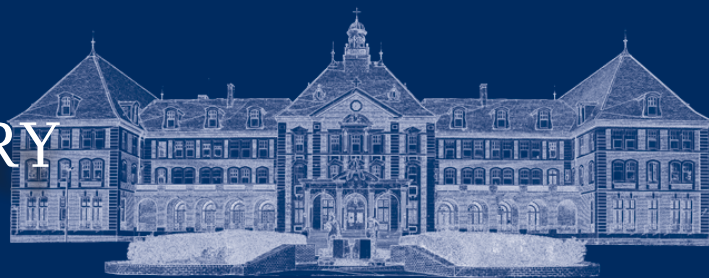


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NOTRE DAME SEMINARY

Graduate School of Theology



T4 Class of 2021

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Giving



Very Rev. James A. Wehner
Rector/President

MEN OF GRATITUDE AND THANKSGIVING

I remind the seminarians that we are not born “virtuous” rather we are born “good” because we are created in the image of God. Virtue is the result of good habits; vice is the result of bad habits. Gratitude is a virtue, which means we have to form good habits in order for gratitude to become a virtuous disposition. Seminarians are provided with excellent formation; the goodwill and prayers of many lay, religious, and ordained benefactors; a healthy fraternal life; and solid spiritual direction, which prepares them for lives of service to God’s People. Therefore, the seminarians and all of us at NDS are truly grateful for the blessings we receive from God and from you, particularly during a historical moment when people have lost their jobs and livelihood, when many organizations and ministries are suffering because of a lack of resources, and when families experience the struggle of tension and anxiety. Yet, people continue to be generous to the mission of NDS. The seminarians and I are truly grateful in the deepest meaning of that virtue. It is troubling when parishioners and laity see in their shepherds those who are not grateful, which is at the root of clericalism. I can assure you that we are intentional about forming future priests who are grateful for the blessings that they receive from the Lord and from you.

T4 CLASS OF 2021

(class photo on cover)

Dcn. Lennin Arroyo, *New Orleans*

Dcn. David Bailey, *Tyler*

Dcn. Thomas Bamoah, *Yendi*

Dcn. Michael Beverung, *Lake Charles*

Dcn. Daniel Dashner, *New Orleans*

Dcn. David Dawson III, *Baton Rouge*

Dcn. Casey Dugas, *Lafayette*

Dcn. Ajani Gibson, *New Orleans*

Zachary Howick, *Houma-Thibodaux*

Dcn. Raney Johnson, *Shreveport*

Dcn. Robert Johnson, *Alexandria*

Dcn. Bobby Kennedy, *Alexandria*

Dcn. Leszek Kwasniowski, *Biloxi*

Dcn. Michael Lamy, *New Orleans*

Dcn. Clement Manjas, *Tororo*

Dcn. AJ Motte, *Tyler*

Dcn. William Mumphrey, *New Orleans*

Dcn. Paul Nacey, *Atlanta*

Dcn. Nicholas Nappier, *Tyler*

Dcn. Dennis Obienu, *New Orleans*

Dcn. Jonathan Perez, *Memphis*

Br. Augustine Pham, *CRM*

Br. Benedict Pham, *CRM*

Dcn. Truong Pham, *New Orleans*

Dcn. Connor Poirrier, *Lafayette*

Dcn. Tomasz Powroznik, *Biloxi*

Dcn. Danny Roussel, *Baton Rouge*

Dcn. Andrew Sanchez, *New Orleans*

Dcn. Taylor Sanford, *Baton Rouge*

Dcn. Juan Torres, *Dallas*

Eugene Udemba, *Dallas*

Dcn. Casey Weber, *Memphis*

Thank You

Dear Alumni, Benefactors, Volunteers, and Friends of Notre Dame Seminary:

On behalf of the seminarians, I write to extend a word of gratitude for the many ways you support NDS. For so many, the past year has brought unexpected difficulties and challenges, but at Notre Dame Seminary, we have been encouraged and inspired by your prayers and support as our formation continued.

Although a difficult year, it has been filled with many blessings and unexpected graces. As a community, we have been able to spend more time in front of the Blessed Sacrament in Adoration where we pray for all those who continue to be affected by the pandemic. In addition, much of our free time and weekends were spent on campus in order to limit our contact with those who may be ill. Because of this, we have been able to spend more time in intentional fraternity through things like sports, playing cards, and coffee chats.

Please know that we do not take your prayers and support for granted. Because of you, our formation was able to continue safely and in-person, and for that, we offer our sincerest gratitude.

As we finish our 2020-2021 academic year, we reflect on the challenges, acknowledge our growth, and look forward to the future. Please continue to keep my brother seminarians and me in your prayers as we prepare for summer assignments and ordinations.

In Christ,

Steven Chabarria, Diocese of Tyler
Seminarian Association President



Spending time as a community in front of the Blessed Sacrament has been a true gift this semester.



We were happy to welcome back our Deacon Class in January who spent the Fall semester in their home dioceses due to the pandemic.



Michael Vidrine serves coffee at the Capp Bar. The Capp Bar has come to be a place where seminarians spend time in fraternity and get to know one another.

CANDLEMAS

“Christ is the Light of the nations”— On Tuesday, February 2nd, the seminary community celebrated Candlemas, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. Processing into the chapel with lighted candles symbolizes the Christ child bringing light into the world of darkness.



ST. JOSEPH'S FEAST DAY

The Most Rev. David Toups, Bishop of Beaumont, delivered a formation conference to the seminary community as we celebrate the “Year of Saint Joseph.” The bishop made the visit on the Solemnity of Saint Joseph in which he celebrated Mass and then blessed the customary St. Joseph Altar. Several thousand dollars and gift items were donated so that seminarians could pack and distribute care packages for the homeless in the city of New Orleans.



Mass for Racial Harmony

On January 18th, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the Most Rev. Shelton Fabre, Bishop of the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, celebrated Mass for the intention of racial harmony in our city, state, and nation. The seminary community is dedicated to addressing the sin of racism and desires to live as a unified body of Christ.



First-Year Priest: Living Priesthood Fully

by Alumnus Fr. Daniel Duplantis ('20), Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux

If you had told me at the beginning of Fourth Theology that my first year of priesthood would be spent ministering during a global pandemic, I am not sure I would have believed you. The pandemic and the first year of priesthood have presented unique ministry opportunities. My very first month was spent on active duty at Barksdale AFB with the 2nd Bomb Wing. It was there that I encountered one of the greatest challenges in ministry thus far: crisis counseling. While this particular ministry can be extremely challenging, it is also extremely rewarding. As priests, we are often God's instruments for answered prayers.

The most rewarding aspect of priesthood for me is being able to use my God-given gifts in my ministry. Our gifts, talents, hobbies, and experiences are what make us relatable as priests. I have been very blessed to get back into martial arts training on a regular basis. I have also had the joy of working with various Catholic schools in my diocese by filling in as a substitute teacher and saxophone



Fr. Daniel Duplantis currently serves in the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux as the Parochial Vicar at the Cathedral of St. Francis de Sales. Fr. Daniel is also co-sponsored by the Archdiocese for Military Services, USA.

instructor. The students love getting to pick their priests' brains, so I try to avail myself to the schools as much as possible.

All this being said, priesthood can be very *BUSY*. My advice for seminarians in formation right now is not to overlook the value of self-care. You have to pace yourself and set good personal boundaries. Take your day off weekly,

take time for personal prayer, use your vacation days, and get involved in activities you enjoy. Your ministry will be most fruitful when your own tank is full. Priesthood is a very rewarding vocation, and we who are called are very blessed to receive this wonderful gift!



Fr. Daniel Duplantis celebrates a wedding during his first year as a priest.



Fr. Daniel finds time for martial arts, which is a hobby he has had since he was a child.



Students at a Catholic school learn about the saxophone from Fr. Daniel!

AS IRON SHARPENS IRON: *How Sports & Fitness Enhance Seminary Formation*

by Freddy Rodriguez, Archdiocese of New Orleans

St. John Paul II, through his teachings on what would come to be known as the Theology of the Body, would teach on the importance of the human body, and how it, being made in the image of God, can glorify the most high. The Holy Father would go on to write:

“Playing sport has become very important today, since it can encourage young people to develop important values such as loyalty, perseverance, friendship, sharing, and solidarity.”

As the world continues to be held in the clutches of a pandemic, it has caused much disruption to not just ordinary life, but to the human formation aspects of seminary life.

Yet, Notre Dame Seminary did not stay stagnant, but rather, the seminarians adapted and brought to life new initiatives to help not only pass the time, but also bring the community together, grow in holiness, and use the human



Thomas Gaines and Freddy Rodriguez play a game of rugby.

bodies to bring even greater glory to God.

From pick-up games of volleyball, to a wiffle ball league, and even the startup of a rugby club, the men of Our Lady's seminary have looked to the sports realm to give an added dimension to the element of human formation. As the Holy Father stated, it “develops important values such as loyalty, perseverance, friendship, sharing and solidarity.” Sports bring an avenue that allows the seminarians to not only let off steam, which is necessary in light of the pandemic, but to also help build each other up. As the old proverb states, “As iron sharpens iron, so does one man sharpen another” (Proverb 27:17). In the different sports, we see the men of Notre Dame Seminary tested in unique ways that challenge

them to grow. Some ways we see this is in the “Fit for Priesthood” Program that challenges the men to work out, thus increasing their own strength and stamina. We see the men forming running groups to encourage one other and push themselves to go further and longer than before. Some of the men, who never played contact sports before, are now running into full on tackles in rugby, showing an increase in the masculine trait of courage, that our world seems to frown against as it looks to systematically redefine what it means to be a man. The impact sports have made in the formation process cannot be denied. The men of Notre Dame Seminary have adapted to the challenges thrown at them because of COVID-19 and have become stronger for it.



Dale Sullivan takes the plate during a game of wiffle ball.



Champions of the Tennis Tournament (left to right): Br. Benedict Pham 2nd, Allen-Michael Muench 1st, and Will Whitlow 3rd

NDS Welcomes 3 New Dioceses: Beaumont, San Angelo, & Savannah

The 2020-2021 academic year at Notre Dame Seminary brought on many challenges, but our seminarians handled the year with grace, patience, and perseverance. For five seminarians, they not only entered Notre Dame Seminary in the middle of a pandemic, but as some of the first men from their dioceses in recent years to begin formation at NDS. Three men from each of the new dioceses offer reflections on their first year in formation at NDS.

Diocese of Beaumont, TX

"I am one of two new men from the Diocese of Beaumont, and this academic year was the first time that our diocese has sent to Notre Dame Seminary in roughly 10 years. NDS is a wonderful place for discerning the priesthood of Jesus Christ. In many ways, seminarians are challenged to become the best man that they can be. I have found this to be a great blessing. All in all, being a part of this community has helped me in many ways, especially in my understanding of the spiritual and intellectual traditions of the Church." –Aaron Griffith



Aaron Griffith (left) and Max Medina (right) with the Bishop of the Diocese of Beaumont, Bishop David Toups.

Diocese of San Angelo, TX

"Deciding to begin seminary formation in normal times takes a lot of intense prayer and reflection, but coming into a new seminary that your diocese has never sent to in the middle of a pandemic adds many facets to the first year seminary experience. Despite my worries, I have never felt more welcomed by a community than at NDS. The welcome I received from the orientation team and all of the faculty/staff during orientation week really allowed myself and other new seminarians to get a great start with seminary formation. Although this year has looked different in many aspects, I am truly appreciative of the formation at NDS which has allowed me to understand what it means to be a seminarian." –Joshua Basse



Joshua Basse serves Mass at NDS with the Bishop of San Angelo, Bishop Michael Sis, as the celebrant.

Diocese of Savannah, GA

"Prior to attending NDS, many people told me that it was one of the best seminaries in the country, and, after my first year, I'd have to agree. The program for priestly formation here at NDS has built off my previous seminarian formation from St. Joseph Seminary College very well. The formation staff here has continued to challenge me and my brother seminarians to grow in all four pillars of formation: human, intellectual, spiritual, and pastoral, so as to become a well-rounded Catholic gentleman so that I may later become a well-rounded priest that longs to serve God and His flock back in the Diocese of Savannah." –Kevin Braski



Will Cook (left) and Kevin Braski (right) with the Bishop of Savannah, Bishop Stephen Parkes, and the Vocations Director, Fr. Pablo Migone.

Raising Our Voices to the Lord: SACRED MUSIC FORMATION

The Schola spends time weekly practicing and sings daily at Mass.

by Joseph Fiorentino, Archdiocese of Atlanta

"The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for this preeminence is that, as sacred song united to the words, it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy" (Sacrosanctum Concilium 112). Sacred Music is an important part of Catholic Liturgy and has been since the earliest times of the Church. St. Augustine, an early Church Father, is often attributed as stating that "when we sing, we pray twice."

There is something intrinsically beautiful about music that lifts the heart and mind to God and helps to move us deeper into prayer. I have come to the realization of this reality over the course of my five years in seminary formation. I have fallen in love with music and have dedicated the last five years of my life to serving my communities through sacred music and immersing myself in the Church's tradition of music. I sing whenever and wherever I can. For this reason, people often hear me well before they see me, and I have achieved the recognition of not being able to stop singing. That being said, I am a member of the Schola Cantorum here at Notre Dame Seminary and the formation we are receiving in sacred music has helped me even better to enter into the Mass. We are formed in the Tradition of the Church through the Church's documents on sacred music and have the opportunity to learn different types of sacred music: chants, polyphonies, and hymns. While we are formed in the Church's tradition, we are also given

the opportunity to grow in brotherhood and fraternity with the members of our Schola. We spend many hours together practicing, laughing, and learning. We do all this for the glory of God and to lead the faithful deeper into the Sacrifice of the Holy Mass. For this reason, we raise our voices to God in song and offer Him our hearts, minds, and all that we are.



Vu Nguyen plays the violin during Mass at the seminary.



Manuel Mora raises his voice to God in song.



The Schola Cantorum at NDS learn many different types of sacred music.

OATH OF FIDELITY & PROFESSION OF FAITH:

Preparing for Ordination

During the spring semester each year, the seminary community gears up and prepares for the ordination of seminarians to the priesthood and the diaconate. In preparation for those ordinations, each seminarian participates in an evaluation with the faculty and vocation directors. The rector then conducts a canonical interview with each candidate to determine if the seminarian is properly motivated, free to enter into Orders, and is ready to embrace life-long commitments. The seminarian then handwrites a petition to his bishop asking for ordination. Before the seminary community, the rector leads the community in Vespers at which time each seminarian makes a Profession of Faith and then makes an Oath of Fidelity to uphold and teach the Gospel. Let us pray for our future priests and deacons!



On Sunday, February 21st, the T4 men preparing for priestly ordination took the Oath of Fidelity and Profession of Faith, affirming their commitment and fidelity to the mission of the Church.



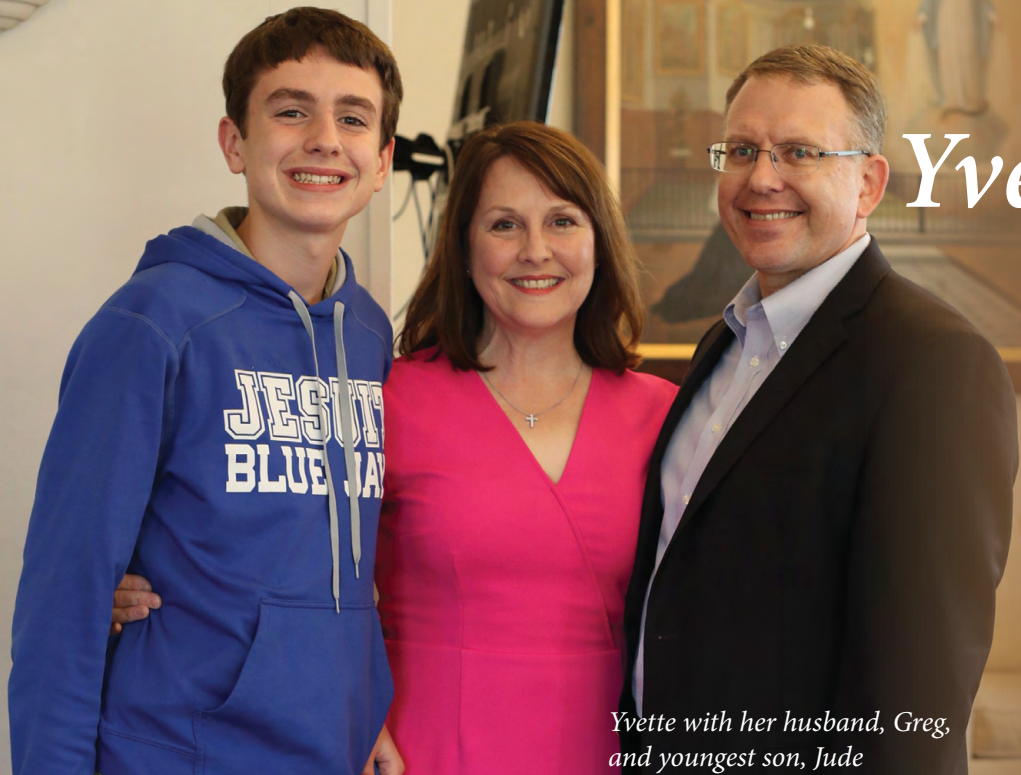
On Sunday, February 7th, the T3 class took the Oath of Fidelity and Profession of Faith, which is required of all candidates preparing for their diaconate ordination and recognizes each of them as competent and ready to exercise pastoral ministry.



Dcn. Ajani Gibson and Dcn. Raney Johnson take their Oath of Fidelity along side their T4 class.



Members of the T3 class sign their Profession of Faith.



Yvette LaCour Celebrates 10+ Years of Service to NDS

Yvette with her husband, Greg, and youngest son, Jude

Alumni, benefactors, volunteers, faculty, staff, and friends of Notre Dame Seminary have come to know Yvette LaCour and the passion and dedication she has for the mission of Notre Dame Seminary. Yvette and her husband, Greg, began as volunteers working on the second annual Gala and Auction. After two years of working as a volunteer, Yvette joined the staff as the first Director of Development in 2011.

Yvette worked tirelessly to establish a plan to set Notre Dame Seminary up for financial and organizational success. She worked with dedicated committee members and volunteers to establish the Annual Gala and Christmas Luncheon for Priests fundraising events. Both events have grown to welcome over eight hundred attendees each and have become major fundraisers for the



Yvette and Mrs. Gayle Benson

seminary. During her ten years as Director of Development, Yvette also worked on multiple capital campaigns including the *Priestly Formation Campaign* and the *I Will Give You Shepherds Campaign*.

The seminary community thanks Yvette for her many years of dedication, leadership, and commitment to the mission of Notre Dame Seminary. Although Yvette is retiring from staff here at NDS, we look forward to her continued presence as a volunteer and dedicated supporter of priestly formation. Thank you, Yvette!



Yvette with members of the Christmas Luncheon Committee



Yvette's oldest son, Patrick; Patrick's fiancé, Danielle; Yvette; Dcn. Carlo and Debbie Maniglia



Dcn. Ajani Gibson, Yvette LaCour, Caroline Thriffiley, and Dcn. Michael Beverung

LEAVE YOUR LEGACY AT NOTRE DAME SEMINARY

We thank you for the many ways you support Notre Dame Seminary today, but there are also ways to plan a gift that will leave a lasting impact on Notre Dame Seminary and seminarians for years to come. Planned giving ensures that seminarians continue to be formed as faithful shepherds, pastoral leaders, and spiritual fathers that will serve our Church and future generations.

Bequest in Your Will or Trust

You can easily name Notre Dame Seminary as a beneficiary in your last will and testament. Bequests from your estate may be specified in dollar amounts or as a percentage of your estate/trust. By making this charitable gift, your trust or estate receives an estate tax deduction. For more information on bequests and specific wording options for your will or trust, please contact the Development Office.

Beneficiary Designation in Your Retirement Plan

Adding Notre Dame Seminary as a beneficiary of your IRA or retirement plan can provide both a meaningful gift for our seminarians and allow your family to avoid estate and income tax. All that is required is to name Notre Dame Seminary as a beneficiary for a portion of all of your IRA or qualified retirement plan.

Charitable Gift in Your Life Insurance Policy

You can assign whole life insurance policies and name Notre Dame Seminary as a beneficiary. In most cases, you receive a tax deduction for the premiums you have paid on the policy.

If you are interested in making a planned gift to Notre Dame Seminary or for more information, please contact the Development Office by phone at (504) 866-7426, ext. 374 or 375. The information contained here is not intended as legal, tax, or investment advice. We urge all donors to consult their financial and legal advisors for this type of advice and for a full discussion.





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As our men answer “YES” to God’s call, they are formed at Notre Dame Seminary as authentic, compassionate, and holy priests. Your gift to the annual fund ensures that they arrive at your parishes, schools, and families fully formed and prepared to serve as pastoral leaders who commit to build and strengthen our Church.

To donate online, please visit www.nds.edu/donate-now. You can also mail your donation to Notre Dame Seminary via the enclosed envelope. For more information, please contact the Development Office by phone at (504) 866-7426, ext. 374 or 375.