



SPRING 2025

**CELEBRATING
140 YEARS:
LOOKING
TOWARD THE
FUTURE**

PG.3

**SOUTHIE SWEEP
SPEAKS TO
HOOPS, FAITH'S
BONDING
FORCE**

PG.5

**SAINT JOHN'S
REPRESENTED
AT ANNUAL
SEEK
CONFERENCE**

PG.7

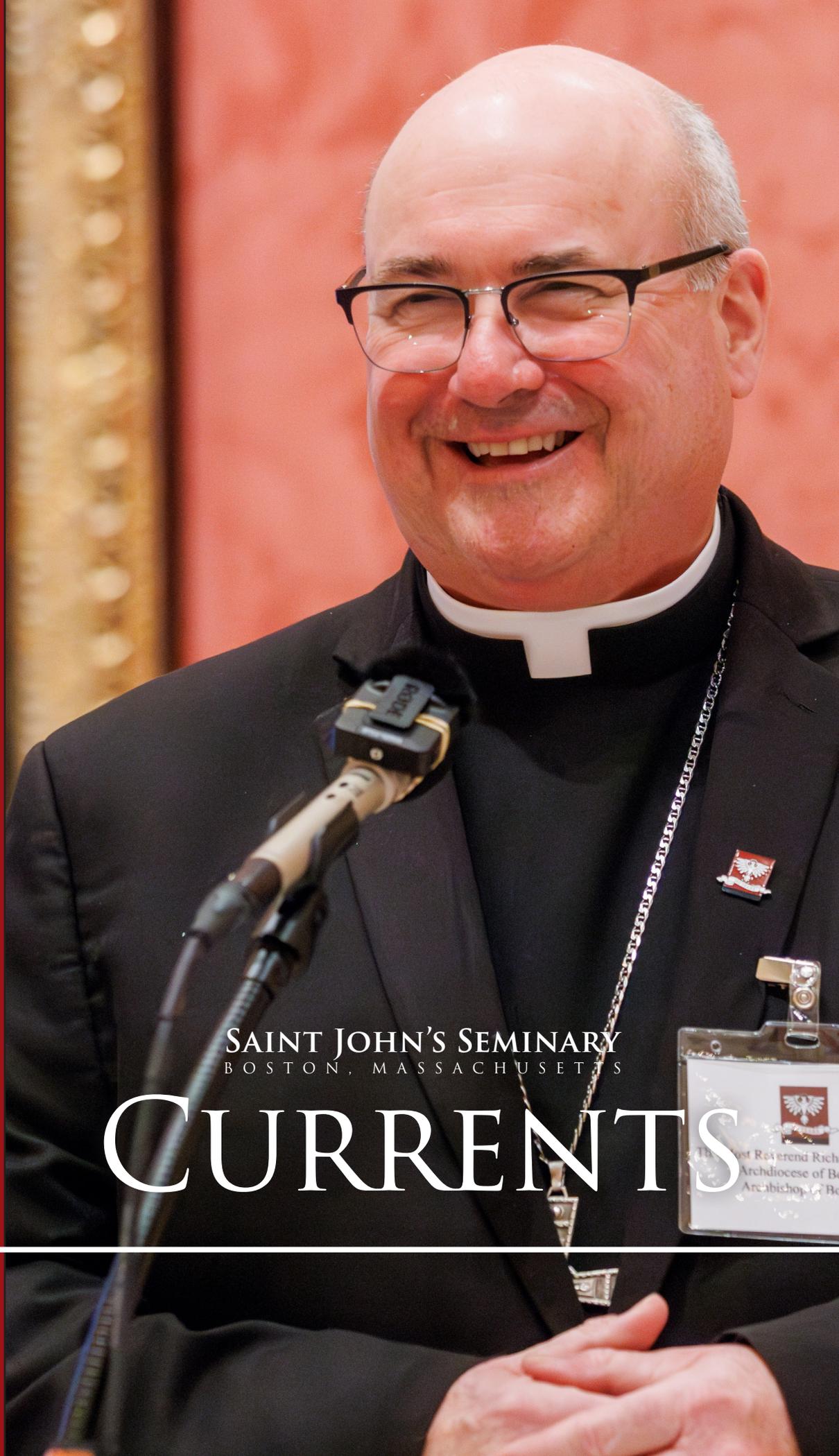
**A SHEPHERD'S
LEGACY:
REMEMBERING
POPE FRANCIS
THROUGH THE
EYES OF SAINT
JOHN'S SEMINARY**

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127 Lake Street,
Brighton, MA 02135

www.sjs.edu

617.254.2610



SAINT JOHN'S SEMINARY
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

CURRENTS



DID YOU KNOW?

SEMINARIAN POPULATION

Total Seminarians: **69**

Resident Seminarians: **40**

Religious Order Seminarians: **14**

Redemptoris Mater Seminarians: **15**

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.

THE THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

22 Lay students enrolled

3 Dioceses represented

Programs in: Theology, Ministry, Evangelization

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



Pg. 3

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LETTER FROM THE **RECTOR**

Dear Friends of Saint John's Seminary,

Spring greetings to you all!

As I write to you, the sun is shining more strongly in these early days of spring; and, all of us here at Saint John's are fully engaged in this time of reflection and renewal following a most joyful celebration of Easter.

This academic year has been marked by active engagement and meaningful growth as we remain dedicated to our mission of forming future priests and lay ministers for the Church. In this spring issue of CURRENTS, we're pleased to share with you some highlights from the Seminary.

Last November, we celebrated our 140th Anniversary Gala at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, gathering over 200 friends and supporters, including Archbishop Richard Henning and Cardinal Seán O'Malley. Their inspiring remarks highlighted Saint John's importance to the Church's vitality in New England and beyond. The event was a great success, strengthening relationships and renewing our mission.

In January, we held our third annual Saint John's Seminary Basketball Invitational, a growing tradition that fosters fellowship among our seminarians and the broader community, essential for holistic priestly formation. That same month, Saint John's was proudly represented at the SEEK conference in Salt Lake City, UT and in Washington, DC. And in January, our faculty and seminarians traveled to Washington, DC for the annual March for Life.

Our PRAY²⁷ initiative also continues to encourage individuals and parishes across New England to dedicate prayer for the Seminary on the 27th of each month. More details can be found at www.sjs.edu/27, reinforcing our commitment to prayer and our spiritual foundation.

Lastly, I cordially invite you to our 23rd Annual Summer Classic Golf Tournament on June 16, 2025, at Ipswich Country Club, followed by a festive dinner to celebrate the conclusion of our 140th anniversary year. It promises to be a wonderful day of fellowship and celebration. More information about the tournament can be found on our website.

As we journey through these last weeks of this memorable academic year, we are grateful for your prayers and support. Your partnership is vital as we build on our legacy and aim for a promising future. Please know that we are praying for you, your families, and your intentions.

With my deep gratitude and prayers,



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



**HAPPY
EASTER**

Scan for an
Easter Message
from Msgr. Salocks

CELEBRATING 140 YEARS: LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE



ARCHBISHOP HENNING SPOKE ABOUT HIS MANY CONVERSATIONS WITH SAINT JOHN'S ALUMNI PRIESTS WHO AFFIRMED THAT THEIR FORMATION AT THE SEMINARY HAD PREPARED THEM WELL FOR MINISTRY.

On November 14, 2024, Saint John's Seminary welcomed over 200 members of our community to a landmark celebration of our 140th anniversary at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. The evening was a meaningful tribute to our faith, a time of fellowship, and an inspiring look toward the future.

While the evening honored the Seminary's enduring legacy, its true focus was the future. In his keynote address, Archbishop Richard Henning spoke clearly and convincingly about the critical importance of formation in the life of the Church today. He reminded us that Saint John's Seminary is not simply a historical institution—

it is an active, dynamic force, forming leaders who are ready to meet the pastoral, theological, and cultural challenges of our time. His presence affirmed the Archdiocese of Boston's commitment to the Seminary's mission and its central role in the future of the Church in New England and beyond.



As Vice President for Mission Advancement, I see this future unfolding every day: in the seminarians who greet our guests with warmth and grace, in our alumni stepping into parish leadership with clarity and conviction, and in the increasing engagement of donors who believe in the transformative work of formation. Our efforts to raise awareness of the Seminary’s mission—through events,

communications, partnerships, and outreach—are not just about sustaining operations; they are about cultivating a culture that values the formation of faithful, capable, and compassionate Church leaders.

Our 140th Anniversary Gala was a milestone, but it was also a launchpad. The coming years will demand more: more leadership, more vision, and more faith in the

mission entrusted to us. With the support of Archbishop Henning and the broader community, we are committed to deepening our efforts, expanding our reach, and preparing the next generation of priests and lay leaders to serve a Church in need.

I am deeply grateful to everyone who helped make the Gala possible, including our sponsors, especially Folan Waterproofing & Construction, whose support was not only financial but also deeply mission-driven. Thank you for your prayers, your generosity, and your belief in our work.

Together, we look to the future—in hope, in faith, and in joyful confidence in the power of Christ to renew His Church through the work we do at Saint John’s Seminary.



Mr. Tomasz Kierul
Vice President for
Mission Advancement

SOUTHIE SWEEP SPEAKS TO HOOPS, FAITH'S BONDING FORCE

Four Southie bros hobble out of a gym...

Nope, that's not the start of a joke. It's the end of something special.

It was the scene of sore success, as Paul Ramsey, Vinny Ferrucci, Matthew Chignoli, and Ryan McCarthy slowly shuffled off the court and toward the third-floor doors inside Boston College's Margot Connell Recreation Center on Saturday evening, having helped South Boston's Saint Brigid (Warner and McCarthy) and Gate of Heaven (Ramsey and Chignoli) parishes secure gold and silver, respectively, at the third annual Saint John's Seminary Basketball Invitational.

Truth be told, these were "guys I never knew" before joining Southie's League Morning Star, said McCarthy, who last year joined the pre-dawn hoops league that now boasts 16 teams and a player pool of about 150 hoopers. "Now these guys are my friends. It's incredible."



Incredible in the very real sense that, "It's hard to make friends the older you get," joked McCarthy, a 2020 Bentley College grad (and Falcon wide receiver) who took in Saturday's eight-hour ordeal alongside 17 buddies from Gatey and Saint Brigid, which earned a 68-64 overtime victory in the all-Southie final. And that in itself was incredible, given Saint Brigid trailed by significant margins in all five of its games,



including a double-digit deficit in the semifinals against Hingham Catholic, which inched past Saint Thomas the Apostle (Millis, MA) in the third-place contest.

But thanks to Kyle Olander's loose-ball dives, Colin Warner's timely 3s, and stretches McCarthy could describe only as "Tuttle Time," when teammate Alex Tuttle seemed to take over games, and Saint Brigid became the SJS Hoops Invite's third different

champion in as many years.

"I've always been looking to play basketball, and that's what I found," McCarthy said, "but I found so much more."

Throughout Saturday, the sentiment was shared. "More" was found in Brother Anthony Marie's Immaculate Heart of Mary (Still River, MA) squad, which brought dozens of rowdy fans with homemade signs to cheer on their

Eagles and scoring sensation Alex McCormick who, along with his teammates, sported award-winning ("Best Uniforms") titan yellow T-shirts specially designed by Sheila Rochman, the wife of IHM veteran Chris Rochman.

"More" was also found in the nick of time by Trivium, who claimed two last-second wins on clutch free throws by Ed Pastrone (a 1,000-point scorer while at Trivium) in the group-stage round.

"More" was certainly found



in Hingham Catholic's Conor Lowther's vertical, which sent the Army private skyward to block a last-second 3 attempt by Saint Thomas long-range specialist Sean Parrish and secure the St. Paul/Resurrection collaborative's first Invite trophy in the third-place game.

And "more" came for Eoin Walsh, too. After claiming the 3-point contest crown in his team's first Invite appearance, the Catholic Weymouth captain's favorite moment of the day arrived at the very end, as both championship squads and all remaining attendees gathered on the court to sing the "Alma Redemptoris Mater" and receive a final priestly blessing from Saint John's vice rector Father Tom Macdonald.

"I've been playing basketball for a long time," Walsh said, "but I've never had games that have ended in prayer. That was very special."

It spoke to something deeper, too.

"I don't think something like this happened anywhere else on earth," Walsh said with a chuckle about Saturday's proceedings, which

started with Holy Mass in the Saint John's Seminary Chapel, continued with a total of 21 hard-fought hardwood contests, and culminated with the Christmas season Marian hymn and closing blessing.

"Men, we thrive on teams, whether that's in the parish, at work, or in sports; we want to have a purpose. So to pair something like basketball, that's just for fun, with your church ... that's a special, moving way to represent your community, even on a small scale."

As they say, though, in harmony, small things grow — an adage seen



manifest throughout the day: The simple scenes of Saint John's coach Tom Biggins's sons Tommy (13 years old), Ben (11), and Hopper (9) reverently praying in the chapel's front-row pew before the Mass, then working the scorer's tables (Tommy) and card tricks for referees (Ben); Saint Brendan's Jason Potrzeba (who got his first ever Invite bucket earlier in the day) posted up in his customary perch on the top row to watch the championship with teammates Greg Scimeca, Jayden Amaral, and Jason's son, Brandon who'd already designed the East Providence team's jerseys for next year's Invite;

two expectant fathers in Saint Mary's of the Assumption captain Charlie Boles and Weymouth's Walsh being cheered on by their wives (and 2045 A.D. Invite captains-to-be); and a child letting one of Walsh's teammates know postgame, "You were so good out there!"

Then there were the limping lads of South Boston.

McCarthy's calf cramped so badly in the title game that he was restricted to cheering from the sideline by the end of the championship's OT period. Nevertheless, he and seven or eight teammates still mustered the energy for a celebratory beverage upon returning to their Southie stomping grounds. And Sunday, teammate Kjellan Gallegos even brought the gold trophy to the 6 o'clock evening Mass at Saint Brigid's to show the spoils to Father Peter Schirripa, who suited up in the squad's group stage and semifinal bouts before jetting back to Gate of Heaven to celebrate Saturday evening's Vigil Mass.

Then, some Sabbath sedentariness.

"I can barely walk," McCarthy said with a laugh midday Sunday. "But that was awesome."



Mr. Joseph Jasinski
Second Theology
Archdiocese of Boston

SAINT JOHN'S REPRESENTED AT ANNUAL SEEK CONFERENCE

At the beginning of this year, several of our seminarians had the wonderful opportunity to attend SEEK, a conference hosted by FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students). In the early years of FOCUS, it became clear that one thing that would help college students across the country was to see that they were not alone in their faith. So, the opportunity was created to bring students together to join in fellowship and ask the big questions in life and to find those answers in Jesus Christ, who says, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7).

SEEK has grown tremendously, bringing in students from every part of the country and beyond. In the early days of FOCUS, the conferences attracted less than



a hundred attendees but now it's drawing over 20,000 college students and young adults. It has grown so much that they now host the conference in multiple locations. There are various session tracks offered, not just for college students, but for anyone interested in growing in discipleship. One of

the tracks is designed specifically for seminarians to help them grow in their formation and their vocation. There are talks catered to them and their unique place in the world and in the Church. Saint John's Seminary is proud to have many of our seminarians attend SEEK over the years. The seminarians have been renewed by seeing the faith of so many young people and having the opportunity themselves to speak to the Lord in a personal way.



Rev. Denis Nakkeeran
Faculty
Saint John's Seminary

This year I went to my seventh SEEK conference. Every year my spiritual life has been fed in wonderfully new ways, and I have come back with new things to think about and put into practice. Since the conference is always structured around the Kerygma (the essential message of the Gospel), the main topics are basically the same each year. Yet something new strikes me each time, because the Gospel is always "Good News." The freshness, the joy, and the deep mystery of Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection can never be exhausted. We can never be reminded too often of the Lord's Saving Mysteries.

Although this year I attended the smaller SEEK location in Washington, DC, there were over 3,000 participants (including college students, parishioners, priests, seminarians, and religious). I am always struck by the tangible joy and excitement of so many Catholic youth gathered in one place for formation in the Faith and worship of the Lord in Mass. This experience of community can do so much to ground college students firmly in Faith when they may be wavering on the edge of leaving the Church. I was strengthened in this way by FOCUS in college, and I have also seen the impact on many others..

As a seminarian, SEEK has been a great opportunity to be a witness to young men who are discerning the priesthood. I have been able to accompany several young discerners from my diocese, answer their questions, tell my story, and go with them to special discernment presentations during the conference. Several of these men are now getting ready to apply to the seminary.

For me, SEEK is evidence that the Lord has not abandoned His people; there is hope for the future of the Church.



Mr. Nicholas Hershbine
First Theology
Diocese of Portland, ME

A common ice breaker with new people at SEEK is to ask, “Is this your first conference?” People are always surprised when I reply that I’ve been fortunate to attend a FOCUS conference every year since my freshman year at the University of Rhode Island. In fact, this year, I even lost track and had to count to verify that I was indeed attending my eighth conference.

My travels have brought me to such far-away places as Phoenix, AZ in 2020, to exotic locales as my own living room, when SEEK was held remotely due to COVID. In all seriousness, I’m always struck by the Providence of the Lord in giving me something to think about after leaving the conference. All eight years have had different graces but the same key reminder—that Christ is Lord and must be proclaimed as such to a forgetful world.

This year’s trip to Salt Lake City was marked especially by a seminarian-only talk given by Fr. Mike Schmitz. It was a privilege to hear Fr. Mike talk to us about the sacrificial nature of our lives. He reminded us that the greatest identity we should own is that of Christ the Priest, willing to lay down our lives in matters great and small, for the good of souls.

It was a great reminder of the goal of our formation here at Saint John’s, a greater Christlikeness in all we do.



Mr. Nicholas Jones
Second Theology
Diocese of Providence



Photo: SEEK 2024 in Saint Louis

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PRAY²⁷ for SAINT JOHN'S SEMINARY

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www.sjs.edu/27



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A CATHOLIC SPIRITUAL ROADMAP – DESTINATION: GOD

We spend countless hours seeking to understand and know God, desiring a relationship with Him. But do we consider why we want that relationship or what it may yield? Are we focused on the ultimate goal—eternal life with God the Father in Heaven?

We often forget to pray about how to build, deepen, and share our relationship with God—especially through evangelization. Let's explore these questions through the wisdom of spiritual masters and theologians, and offer a “roadmap” for the journey to God.

Ask God to be with you, to stay near you and to inspire you.

Initiate a conversation with God, beginning with gratitude for your life, for all that has been given to you, and for the beauty of creation. Pray for a constant change of heart, always in the direction of imitating Jesus Christ. Ask that you may recognize opportunities to bring Jesus to others and to be Jesus for others. Ask for the grace to seize those opportunities and for the courage to seek help when they come with challenges.

Remember to prioritize God over everything else. We are often distracted by other duties, obligations, and people that shift our focus from God to other things. Pray your way through these distractions – large or small. Your destination is eternal life in heaven with God, so seek

contentment and the peace of mind that ensues from being kind and charitable towards others, and by encouraging spiritual friendships where you surround yourself with others who share in your commitment, lead a comparable life, have similar morals, and seek the same happiness as you.

Remember, life will not always be smooth; there will be bumps and hazards along the way. As hard as you try, there will be times when you are separated from the main road and need to focus on making your way back. In life there will be temptations that will lead to sin, which like bumps in the road, may separate you from the main road – or from God. God has given us a remedy, however. Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we have the chance to examine what we did to veer off the main road, why we may have done it, and to ask for forgiveness and the strength to recognize it and maintain direction if it happens again.

In your times of prayer or conversation with God, ask for a glimpse of heaven. Gaze lovingly at the beauty and joy that awaits us. Ask, as well, for a glimpse of hell. Stare at the despair and anxiety that results from the bad choice. Fix these images in your mind and refer to them time and again as you make life choices – both big and small ones. The choices you make today are

indicative of the choice you are making for eternity. Make good choices!

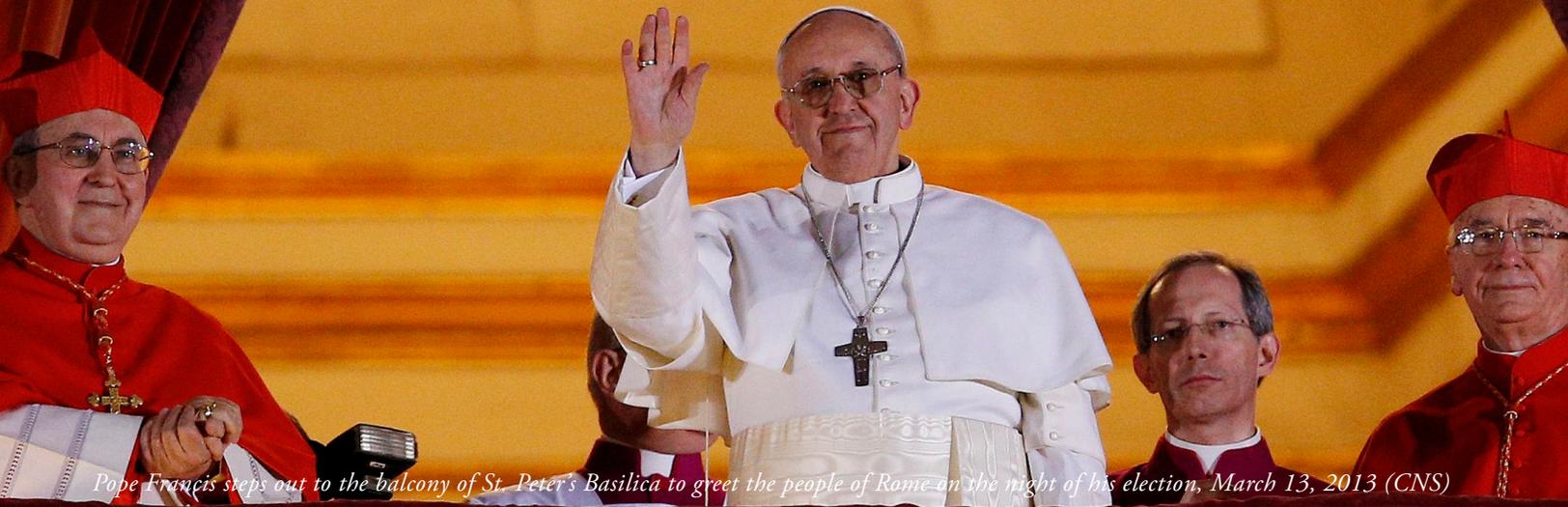
Ponder the beauty of God's creation and give thanks to God for all He has given you. Talk with Him about your blessings, areas where you need His help, and areas where He may need your help. Try to do this at times when you are not being pulled in many directions and can truly focus on sharing what is in your heart. When you are blessed with quiet time, always use it wisely!

As you journey through life, watch out for hitchhikers! Be careful as to who you stop and pick up along the road. Select people like yourself, people who believe like you, act like you, and treat others as you do. You may be helping them by offering a ride, but these are the people who will also help you along the rest of life's journey. Always watch for a man carrying a sign that reads: “I AM heading to the same place as you!” If you see Him, pull over and ask Him to accompany you on the rest of your journey. You will then arrive safely at your destination!



Anthony Caruso,
2024 Graduate,
The Theological
Institute of
Saint John's Seminary

A SHEPHERD'S LEGACY: REMEMBERING POPE FRANCIS THROUGH THE EYES OF SAINT JOHN'S SEMINARY



Pope Francis steps out to the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica to greet the people of Rome on the night of his election, March 13, 2013 (CNS)

The passing of Pope Francis (1936–2025) marks the end of a historic and deeply pastoral pontificate — one defined by humility, mercy, and a relentless call to bring Christ to the margins of society.

Elected on March 13, 2013, as the first Jesuit pope, the first pope from the Americas, and the first to take the name Francis, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio quickly made clear that his papacy would be centered on compassion, simplicity, and service. His vision for the Church was rooted in the Gospel and guided by his profound love for the poor, the suffering, and the forgotten. His papacy, which spanned over 12 years, bore witness to a shepherd's heart — one who, in his own words, called priests and bishops to “smell like the sheep.”

For the Saint John's Seminary community, Pope Francis' life and

witness have left an indelible mark. Those among our seminarians, faculty, and staff who had the blessing of meeting Pope Francis in-person experienced his warmth, wisdom, and Christ-like love. He touched them deeply, inspiring their vocations and strengthening their resolve to serve the Church with humility and joy.

Yet, even amid our grief, we are filled with great hope — hope in the mercy of God for the repose of Pope Francis' soul, and hope that the Holy Spirit will guide the College of Cardinals in electing a new pope. In this pivotal moment for the Church — when strong, authentic, and joyful Catholic leadership is needed more than ever — we trust in God's providence to raise up a shepherd who will lead with faith, courage, and compassion.

Among those who have shared their reflections is Msgr. Stephen

E. Salocks '80, Rector of Saint John's Seminary, who recalls with vivid clarity the rainy evening of Pope Francis' election:

“It was not a nice evening in the square; it had been raining all day... But when Pope Francis came out, incredibly, it stopped raining. He greeted us and asked us to pray with him, and from the front of Saint Peter's Basilica all the way down to the Tiber River, the entire crowd fell silent in prayer. It was a moment of grace — a glimpse of the unity and holiness that Pope Francis would continue to embody.”

Msgr. Salocks also reflected on the Pope's pastoral spirit, especially at his first Chrism Mass, where he encouraged priests to “smell like the sheep” — a phrase that would go on to define much of Francis' ministry.

Fr. Joseph Briody, faculty member, highlighted the spiritual clarity Pope Francis brought to the priesthood and the mission of the Church:

“He reminded us that the Christian life comprises two key elements: adoration and service. The priest is a contemplative in action. Pope Francis often pointed out that priests are not social workers, but shepherds after the heart of Christ.”

For Fr. Michael MacInnis, a faculty member and Coordinator of the Propaedeutic Formation Program, the Pope’s legacy is most powerfully felt in how he has shaped the Church’s approach to mercy and priestly formation:

“For me, the heart of Pope Francis’ pontificate is the tangible demonstration of God’s mercy. Through his actions of compassion, his simple way of living, and his teachings, the Holy Father has shown that God’s mercy is available to everyone... His example has inspired me to become a better priest and a more compassionate human being. It has also deeply influenced my work in priestly formation.”

Fr. MacInnis noted how the Seminary’s formation program has embraced the Pope’s model by placing seminarians in ministries that emphasize compassionate accompaniment with the poor, homeless, elderly, and marginalized

— echoing the Holy Father’s call to build a “poor Church for the poor.”

Ellen T. Oesterle, M.A.M. ’09 offered a moving personal account of witnessing Pope Francis during his 2015 visit to Washington, D.C.:

“The most remarkable reality was the deep silence that could be heard as Pope Francis spoke. The revival was mysterious — like a yearning for the peace the world cannot give. For a time, Pope Francis reminded all present that heaven’s reach begins with the ‘apostolate of the ear’ — caring for those encountered.”

From papal documents like *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Laudato Si’* to his recent encyclicals *Desiderio desideravi* (2022) and *Dilexit nos* (2024), Pope Francis offered the Church a deep well of spiritual, liturgical, and pastoral insight. He urged Catholics to encounter

Christ in the Eucharist and in the faces of the poor. He challenged the faithful not to cling to comfort but to reach out, again and again, in mercy.

His legacy at Saint John’s Seminary will continue in the formation of priests who lead with hearts formed by compassion, courage, and a deep love for Christ and His Church.

“Through Pope Francis’ leadership, I pray that all of us have come to ‘smell more like our sheep’ and have grown in our capacity to love.”

— Rev. Michael MacInnis

May Pope Francis rest in peace, and may the Holy Spirit guide the Church as we await the next successor of Saint Peter.

Stay tuned to the SJS Podcast for more stories about how Pope Francis has inspired our seminary community.



Saint John’s Seminary seminarians with Pope Francis during their 2024 visit to Rome.

SAINT JOHN'S SEMINARIANS AND PRIESTS MARCH FOR LIFE

“The March for Life campaign is one of the greatest contributions the American Church has made to the mission of the Universal Church in her witness to life,” said a wise former faculty member here at Saint John’s. The rally/march is a great witness to the gospel of life. A witness that begins with a National Prayer Vigil for Life, which includes the holy sacrifice of the Mass on the eve of the march, a 12-hour overnight Eucharistic adoration, the holy Mass at different locations on the day of the march, wherein different delegations offer prayers for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life, as well as reparation for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through various heinous acts especially abortion of unborn babies at any stage. The witness culminates with various rallies featuring speakers of several backgrounds, and the march to the steps of the Supreme Court.

Saint John’s Seminary has for a long time participated in the March for Life in Washington, D.C., on the Thursday and Friday closest to the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision, *Roe vs. Wade* of January 22, 1973. Out of over one hundred seminaries in America, Saint John’s has been regularly invited to lead a holy hour during the overnight Eucharistic adoration, and this year, we led the last hour and concluded it. The experience is

so incredible, and the witness is very powerful as we are privileged to join in this massive campaign for the right to life. As a house of formation for priests, we ought to lend our voice to a cause that bears witness to life, in praying for the preservation and the right to the gift of life and to make reparation for violations to the dignity of the human person in any form.

The March profoundly impacts thousands—from teens and parents to priests and future priests—many of whom have been touched by abortion in some way. These stories from our seminarians reflect that witness. We will continue to pray, give thanks, and stand for the gift of human life.



Rev. Stanislaus Achu,
Dean of Men
Saint John’s Seminary

Upon entering Saint John’s Seminary, I found that few events were as highly anticipated by the community as the March for Life. Regardless of their stage in formation, all seminarians were to wear the Roman collar until returning to Boston. For most of the Propaedeutic class, this was our first time representing the Church in this way and more specifically the Archdiocese of Boston. The weekend offered opportunities to visit and worship at St. Matthew’s

Cathedral, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the Dominican House of Studies, and the Saint John Paul II National Shrine. The morning of the March began with a holy hour of Eucharistic adoration at the JPPII Shrine and was followed by Mass with Archbishop Henning at the Dominican House of Studies. Before heading over to the National Mall for the start of the March for Life, we had a chance to walk through the JPPII exhibit and to pray before the blood relic that is venerated there.

People from all over the country gathered in Washington, D.C. representing numerous archdioceses and seminaries to inspire positive change on behalf of the pro-life movement. It was heart-warming to see so many young people who made the necessary arrangements to be there. People prayed proudly in the spirit of thanksgiving for all the positive changes anticipated with the new administration. It felt more like a celebration of success rather than a demonstration.

We believe as Catholics that life begins at conception and ends at natural death. There is no negotiating this fundamental truth and we give glory to God by protecting the dignity of human life. It was a privilege to be in D.C. to take part in the March for Life. I’m looking forward to going again next year and hope to become

more involved with the Pro-Life Club here at Saint John's Seminary.



Mr. John Manning
Propaedeutic Program
Archdiocese of Boston

Marchers often get labeled as “pro-life activists”, especially by opponents. I always thought this was strange, but I never gave it much thought. What exactly are we “activating” if God set life in

Among all things that justify anger, is not such an assault on the innocent the most prominent? Ought we not to be the angriest among them all?

The temple cleansing provided me with a helpful personal reflection in answering these questions. The table flipping is no doubt the most obvious example of Christ's anger known to us all. In this example as all the others in the gospels, Christ does not become distracted by the mere fact of injustice. He sees places where love could be. Christ



motion “from the beginning”? It seems that “abortion protestor” would be a more appropriate label...yet it seems even most pro-abortionists will not go as far as to label us protestors of murder. Regardless of whether we could be rightly called either, it has become obvious to me that the March cannot be lumped in with all the other things drawing angry activists and protesters into the streets these days. But why is this? Why do marchers not share the same anger that many other protestors and activists commonly do? God gave us anger for a reason.

didn't flip over tables to correct a factual error. He flipped tables to protect the temple, the womb of the Father's Love. And this was purely so that the money changers would start seeking the purpose of that “womb” again – the place where God incarnates His mercy.

Any time God invites us to stand up to an evil, He also invites us to an examination of conscience. The “judgers” at the march are the outliers. Christians do not judge. As Christians, we know that a just mission always begins with a sub-mission to the Father's will. The March is a place where

no one seeks to wound anyone. No windows were smashed. No buildings were burned. That's because the people who march know themselves wounded. But they also know themselves healed.

When the priests and scribes saw Jesus healing the blind, it was the children in the temple through which they were alerted to the truth of their own blindness. While the children shouted “hosanna” in the presence of Christ in the temple, the womb of our future mother, the Church, the priests became angry. The anger of Christ sought to hell. The anger of the priests sought to reject that healing.

The marchers know well that even were abortion to become unthinkable, the abortionist is a spiritual enemy that will live on. He seeks to abort the child within us, luring us on to lives of ambition, independence, and finally individualism. The enemy wants us to believe we are the arbiters of our salvation. But by the simplicity and joy of our praise, we silence him. And we speak the truth of a God who longs to restore our childlike innocence with the healing balm of His mercy.

The fact that the March for Life lives on is quite intuitive. It is a movement that is only fully realized in eternal life.



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