



THE INSTITUTE FOR PRIESTLY FORMATION

A Public Association of the Faithful in the Archdiocese of Omaha

20
YEARS

VENI, VIDI, BENEDICTUS

I came, I saw, I was blessed.

Over 2000 seminarians from the past 20 years could use this slightly altered famous saying to explain their participation in the Summer Program for Spiritual Formation for Diocesan Seminarians at Creighton University in Omaha. This year's participants are no exception. The 168 men shown below from 66 dioceses and archdioceses, from Albany to Allentown, La Crosse to Lafayette, St. Louis to St. Paul, carried the blessings from their experience this summer into their next year of study at 31 different seminaries across the country.



Listening: to instruction and to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Seminarian Anthony Astrab, from the Diocese of St. Petersburg, currently studying at St. Vincent dePaul Regional Seminary in Boynton Beach, defined his experience this way: "IPF has been an enormous blessing. I am willing to say it is the single greatest thing a seminarian can do during the course of his formation. It certainly has been for me. Thank you, IPF, for helping me grow in a deep relationship with the Trinity, one which I never realized was possible. The program has enlivened my faith and I am truly grateful."

It is not only seminarians who can claim, *Veni, Vici, Benedictus*. More than 550 others over the past 20 years including 40 from this summer who participated in the 30-Day



Classroom Instruction: an integral part of the summer program.

Spiritual Exercises, the Seminar for Seminary Spiritual Directors, and the Retreat for Seminary Faculty, programs offered concurrently with the Seminarian Program, can say the same. These participants also left Omaha to return to their parishes and seminaries with a renewed, pastoral spirit and a deep appreciation of their experience with IPF.

"Through theory and practice, I was able to get insights into the art of Spiritual Direction. The instructors have a deep love for the church and the priesthood of Christ. They brought out the beauty of priestly ministry and spirituality without shying away from the wounds and challenges that

confront the human minister. I return to my seminary work, renewed with hope and purpose," was the way Fr. Frederick Chung, from the Archdiocese of Toronto, Canada, expressed his appreciation for the Seminar for Seminary Spiritual Directors.

Not only have those who have participated in the programs the past 20 years been blessed, but the Church as a whole has as well. May the Lord continue to bless the work and mission of IPF and bring seminarians, priests, and seminary



Sacraments: remaining close to the sacraments is essential to the program.

faculty more deeply in communion with Christ for another 20+ years.



Participants of the 2014 Summer Seminarian Program.

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Dear Friends,

Although we are surrounded these days by many Creighton freshmen who are beginning their college adventures, we still have treasured memories of many IPF seminarians, staff, and other program participants walking along the campus mall during this past summer. Those memories include a variety of special summer events including Friends Night, the Our Lady of Guadalupe Award, Saint John Paul II Fund for Priest Memorial Mass as well as our “A Reason for Your Hope” gathering with Cardinal George. All of these have helped us continue the 20th Anniversary celebration of the Institute—look inside this issue for many images of those wonderful times.

This past July marked the arrival of a new staff member, Mr. Kevin Armshaw. Kevin joins our Mission Advancement team as the Director of Mission Advancement, serving alongside Tom Pogge who remains the Executive Director of the IPF Foundation. Kevin worked with us as a consultant for a few months several years ago and we are delighted he now joins us as a fulltime staff member.



Welcome, Kevin Armshaw, to the IPF Staff!

The fall months have found our staff “on the road” for a variety of reasons, including double sessions of our Spiritual Direction Training Program in Chicago. In addition to the “usual” travels, we eagerly anticipate our 20th Anniversary Pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi, November 9-18. If you are not among those able to join us on the pilgrimage, please accompany us with your prayers. All of our alumni, staff and friends will be remembered at all the holy places we’ll visit along the way.

In all of our programs we provide the time and place for seminarians and priests to encounter the Lord in a deeper

*“I invite all Christians,
everywhere, at this very
moment, to a renewed personal
encounter with Jesus Christ,
or at least an openness to
letting him encounter them.”*

— Pope Francis

way. The theme of “encounter” appears frequently in the talks and writing of Pope Francis, including his apostolic exhortation on evangelization, *The Joy of the Gospel*. The opening words of that document were given to our seminarian participants this summer. I share them here with you as well: “I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them. . . . No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord.”

Gratefully in the Lord,

Richard J. Gabuzda

Rev. Richard J. Gabuzda
Executive Director

THE GIFT YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN, GIVE AS GIFT

By KRISTI COUGHLIN

On July 16th and 17th the Institute hosted 70 new friends from around the country for an event entitled, “*A Reason for Your Hope*.” The gathering helped acquaint people with the Institute and its mission to assist Bishops in the spiritual formation of diocesan seminarians and priests. It was my job to help plan this event.

New to IPF, I had to decode the title and meaning of the event which I was about to help coordinate.

I Peter 3:15: “...Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for *a reason for your hope*.” Hmm... I would have to dig out my bible commentary. I read the commentary, and then reread the scripture. And then I read it again. What came to me is that we, through our living and our suffering, must always burn as a beacon of light so that others might *through our liv-*



Fr. Gabuzda interviews Cardinal George.

ing example, become drawn, attracted... or merely curious, about just what it is that keeps us engaged and committed to our faith. But... was that right? I had to ask Fr. Gabuzda. He, in turn, asked me, “Why *do* we carry this hope in our hearts... as Christians, as Catholics, as believers? Romans 5:5 tells us... ‘*Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.*’ What God is doing through the work of IPF is raising up seminarians and priests who are growing in holiness.” I got that.



Bishops Lucas and Kemme concelebrating Mass with Cardinal George.

Our guests arrived and learned about the programs the Institute offers for priests and seminarians. They were invited to experience Evening Prayer and Eucharistic Adoration with the sum-

“Diocese and their seminaries do a wonderful job of preparing our seminarians to serve in the diocese. After ordination, we need places and enrichment to retain and amplify the joy of being a priest. This is essential for healthy priests which, in turn, is essential for healthy dioceses.”

— Brian Wenger, St. Paul, MN

mer seminarian community. An elegant dinner was graciously hosted by a local benefactor. In celebration of our 20th anniversary, guests were presented with a brief yet truly moving history of the

Institute’s twenty year history by Kathy Kanavy, one of the founders of the Institute. Her theme was, “The Gift you have been Given, Give as Gift.” Bishop Andrew Cozzens, Auxiliary Bishop of St Paul Minneapolis, shared the gifts and graces he received after his IPF Ignatian 30 Day Retreat experience. His mother, Mrs. Judy Cozzens, passionately affirmed the changes she saw in her son’s priesthood resulting from her son’s involvement with the Institute.

Thursday the group was given a formal presentation including the “*What is IPF?*” video and heard testimonies from a current summer seminarian and a summer staff member. Mass was celebrated by our special guest, His Eminence

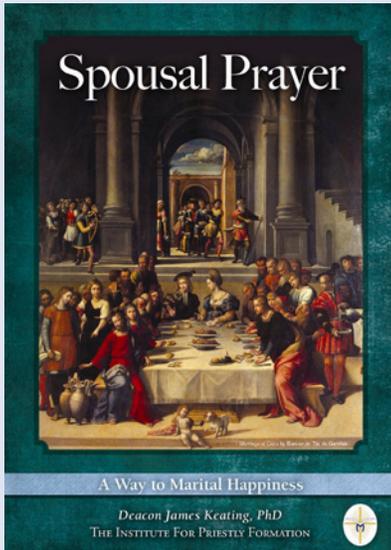


Guests attending the event enjoyed a luncheon with local supporters of the Institute.

Francis Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago. After a luncheon at the Skutt Student Center, attendees were treated to “A Conversation with Cardinal George,” including a question and answer session. The Cardinal answered questions posed by Fr. Gabuzda, offering reflections on various subjects including his experience at the papal election.

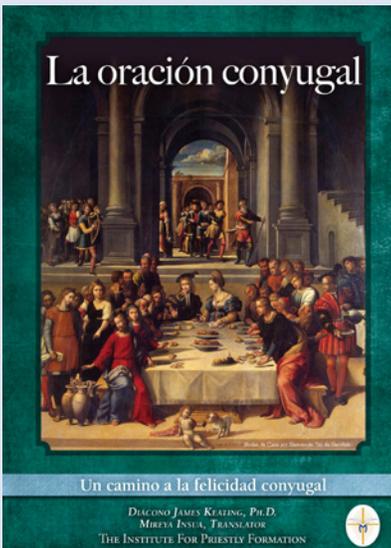
Guests were asked if they were left with *a reason for your hope* after their experience in Omaha. Mr. Wenger’s quote in the center column says it all.

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SECURING THE DIOCESAN PRIESTLY IDENTITY THROUGH THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY

by DEACON JIM KEATING



Deacon Jim Keating

Each year IPF conducts a research seminar on some aspect of priestly formation. On September 12-14, eight theologians from around the country participated in a Seminar on the theme of “Securing the Diocesan Priestly Identity through the Study of Theology.” This theme was inspired by the mission of IPF to better secure the diocesan priestly identity within the theological and scriptural tradition of the Church.

Included within the participants of this seminar was Fr. Brian Daley, S.J., the winner of the 2012 Ratzinger Prize for Theology. Pope Benedict presented Fr. Daley with the Prize for Theology, nicknamed the “Nobel Prize in Theology.” In remarks before the award presentation, Pope Benedict said Father Daley was “exemplary for the transmission of knowledge that unites science and wisdom, scientific rigor and passion for humankind.” A member of the University of Notre Dame faculty since 1996, Father Daley, a Jesuit priest, is

an internationally renowned scholar of first- through eighth-century Christian thinkers as Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine of Hippo and Maximus the Confessor.

The papers presented in this seminar will culminate in a book to be published by IPF Publications. It will be intended for use by seminary formators nationally and internationally. The days of study were enveloped in prayer, silence and fraternity. These days were also ones of deep conversation between the theologians and humility, as the participants helped one another bring clarity to their ideas.

IPF’s mission is to promote the interior life of diocesan priests as an essential part of their lives of ministry. IPF invited the guest theologians, who honored our Institute by agreeing to come and be with us, to help diocesan seminary theologians to understand the role that theology and spirituality (“intimate and unceasing communion with The Trinity”, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, n.45) play in their own teaching and study; and secondly the seminar theologians were encouraged to assist seminary faculty in deepening their understanding of how spirituality can remain a more permanent reality within the study of theology for diocesan seminarians.



From l to r: Dr. Paul Griffiths (Duke University), Fr. Joseph Koopman (St. Mary Seminary), Msgr. Joseph Betschart (Mt. Angel Seminary), Dr. Mary Healy (Sacred Heart Seminary), Rev. Msgr. Michael Heintz (University of Notre Dame), Fr. Robert Imbelli (Boston College), Fr. Thomas Weinandy, O.F.M., Cap (Gregorian University), Fr. Brian Daley, S.J. (University of Notre Dame).

THAT'S IPF

By KEVIN ARMSHAW
Director of Mission Advancement

Here in Omaha, we frequently hear our lay friends talking about their favorite “IPF priests.” For those close to the Institute, “IPF priest” is a short-hand, for a priest with a deep communion with Christ who has made staying in love with the Trinity the priority of his life. Outside of Omaha, folks are much less likely to have heard of IPF. This is about to change!

IPF Information Nights are a new effort, from the IPF advancement team, to raise awareness among lay people about the impact and importance of the Institute for Priestly Formation. The short program shares the IPF video (available at www.priestlyformation.org), a brief history of the Institute and includes testimonies from IPF Alumni and those that love them. Attendees gain an understanding of what it means to be an “IPF priest.” More importantly, it helps them know that the deep communion with Christ their pastor is experiencing is available to them as well. God wants to be with us always.

Recently, at the Curé of Ars parish, in Merrick, New York, IPF rolled out its first Information Night. Fr. Charles Mangano, an IPF alumnus, shared with seventy interested people, how IPF had transformed his ministry. “I had heard others say IPF saved my priesthood and frankly, I thought that a little extreme.” He continued, “Then, I experienced it.”

Fr. Charles went on to explain how he and Fr. Tony Stanganelli, both 2014 graduates of the 3 year IPF Spiritual Director Training course, encountered Jesus in a new and deeper way. IPF programs are designed to create an environment that enables the participants to escape the noise of their busy lives and encounter the Holy Trinity. Kathy Kanavy, an IPF founder, is fond of saying, “We just help create the space and the Holy Spirit does the rest.”

One attendee of the information night said she came because she wanted to know what had changed Fr. Charles. She said, “He has always been a great pastor, but in the last few years there is something different. His homilies are amaz-



Frs. Stanganelli, Mangano and Gabuzda pose with Fr. Mangano's parents and sisters at the conclusion of the IPF Information Night at the Curé of Ars Church in Merrick, New York.

ing. You can just sense God's presence when he speaks. It is like God is right there with you pointing out exactly what you need to hear.”

The Spiritual Director Training course equips participants to provide spiritual direction to diocesan priests. In the process, participants encounter the Lord at a level many previously never considered possible. They also learn how to maintain and further the depth of that relationship.

Fr. Tony Stanganelli, who brought members from his parish to the information night, said, “I was awakened to Christ's desire for constant communion. I have an awareness of Jesus all the time and it is amazing! I live my priesthood with Christ in all of my day to day responsibilities.”

Helping diocesan seminarians and priests fall in love and then stay in love with God is the purpose of IPF. For many like Fr. Charles and Fr. Tony, it is discovering a greater depth of God's loving presence. The Church, in her wisdom, has discovered tools that can be used to deepen the interior union with the Trinity. IPF makes those tools available to program participants, who in turn bring them home to the parishes in which they work; so that the faithful can also experience the depth of love that Jesus wants every believer to experience on a daily basis.

These Information Nights are designed to help parishioners understand,

in a small way, the change taking place in the lives of their parish priests. At the end of the evening, parishioners are provided resources that will help to deepen their own prayerful experience of God. There are opportunities to join in the mission of IPF and a renewed commitment to pray for our priests on the front line of the New Evangelization.

IPF plans more informational events and welcomes invitations by “IPF priests” to help organize one at his parish. A priest's love for God is contagious. When we see it, we want it too.



My experience with IPF was one of strengthening, healing, and revitalization. It has taken what I had known intellectually and deepen it into the core of my being, my heart. I feel the joy at being a newly ordained priest but with a heightened awareness of my identity as a beloved son, chaste spouse and as a spiritual father.

— Fr. Keith Laskowski,
Diocese of Allentown

20 YEARS OF HELPING PRIESTS AND SEMINARIANS

Throughout this year, memories of people, places, events and programs have led us to lift up our hearts in praise and gratitude to the Lord for his gifts to the mission of IPF. As we share some of them, we invite you to join this chorus of praise rising up to the Giver of all good gifts.

The seeds of what became the Institute for Priestly Formation were first planted in July 1992 when Fr. John Horn, S.J., directed Kathy Kanavy and Fr. Rich Gabuzda in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola on the campus of Creighton University. The intent was simply to “make the Exercises.” But God had other ideas in mind!

Prayerful conversations among Fr. John, Kathy and Fr. Rich over a period of time (often over Italian dinners!) led to the important question, “If you could write your own ticket and do something good for the Church, what might that be?” As ideas began to emerge for “doing something” for diocesan seminarians and priests, Fr. George Aschenbrenner, S.J., was drawn into the conversation, bringing his expertise to bear in refining the vision.

By 1994 the outline of a summer program for seminarians had been created and the Institute was formally incorporated at the end of that year. Conversations with Creighton University resulted in the “green

light” to conduct a program of spiritual formation for diocesan seminarians in the summer of 1995—if we could find six seminarians as participants! God provided and the seminarian program was off and running—along with a Seminar for Seminary Spiritual Directors led by Fr. Joseph Kelly, then-spiritual director at St. Joseph’s Seminary, Dunwoodie, New York.

As numbers in the seminarian program began to grow steadily, and Fr. John, Kathy and Fr. Rich moved to Omaha as a “full-time” operation, we began praying about what more the Lord desired for the mission. Along the way, a second summer program began as a way to develop what had taken place during the first summer. However, that program lasted just two years as we were led in the summer of 2000 to begin offering the full Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius (30 day retreat). In addition, we began to hold Symposia on the Spirituality and Identity of the Diocesan Priest.

After a “pilot” program in Florida, we opened a Training Program in Spiritual Direction for diocesan priests. The three year program, which meets three times a year, began and continues at the conference center of the University of St. Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary. As the program grew, we offered one series

at the Cedar Brake retreat house in the Diocese of Austin.

In time, we began to gather together groups of advisors including the Bishops Advisory Council, the Mission Advancement Council and the Finance Council. These councils continue serving IPF today.

By 2003, the Summer Seminarian Program had reached over 100 participants. At that same time we assembled a group of seminary formators to discuss the question, “How can spiritual formation be more at the heart of priestly formation?” These gatherings gave birth to a symposium, held at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary, Denver, in March 2005; the topic was, “Interiority for Mission: Spiritual Formation for Priests of the New Evangelization.”

That year also brought many other graces to the IPF mission. The Summer Seminarian Program welcomed 118 seminarians; the Mission Advisory Council was created from its predecessor bodies, the “Advisory Board” and the “Mission/Curriculum Council”; and, for the first time, all IPF offices were located in the same space, the Campion House, where we remain to this day.

The celebration of IPF’s tenth anniversary was marked by a pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi in November 2004.

IPF TIMELINE

1995



The original group of six seminarians. Not exactly a formal gathering, but it was a start! Fr. George Aschenbrenner, S.J., one of the founders of the Institute, is pictured instructing the group of seminarians from the Dioceses of Denver, Washington, Ft. Worth, and Scranton.

1997



One of the first groups of Seminary Spiritual Directors to gather for the summer seminar. The seminar continues to be directed by Fr. Joe Kelly, Fr. George Aschenbrenner, S.J. and Fr. Vinny Fortunato pictured in the front row, from center to the right.

2000



The first group of seminarians to number over 100. Enrollment reached the maximum of 175 in 2009 and has remained close to that number ever since.

2003



Spiritual Fatherhood: Living Christ’s Own Revelation of the Father was the theme of IPF’s Symposium held at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary. Pictured here, among others is now-Archbishop Paul Coakley (Oklahoma City) and now-Bishop Felipe Estevez (St. Augustine).

2004



IPF’s 10th Anniversary Pilgrimage took a group to Rome and Assisi. The group was blessed by an audience with now-Saint John Paul II. Fr. Gabuzda is about to present the 2003 Symposium proceedings to the Holy Father.

PLEASE REMEMBER IPF IN YOUR ESTATE PLANNING AND HI

SEMINARIANS FALL MORE DEEPLY IN LOVE WITH GOD

A highlight of that event was gathering for a photograph of our group with now Saint John Paul II.

In the summer of 2006 we participated in an Apostolic Visitation of our Institute. This visitation was part of a broader visit of United States seminaries, conducted under the leadership of then-Archbishop Edwin O'Brien. The team members were: Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz (Lincoln, Nebraska), Bishop Carlos Sevilla (Yakima, Washington) and Fr. Brendan Cahill (St. Mary's Seminary, Houston). Their report was quite favorable.

An additional summer program was added when Deacon Jim Keating began a Retreat for Seminary Faculty in the summer of 2007. This grant-funded program has provided seminary faculty an opportunity to share in the silence of the seminarians' silent retreat while focusing on the unique nature of their vocation as seminary faculty.

A long-held desire became a reality in March 2008 when, through the gracious support of Omaha's Archbishop Elden Francis Curtiss, IPF became a Public Association of the Faithful.

One of the many graced outcomes of becoming a Public Association was the beginning of the "Spiritual Moms" program. This pairing of a local woman with each seminarian in the summer program began

in the summer of 2008. It has grown so that there are currently over 700 women who have made themselves available to pray for a seminarian individually or for the group at large. Other "cells" of Spiritual Moms have begun to develop in different parts of the country. A "Spiritual Dads" group was begun in 2009. These men pray for the summer faculty and spiritual directors.

In collaboration with the Cenacle of Our Lady of Divine Providence in Clearwater, Florida, IPF began offering alumni retreats in September 2009. The initial silent directed retreats have featured presentations by Fr. Timothy Gallagher, OMV, on the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits. The retreats continue and are offered twice annually for any IPF program participant.

A long-held desire was realized in January of 2010 when, at the invitation of the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors, we conducted a retreat specifically for vocation directors. Originally a bi-annual event, we now provide this retreat for vocation directors each year.

In the spring of 2011, Archbishop Robert Carlson announced that Fr. John Horn, S.J., had been appointed to become Rector/President of Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in the Archdiocese of St. Louis, effective July 1st. Needless to say, this announcement came as a surprise to us all!

Having attempted numerous times to find a replacement for Fr. Horn but without success, the IPF staff and others began to pray about what the Holy Spirit might be revealing to us. The end result of this prayer and consultation was the permission granted by Omaha's Archbishop George Lucas in 2012 to begin the formation of a Community of IPF Priests, i.e., diocesan priests with a "call within a call" to focus on building up the interior life of diocesan priests, chiefly through service to the IPF mission.

With the permission of the bishop of Scranton, the arrival of Fr. Jim Rafferty in July 2013 allowed the Community of IPF Priests to begin and added, once again, to the availability of full-time staff for IPF programs throughout the year.

In this quick run through highlights of IPF's history, and allowing all these people, places, events and programs to fill the imagination, brings to mind the beautiful phrase from Psalm 136, "For his great love is without end!" We ask all of our dear friends, alumni and staff to pray to the Lord in gratitude for all that he has accomplished. And to pray in intercession that we remain faithful to the gifts given and so continue to serve seminarians, priests and seminary personnel with and in the Heart of the Good Shepherd.

MELINE

2008



IPF became a Public Association of the Faithful, an officially recognized body in the Roman Catholic Church which receives a mission within the Church to achieve the purposes of its "charism" (the gift which the Holy Spirit has given to it).

2011



This year's group of seminarians was the first covered by a "dome of grace" provided by their Spiritual Mothers, an initiative which has continued ever since. Pictured here is Anne Pogge, Spiritual Mom Coordinator, and her first seminarian son, now Fr. Kregg Hochhalter, from the Diocese of Bismarck, ND.

2012



The Community of IPF Priests is formed with the first (of hopefully many) priests, Fr. Rich Gabuzda and Fr. Jim Rafferty, who move into the community's first residence. A chapel is created in the duplex and bedrooms are furnished for priest and seminarians on retreat.

2013



Supporters of IPF come together for the 8th annual Celebration of Priesthood Banquet in Omaha. Pictured guests include honoree, Msgr. Richard Wolbach, Archbishop George Lucas, and Msgr. Joe Hanefeldt, the speaker for the evening.

HELP WITH THE SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF FUTURE PRIESTS.

SAINT JOHN PAUL II FUND FOR PRIESTS CONTINUES TO GROW

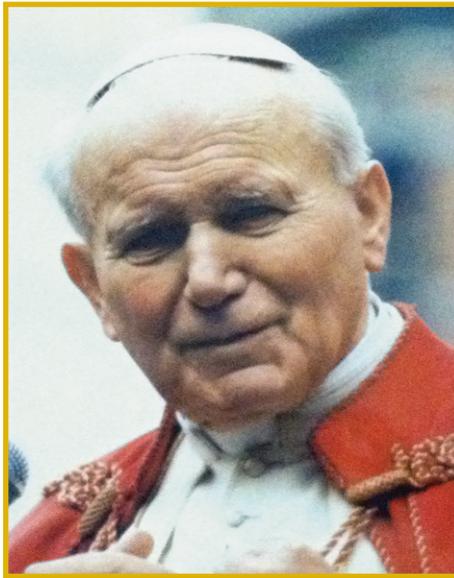
Is there a special priest in your life you would like to honor?

Will Buttarazzi, who attended the Summer Program of Spiritual Formation for Diocesan Seminarians in 2002, wanted a way to honor his beloved uncle, Fr. John Nacca, a deceased priest from the Diocese of Rochester, New York. So he wrote a letter and sent it to his family members.

In the letter, Will explained his inspiration.

“Earlier this year, Uncle John was on my mind a lot, how sublime his daily witness was, and how incredibly blessed we have been to have him in our lives. I heard it said recently that when we are young, we tend to seek and follow many “heroes” whom, when we grow older, nearly always fade in importance; but as we get older, those who truly are our heroes and have forever influenced our lives, never leave us. With this came the inspiration to do something that would allow us to express our love and appropriately commemorate Uncle John.”

Will told his family that his summer experience with IPF “changed his life” and when he learned about IPF’s *Saint John Paul II Fund for Priests*, he knew it was a perfect way to support the work and



mission of the Institute and at the same time honor his uncle. “This fund will serve to perennially form diocesan seminarians and priests to be men of prayer, living in unceasing union with Christ, so that they can help the laity do the same. I believe this was Uncle John’s gift, and, as family members, we are given the chance to be his legacy in faith, God willing, for generations to come,” his letter stated.

An account can be opened for any priest whether he is a Diocesan or religious priest, living or deceased. A brief biography of the honored priest and a list of all donors to his account are perpetually inscribed in a Book of Remembrance once the fund reaches the perpetual level of \$5000. Every summer, a Mass is celebrated in remembrance of all honored priests and their donors.

To date 89 priests have been honored with 419 donations. There is no limit as to how much can go into an account. Donors can contribute to an existing account or open a new one.

By contributing to an account in honor of a priest of your choice, you will be part of the Mission of the Institute in the spiritual formation of seminarians and priests while at the same time recognizing the service and generosity of a priest like Fr. John Nacca.

Is there a special priest in your life you would like to honor? Additional information is on the IPF website www.priestlyformation.org, or phone 402-546-6384.



*My experience at IPF
has made me fall in love
with Jesus Christ in ways
I never imagined
were possible.*

*– Howard Jankowski,
Seminarian, Diocese of
Fort Wayne-South Bend*



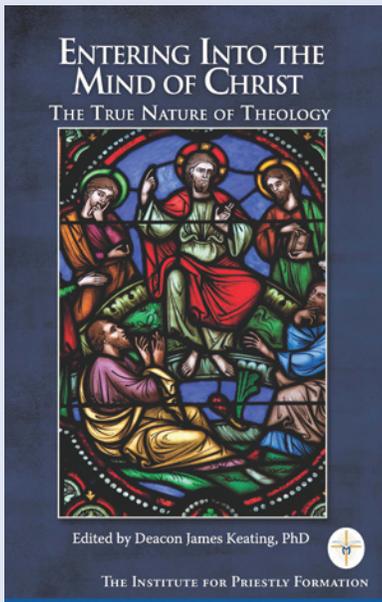
SAINT JOHN PAUL II FUND FOR PRIESTS

Accounts have been established in honor of the following priests:

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SPIRITUAL MOMS PRAY FOR SEMINARIANS DURING IPF FORMATION PROGRAM

By DAVID GOUGER

*The Archdiocese of Omaha Catholic Voice, August 8, 2014
(edited for length)*

They had never met before, but they were far from being strangers.

So seminarian Andrew Natali smiled broadly when he spotted Mary Dulac and her 6-month-old son, Louis.

And the two adults hugged and quickly began chatting as the seminarian from the Diocese of Green Bay for the first time met the woman who had been praying for him as a “Spiritual Mom”.

Taking chairs July 23 at the Friends



program’s faculty and spiritual directors, whom they also meet at Friends Night. Local dads also attend one of the holy hours held each Wednesday during the summer program. This year, 50 men from five states served as spiritual dads, a record number, said Larry Dwyer who helped organize the initiative and is a member of IPF’s Mission Advisory Council.

Friends Night begins with adoration of the Eucharist at St. John Church on



assigned one seminarian and are given his name, diocese and hometown as well as his photo. The seminarians are told there is a woman in Omaha praying for them and are given her name. They are encouraged not to meet, as a way to avoid distracting the men during their studies.

At the same time, other women from the local area as well as others around the country pray for all of the seminarians. More than 300 spiritual moms this year provided a “dome of grace” around



Night gathering, Dulac balanced Louis on her lap, showed Natali a family photo and told him her husband and nine children also prayed for him.

“That was such a grace and a joy to hear,” Natali said.

For 10 weeks, spiritual moms from across the archdiocese and around the country prayed at least one Hail Mary each day for the seminarians attending IPF’s summer program.

Spiritual Moms in the Omaha area are



Creighton’s campus. It continues in the nearby student center ballroom with hugs, smiles and laughter as seminarians and spiritual moms visit and enjoy a program of priests and seminarians talking about their IPF experiences – and the impact the women’s prayers had on their summer.

At their table, Natali and Dulac talked about his family, background and IPF experiences.

“It is a joy to see the face of the person I have been praying for,” Dulac said.



the men through prayer. Beyond the 10 weeks, there is no commitment for the women, but many continue to pray for and stay in touch with their seminarians.

Spiritual moms began in 2008, inspired by 14 women associated with IPF who wanted to respond to then-Pope Benedict XVI’s call for spiritual mothers for all priests and seminarians.

Spiritual dads were added the next year, daily saying a prayer to St. Joseph for the



OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE AWARD

The Institute for Priestly Formation grants its highest award, the medallion of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, to women and men who have given witness with their lives to the value of listening for and responding to Mary's call to live Jesus' own life in our day. This is made possible through exercising in practical ways the great gift of a humble faith. Exercising the gift of faith incarnates the Living Word every day in a wide variety of ways for the Church and the world.

This summer the award was bestowed upon Msgr. John Cippel, priest of the Diocese of St. Petersburg and Mike and Suzie Lawler of Omaha, in profound gratitude for their generous response to Mary's call to live Jesus' own life through acts of charity and lives that give witness to Christian hope.

Msgr. John Cippel, on the "books", is listed as "retired", but his own bishop refers to him as "a hyper-active retired priest." Very beautifully, his bishop also describes him as "Every bishop's dream—a priest in love and on fire with his priesthood." Msgr. Cippel has spent the last two years of his active retired life as spiritual director at St. John Vianney College Seminary, Miami and presently serves as administrator of a large parish in his diocese; previously he served as a seminary professor, hospital chaplain, college history professor, parish pastor and retreat master. Since 2005 he has been actively involved with the mission of IPF, serving as a spiritual director in the seminarian



program, a staff member for the Spiritual Direction Training Program and he has assisted with other programs such as our annual alumni retreat. Msgr. Cippel is a man in love, a man in love with the Lord, a man with a burning desire to help others come to know that love as well.

Mike and Suzie Lawler have generously shared their Catholic faith with many individuals, groups and causes throughout their married lives. Mike attributes his survival in the Viet Nam War to his daily recitation of the Rosary, a practice which both he and Suzie continue daily. Suzie has been an IPF Spiritual Mom praying for seminarians since the program began. Mike has brought his expertise as a financial officer at Tensaska, an energy company headquartered in Omaha, to the service of IPF as a member of our Finance Council and Long Term Financial Sustainability Committee. Both Mike and Suzie support the mission of IPF in countless other ways, including drawing others into this mission, a testimony to their deep love for the Church and her priests.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU...

...to IPF's \$20/Month Club Members!

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To make a tax-deductible donation, complete and return the enclosed envelope, visit our website at www.priestly-formation.org, or call our office at 402-280-3901. Thank you for your generous financial and prayerful support!



UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 16-19

**Federation of Seminary
Spiritual Directors Meeting**
St. Louis, MO

NOVEMBER 3-10

IPF Alumni Retreat
Cenacle of Our Lady of Divine Providence,
Clearwater, FL

NOVEMBER 8

Bishops Advisory Council Meeting
Baltimore, MD

NOVEMBER 9-18

20th Anniversary Pilgrimage to Italy

DECEMBER 6

Advent Morning of Reflection
Christ the King Church, Omaha, Nebraska
For the Laity and the Clergy

JANUARY 11-16

(Section A)

FEBRUARY 8-13

(Section B)

Training Programs in Spiritual Direction
Mundelein Seminary, Chicago, IL

JANUARY 25-FEBRUARY 3

NCDVD Vocation Directors Retreat
Bethany Center, Lutz, FL

FEBRUARY 2-9

IPF Alumni Retreat
Cenacle of Our Lady of Divine Providence,
Clearwater, FL

FEBRUARY 19-21

**Christ the Foundation and Center:
The Integration of Human and
Spiritual Formation Symposium**
St John Vianney Seminary, Denver, CO

MARCH 14

Lenten Morning of Reflection
Christ the King Church, Omaha, NE
For the Laity and the Clergy

APRIL 9

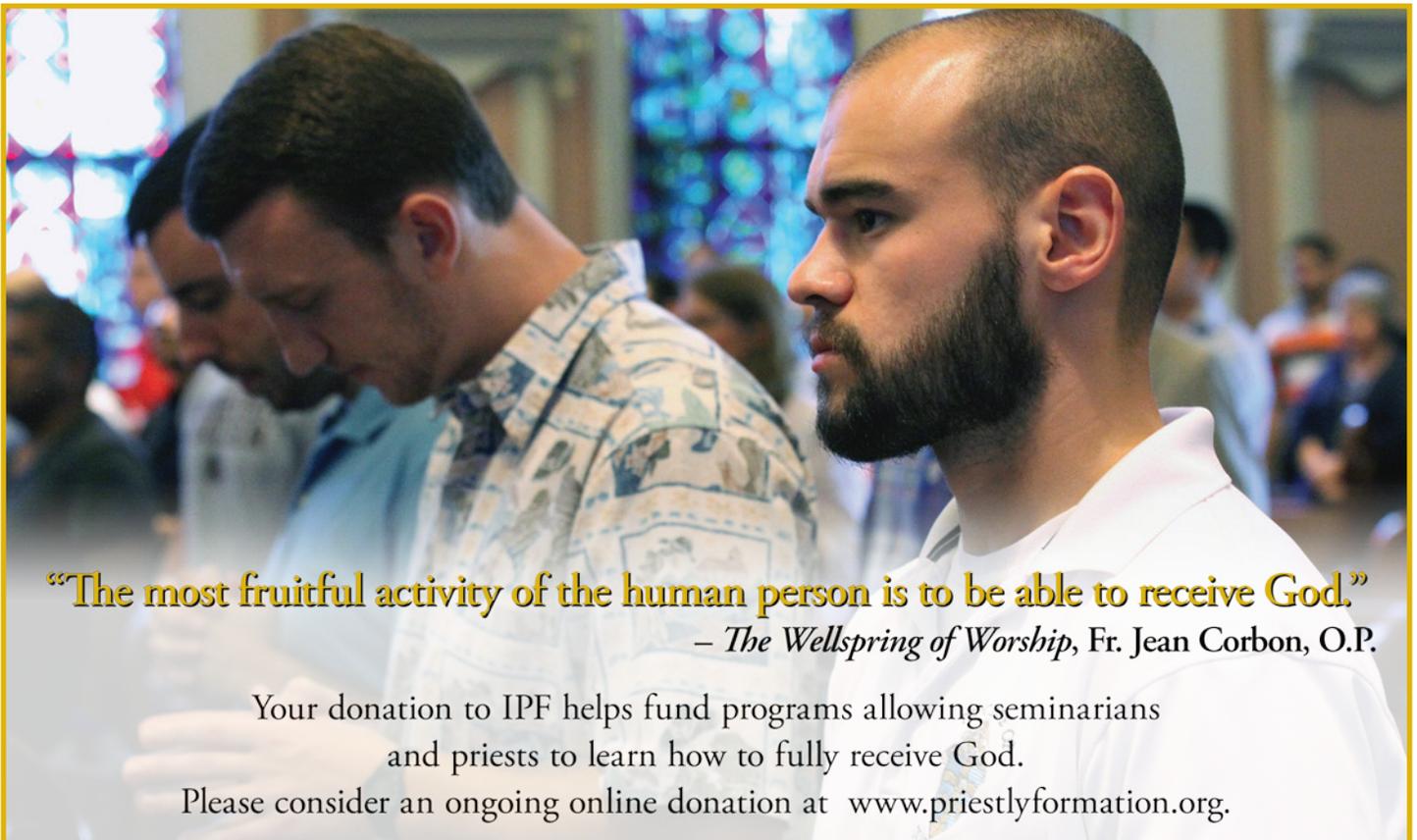
Celebration of Priesthood Banquet
St Robert Bellarmine Church, Omaha, NE
For the Laity and the Clergy



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“The most fruitful activity of the human person is to be able to receive God.”
– *The Wellspring of Worship*, Fr. Jean Corbon, O.P.

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