

August 10, 2017  
Saint Lawrence  
Deacon and Martyr

My Dear Sons of the Church:

Pope Benedict XVI in his homily closing the Year for Priests in June 2010 explained that priests are not mere office holders carrying out functions to sustain a society rather he exercises power of which no human being can do of his own power. The power to absolve, to consecrate; words that heal and transform – this is how the priest carries out his ministry. At ordination the priest receives the sacramental power to bring Jesus Christ to others in a most personal and intimate manner.

However, while ordination supplies these powers a man needs to be prepared on how to use them in service to God's people. The priestly formation program at Notre Dame Seminary presumes a man is ready to embrace the discipline required for discernment and formation. Humility and obedience are absolutely necessary otherwise the seminarian simply observes the prescriptions of the program not internalizing the meaning of formation.

The *horarium* reflects our best efforts in providing you the time and space needed for prayer, study, and fraternity. You, on your part, must integrate the schedule into your own routine taking charge of your formation, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Church, thus allowing the transformation that occurs to be authentic and alive.

The seminary community is a real community envisioned by the Church to be a place where the Word of God is truly growing the seeds of your vocation. The unfolding of God's plan in the life of Christ is mirrored in the transformation that takes place in the life of a seminarian. On the day of your ordination, a man stands before the Church ready and prepared to receive the sacred powers of the priesthood. He does so having been formed into the person after that of Jesus Christ.

Pope Francis has heralded a Church that is able to bring the Mercy of God to all people seeking forgiveness and reconciliation. The *horarium* disposes the seminarian to virtuously live out a rule of life that brings him discipline and structure in order that a future priest can generously be available to minister to the needs of the faithful.

Best wishes for a good year and may the Lord bless your efforts.

Sincerely yours in the Lord,  
Very Reverend James A. Wehner, S.T.D.  
Rector/President