



NOTRE DAME SEMINARY

OFFICE OF THE RECTOR

Announcement of the New Rector of Notre Dame Seminary **Rev. Joshua J. Rodrigue, S.T.L.**

On Thursday, October 14, 2021, the Board of Trustees approved the nomination of the Reverend Joshua J. Rodrigue as the next rector/president of Notre Dame Seminary effective July 1, 2022.

After much prayer and discernment including consultation with bishops and the seminary Board of Trustees and faculty, Archbishop Gregory Aymond, as chancellor of the seminary, announced the appointment of Father Rodrigue to the faculty and seminary community following the board meeting on October 14.

In making the announcement, Archbishop Aymond stated: *“Fr. Rodrigue comes to us eminently qualified and with much experience in priestly formation. I am very pleased to make this appointment and thank him for his willingness to take on this new role and important ministry of priestly formation at Notre Dame Seminary. At this time, I would also like to extend my gratitude to Fr. Jim Wehner who has brought excellence in priestly formation and theological education to the seminary for the past 10 years. The stability he has brought to Notre Dame Seminary has been and will continue to be a great gift to many for years to come.”*

The board of trustees had offered the current rector, Father James Wehner, another five year term during its Spring 2021 meeting. After consultation with his bishop, spiritual director, and colleagues, Father Wehner concluded that it would be in the best interest of the seminary for new leadership.

Father Wehner stated to the community: *“I could not be more pleased with this appointment which reflects the archbishop’s unwavering commitment to priestly formation, his solicitude for Notre Dame Seminary, and the continuity that Father Rodrigue will bring to the community. Father Rodrigue is eminently qualified for the position – more than I was in coming to New Orleans – who will bring creativity, energy, and a collaborative leadership to Notre Dame Seminary. I have known him for over twenty years. I am so glad he accepted the appointment. Seminary formation is a unique ministry in the Church – one that I will dearly miss. The transition will be very smooth as Father Rodrigue begins his ministry on July 1, 2022.”*

Fr. Josh Rodrigue grew up in the St. Charles Community in Thibodaux, LA, and graduated from E.D. White Catholic High School. After completing minor seminary studies at St. Joseph Seminary in Covington, Fr. Rodrigue spent five years in Rome at the Pontifical North American College and was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux on August 10, 2002.

Following his Ordination to the Priesthood, Fr. Rodrigue returned to Rome for his last year of studies to complete the licentiate degree in sacramental theology. After returning to the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, Fr. Rodrigue served in the diocese as Associate Pastor at Holy Cross Church in Morgan City, Pastor at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Bayou Black, and Rector at the Cathedral of St. Francis de Sales in Houma. In 2017, Fr. Rodrigue was granted permission to serve at the Pontifical North American College in Rome, where he has served as Director of Pastoral Formation and a Formation Advisor and then as Director of Spiritual Formation and as a Spiritual Director.

Since 2006, Fr. Rodrigue has been involved in seminary formation and over the years, has taught as an Adjunct Professor of Theology at St. Joseph Seminary College (2006-2017), Notre Dame Seminary (2008-2009), the Pontifical Gregorian University (2017-2018), and the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross (2018-present).

In accepting the appointment, Father Rodrigue stated: I express my profound gratitude to Archbishop Aymond and the Board of Trustees for their confidence and trust in appointing me Rector of Notre Dame Seminary. I am also grateful to Bishop Fabre, my Ordinary, for his generosity in allowing me to continue working in seminary formation. Being able to serve the local and universal Church as rector of Notre Dame is a great honor and gift that I can only receive in gratitude and joy before the Lord. The great responsibility entrusted to me to form men to be compassionate, merciful, and holy priests of Jesus Christ is quite daunting. However, trusting that the Lord will always provide for what is needed and knowing that Notre Dame Seminary is blessed to be served by an outstanding faculty give me the confidence that I can rely upon both the Lord and the faculty to help guide me in this new role.

I am most thankful to Father Wehner for his pastoral and paternal leadership as rector for the past ten years. His love and dedication to seminary formation has truly transformed Notre Dame into the model seminary it is today, and I look forward to

continuing to build upon the solid foundation that Father Wehner and the faculty have established.

It has been a blessing and a privilege to serve in seminary formation both at St. Joseph Seminary College and the Pontifical North American College. The rectors, formation faculties and seminarians at both seminaries, along with the parishioners of my previous parishes, have truly been formators for me in preparing to assume my new duties as rector.

I hope that my ministry at Notre Dame Seminary and the seminarians in my care who will be formed for the salvation of souls will be acceptable gifts offered in return to the Lord for the gracious gift of the priesthood He has given to me. In your kind generosity, I ask for your prayers throughout this year for Father Wehner and I as we prepare for our transitions. ”

Father Rodrigue will be officially installed as rector by Archbishop Aymond during the Mass of the Holy Spirit in Fall 2022.