admirers of Dr. Scott Hahn. Dr. Paul Metilly introduced the popular author who is also the Founder and President of the St. Paul Center, and Scanlan Professor of Biblical Theology and New Evangelization at Franciscan University, Steubenville. A fine presentation and an enjoyable evening concluded with Q&A and book-signing.

TEMPLE CLEANSING

Dr. Hahn spoke on how, in Saint John's Gospel, Christ is presented as the fulfilment of what was signified by the Jerusalem Temple. The Jewish Temple was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70, an event predicted by Jesus some forty years beforehand. This prophecy is recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke toward the end of their gospels (Matt 24:2; Mark 13:2; Luke 21:6).

John, on the other hand, places Jesus' reference to the destruction of the Temple at the beginning of his gospel. For John, the death and resurrection of Jesus is the inauguration of the new Temple that is His Body, the place where we meet God in the flesh—the place of sanctification where we are made like God. Saint John underlines that Jesus wasn't speaking of the razing of the stone Temple. He was speaking of the New Temple of His Body, the Body that would be torn down and gloriously raised: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). Christ fulfills and perfects what went before. He embodies all that the old Temple prefigured.

John saw the ongoing fulfillment of the Jewish Temple and its liturgy in the Church and her sacraments. As Dr. Hahn put it, Jesus conferred on



His disciples His own "Templeness." He consecrated His disciples to continue His mission. He assured them that they would do even greater works through the Holy Spirit He sends from the Father.

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE AND CHRIST'S TEMPLE

Dr. Hahn rooted this New Testament vision deeply in Old Testament soil. Solomon's Temple embodied God's covenant with David, that David's kingdom would



be firmly established through a future son (2 Sam 7:8–16). Like David, his son Solomon was anointed king or “messiah” (Christos in Greek). Dr. Hahn noted that Solomon is the first individual in Scripture explicitly described as a “son of God.” Yet Solomon was only a type or foreshadowing of a later and greater “Son of God” and “Son of David.” Though a “son of God,” Solomon was not the “Son of God.” Though a “son of David,” he was not the “Son of David.” Solomon’s reign declined with his infidelity. His kingdom was divided and waned. Solomon was clearly not “Great David’s Greater Son” nor was he David’s Lord (Ps 110:1; Matt 22:41-45, etc.).

Solomon’s failures and the eventual destruction of the Temple (587 B.C. and A.D. 70) reveal the provisional nature of his kingship. In any case, the “Son of David” intended in God’s promise was to come long after David was buried. The promises to David in 2 Samuel 7 point beyond that particular historical moment to a glorious and ideal figure to come.

Saint John emphasized the Temple and its feasts in order “to demonstrate that Christ is the fulfillment of the Temple and the worship performed there” (Dr. Hahn). Since John situates the cleansing of the Temple at the very outset (John 2:13–25), he frames Jesus’ entire ministry through the lens of His identity as the New Temple. Since Christ desires to live His mysteries in us, the Church

becomes a living Temple—the place where God dwells and acts.

CHURCH CONTINUITY WITH TEMPLE LIFE



What survived most obviously from Jewish life after A.D. 70 is often called Rabbinic Judaism. Both Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity show continuity and discontinuity with the life of the former Temple. With the destruction of the Temple, Judaism, gave way to the synagogue, priests gave way to rabbis, and sacrifice gave way to the scriptural scroll—the Law and its interpretation. On the other hand, Christianity, Hahn noted, continues to have in Christ a Temple, a High Priest, and a holy sacrifice.

Christianity, like Israel of old, consecrates space to God, offers sacrifice and Communion, and acknowledges the presence of the living God, especially in the Mass (Baruch A. Levine’s commentary on Leviticus). Dr. Hahn concluded with the striking observation that “there is arguably no less continuity in the Christian worship that flows from John’s Temple Christology than in Rabbinic Judaism.” For John, all

that was good and holy in the old Temple is brought to completion and perfection in Christ’s Body, the new and enduring Temple.

CONCLUSION

Given a recent resurgence in “Temple Theology,” Dr. Hahn’s presentation was timely. This theology sees the temple worship of old as a key to understanding much of the Bible and its shaping of life in Judaism and Christianity. Dr. Hahn’s lecture masterfully sketched John’s vision of Christ the living Temple and the Church’s sharing in His holy “Templeness.” For Dr. Hahn, Saint John does this in an exceptional way.

Saint John the Evangelist is not concerned merely with the past. His signs and gospel are written that “you may have life in His name” (John 20:30-31). They describe what is meant to happen in us. The sacraments we celebrate are not distant echoes of ancient Temple worship, but the powerful means by which the Holy Spirit shapes us into Christ, the Holy Temple, renewing us as sons and daughters in the Son, and empowering us to do “even greater things” (John 14:12). The Lord desires to perfect us as His Temple, “resplendent with the glory of a life acceptable to Him” (Preface of The Dedication of a Church).



FORMED AT THE TABLE AND THE ALTAR

BROTHERHOOD, SHARED PRAYER, AND THE GRACE OF DAILY FORMATION



Mr. Quinn Cunningham
Propaedeutic Program,
Archdiocese of Boston

I went to college, meals became “solo missions,” eaten quickly while rushing to the next activity. At Saint John’s Seminary, I am now home for breakfast, lunch, and dinner to say grace and share a meal with my brother seminarians. I hadn’t

not a collection of individuals but a family, called to worship as one.

Sports were also formative for me as a child, teaching teamwork, selflessness, humility, and camaraderie. I did not expect to play wiffle ball, soccer, football, and basketball again in one semester at seminary. I recently told my mom, “Yesterday we had our World Cup soccer tournament; next week is basketball; and later we have flag football practice.” Opportunities for recreation at Saint John’s Seminary continue to teach these virtues, forming me to become a better teammate and brother—all while having fun.



2025 Seminary Flag Football Tournament, Blue Team

“At the end of the day, we are all brothers,” I heard one of the upperclassmen say during the first week of classes. It was a familiar theme throughout my time discerning, applying, and preparing to enter seminary. As a seminarian, you enter into a brotherhood and a new family of formation. Over the first few months at Saint John’s Seminary, this theme has become a daily reality. Life as a seminarian is life as a brother, a son, and a member of a family—a family with a mission: to form men who bring Christ’s healing love to the world. My first semester has truly been a “welcome to the family.”

Growing up, my family gathered almost every night for dinner, said grace, shared about our days, and enjoyed a meal together. Once

expected meals to be so formative, but they are essential for our growth as future priests. Before we can be good fathers in the Church, we must first learn to be good brothers. Meals are where we listen, share, joke, and learn to love.

As a child, my dad and I prayed the “Our Father” before bed, and I felt safe knowing God would protect me. In seminary, we recite the “Our Father” three times a day—at Morning Prayer, Holy Mass, and Evening Prayer—led by one of our spiritual fathers. While I am older and not afraid of the dark, this daily communal prayer continues to give me a sense of safety and formation. Before seminary, much of my prayer life was individual. Now, I experience the power of praying together, knowing the Church is

St. John Paul II called the family the “first seminary” and the first “school of love,” where children learn about God’s love and how to give themselves to others. My first semester has been like entering a “second family” and “school of love,” where I am being formed more intensely to be a man of faith, peace, hope, and self-giving love. Seminary is the place where we deepen our ability to love amid daily joys, sorrows, and challenges.

In other words, it is the place we become more like Christ, who Himself was formed in His Holy Family and then sent on mission. God placed me in my family to begin this process, and He has brought me to Saint John’s Seminary to continue it.

A LIFE REORDERED

ADJUSTING FROM THE INDEPENDENCE OF PROFESSIONAL WORK TO THE STRUCTURED, COMMUNAL LIFE OF THE SEMINARY



Mr. Benjamin Woodruff
Propaedeutic Program,
Diocese of Rochester

When I left my career after seventeen years to begin formation at Saint John's Seminary, I knew the change would be significant, but I didn't fully grasp how deep that shift would be. Moving from the rhythm of full-time work to the structure of seminary life has been both freeing and demanding in ways I couldn't have predicted.

In professional life, my schedule was full, yet largely my own. Now the days are even busier, shaped by morning prayer, classes, chores, shared meals, and formation sessions. Each day follows a rhythm of prayer and study that leaves little space unaccounted for. Even our "free" Saturday often fills quickly with ministry, events, or homework. The lack of control over my schedule has been one of the hardest adjustments, but it has also taught me patience and trust. There is real peace in surrendering my time to the rhythm of the house and to the needs of others.

A typical day begins with Morning Prayer and Mass at 7 a.m., followed by breakfast, then class, formation

meetings, or ministry. Midday Prayer in community precedes lunch, and the afternoon brings more classes, formation, or ministry work. In the evening, we gather for a Holy Hour with Evening Prayer, then dinner together.

One of my favorite parts of the week is the Tuesday evening Bible study our class shares with two upperclassmen. We reflect on the upcoming Sunday Gospel in a relaxed setting, and those conversations have helped build fraternity and deepen my love for Scripture.

Returning to academic life has also been humbling. After years in the workforce, I had forgotten what it is like to have homework. The transition back to essays, reading assignments, and exams requires discipline and focus. There is no coasting on professional experience here. Each class asks something new of both the mind and the heart.

The demands are real, but so are the freedoms. Much of life here is provided for: meals, structure, and time for prayer. There is a subtle freedom in obedience, in not needing to decide every detail of the day. With so many practical burdens lifted, there is more space to focus on formation itself and to grow interiorly and spiritually.

The opening silent retreat was a turning point for me. For days, my only real responsibility was to pray. That shift from being productive to being prayerful marked a clear change in my priorities. My old worries about career growth or financial goals faded quickly. In their place came a deeper awareness of my responsibility to grow in holiness and to serve others well.

A recurring theme across our classes has been redemptive suffering—the idea that even in struggle, God is at work. It is a lesson that has already shaped how I see both the challenges of formation and the small sacrifices that fill each day. Life in the seminary can be demanding, but it is also deeply meaningful. The work never really stops, yet it is the kind of work that changes you.

This transition continues to stretch me and draw me closer to God. I am learning to trust more, to let go of control, and to see how even the smallest moments of shared prayer, study, or conversation are part of something much larger. The days are full, but they are filled with grace.

CATHOLIC AND FAITHFUL AI?

FAITH, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH IN THE AGE OF AI



Fr. Denis Nakkeeran
Dean of Men, Professor
of Moral Theology

Perhaps one of the most widespread topics of the 2020s is Artificial Intelligence. The discussions surrounding the topic of AI include mentions of the seemingly near-infinite benefits, the weighty ethical concerns, the side effects such technology would have on society, and much more. Still, despite the heated discourse, the technological innovators working in the AI field are continuing to push forward and make AI a more integrated part of our everyday life. While there can be a number of different reactions to this prospect, thankfully within the Church, there are people who are looking at the enterprise of AI with the lens of how we can use this tool well.

Matthew Harvey Sanders is one of the people behind Magisterium AI, which is an AI-powered tool meant to provide people answers to questions in a way that is faithful to Catholic teaching. Matthew was generous in providing a talk to our seminarians at Saint John's Seminary about Magisterium AI, what it is, and how AI can be used well in a faith-based context. With

AI generating a number of pastoral questions and concerns, this talk was incredibly helpful for our seminarians, faculty, and staff.

The image Matthew offered to help our community understand both the capabilities of AI and the specific purpose of Magisterium AI was that



of a digital librarian. The type of AI with which most people might be familiar is the Large Language Model (LLM). Some versions of ChatGPT and other generative AI tools are a type of LLM, which means that they are designed to try to understand and generate human language. For instance, I ask a question, the AI then tries to understand what the question means, and then it tries to generate a logical response to the provided question. Magisterium AI, on the other hand, is not such a tool. Magisterium AI is not trying to come up with its own answer to a question, but instead is trying to

point the questioner to the right places from the two thousand years of the Church's history. Like a librarian, this faithful AI is designed to provide you with the correct sources for your particular query.

In its current database, it has all the official Church documents, the writings of numerous saints, and even obscure theological texts that are not widely available. Part of the ongoing goal of the Magisterium AI team is to continue to digitize the enormous amount of content that the Church has at her disposal. There are many people who have questions about what the Church teaches or why she teaches it. Our current search engines can only do so much in showing various blogs or articles that can come from anywhere. It can be a difficult task to sift through and know which sources can be helpful. With a digital librarian such as Magisterium AI, the entire program is built so that what you are receiving is exactly what the Church teaches, with citations and links to primary sources. With such a tool, Catholic research, whether it be theological, or simply asking questions about the faith, can be done with greater ease and fidelity to the Church.

Even with all the hopeful possibilities that Magisterium AI can offer, there are still some ethical concerns that can be had. Matthew was not shy in noting that other



areas of AI research and development still pose risks to humanity. Without good regulations and parameters, some AI tools can be used to generate harmful and low-quality content. There are many dangers with confusing AI chatbots with real human persons and allowing such interactions to distort human perceptions and withdraw from real human relationships. Some AI tools can replace or threaten to replace

human labor and artistic endeavors. These are not merely abstract concerns, but real problems that are happening today and will continue to require us to ask questions and call for proper moral evaluation.

As a moral theologian, I still have concerns and hesitations around the enterprise of AI as a whole. However, I am comforted by the presence of faithful Catholics who are looking to see how a tool, which of its

own nature is neither objectively good nor evil, can be used well. It is important to note for anything that the possible or real abuse of something should not invalidate its proper use. With Magisterium AI and other similar Catholic AI tools, I am hopeful, as Matthew Sanders suggests, that Catholic knowledge will be placed more fully in the hands of the faithful, helping us grow in our love of God.

SJS PODCAST

 YouTube  Podcasts  Spotify



 SCAN ME

Summer Conference Series

As part of our commitment to forming and supporting those in parish ministry, Saint John's Seminary will host two upcoming conferences—one for priests and one focused on Natural Family Planning for parish and healthcare leaders. **Dates are TBD.** Stay connected through our website and social media for full details and registration information.

www.sjs.edu/events

THE HEART OF THE PRIESTHOOD
Teaching, Sanctifying, Leading God's People
Priest only Conference | June 2026

NFP IN PARISH LIFE
Practical Tools for Ministry, Healthcare, and
Family Accompaniment
July 2026



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24th Annual SJS Summer Classic Golf Tournament

June 1st, 2026
Woodland Golf Club

PRAY²⁷ for SAINT JOHN'S SEMINARY

Each month on the 27th, Catholics across the region join in prayer for the mission of Saint John's Seminary. This day honors St. John the Evangelist, the Seminary's patron, and includes a special Mass for all Pray27 benefactors. United in faith, we pray for the continued success of the Seminary's vital work for the Church.



 Learn More

ROOTED IN PRAYER, FORMED FOR MINISTRY



“WITH JESUS—FROM HIDDEN LIFE TO PUBLIC MINISTRY.”

This was the theme guiding our seminarians on their week long silent retreat at the start of the Spring Semester.

At heart, a retreat is time alone with Jesus. In the Gospels, the Lord withdraws to pray to the Father, an intimacy that sustains His public ministry. In the same way, priestly ministry must be rooted first in communion with Christ.

Throughout the week, our seminary community was led by Father Nicolas Steeves, S.J., through selected portions of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, inviting seminarians into deeper prayer, greater self-knowledge, and freedom from hidden attachments that hinder generous service.

SAINT JOHN’S SEMINARY ALUMNA PHILOMÈNE PÉAN APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GOOD VOYAGE



Saint John’s Seminary is pleased to congratulate alumna **Philomène Péan** on her appointment as the new **Director of the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Voyage** in the Boston Seaport District.

A graduate of the **Master of Arts in Ministry degree program** at the **Theological Institute of Saint John’s Seminary**, Philomène brings to this role a deep commitment to pastoral leadership, spiritual accompaniment, and community-centered ministry—hallmarks of the Seminary’s mission of formation and service to the Church.

The Shrine community formally welcomed Philomène on Sunday, January 4, during a joyful celebration that included morning Masses celebrated by **Bishop Cristiano Barbosa**, marking the beginning of this new chapter of leadership and ministry at the Shrine.

PACKED WITH PURPOSE, INVITE BRINGS FRIENDS AND FATHERS TOGETHER

LIFE LESSONS FROM THE SJS HOOPS INVITE



Mr. Joseph Jasinski
Configuration III
Archdiocese of Boston

Sometimes Divine Providence packs a punch. Literally.

OK, so maybe God's orchestration of creation wasn't the immediate epiphany for Owen Hopkins or Bobby Schaeffer when Hopkins' paw accidentally POW!ed Schaeffer's nose as the two warmed up before Saturday's championship bout in the Saint John's Seminary Hoops Invitational, Vol. 4.

But looking back, it could provide pause for ponder.

How does a native of Van Horne, Iowa (Population: 774), "the best player I've ever played against," Schaeffer said of Hopkins, even wind up on a court in Boston with a Long Islander who described the blood-gushing bump he absorbed as only a former college lacrosse player could: "It was so funny!"

Several strips of gauze and nasal plugs later, Schaeffer's nose still wouldn't stop bleeding, which forced him in and out of the title clash between Saint Brigid and Gate of Heaven to reapply Vaseline to his schnoz. Meanwhile, Hopkins helped guide "Gatey" past its South Boston brethren 55-49 to secure its first SJS Hoops Invite title — the fourth different champion in as



Photo by: Cindy Russell Photo

many years of the event, but second straight from Southie.

Consider it part of the ultimate sports cliché (blood, sweat, and tears) that comes with competition. But the hustle and ultimate hoisting of hardware all point to the essence of the SJS Hoops Invite, which brought 11 teams together from the Dioceses of Boston, Worcester, and Providence (R.I.) in its fourth installment.

"Every person in that gym had a purpose," Boston seminarian and Invite head organizer Nick Colón said. "They came to win, they came to struggle, they came to compete, and they did that."

For an event focused on "fostering fatherhood on the hardwood," as its slogan proclaims, the 11-team tournament also illuminated "the power of friendship," said Schaeffer, who pointed to that becoming a quasi-tagline with teammates Stephen Karlberg and Colin Warner. The complementarity of fraternity and fatherhood can't

be ignored either, said Schaeffer, who, along with his wife, Lizzie, welcomed into the world their firstborn child, Robert, Jr., in August.

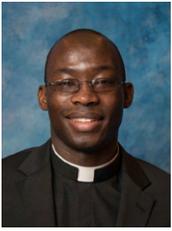
"Sports are all about communication with your teammates and the people who you're playing with, and you have a common goal in mind, and that's kind of like parenthood," he said. "I don't want to sound too cheesy or corny, but there's definitely commonality between them."

Which points back to the crux of Saturday's synergy on the court.

"Every man has a vocation to be a father in one way or another," Colón said. "So in order to do that well, we need to struggle, we need to sacrifice, we need to communicate; we need to do all these things, and we need outlets so that we can develop these skills. All of this takes shape on the court."

Read the complete article at:
www.sjs.edu/blog

A CHURCH ALIVE: SEEK 2026



Fr. Stanislaus Achu
Interim Vice Rector

Inspired by St. Pier Giorgio Frassati's call "To the Heights!", SEEK 26 truly led participants to deeper heights of faith, trust, reconciliation, spiritual surrender, and communion with God. Organized by FOCUS and held January 1–5 in Columbus, OH, Fort Worth, TX, and Denver, CO, the conference drew thousands of seekers from across the country. Thanks to a generous sponsor, St. John's Seminary sent 11 seminarians and three faculty members to the Columbus gathering, joining nearly 17,000 participants—mostly college students—in what was a profoundly grace-filled experience.

At the conclusion of the opening Mass, presided by Bishop Earl Fernandes of Columbus Diocese, Pope Leo spoke to all via a video message. He expressed his gratitude for all the thousands of young people in attendance while encouraging everyone to reflect on the reason for being at SEEK 26. Centering his message on the question, "What do you seek?" He emphasized that Jesus Christ is the answer, and that only through a personal encounter with Him can one find true peace, joy, and fulfillment. He urged all to allow themselves to be transformed by their encounter with Jesus and to share that joy with others, just as St. Andrew shared his encounter with Christ with St. Peter. He also encouraged all seekers not to fear God's call, but to remain open to a vocation to the priesthood, religious life, or married life. Pope Leo concluded his message with his apostolic blessing—an inspiring way to begin the New Year.

SEEK 26 was a great testimony to a great religious revival going on around the world, and most certainly in the United States. Who could ever imagine that in today's world, college students, over 26,000 of them across the three SEEK locations, would choose to spend the first five days of their year in retreat, spiritual conferences, Eucharistic adoration, and prayer. It was an incredible sight to behold, an awesome experience to be a part of. It was heavenly, to the heights! It brought about in me a reassurance that God is not done with us, He is not distant from us, He is still moving hearts, especially the hearts of young people, who we say are the future and leaders of (the Church) tomorrow. Witnessing these young people who unapologetically bear witness to their Catholic faith, not ashamed to throw their hands up in the air in prayer, kneel for a very long time in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, go to the sacrament of reconciliation, receive the Holy Eucharist at every Mass offered during the conference, you walk out of that conference convinced that the Church is very much alive, that "God is real, that heaven is real, that sainthood is attainable," according to a friend.

It was inspiring to have attended SEEK 26, especially with the seminarians. Most of them shared with us that it was spiritually fulfilling and nourishing. They were able to experience the "seminarian track," packed with great talks and witnesses that spoke to them. SEEK

26 was also encouraging in the reassurance of their vocations.

Knowing that the harvest in God's vineyard is plentiful, that such multitude of young people yearn for God, there is a renewed commitment and dedication to be docile to the workings of God in their hearts, to continue to intentionally apply themselves to seminary formation and their configuration to Jesus Christ, the High Priest. There is a reminder for them that the Church and these God-seeking young people need a good and holy priest to minister to them and lead them to the heights. SEEK 26 was an opportunity for encounter with God and a deepening of the interior life of holiness, and as Pope Leo said in his speech at the Jubilee of Seminarians in June of 2025, the seminarian is to "never settle for less, never be satisfied, not be passive recipient, but to be passionate about the priestly life, living in the present and looking to the future with a prophetic heart."

This is what we call for in seminary formation: inviting the men in formation to seek for more while allowing God to mold their hearts and make them like His own. SEEK 26 in many ways proved this.



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Saint John's Seminary seminarians at the 2026 March for Life