



INSTITUTE *for*
PRIESTLY FORMATION

Fall 2025

Hearts on Fire

Magazine



Fr. Rafferty - Interim Executive Director

As Fr. Brian Welter's assignment with us comes to an end, Fr. Jim Rafferty steps up to lead IPF. See more inside on pgs. 3 and 5.



INSTITUTE *for* PRIESTLY FORMATION

A Public Association of the Faithful
in the Archdiocese of Omaha

11626 Nicholas Street
Omaha, NE 68154
402-546-6384
www.priestlyformation.org

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Cover Photo:

Fr. Richard Gabuzda, Fr. Jim Rafferty, and Fr. Brian Welter pose for a quick photo in the IPF Chapel before Fr. Brian's assignment with IPF comes to an end.

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Our Mission

In collaboration with Catholic seminaries and dioceses, we form seminarians, priests, and bishops in holiness and accompany them in their ongoing spiritual growth, so they can more effectively lead others to Christ.

Our Vision

We envision a joyful and powerful renewal of holiness across the U.S. Catholic Church as more diocesan seminarians, priests, and bishops seek and commit to a personal, deep, and sustained spiritual communion with the Trinity.

Our Objectives

1. Live out our beliefs and convictions in everything we do with humility and magnanimity, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, knowing we are nothing without God.
2. Stay focused on why we exist: to serve the spiritual formation needs of diocesan seminarians, priests, bishops, and those involved in priestly formation.
3. Ensure the ongoing excellence of our programs, retreats, publications, and activities by proactively seeking input and information from others.
4. Sustain and grow funding to ensure that IPF continues its mission for generations to come.

From the IPF Executive Director:

Dear Friends,

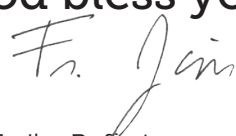
At the end of May, Fr. Brian Welter concluded his five-year term of release from the Archdiocese of Chicago to serve as the Executive Director for the Institute for Priestly Formation. Fr. Welter is now a pastor in a parish outside Chicago. We are all incredibly grateful for Fr. Welter's leadership, discernment, and prayer over these past five years. In addition, we have benefited enormously from his teaching and his preaching. He has a gift for expressing the faith and opening the Scriptures to invite others to encounter Jesus Christ in the concrete circumstances of their own lives. Most importantly, he is evidently a man who lives his own priesthood in a personal and felt friendship with the Lord, so that the Lord may bless others through him.

This summer I began serving as the Interim Executive Director of IPF. I continue to take part in IPF programs and retreats by offering presentations and sharing spiritual direction, while engaging more directly now in the administrative operation of IPF. The IPF Corporate Board continues to work to secure a long-term Executive Director for the Institute. I have been involved with the IPF summer program for seminarians for twenty-two years, and I have lived in Omaha working full-time for IPF for the past twelve years. I am grateful to God for the marvelous growth in IPF's ministry over the past decades. IPF has more programs serving diocesan seminarians, priests, and bishops than ever before, and we look to expand our capacity to accompany priests in the coming years.

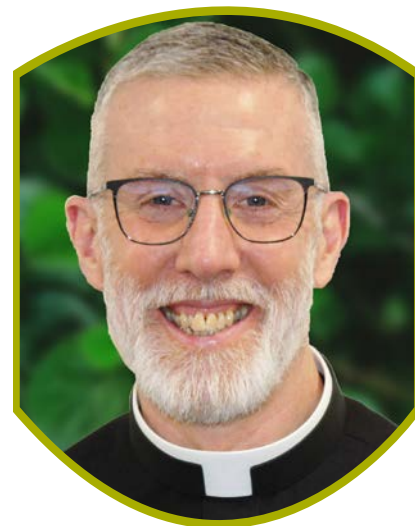
As you see in this issue, this summer also marks the retirement of Fr. Rich Gabuzda, one of the founders of IPF. Fr. Gabuzda served as the founding Executive Director for the first twenty-five years of IPF's history. His service to the Institute and to the Church simply cannot be measured. The willingness to follow the initial inspiration to provide spiritual formation for diocesan seminarians has become the dedication of his priesthood and has helped many priests across the country and beyond to serve their people from a heartfelt union with the Lord. We thank Fr. Gabuzda for his faith and sacrifices to realize that vision.

I am profoundly grateful for all the support IPF receives. Please, as always, continue to pray for the Institute for Priestly Formation and for all our activities. Saint Teresa of Calcutta was known to say: "Pray that we do not interfere with the work of the Holy Spirit."

God bless you,



Fr. Jim Rafferty,
Executive Director of IPF



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INSTITUTE *for* PRIESTLY FORMATION FOUNDATION

From the IPF Foundation President:



Dear Friends,

The past nine months have been a blessed journey as I've settled into serving the Institute for Priestly Formation. I have learned much throughout this time. In addition to researching the beginnings of IPF and working with our

tremendous board members, I've had the privilege of meeting many of the incredible adjunct staff who assist with our programs.

Although IPF has a small full-time staff here in the Omaha office, there is a team of holy bishops, priests, sisters, deacons, and lay people from across the country who come together to serve in a variety of ways. Their commitment and generosity reflect the beauty and strength of the Church at work.

Much has been accomplished in the 31 years since IPF's humble beginnings. At first glance, Omaha might have seemed an unlikely place to plant the seeds of IPF's mission. But the remarkable support of Omaha's Catholic community—and the surrounding region—has been essential to our growth. That support continues to be a foundation for the work we do today.

Much has been accomplished in the 31 years since IPF's humble beginnings.

As I've explored IPF's history, I've grown deeply grateful for the many Catholic leaders and families who sacrificed time, talent, and treasure to establish and sustain the mission. In this issue, we remember three beloved individuals who recently passed away: Michael Sketch, Sr., MD, Trudy McCaffrey, and John Micek. Their dedication and love for IPF will always be remembered and cherished.

You know well that IPF programs draw seminarians, priests, and bishops from across the United States—and even internationally. Yet today, the majority of our donor base is still centered here in Omaha. One of our

goals at the Foundation is to keep our local supporters engaged while also raising awareness and growing our community nationwide. Please pray for the Holy Spirit to guide this work and keep our hearts open to God's plan.

Thank you for partnering with us in this mission. If you have any thoughts or ideas for helping us share the mission of IPF more broadly, I would love to hear from you.

May God bless you and your family abundantly.

With gratitude and warmest regards,

Angie

Angie Lohaus,
President of the IPF Foundation



Fr. Sean Kilcawley offers the Eucharist at Mass during one of the daily Masses held at St. John's as part of the Summer Program for Diocesan Seminarians.

Fr. Rich - A Walk Down Memory Lane



We wanted to share a few photos of Fr. Rich throughout the years at IPF:

From the top left:

- 1) Fr. Rich poses for his headshot with the Diocese of Scranton, Pennsylvania.
- 2) Fr. John Horn, SJ, Fr. Rich and Kathy Kanavy enjoy a meal at then-Bishop Carlson's home in Sioux Falls, SD.
- 3) In 2002, Fr. Rich teaching at the blackboard during the summer programs.
- 4) In 2006, on behalf of the Mission Advancement Council, Larry Dwyer presents this image of St. John Paul II in honor of Fr. Rich's 25th anniversary of ordination.
- 5) Fr. Rich interviews Francis Cardinal George during IPF's "A Reason for Your Hope" event in 2014.
- 6) In 2017, the statutes for the IPF Priests of St. Joseph were officially approved by Archbishop George Lucas.
- 7) Fr. Rich, Kathy Kanavy, and Fr. John Horn, SJ reunite during 2019 Symposium.
- 8) In 2022, Fr. Rich walks alongside Archbishop George Lucas as he blesses the new IPF office building.

Fr. Rich's Retirement



On September 1, 2025, Fr. Rich Gabuzda will retire from full-time service to the Institute for Priestly Formation. Fr. Gabuzda, who turned seventy in July, has dedicated the past three decades of his priesthood to the spiritual formation of diocesan seminarians and priests.

Along with Fr. John Horn, SJ, Fr. George Aschenbrenner, SJ, and Kathy Kanavy, Fr. Gabuzda helped establish the Institute in 1994, following an inspiration of the Holy Spirit received in response to the question, "If you could do anything for the good of the Church today, what would that be?" The answer: ground diocesan seminarians and priests in an intimate, personal relationship with God in all aspects of their lives. The first IPF program for seminarians held in 1995 on Creighton's campus served six seminarians. Today IPF hosts a variety of programs throughout the year assisting seminarians and priests in their deepening communion with the Lord.

Fr. Gabuzda will no longer serve on the full-time staff of the IPF offices in Omaha, but he is not leaving IPF. Fr. Gabuzda will continue to serve as a spiritual director and presenter in IPF's programs, so we are grateful for his continued generosity and his commitment to brother priests.

Summer Program Smiles and Selfies



Seminarians are invited to share the summer pictures they take during the IPF photo contest. Here are a few of our favorites from 2025:

From the top left:

1) Jon Patrick Stone takes delight in visiting the penguins at the Omaha zoo.

2) Fr. Jim Rafferty and several seminarians walk across the Creighton campus as they return to their dorms after class.

3) Chris Larkins, Stanley Amuchaka, and Jose Cruz Gonzalez pose for a picture.

4) Tony Carosone sits next to a jovial Jelly Belly mascot.

5) Kade Palmer, Nicholas Huza, Alex Thiel, Alex Burns, Luke Capoun, and Braden Scalisi pose for a selfie after taking a run.

6) John Francis takes a selfie in front of Nebraska Furniture Mart while sightseeing around Omaha. William Dobrient, Andrew Nigro, and Jon Kadlec cheer him on.

7) Anthony Rizo, Kenn Bui, Maximilian Lock, Tom Malone, and Vincent Vanzuylen take a selfie while exploring the Desert Dome at the Omaha Zoo.

8) A group of seminarians enjoy a little time at the ballpark, watching baseball games this summer as a leisure activity between prayer and studying.



Seminarian Participant Spotlight

A Peek into the Mind of a Seminarian this Summer



Dan Graber, Seminarian
Diocese of Madison

I am profoundly grateful to have attended IPF's 2025 Summer Program for Diocesan Seminarians. I found the program extremely productive because it deepened my prayer life and helped me forge a more tangible relationship with Jesus.

What do I mean by this? Well, for me, IPF's summer program was just what I needed in terms of my spiritual formation needs. The program's concentration and focus was on prayer, prayer, and more prayer. In fact, I saw it as a "prayer boot camp" coupled with a "prayer immersion experience." For example, I was taught how to pray holy hours, why I should pray holy hours, how to journal, how to address

blockages in my prayer life, how to sit in silence for an hour and just listen, how to see God talking to me through daily encounters with other people, how to surrender to God's will and trust in His Divine Providence, and how to be on the same page with Jesus who will be working through me and with me when I become a priest.

I found the design of the program played an important role in my spiritual growth. By combining twice-daily lectures with the eight-day silent retreat, as well as weekly spiritual direction and large blocks of free time to pray, the program created the right mix of the intellectual study of prayer, with the actual practice of prayer. For me it was a winning formula.

The lessons I have learned from this program will serve me well as a priest. Most importantly, I learned just how crucial it is for a priest to constantly pray and stay in close contact with Jesus. IPF's motto says it best -- "Hearts on Fire for Christ." It's true. And this program helped get me to that place.

Written by: Dan Graber
Seminarian from the Diocese of Madison

Summer 2025 Priest Retreat



During the summer of 2025, 19 priests came to Omaha, Nebraska to take part in a silent directed retreat. They joined us for Mass in St. John's (see several attendees in photo to the left), were given daily spiritual direction, and grew in their interior friendship with the Lord. We are encouraged by their diligence to their spiritual lives, and are happy to provide another opportunity to accompany priests as they make time to tend to their relationship with the Holy Trinity.

IPF Priests of St. Joseph

On May 30, 2025, two priests, members of the IPF Priests of St. Joseph, professed their perpetual vows. Father Josh Brown (Diocese of Grand Island) and Father Jorge Garcia (Diocese of San Bernardino) made their profession in St. John's Church on the campus of Creighton in the presence of the seminarians and staff of the 2025 Summer Program for Seminarians. Father Jeff Eirvin, Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon, renewed his temporary vows for another year while Father Andy Gehringer (Diocese of Allentown) and Father Rob Cadrecha (Diocese of St. Petersburg) renewed their vows.

All of the above priests, as external members of the Association, live and work in their own dioceses while assisting with programs of IPF during the year as they are able. Father Rich Gabuzda and Father Jim Rafferty, as internal, full-time members, work with the Institute's mission throughout the year.

A Night of Faith and Fellowship Spiritual Moms Event

On Wednesday, July 2, at Christ the King Parish in Omaha, Nebraska, IPF hosted a special gathering that brought together seminarians and the "Spiritual Moms" who have been faithfully praying for them throughout the summer.

The evening began with a Holy Hour of Adoration, offering time for quiet reflection in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Intentions were lifted in prayer, uniting everyone in a shared sense of gratitude and purpose.

After Adoration, seminarians met their Spiritual Moms for the very first time. What had begun as anonymous intercession blossomed into personal connection, with warm smiles, handshakes, and heartfelt conversations marking the occasion.

The night concluded with a social reception, where stories, laughter, and encouragement flowed freely, as well as root beer floats, cookies, and other refreshments. New friendships formed as the women and seminarians celebrated the role of prayer in nurturing vocations.

It was more than an event – it was a testimony to the power of prayer and the quiet, steady support that helps vocations grow. It reminded everyone present that behind every seminarian is a community lifting him up in faithful prayer.

Details on how to become a Spiritual Mom or Prayer Partner for next summer will be shared early next year.

See photos from the evening on pg. 9



The IPF Priests of St. Joseph, starting from left to right, are Fr. Jim Rafferty, Fr. Andy Gehringer, Fr. Robert Cadrecha, Fr. Jeff Eirvin, Fr. Jorge Garcia, Fr. Josh Brown, and Fr. Richard Gabuzda.

Friends Night Photos from July 2, 2025:



From the top left:

- 1) Marie Holiday and Mason Bailey bond during the social hour at Friends Night.
- 2) Fr. Jim Rafferty lifts up the monstrance at the end of the Holy Hour of prayer.
- 3) Barbara McKenna and Ashton Lacko share a hug as they offer a smile to the camera.
- 4) Seminarian Emmanuel Hernandez, from the Diocese of Dallas offered a glimpse into his summer journey.
- 5) Cindy Wieck and Joseph Shlanta grin while their photo is taken during the social hour.
- 6) Mary Stuart listens attentively while Ethan Rice gives details about his time at IPF this summer.
- 7) Seminarian Jon Kadlec, of the Diocese of Lincoln shared a few jokes as he talked about the impact of this summer on his vocational journey.



In Memory of: Trudy McCaffrey, John Micek, and Dr. Michael Sketch

Dr. Michael H. Sketch, Sr. June 25, 1931 – March 10, 2025



Dr. Michael H. Sketch was born in Paris and raised in England, where he excelled in agricultural studies, earning top honors in animal husbandry and veterinary medicine. With a spirit of adventure, he immigrated to the U.S. aboard the Queen Elizabeth I, entertaining fellow passengers with

his magician's flair—a gift he would later share with his children and grandchildren.

He worked on a farm in Council Bluffs, Iowa, before being drafted into the U.S. Army in 1954, serving in Germany and becoming a U.S. citizen. After his discharge, Michael married Nancy Wilcox, his beloved wife of 55 years. They raised five children in Omaha, where he completed his undergraduate and medical degrees at Creighton University.

Dr. Sketch served on the faculty at Creighton University's School of Medicine for over two decades, becoming Director of the Division of Cardiology and

earning the title of Professor Emeritus. A respected physician and educator, he also held leadership roles in numerous professional medical associations.

His deep Catholic faith guided his life. He served as a lector and Eucharistic minister at Christ the King Parish and contributed to several boards supporting Catholic education and mission outreach.

Dr. Michael and Nancy Sketch first became connected with IPF in 2005, and from that moment, their generosity and commitment to its mission were evident.

In the early years of IPF, their leadership played a vital role through their service on the Mission Advancement Council. This distinguished group of Catholic leaders was instrumental in expanding awareness and support for IPF, not only within Omaha, but across the country.

IPF is profoundly grateful for Dr. Mike and Nancy Sketch. Their generosity extended far beyond financial contributions—they gave their time, wisdom, and hearts to help shape and strengthen the Institute for over a decade. Their legacy of faith and service remains an enduring blessing to IPF and all those it serves.

The Gift that Keeps on Giving

Join IPF's Sacred Heart of Jesus Legacy Society, which was created to recognize and honor donors, alumni, and friends who have informed the Foundation of their intent to invest in the mission of the Institute for Priestly Formation through planned gifts made during life or to take effect upon death.

Alternatively, IPF has partnered with MyCatholicWill.com to offer a tool that allows you to write your will for free. It takes less than 15 minutes to complete and allows you to leave a legacy that reflects your faith and values. Scan the QR code to the right to learn more.





Trudy Ann McCaffrey

August 8, 1942 - March 11, 2025

Trudy McCaffrey's first and deepest love was Jesus Christ. From a young age, she consecrated her heart to His Sacred Heart through the Immaculate Heart of Mary—a devotion that remained the foundation of her life. Her nightly blessing to loved ones, traced with the sign of the cross and entrusted to Mary's Sorrowful Heart, was just one of many signs of her unwavering faith.

While attending the University of Saskatchewan, she met her beloved husband, Garfield ("Garry"), whose deep integrity won her heart. They married in 1963 and were blessed with 48 years together and four sons: Blayne, David, Garth, and Timothy.

Following Garry's death in 2011, Trudy made her Promise of Consecrated Widowhood on February 2, 2013, before Archbishop Samuel Aquila. A longtime practitioner and guide of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, Trudy devoted herself fully to the ministry of spiritual direction—particularly to priests, religious, and bishops around the world.

Through her retreats, direction, and especially her prayer, Trudy brought the love of Christ and the maternal care of Mary to thousands. Many priests credit her with helping them rediscover or sustain their vocation. As one son shared, "I've been told by more than one priest: 'If it weren't for your Mom, I wouldn't be a priest today.'"

Trudy served on the Mission Advisory Council for IPF for over a decade. In addition, Trudy used her gifts to serve priests through the Summer Program for Seminarians for several years and the Spiritual Direction Training Program. Trudy's impact on the priests and lay people served through her work is immeasurable. IPF is very grateful for her many years of guidance and service to its mission.

Her legacy of love and fidelity is best captured in the words she left for all who knew her:

"All for the Love and Glory of the Most Holy Trinity."



John Joseph Micek

July 13, 1928- July 7, 2025

John Micek was a humble and faith-filled man whose daily life was centered on a deep, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. A devoted daily communicant at Christ the King Parish, he found his greatest strength in the Eucharist. His simple mission was clear: bring Jesus to everyone he met through a loving smile and generous heart.

John and his beloved wife, Ann Louise, shared 69 years of marriage and were blessed with six children, 22 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. He was a quiet yet powerful role model—steadfast in love and faithful in prayer.

Born the youngest of eight and raised in Omaha, John graduated from Creighton University, served in the U.S. Army, and later worked at the Defense Language Institute in California before returning to Omaha to build both a family and a thriving insurance career. He founded several businesses and never fully retired.

John and Ann were generous benefactors, particularly in support of Catholic education. His legacy includes foundational support for Christ the King Parish, Spirit Catholic Radio, the MAGIS Catholic Teacher Program, the Holy Family Shrine, and the Institute for Priestly Formation, among many others.

His generosity—quiet, consistent, and heartfelt—touched countless lives. His name became synonymous with selfless giving, and his faith was the quiet force behind it all. IPF received many fruits from John and Ann's involvement. Their generous sharing of graces for many years, helped spread the good news of IPF's work and grow its mission.

John passed into eternal life as he lived—humbly, prayerfully, and faithful to the end.



Archbishop McGovern celebrates Mass with the seminarians during the summer program

**Welcome to
Omaha
Archbishop
Michael
McGovern**

**"I will give you
shepherds after
my own heart."**

- Jeremiah 3:15

Kathy Kanavy's 30th Anniversary Consecrated to the Lord

Written by: Kathy Kanavy
Director of Spiritual Direction Formation at IPF

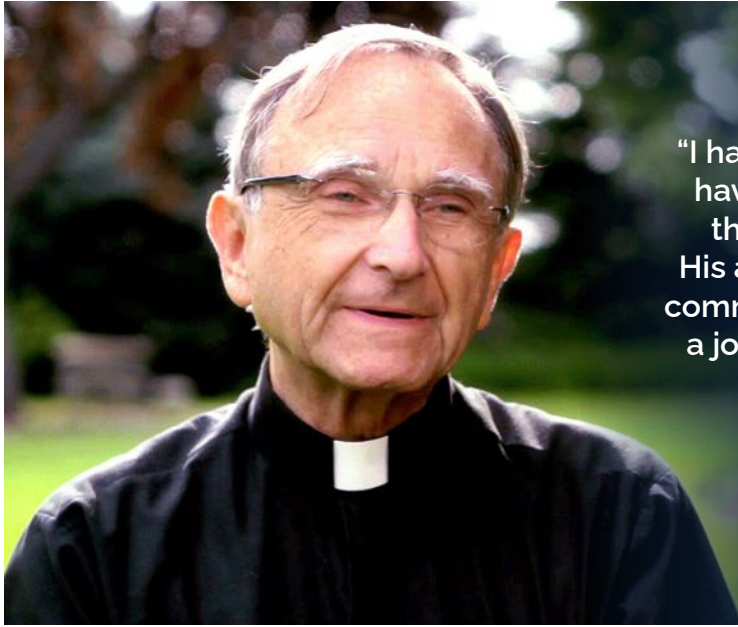
I was asked to write an article on the 30th anniversary of my consecration as a consecrated virgin living in the world. On July 8, 1995, I received consecration at the hands of Auxiliary Bishop John Sheets, S.J., then Auxiliary Bishop of Fort Wayne/South Bend, Indiana as IPF was beginning its first summer program. We had six seminarians receiving formation during the Summer Program for Diocesan Seminarians. All six seminarians, the faculty, and some friends participated in the beautiful ritual of consecration where the woman is espoused to Christ forever. The ritual speaks of Christ as her all-in-all, where she is received into a permanent relationship of spousal love with Him. For me, there was also a "call within a call," namely, to serve diocesan priests, bishops, and seminarians in their interior life, and in a particular way through the mission of IPF.

How grateful I am for this life! My heart is full of gratitude to Jesus for His faithful love and grace. I am also deeply grateful for the privilege to serve those we accompany in IPF's mission, and to be with all of you who work in and support this mission. I have seen your hearts that long to lead others to experience the love, truth, and the home that you know in God. I have felt your conviction of faith in the midst of trials and sufferings. I have been humbled by your free yes to surrender to the Lord in conversion of heart. And I have been strengthened and supported to witness you lay your life down freely in sacrifice and love.

Thank you all for your dedication and faith that has strengthened me in my vocation. God be praised!



Kathy Kanavy receives a blessing from auxiliary Bishop Sheets during the initial consecration ceremony back in July 1995.



"I have come that you may have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10). I thank the Lord for I have experienced His abundant life in and through the IPF community over the past 25 years. What a joy for me to share with you this good news of His gift to me."

Msgr. John Cippel
Diocese of St. Petersburg, Florida

Growing the Foundation Nurturing the Mission of IPF

As the mission of the Institute for Priestly Formation continues to grow, testimonials like the one above are heard time and again from seminarians, priests, and bishops who have experienced IPF's programs. Their words affirm that your support is making a real and lasting impact — strengthening the holiness of priests across the United States and beyond.

A strong and vibrant foundation is essential to the future of IPF. The Foundation exists to provide financial support for the Institute's general operating needs and to grow the endowment, helping to secure the future of our vital mission. Nurturing both the Foundation and our programs is key to sustaining and expanding this work.

This year, we are inviting you to partner with us in a special way.

The IPF Foundation is working toward two major fundraising goals:

» **Annual Fund (Operating Budget)**

» **Endowment Growth (Long-Term Sustainability)**

Both areas are essential. The Annual Fund supports the day-to-day operations of IPF, while the endowment ensures we can continue forming seminarians and priests for generations to come. While we are deeply grateful for the gifts already received, we are not yet on pace to reach our goals.

2025 Fundraising Progress

(as of July 30, 2025)

Annual Fund for General Operating Expenses

40%

Goal: \$1,400,000
Received: \$562,000

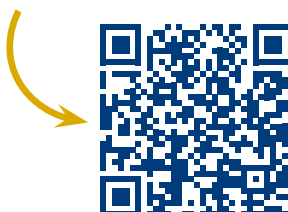
Endowment Growth

19%

Goal: \$500,000
Received: \$96,222

We are truly grateful for your ongoing prayers and generous support. You are helping to renew the priesthood and, through it, the life of the Church. Thank you for walking alongside us in this important mission.

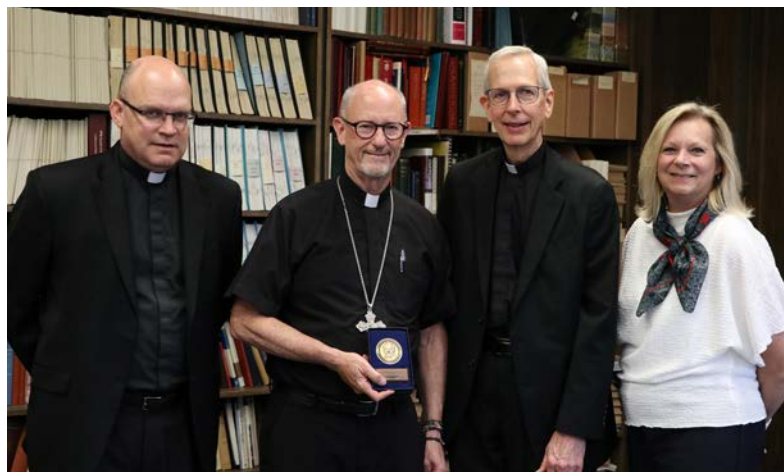
**To Give To The
Annual Fund:**



**To Give To The
Endowment:**



Two Bishops Receive St. John Paul II Medallions from IPF



Two bishops, Archbishop Samuel J. Aquila, Archbishop of the Diocese of Denver, and Bishop James D. Conley, from the Diocese of Lincoln, were honored to receive St. John Paul II medallions from the Institute for Priestly Formation.

Bishop James Conley was presented with his medallion by Fr. Richard Gabuzda and Angie Lohaus on Tuesday June 24, 2025 (pictured above).

Archbishop Samuel Aquila was presented with his St. John Paul II medallion by Fr. Brian Welter on Tuesday, April 22, 2025.

We are thrilled to honor both of these shepherds of the Church as those who have donated to their St. John Paul II funds show how incredibly loved and appreciated they are by those they serve with their ministry.



2026 IPF Vocation Director's Retreat

The Institute for Priestly Formation will host an individually silent-directed retreat specifically for vocation directors. For many years IPF and the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors (NCDVD) have shared a close collaboration in providing spiritual support for priests who serve in vocation ministry.

**January 18-23, 2026
(Five Day Retreat)**

or

**January 18-26, 2026
(Eight Day Retreat)**

Where:

The retreat will be held at Grand Coteau Retreats in Grand Coteau, Louisiana. If flying, the closest airport is in Lafayette, Louisiana (LFT).

Cost:

The cost is \$150 per diem

- 5 Day Retreat: \$750
(5 nights)
- 8 Day Retreat: \$1,200
(8 nights)

Historical Highlight

Nearly 20 years ago, in 2006, IPF hosted a symposium on the role of priests as Good Shepherds: Living Christ's Own Pastoral Authority. Here's a group shot of all who attended that symposium out at Mundelein Seminary.



Hearts on Fire: Strengthening the Foundation Dinner Celebrates Faith and Formation



Fr. Dan Andrews, fifth from the left, is pictured with members of his family. We are thankful for their presence and support at the IPF Hearts on Fire dinner.

The annual Hearts on Fire: Strengthening the Foundation Dinner drew a full and joyful crowd on April 24 at the St. Vincent de Paul Parish Center in Omaha, NE, celebrating the mission of the Institute for Priestly Formation (IPF) and the generous community that supports it.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the prestigious St. John Vianney Award for Priestly Service to Fr. Dan Andrews, in recognition of his outstanding dedication to IPF and impact on the spiritual lives of those he serves. His acceptance was heartfelt and humble, embodying the priestly virtue that the award honors.

Guests were deeply moved by a testimonial from Fr. Brett Jamrog, an IPF alumnus, who shared how his formation at IPF shaped his vocation and continues to influence his ministry. His story underscored the long-lasting impact of IPF's mission.

In an inspiring display of generosity, the evening's Raise the Paddle appeal — benefiting the Summer Program for Diocesan Seminarians and Pre-Ordination Retreats — surpassed expectations, raising more than \$185,000. This amazing support ensures future priests receive the spiritual formation essential to their pastoral life.

Pat and Mary Corrigan, serving as Honorary Chairs, were recognized for their long-standing dedication

and generosity toward IPF's mission. Their leadership and faith have been instrumental in fostering the Institute's continued growth and success.

The evening also celebrated Fr. Brian Welter, who was finishing out his five-year assignment serving as the Executive Director of IPF, applauding his vision and leadership in guiding the organization with clarity and purpose.

The Hearts on Fire Dinner was more than a fundraiser — it was a celebration of faith, community, and the vital mission of forming holy priests. The evening reminded all in attendance that supporting priestly formation is an investment in the heart of the Church.

Save the Date for 2026

IPF Hearts on Fire Dinner
Thursday, April 9, 2026

See the full list of sponsors for the IPF
Hearts on Fire Dinner on pg. 16.

Hearts on Fire Dinner Sponsors

Gold Sponsors:

Michael and Suzie Lawler

Silver Sponsors:

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Marian Servants of Divine

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Merrill Lynch - Michael Lighthart

Tim and Sally O'Neill

Project Advocates - Rob

Zimmerman

Doug and Margaret Quinn

Margarita Wanek



Scan the QR code
with your phone to
see all the photos from the
"Hearts on Fire" dinner



From the top left: 1) Fr. Vinny Fortunato shows off the autographed Husker football raffle prize.

2) Chris Jacobson, Fr. Matthew Pohlman and Michala Jacobson smile for the camera.

3) Colleen Franco, Terry Petersen, and Ted Franco offer a grin during the evening social hour.

4) Angie Lohaus speaks to guests about the IPF Foundation.

5) Pat and Mary Corrigan, the honorary chairs, pose with their family members.



From the top left: 6) Fr. Brian Welter presents Fr. Dan Andrews with the St. John Vianney Award for Priestly Service.

7) Several St. John Paul II Newman Center friends celebrate Fr. Andrews.

8) Kathy D'Ercole, Deacon Steve and Angie Luna say 'cheese'.

9) Sarah Doernman leans in next to Derek and Cheryl Ferguson.

10) Fr. Brett Jamrog talks about his IPF experience.

11) Fr. Damien Cook smiles while taking a picture with Jennifer and Joe Vasko.

12) Margarita Wanek, her two friends, and Tim and Sally O'Neill pose for a quick photo as the evening begins.



2027-2030
Spiritual Direction
Training Program
Applications Open
in Fall of 2025



The Spiritual Direction Training Program (SDTP) is offered for diocesan priests. It encourages them to deepen their communion with Christ and equips them to be able to nurture this communion with the Lord in the lives of others.

The next round of the Spiritual Direction Training Program will take place in Grand Coteau Retreats in Grand Coteau, Louisiana. The application process will open in the fall of 2025. The program will begin in Spring of 2027. A full list of the dates and cost of the program can be found online by scanning the QR code below.



Scan the code
with your
phone to view
the Dates and
Cost of the
2027-2030
SDTP



Golf Fore IPF

◆ September 8, 2025 ◆

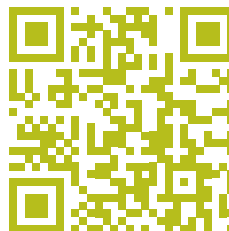
*****New Location*****

**Oak Hills Country Club
Omaha, Nebraska**

11:30 a.m. - Registration/Lunch from Godfather's Pizza

12:30 p.m. - Shotgun Start

Dinner, Raffle, & Pin Prizes to follow
in the Oak Hills Clubhouse



Scan the QR code with your
phone to register to play at
Golf Fore IPF.

Event Title Sponsor:



Our Lady of Guadalupe Award Recipients



Deacon Pat Quagliana smiles while Fr. Richard Gabuzda presents the Our Lady of Guadalupe medallion to Msgr. Mike Steber.

Our Lady of Guadalupe has long served as the patroness of the Institute for Priestly Formation. Her intercession and protection has allowed the work of IPF to flourish, bringing thousands of seminarians, priests, and bishops into a deeper relationship with the Holy Trinity, setting their 'hearts on fire for Christ' as they serve the Church.

Since 2002, the Institute has sought to recognize clergy and laity whose dedication to IPF's mission and service to the Church provides a tangible sign of Our Lady's graces at work. On Wednesday, June 11th, IPF presented Msgr. Mike Steber and Deacon Pat Quagliana with the Our Lady of Guadalupe Award for their distinguished support and notable assistance. We congratulate them for this achievement, and for being conduits of grace to all they encounter.

Msgr. Mike Steber was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Marquette, Michigan on September 12, 1986. He has served as pastor of a variety of parishes, including most recently St. Peter Cathedral. He reached Senior Priest status in July 2024 and is semi-retired. Msgr. Steber began working with IPF in 2001, directing the eight-day retreats in the summer seminarian program. He has served as a spiritual director and supervisor in other IPF programs, including the Alumni Retreats held at the Our Lady of the Cenacle Retreat House in Clearwater, Florida, and the Spiritual Direction Program held at Mundelein Seminary.

Deacon Pat Quagliana was ordained a Permanent Deacon for the Archdiocese of Newark on June 2, 2002. He has served as a deacon in various parishes in the Archdiocese of Newark as well as in campus ministry. He was most recently the Director of Spiritual Life at Mundelein Seminary. Deacon Pat began working with IPF in 2007, assisting with the seminarian program as well as the Spiritual Direction training program. At IPF he has taught courses, directed seminarians in the summer program, and directed seminarians and priests in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.





INSTITUTE *for*
PRIESTLY FORMATION
Hearts on Fire for Christ

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

- September 8, 2025
Golf Fore IPF
Oak Hills Country Club
Omaha, Nebraska
- October 5 - 10 (14), 2025
Spiritual Direction Training Program, Sec. A
Mundelein Seminary, Illinois
- October 19 - 24 (28), 2025
Spiritual Direction Training Program, Sec. B
Mundelein Seminary, Illinois
- October 30-31, 2025
IPF Corporate and IPF Foundation Board Meetings
- November 3 - 10, 2025
Alumni Retreat
Cenacle of Our Lady of Divine Providence, Clearwater, Florida
- November 8, 2025
Bishops Advisory Council Meeting
- December 13, 2025
Advent Morning of Reflection
Christ the King Church, Omaha, NE
- December 28, 2025 - Jan 6, 2026
Pre-Ordination Retreat for Diocesan Seminarians
Grand Coteau, Louisiana