

VOLUME 5, NO. 2 • SPRING 2018

NOTRE DAME SEMINARY

Graduate School of Theology



A Celebration of Life: **Mr. Tom Benson**



Inside
Missionaries and
Shepherds

Canizaro- Honorary
Doctorate

Volunteer Party



Very Rev. James A. Wehner in Jesus Christ. Pray for our men and pray for our faculty—we are all indeed giving glory to God in preparing our men for fruitful, dynamic, priestly ministry!

Missionary Disciples – Missionary Priests

A seminarian cannot become a priest until he gives evidence that he is first a disciple of Jesus Christ. How does a seminarian give evidence of this? The Church has in place a number of measureable benchmarks that touch upon academics, human formation, pastoral aptitude, and spiritual exercises; however, confirming a seminarian has a vocation is not just completing a check-list. The Lord instructs the apostles at the Last Supper that they were chosen so that they may bear fruit and that their fruit would remain. I am delighted that Notre Dame Seminary continues to encourage our seminarians as disciples and challenge them in the Church's mission of salvation



2018 GRADUATION CLASS



1st Row (L-R): Br. Augustine Odhiambo–*Franciscan Missionaries of Hope*, Dcn. Vincent Nguyen–*New Orleans*, Dcn. Martin Ahiaba–*Tyler*, Dcn. Hector Arvizu–*Tyler*, Very Rev. James Wehner–*Rector*, Dcn. Korey LaVergne–*Lafayette*, Dcn. Aaron Williams–*Jackson*, Dcn. Roselio Fuentes–*Tyler*, Br. Francis Matiru–*Franciscan Missionaries of Hope*
2nd Row (L-R): Dcn. Mixie Arcuri–*New Orleans*, Dcn. Thien Nguyen–*New Orleans*, Damian Zablocki–*New Orleans*, Dcn. Paul Birdsall–*Houma-Thibodaux*, Daniel Okafor–*New Orleans*, Dcn. Brent Smith–*Lafayette*, Dcn.

Duane Trombetta–*Shreveport*, Dcn. Samuel Orsot–*Lake Charles*

3rd Row (L-R): Dcn. Cletus Orji–*New Orleans*, Dcn. Timothy Grimes–*Baton Rouge*, Dcn. Nick Adam–*Jackson*, Dcn. Blake Dubroc–*Lafayette*, Dcn. Anh Tuan Phan–*Nashville*, Dcn. Felix Hinambona–*Tororo*

4th Row (L-R): Dcn. Stephen Pellessier–*Lafayette*, Dcn. Joey Lirette–*Houma-Thibodaux*, Dcn. Andrew Schumacher–*Lafayette*

NDS Hosts Visitation for Mr. Tom Benson: *Beloved Benefactor and Friend to Our Community*

This past March, the NDS community hosted the reception and wake of Mr. Tom Benson, owner of the NFL Saints and the NBA Pelicans. Mr. Benson, a faithful Catholic and supporter of many Catholic civic efforts, passed away at the age of 90. Archbishop Aymond presided over the welcome of the body as well as the closing transfer of the body. The two-day wake brought thousands of people to campus. Mrs. Gayle Benson spent both days welcoming every person who filed through the line to pay their respects to Mr. Benson. At the historic Saint Louis King of France Basilica Cathedral, seminarians served the funeral Mass and the Schola welcomed guests in Jackson Square with memorable polyphony and chant. Tom and Gayle have been generous



Deacons from NDS served as pallbearers at the public visitation for Mr. Benson.

benefactors and friends of NDS providing \$7 million to renovate Shaw Hall and \$2 million to renovate the Lourdes House. They chaired the I Will Give You Shepherds Campaign that raised \$18 million for renovations at Saint Joseph Seminary and Notre Dame Seminary. The entire seminary community expresses their sincere gratitude for their generosity and



Mr. Tom Benson, benefactor and friend of NDS, will be greatly missed by the NDS community.



Mrs. Gayle Benson stands with Archbishop Aymond to receive Mr. Benson's casket before the public viewing at NDS.



Archbishop Aymond presided over the reception of Mr. Benson's body.

dedication to NDS. Seminarian Charles Deering speaks on behalf of the seminarian community when he says that Mr. Benson will most importantly be remembered for his "generosity and his venerable example of Christian Charity." Deering adds, "If a man is truly known by the fruits he bears, than it is certainly clear that Mr. Benson was a man of the highest caliber."

"I see in this moment, a beautiful sign of the mystical body of Christ. Mr. Benson offered his gifts to generously support the Church in her material needs and now the Church stands with Mrs. Benson and her loved ones offering immaterial gifts of peace, consolation, and prayer. We pray for Mr. Benson's eternal rest, and we pray for peace and consolation for Mrs. Benson and those in mourning."

—Andrew Rudmann, Archdiocese of New Orleans, on hosting Mr. Benson's Visitation



NDS Schola sings during the ceremony of the reception.

To Say Mass and Hear Confessions... THE ESSENCE OF PRIESTHOOD

by Fr. Brice Higgenbotham—Diocese of Houma/Thibodaux

Associate Pastor at Christ the Redeemer

“What do you want?” my spiritual director asked. In the depths of a 30-day retreat... the depths of silence...the depths of honesty...God and my only to the grace of God I spontaneously responded, “To say Mass and hear Confessions.” Four years later, I stood before my bishop who asked, “Are you resolved to celebrate faithfully...the sacrifice of the Eucharist and the sacrament of Reconciliation, for the glory of God and the sanctification of the Christian people?”

“I am.”

I was...I am...I will be. I don't know how many Confessions I've heard in the past 8 months—how many times God has used me to give forgiveness and freedom to His children. I don't know how many

Masses I've celebrated—how many times I've been blessed to confect and to receive the Most Holy Eucharist. But I do know that this really is what I wanted. I do know that this really is the life for which God made me. I am extraordinarily happy—even, at times, in the midst of immense difficulty.

Over these 8 months of being a priest I have said many times, “I don't know what I expected in becoming a priest, but this is way better than I expected...way harder...and way better.” Happiness lies not in the great and extraordinary things, but in the daily devotion to one's duty. Holiness lies not in the great and extraordinary things, but in generous self-gift before God and His people. Twenty-eight years later, I thank God for the gift of becoming a Christian. Eight months later, I thank Him for the gift of becoming a priest.



PRIESTHOOD: *Shepherding my Flock*

by Fr. Jared Rodrigue- Archdiocese of New Orleans, Parochial Vicar at Mary, Queen of Peace Church

Sometime after ordination, I was asked: “So you've been ordained, now what? What comes next?” I responded, “Well, death I guess.”

Looking back on that now, I wish I would've continued that thought with “...because now I must die to my own desires, my own wants, my own needs, for the sake of my sheep,” but I don't think that's what I really meant. What I meant was, “Well, I'm a priest. What more could I want? Death is the next thing to look forward to.”

And I think to myself now, “What kind of father would say that to his children?” “Ever since I married your mom, I've been looking forward to death. Instead we got you...” That's pretty selfish, and a lot of other things as well.

Since that initial question, I've obviously modified my response. Yes, I do still look forward to death—to the extent that I cannot wait to spend eternity with our loving God, if He should have me—but I also hope to bring as many people there with me or to awaken the desire in others to want to follow me there.

What this looks like practically is: preaching the Lord and His Kingdom from the pulpit and not myself, greeting parishioners outside of Mass to remind them that they have a father, visiting the children at school to remind them that they are being shepherded, acting a fool with the youth to remind them that life should not be taken too seriously, celebrating the Holy Sacrifice devotedly and reverently, pulling people out of the pits of sin and filling those pits with grace in hopes that they'll never fall in again.

This is how I daily learn to die. This is how I hope to take others with me when I go. These are the first days of my participation in the priesthood of Christ.



Endymion Mass

Seminarians established their spot on the neutral ground along Carrollton Ave to watch the Krewe of Endymion parade on Saturday, February 10th. Seminarians and Fr. Wehner gathered on the neutral ground in the early hours of the morning to celebrate daily mass before the parade.



Tết Vietnamese New Year Celebration

On March 10th, NDS celebrated Tết, the Vietnamese Lunar Year in which the Vietnamese seminarians brought the language, cuisine, music arts, and traditions of the Vietnamese culture to NDS. We give thanks for the Vietnamese community at NDS and in the city of New Orleans for their support of the seminary community.



St. Joseph Altar

On Monday, March 19th, the Feast of St. Joseph, the NDS Community erected a traditional St. Joseph Altar. Fr. Joseph Palermo celebrated mass and blessed the altar. Br. John Joseph Bourque coordinated the set-up of the altar with help from other seminarians, lay students, lay volunteers, and NDS Chef, Sammy Marcello. At the end of the day, seminarians traveled around the city to deliver the food from the altar to homeless men and women.

Causeway Cup

Seminarians from Notre Dame Seminary and St. Joseph Seminary challenged each other to a game of soccer in the annual Causeway Cup on Saturday, April 21st. The game was played at the Ochsner Sports Performance Center, the Saint's official training facility. St. Joseph Seminary won the game 4-0.



NDS Forms New Evangelizers: *Missionaries & Shepherds*

Acompaño Mission Trip



Jeb Key with children he ministered to in Granada.

by Jeffery “Jeb” Key, Diocese of Shreveport

Spending a week in Nicaragua after an extremely tiring and demanding semester was a gift from God. It was incredible to get out there amidst the people and serve them. One thing that surprised me above all others, however, was that even though I went to Nicaragua to share the love of Christ with others, I feel like I received Christ’s love much more. Our trip was about ministry in all its parts. Not only did we feed the hungry and house the homeless, but we went down to Nicaragua to search for Christ where no one wants to look for Him.

Among the people of Granada, I had the opportunity to meet with the homeless, the elderly, the orphaned, and many of the clergy. Meeting all of these people who are all part of the Universal Church of Jesus Christ was an incredible experience. Several times in life, there are experiences

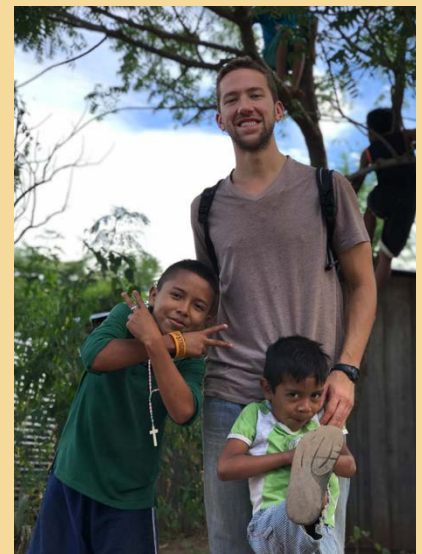
which broaden the understanding of this world, and this was one of those experiences for me. It was incredibly rare during this trip to find someone who knew more than a couple words of English. With my Spanish being similarly limited, I was worried about how I could possibly share my love of God and the Church with these people. However, communicating God’s love comes through actions just as it does through words. Many of them were suffering from hunger and going without, but more than that, these people suffer from a feeling that they are unwanted or unimportant. To these people, words were completely unnecessary in showing the love of Christ. A smile, a hug, or just simply trying to communicate as best as you can says to them “I know you, I see Christ in you.”



“There is real joy in the people of Nicaragua. To be able to share in their joy is beyond humbling. They showed me how to embrace the cross with the fullness of joy.”

—Ajani Gibson, Archdiocese of New Orleans

“Every day on the Acompaño Mission to Nicaragua, my brothers from Notre Dame Seminary, our two brave women, and myself experienced the gift of Mass as a community and then went out to discover authentic beauty and truth through Enculturation. We shared, as St. Paul says, “not only the Word of God but our very selves.” I realized my greatest blessing through the heart wrenching goodbyes with those humble families who radiated Christ’s love to us.”

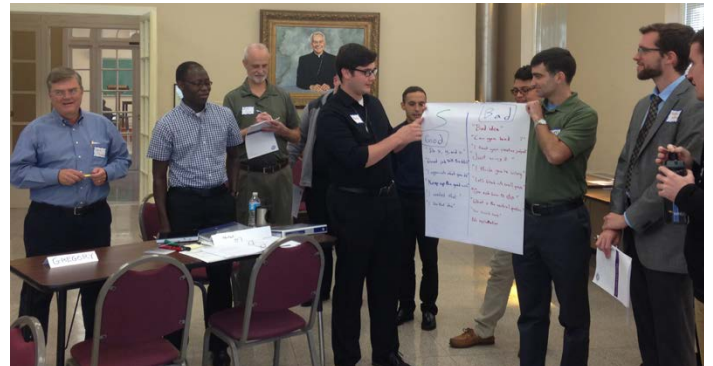


—Elijah Thomson, Diocese of Dallas

Catholic Leadership Institute

Effective leadership is paramount to creating and building authentic, vibrant Catholic communities. Notre Dame Seminary requires all seminarians to take part in a formation program called the Catholic Leadership Institute. The Catholic Leadership Institute (CLI) is designed to allow seminarians, our future priests, to better understand the demands of ministry and to learn how to effectively lead a parish by focusing on leadership instincts and practical skills. Seminarians partake in a weekend long workshop led by CLI Leadership Consultants. Fr. Deo Ekisa, Vice Rector and CLI Coordinator, says, "CLI is conducted in two workshops. The first module helps the seminarians to learn their personality and its general strengths and weaknesses so that they can understand why they tend to act in a particular

way and respond accordingly. The second module helps the seminarians apply what they have learned particularly to their seminary formation by writing SMART goals for their human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation." By taking part in this institute, seminarians learn to become more holy, healthy, and happy shepherds of vibrant parish communities, which will allow them to lead more people to a deeper relationship with Christ.



A group of seminarians present what they learned during a workshop of CLI.



Seminarians partake in a group discussion led by the CLI Leadership Consultant.

"I thought that I had a pretty good idea of my leadership abilities going into the program, but I enjoyed learning more about myself. As I read the results of my DISK profile, I began to laugh. The results were spot on. My table group shared our results and discussed the particular needs which each of our personalities require for successful teamwork. As future pastors, we will be communicating the Gospel message to others who experience the message differently than what we do. It's the same message, but received differently. Communication is key, and so is understanding. CLI enriched the way I understand myself and those around me, and it has better prepared me for my leadership role in the Church. The learning continues!"

—Rusty Bruce, Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux

Support Our NDS Missionaries and Shepherds

Donations to help fund The Acompaño Mission Trip and The Catholic Leadership Institute can be made online at www.nds.edu/donate-now. Designation can be selected on the drop down menu. You can also make a donation by returning the envelope insert in this newsletter. Checks should be made payable to *Notre Dame Seminary* and mailed to 2901 S. Carrollton Ave, New Orleans, LA, 70118. For more information, please contact the Development Office at (504) 866-7426, ext. 374 or 375.

Mr. Joseph Canizaro: *His Yes to the New Evangelization*

by David Keran, Diocese of Alexandria

Mr. Joseph Canizaro is a man of many accomplishments: Commercial real estate, financial enterprises, business successes spanning several decades, and an extensive history of community service name just a few of these accomplishments. Yet Mr. Canizaro talks about these very matter-of-factly, as though these accomplishments – while fulfilling challenges in themselves – are secondary compared to a deeper pursuit and a greater meaning of success.

His contributions to Catholic education are an especially evident part of this pursuit, as his way of participating in the Gospel instruction to teach the truths of the Faith to others.

Particularly at NDS, Mr. Canizaro has been instrumental to several recent campaigns including the *Priestly Formation Campaign* of 2010, the *I Will Give you Shepherds*

Campaign of 2012, and the *Handing On the Faith* endowment in support of the various education programs that NDS offers to the laity.

Yet, what stands out about Mr. Canizaro's giving and support is not the individual numbers or the many years he has been a faithful promoter of Catholic education, but rather the conviction that he brings to this mission. It is evident in his passion for sharing the Truth that his business talents are at the service of his dedication to living the Gospel command to teach the Faith to others. After interviewing him, my most lasting impression of Mr. Canizaro is that while he is a man

who *enjoys* and is *happy* to promote seminary formation, he is more so *convicted* of a tremendous sense of its importance. There is an intensity to the ways in which he has said yes to being part of the New Evangelization that reveals his passion for Christ and the Church.

As evidenced by the various dimensions of priestly formation, education is not all about academics, and Mr.

Canizaro readily shares the impact that an active spiritual life has on every facet of daily life. Eucharistic Adoration is a devotion which he promotes very actively, and he notes that priests who are well formed and “excited and happy” about being priests will touch a great many lives, who in turn will touch other lives. “Your happiness,” he says, “*has* to show in the pulpit.” He relates how he has been inspired by the teaching and preaching of priests, an

experience that brings his involvement full circle: Having supported, encouraged, and provided for Catholic education and seminary formation, he is able to experience the fruit of that formation as a parishioner in the pew. Likewise, evangelizing the laity through the programs NDS offers will in turn cause a

chain reaction of evangelizing interactions.

When asked for his thoughts about the honorary Doctor of Letters degree that he will receive from NDS in May 2018, Mr. Canizaro professes a humble confusion over why he is the one singled out for this honor. Yet the reason is clear: He has shown a faith-filled and genuine conviction for following the Gospel instruction to go and teach all nations. And while this – the greatest wisdom of all – is not well enough recognized by even the greatest of academic degrees, we offer him this degree and our prayers in a spirit of gratitude for his example of wisdom in following the Lord.



Fr. Jim Wehner, Archbishop Gregory Aymond, Mr. Joseph Canizaro, and Archbishop Alfred Hughes



Archbishop Aymond and Fr. Wehner present Mr. Joseph Canizaro with an Honorary Doctorate from NDS



Mr. Joseph Canizaro with his wife, Sue Ellen (right), and his daughter, Jill (left)

THANK YOU FOR GIVING BACK

On behalf of NDS, Dcn. Andrew Schumacher accepted a beautiful George IV silver cruet set donated by Mrs. Anna Maria Mitchell.

Mrs. Mitchell also underwrote the cost of the beautiful, new altar rug in the seminary chapel.

The Louisiana State Council Knights of Columbus made an extremely generous donation of \$13,000 to Notre Dame Seminary's Acompaño Mission Trip Fund. Fr. Joseph Kraft, Fr. Deo Ekisa, and Dcn. Aaron Williams accepted the check on behalf of the seminary community.



A Special Thanks to our Donors and Underwriters for improvements to the Seminary by their contributions

Rev. Richard Fabre
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David & Laura Melancon
Dr. Lynne Neitzschman
Mrs. Mary H. Picou
Ronnie & Gwen Briggs
Mr. and Mrs. Ashton Brisolara
Mr. and Mrs. James S. Hotard
Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Rome
Dr. and Mrs. Truyen Vu
Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Massett
Mrs. C.A. St. Martin
Ms. Suzanne Farina
Fr. Douglas Brougher
Mr. Henry Dagro
Rev. W. Greff Elliott
Randy & Lyn Dickmann
Mr. Robert Charbonnet
Mr. John Carville
William & Sylinda Ward

Support Notre Dame Seminary

If you enjoy receiving the NDS Newsletter, please consider making a donation to Notre Dame Seminary to help underwrite its cost.

Should you be interested in making a donation to Notre Dame Seminary, please contact the Development Office at (504) 866-7426, ext. 375.

Ministry on the Peripheries

by Will Fruge, Diocese of Lake Charles

At Notre Dame Seminary, there are a variety of opportunities for participating in pastoral ministry. Each year a seminarian applies for a type of pastoral ministry, many of which involve ministry on the peripheries. Pope Francis speaks on the recurring and important concept of ministering to those on the “outskirts” of society by reaching out to the poor and social outcasts. For example, some seminarians go to nursing homes in order to visit the sick and elderly, who are so often forgotten by their families and friends; some go to weekly visitations at a ministry, which offers housing and assistance for people living with HIV/AIDS; and some attend mass at predominantly Hispanic communities in order to interact with those who are struggling with speaking the English language. Furthermore, our apostolic committee usually schedules a group visit each semester to a prison as well as a residential community ministering to those with disabilities. Pope Francis encourages our Church to reach out to those who have been pushed aside for whatever reason. When speaking on the idea of ministering to those on the peripheries, Pope Francis says, “We will not find the Lord unless we truly accept the mar-

ginalized. Total openness to serving others is our hallmark, it alone is our title of honor!”

At Notre Dame Seminary, we strive to embrace Pope Francis’ teaching. When I first arrived at seminary nearly two years ago, I was intrigued by some of the older seminarians and a special ministry they started at NDS. I saw

“Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the “peripheries” in need of the light of the Gospel.”

—Pope Francis,
in *Evangelii Gaudium*

them delivering bread and cookies to the homeless who sit outside Ozanam Inn on Sunday mornings. At the start of my second semester, these men were kind enough to invite me to join them in their ministry. Since that time, several other seminarians and myself wake up early on Sunday mornings and bake bread and cookies to bring to the homeless. We talk and visit with them – just before we attend morning mass together – in hopes of sharing the love of Christ with them. However, they themselves are the ones who teach us about the Lord – through their examples of humility, vulnerability, honesty, and their firm trust in God’s care for them. Pope Francis teaches, “In every suffering brother and sister that

we embrace, we embrace the suffering Body of Christ.” As boundaries are crossed and we visit these homeless men and women, there is a mutual embrace and connection established because of the belief in God’s never-ending love.

*Will Fruge,
Br. John Joseph Bourque,
and Andrew Sanchez
bake bread and cookies
to bring to Ozanam Inn
on Sunday mornings.*





Over 40 priests con-celebrated the Alumni Day Mass in the NDS Chapel

ALUMNI DAY 2018

On Thursday, February 8, 2018, Notre Dame Seminary alumni traveled from all over the gulf coast to attend Alumni Day. Alumni Day gives our alumni the opportunity to visit campus, celebrate Mass, reconnect with classmates, and celebrate another year of their priestly ministry. Among those celebrating milestone anniversaries was Bishop Robert Muench, who was ordained for the Archdiocese of New Orleans in 1968. Bishop Muench currently serves as the Bishop of Baton Rouge and celebrated his 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. At



Celebrating his 25th ordination anniversary, Fr. Pat Williams gave the homily at the Alumni Day Mass

the Alumni Day Mass, Bishop Muench was awarded with the Good Shepherd Award for his priestly ministry and outstanding commitment to the mission of the Church. Also celebrating a milestone anniversary was the Very Rev. Pat Williams, former

rector of Notre Dame Seminary, who celebrated his 25th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. Fr. Pat was ordained in 1993 for the Archdiocese of New Orleans and currently serves as both the Vicar General of Clergy for the Archdiocese of New Orleans and pastor at St. Pius X Church. Fr. Pat delivered the homily reflecting on the humble way in which God's power and mercy touches the lives of those who seek the will of God. Following Mass, alumni, faculty, and fourth year theologians, enjoyed a reception and lunch served by our third year theologians.



Archbishop Gregory Aymond (left) and Archbishop Alfred Hughes (right) stand with Bishop Robert Muench, The Good Shepherd Award Recipient

Fr. Andrew Louth: Lecture on Orthodox and Roman Catholic Relations

by Jason Songe, Archdiocese of New Orleans

Fr. Andrew Louth, a priest of the Russian Orthodox Church, addressed seminarians and lay people on March 2nd in Schulte Auditorium with his lecture, “Fact and Fiction in the Great Schism.” This was the debut in a Notre Dame Seminary program that will address relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Catholic Church. The Very Rev. James A. Weh-

ner, Rector/President of NDS, began the lecture by introducing the significance of the lecture series. Wehner said, “Notre Dame Seminary is the only Catholic seminary to provide an Orthodox Catholic lecture series. It will provide an Orthodox Catholic formation for our seminarians considering the theological and liturgical traditions of the Church, and the program will provide seminarians with a better understanding of unification efforts and what areas still need to be addressed to remove obstacles for Church unity.”

The series is made possible by the generosity of local businessman Mr. John Georges and his wife Dathel. Georges, a member of the Greek Orthodox Church, attended Fr. Louth’s lecture and spoke beforehand. “I think we’re one Church,” Georges said, “We began as one Church and I believe we’ll remain one Church. This is about learning each other’s traditions and resolving all the myths. I look forward to many years of conversations,

particularly with our seminarians, who are our teachers going forward.”

Before Fr. Louth was introduced by Dr. Tom Neal, Director of Intellectual Formation at NDS, the seminary schola sang a traditional Russian setting of the Beatitudes. Dr. Neal began by saying that “Fr. Louth is a man who clearly lives deeply out of the faith he teaches and writes on so

brilliantly.” Dr. Neal mentioned Fr. Louth’s accomplishments, which included studying at the University of Cambridge and teaching at the University of Oxford.

Fr. Louth began the lecture by providing a history of the schism between the Churches and outlined continued disagreements, including unleavened vs. leavened bread, the Petrine primacy, and use of the Filioque. Fr. Louth said the only way to true reconciliation is dialogue and that recent delegations from one Church to the other on larger feast days were a symbolic yet positive step. “It’s a development that can’t do harm and will encourage those who are engaged on a more humble level regarding engagement between East and West,” Fr. Louth said. After the lecture, questions were taken from the audience. Seminarian Dcn. Aaron Williams asked Fr. Louth’s opinion on the modern Roman liturgy. “Making the liturgy more accessible using the vernacular is something that the Orthodox ought to welcome,” Fr. Louth said. “Not that

all Orthodox would, but they ought to. Vatican II’s idea that people should pray in their own mother tongue is something we should embrace.”

The lecture given by Fr. Andrew Louth was the first in a series of lectures about relations between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Catholic Churches that will be hosted at Notre Dame Seminary. To view a video of Fr. Louth’s entire lecture, visit www.nds.edu.



Fr. Jim Wehner, Fr. Andrew Louth, and Mr. John Georges at the lecture made possible because of the generosity of The John and Dathel Georges Endowment for Orthodox and Catholic Relations at The Catholic Foundation.

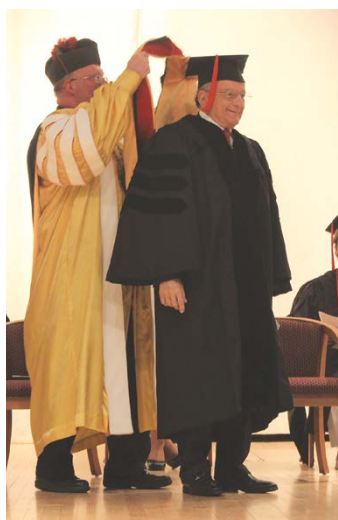


Dcn. Aaron Williams from the Diocese of Jackson, MS participates in the Q&A portion of the lecture.

NDS Graduation Ceremony

On Thursday, May 10th, fifty-seven graduates, both seminarians and lay students, received diplomas at the commencement ceremony which took place at Notre Dame Seminary. The day began with the Baccalaureate Mass in the NDS Chapel for graduates and their families. Students, families, and friends then gathered in Schulte Auditorium for the commencement ceremony, where both bachelor and master degrees were conferred.

Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond, Chancellor of Notre Dame Seminary, and Fr. Jim Wehner, Rector/President of Notre Dame Seminary, presented Mr. Joseph Canizaro with an Honorary Doctorate from Notre Dame Seminary. The Doctor of Letters degree is bestowed on bishops, clergy, and community leaders who have made a unique and significant impact on the mission of the seminary. Mr. Joseph Canizaro has been a consistent leader in promoting Catholic education in our community



Fr. Wehner hoods Mr. Joseph Canizaro as a Doctor of Letters at the graduation ceremony

and a devout leader in promoting the formation of future priests. He chaired the Priestly Formation Campaign that raised substantial funds to recruit and retain faculty, and contributed to the I Will Give You Shepherds Campaign that funded a multi-million dollar renovation of the seminary campus. Joe has been a regular, visible, and generous friend to our seminarians and faculty.

We congratulate all of our graduates on their many years of hard work and give them our prayers as they continue to answer God's call and minister to His people.



Fr. Jim Wehner and Dcn. Cletus Orji, Archdiocese of New Orleans



Both seminarians and lay students celebrate after receiving their diplomas



Deacons Brent Smith, Stephen Pellessier, Korey LaVergne, Blake Dubroc, and Andrew Schumacher from the Diocese of Lafayette



Lay Graduates Ian Hoerner, Michaela York, Renee Giffin, and Josephine Duke

The Lay Programs at Notre Dame Seminary are accepting applications for the new summer semester!

The Lay Programs include academic coursework in theology, as well as formation in the human, spiritual, and pastoral dimensions, taking into account the “whole person” and transforming students toward ministe-

rial leadership in a variety of settings. We encourage anyone who is interested to learn more at nds.edu/laymasterprograms or contact the MA office by email at maoffice@nds.edu or by phone at 504.866.7426 ext. 742.

Volunteer Party

Many of our dedicated volunteers gathered at Notre Dame Seminary on Thursday, April 12th for our annual **Pool Side Volunteer Party**. We were able to celebrate all of the men and women who have given their time in service to NDS this past year. We sincerely thank our volunteers for their commitment and countless hours of service to NDS, as they are truly the hands and feet of Christ!



Yvette LaCour, Danny Roussel, and Caroline Thriffley: We thank seminarian Danny Roussel for serving the NDS Community as the Seminarian Liaison for the Development Office for the past 2 years!



David and Lisa Aucoin with seminarian Luis Valencia. David and Lisa volunteer as a Companion Family—which is a program that pairs international seminarians with local families who offer the seminarians support and encouragement during their time at NDS.



Larry and Abby Brown donate their time every year on the evening of the Gala. They work tirelessly in the kitchen to coordinate and serve all of the delicious food dishes donated from restaurants around the city.



Guests enjoy a delicious pool side dinner!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT—Lisa Thriffley and Rhonda Tusa

Notre Dame Seminary is grateful to the many volunteers who graciously support our mission through their countless hours of service to the seminary. This spring, we recognize two of our dedicated volunteers—Mrs. Lisa Thriffley and Mrs. Rhonda Tusa. Always eager to lend a helping hand, Lisa and Rhonda have served NDS in numerous capacities and currently serve with their husbands as chair-couples for our annual Gala and Auction.

Lisa is married to husband, Tim, and they are parents to Zachary, Caroline, and Andrew. Lisa served as President of CCSCC from 2008-2010 and is still an active member of CCSCC where she serves on the Keep Christ in Christmas Committee. Lisa is also an active member of the Ladies of the Shield at Brother Martin High School, where both her husband and oldest son attended. Lisa began volunteering at NDS in 2014 and continues to give of her time to NDS.



Rhonda Tusa (left) and Lisa Thriffley (right)

Rhonda is married to husband, Frank, and they are parents to Francesca. Rhonda is an active parishioner at St. Clement of Rome Parish in Metairie. Rhonda served as the president of the parent clubs for her daughter's preschool and grammar school. From 2009-2013, Rhonda also served as the President of MCA's Parent Association and was an active member of CCSCC. Rhonda began volunteering at NDS in 2013 and is always bringing new ideas to the table to help better our fundraising events.

Truly Sisters in Christ, Lisa and Rhonda have a blast working together on everything that they do. They truly have a special place in their heart for the NDS community, and we have a special place in our hearts for them!

Thank You for Supporting NDS Fundraising Events

Christmas Luncheon for Priests

Friends of NDS gathered for the annual Christmas Luncheon for Priests at The Roosevelt Hotel on Wednesday, November 29, 2017. Mrs. Cindy Nolan, our 2017 Honorary Chairperson, was recognized during the



luncheon for her tremendous gift of service and her commitment to the mission of NDS. We would like to thank our 2017 event co-chairs, Allison Talley, Wendy Vitter, and Kay Smith for their dedication and leadership as well as Sueann North and Ana Tumminello, who served as our Auction Chairpersons. The seminary community is grateful to the entire Christmas Luncheon committee for generously donating their time in preparation for this event.

Archbishop Aymond presented Mrs. Cindy Nolan as the Christmas Luncheon's 2017 Honorary Chairperson.



Seminarian Andrew Rudmann and Archbishop Aymond present Mrs. Gayle Benson with flowers after revealing the plans for the Gayle and Tom Benson House of Priestly Formation.

Chancellor's Dinner

Notre Dame Seminary held its fourth annual Chancellor's Dinner on Monday, March 5th where the seminary community and friends of NDS gathered to honor Archbishop Alfred C. Hughes as he celebrated sixty years of priestly



Archbishop Aymond and Cardinal DiNardo, Cardinal of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and President of the USCCB, congratulate Archbishop Hughes after receiving the St. John Vianney Award.



Guests representing the Office of Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of New Orleans enjoyed a delicious dinner catered by Pigeon Catering following the award presentation.

ministry to our Church. Archbishop Aymond, the Chancellor of Notre Dame Seminary, spoke about Archbishop Hughes' undying love for the Church and for the priesthood. Archbishop Aymond

recalled Archbishop Hughes' years as Archbishop of New Orleans and thanked him for saying "yes" to God's call sixty years ago and for continuing to say "yes" every day. Fr. Wehner and Archbishop Aymond presented Archbishop Hughes with the St. John Vianney Award for being an exemplary model of priestly virtue.



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Graduate School of Theology
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SAVE THE DATE

— CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON FOR PRIESTS —

Tuesday, November 27, 2018

Mass at Immaculate Conception Church

Luncheon at The Roosevelt Hotel

— SPRING GALA & AUCTION —

Saturday, March 30, 2019

Notre Dame Seminary

*For more information, please contact the Development Office at
(504) 866-7426, ext. 375 or visit www.nds.edu.*