



DIOCESE OF  
**FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND**  
VOCATION OFFICE

Dear Friends,

As I write this letter on the last day of April, 2020, I do so while we are all in the midst of quarantine during the COVID-19 global pandemic. While many of you might not be used to working from home, as a parish pastor I make a career out of it, working from a rectory. However, as you might imagine, even the life of a “stay at home dad” parish priest has dramatically changed.

For one, there are more people living in my rectory. Several weeks ago, all our seminarians were forced to return home to the diocese and complete their studies and formation remotely. Two seminarians have been living with me these past few weeks: Brian Isenbarger, a 2nd year theologian who attends Mount Saint Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and Mark Hellinger, another 2nd year theologian who attends the Pontifical North American College in Rome. Being in Rome, Mark saw the outbreak of this pandemic in it’s earliest days. Upon returning to the United States, Mark and our other seminarians and priest studying in Rome had to enter a two-week quarantine in isolation while we waited to see if they showed any symptoms of the virus. I’m happy to report all our men are healthy.

For another, as you know from your own experience, parish life has dramatically changed. Public Masses have been suspended. However, as the familiar funeral hymn suggests, “Life has changed, not ended.” Our seminarians have done some amazing things to embolden the life of our parish while quarantined here at St. John the Baptist. They created a website, [RebuildMyDomesticChurch.com](http://RebuildMyDomesticChurch.com) to help families worship from home, a podcast called “The Inner Room” which teaches people how to pray, and we held a Eucharistic Procession on Easter Sunday where 70 carloads of our parishioners followed our Lord Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament over a two-mile stretch through our parish neighborhood. It was the most beautiful thing I’ve seen in my ten years of priesthood. Our seminarians responded to the challenge of global pandemic in heroic and humble fashion.

One last thing to share with you: just yesterday, as of this writing, Bishop Rhoades met with the seven seminarians who will be ordained to the priesthood and diaconate this spring to discuss plans for their ordinations. Bishop, in his graciousness, asked the men what they would prefer: to be ordained at a later

26

**SEMINARIANS  
IN FORMATION  
2019-2020**

7

**TO BE ORDAINED  
ON JUNE 6, 2020  
1 PRIEST  
6 TRANSITIONAL DEACONS**

\$48K

**ANNUAL DIOCESAN  
COST TO EDUCATE  
ONE SEMINARIAN.**

\$1.5  
MILLION

**TOTAL ANNUAL COST  
FOR SEMINARIAN  
EDUCATION**

date when, hopefully, we would be out of quarantine and more of their family and friends could attend, or would they prefer to be ordained sooner. I knew how these men would answer. Each of them, to a man, said they preferred to be ordained sooner even if it meant that very few of their family and friends could attend the ordination in order that they may be of service to the people of God in our diocese.

I am so proud of our seminarians. We have excellent men in formation for the priesthood in our diocese. But the present and future demands placed upon our world will not be met by their good will alone. We need your help.

Our world will be dramatically changed for a very long time by this pandemic. No area of life will be more critical to our health and recovery than the spiritual life, and we need more priests for this work. I'm happy to report that a number of new applicants are responding to this great need and our total number of seminarians will increase in the coming year. They are ready to give their lives in service to the church in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

And so, I humbly ask for your generous assistance in preparing these men to be your priests. To be perfectly honest, I'd be lying if I said I wasn't a little concerned about the success of the Pentecost Collection this year given the restrictions the pandemic has placed upon all of us. But I have hope. I have hope in you, and above all, I have hope in God's providence. And I thank you for your great hope for the future of the priesthood in the Diocese of Fort Wayne - South Bend.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,



Fr. Andrew Budzinski  
Vocations Director

# BE THE YES BEHIND THEIR YES

---

## FOR ONLINE GIVING VIA CREDIT CARD

| Visit [diocesefwsb.org/pentecost-collection](https://diocesefwsb.org/pentecost-collection) to make a secure, online donation

## FOR GIFTS BY CHECK

| Please make checks out to Diocese Fort Wayne South Bend and use enclosed envelope to send to  
Attn: Elizabeth Jones  
Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend  
P.O. Box 390  
Fort Wayne, IN 46801

## FOR STOCK GIFTS

| Contact Elizabeth Jones at [ejones@diocesefwsb.org](mailto:ejones@diocesefwsb.org) or 260-888-1224