



# IHM News

IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY SEMINARY

ECCE QUAM BONUM ET QUAM

Welcomed  
into  
**LIFE**

Protect  
**E**

*Roman Catholic*  
**Diocese of Winona**  
*Serving the 20 southern counties of Minnesota*

"It is a poverty to decide that a child must die so that you may live as you wish."

JUCUNDUM HABITARE FRATRES IN UNUM



# Letter from the **RECTOR**

In my first year as a student at Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary over two decades ago, I heard a homily in which the priest encouraged us to take on a little bit more than we thought we were ready to handle. The homilist was not trying to encourage recklessness, of course, but a deepening spirit of trust in God's grace and a confidence that the Lord would provide whatever was needed in the various circumstances of our lives. He was seeking to teach us to rely less on ourselves and our own resources and more on Christ's fidelity to his promise: "And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

In my first year as rector of Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary, I have had ample opportunities to recognize the Lord's grace carrying me through both the joys and the challenges of recent months. There have definitely been moments when I felt that I was handed more than I was ready to handle, and yet those very moments have also been occasions wherein I have detected the Spirit calling me to a deeper trust in the abiding presence of Christ at my side, carrying me along the journey. Needless to say, his fidelity has never failed me.

In their years as seminarians at Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary, the students learn day by day of this unshakeable fidelity of Christ to the Church. Through engaging in the various facets of the formation program, they gain a growing awareness that God truly is with them, accompanying them and guiding them on the journey. In a particular way, the daily celebration of the Eucharist serves to drive home this lesson of God's fidelity, as this frequent plunging into the Paschal Mystery of Christ's dying and rising reminds all of us that God does not abandon us in the darker and more trying moments but gives us the grace to pass through them into the light of new life. The Father did not leave his Son in the throes of death but lifted Jesus from the tomb; similarly, the Father will carry those who belong to his Son through every trial they might face into the glory of new life. By coming to know God's fidelity in such a profound and rich manner, the seminarians become men equipped to carry this joyous message to a world so in need of it.

It is my hope and prayer that the men here at the seminary are learning this truth of divine fidelity more deeply with each passing day. I know that I am immensely glad such a lesson was imparted to me so many years ago, even though I am well-aware that I need to constantly "relearn" it time and again myself throughout the passage of the years. The Lord is constant and steadfast, always reminding us of those consoling words: 'I am with you always, until the end of the age.' "

*Rev. Robert Horihan*

Rev. Robert Horihan



BY NICOLAS WILSON Senior, Diocese of Peoria

# GRADUATION

May 13th, 2017 marked the graduation of the senior class at Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary and St. Mary's University of Minnesota. It was also the one hundredth anniversary of the first apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary to the children of Fatima, a fitting day for the seminarians to depart under the patronage of Mary. The seminarians left with heartfelt gratitude for their time at Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary, and they looked forward to beginning the next stage of formation, confident that the life of prayer, virtue, and study at IHM prepared them for this next stage.

Sunday, May 7th was the last Sunday Mass of the formation year, and the seniors received a special blessing. The following week was a great opportunity for the senior class to spend some time reminiscing before parting ways. The day before commencement, the IHM Baccalaureate Mass was held in the chapel in Watters Hall, the temporary housing during the renovation of Kelly Hall. The seniors and their families appreciated this opportunity to give thanks for the formation program at IHM. Though the renovated seminary building will greatly enhance the seminary experience for generations of seminarians yet to come, formation is more than buildings. It is about relationships, and the senior class is sincerely grateful to everyone whose prayers, sacrifices, and guidance throughout the years helped us grow in the most essential relationship – friendship with Jesus Christ. The senior class promises to keep in prayer the faculty and staff at IHM Seminary and St. Mary's University, the seminarians currently in formation, and all those discerning whether to enter seminary. We ask for continued prayers on our behalf as we go on to the study of theology. Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

## NEXT YEAR, THE MEMBERS OF THE SENIOR CLASS WILL BE CONTINUING FORMATION FOR THE PRIESTHOOD IN THESE LOCATIONS:

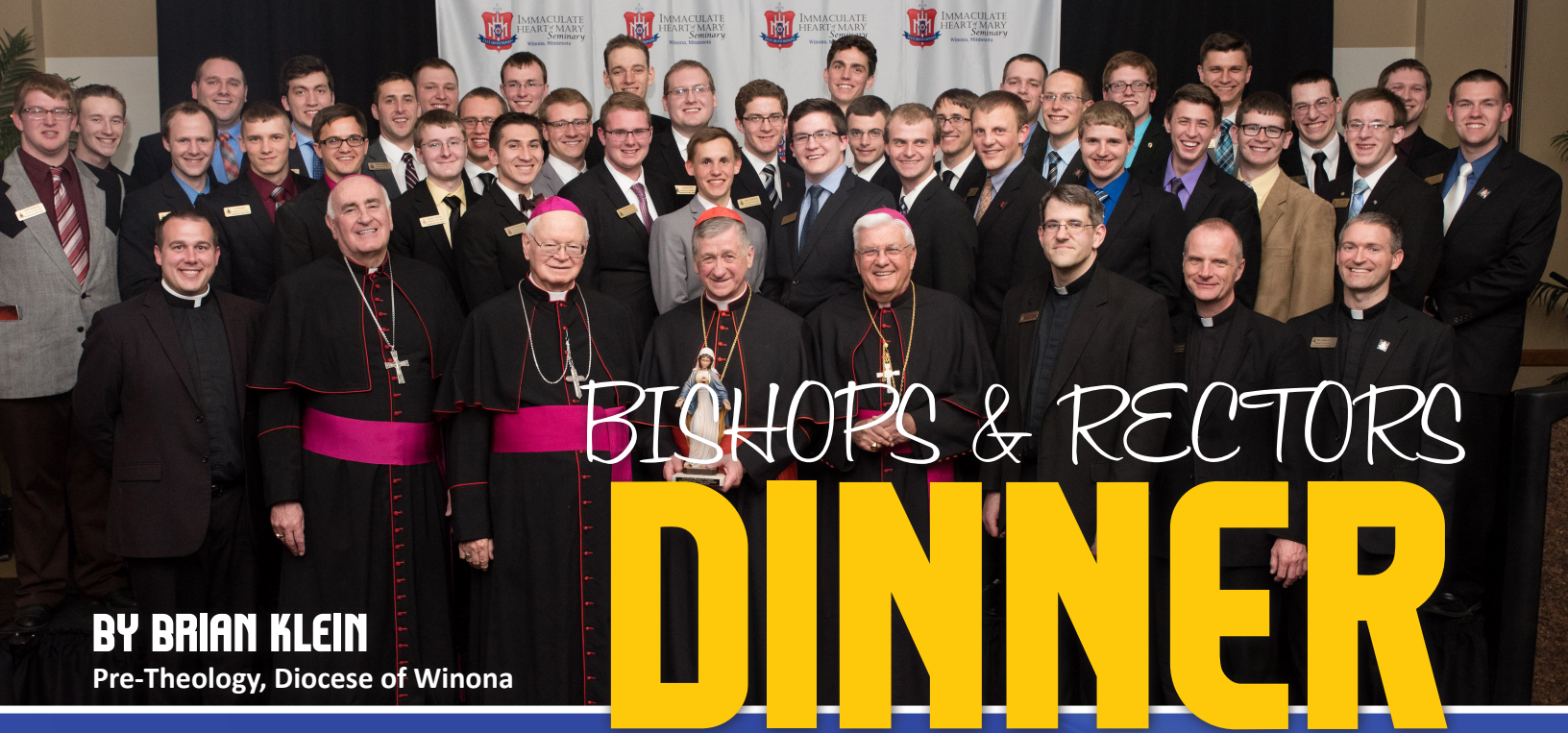
**Diocese of La Crosse**  
Eric Mashak - Pontifical North American College in Rome  
Timothy Reither - Pontifical North American College in Rome

**Diocese of Peoria**  
Zachary Leskanich - Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD  
Nicolas Wilson - Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD

**Diocese of Rapid City**  
Andrew Sullivan - Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in St. Louis, MO

**Diocese of Winona**  
Michael Churchill - Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit, MI  
Mitchell Logeais - Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit, MI  
Ezra Lippert - Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit, MI





**BY BRIAN KLEIN**

Pre-Theology, Diocese of Winona

# BISHOPS & RECTORS DINNER

The 14th annual Bishops and Rector Dinner was a night filled with good food and even better company as generous donors, seminarians, consecrated religious, and priests from across the country (even as far as Florida!) gathered together. Cardinal Cupich, Bishop Quinn, and Fr. Horihan all spoke during the dinner. Cardinal Cupich's talk highlighted four areas of life which are important for every Christian and are particularly essential for a seminarian's development: to cultivate the virtue of curiosity, to focus on dialogue rather than ideas, to take the Fatherhood of priesthood seriously, and to seek interior freedom.

Cardinal Cupich first pointed out that curiosity can be an essential virtue in our lives by guiding us to continually seek to learn more and move deeper in our faith. However, such progress in faith rarely happens when we are isolated from others, and as a result he emphasized the need to interact with new people and ideas so that we can grow by continually challenging ourselves. He continued this focus on relationship as he pointed out to the seminarians the importance of taking the "spiritual fatherhood" of the priesthood seriously. Calling our priests "Father" is not a random choice, and it's important for seminarians to intentionally engage in the process of formation to prepare for the responsibilities of being a spiritual father in a parish someday. Finally, the Cardinal spoke about the importance of developing interior freedom in our attitude toward all parts of our life (such as work, sports, hobbies, relationships with others) so that we will not be too attached to these things and can be more free to love God in all of those areas.

In addition to that valuable advice from Cardinal Cupich, the night was a powerful reminder for all of the seminarians of the support and prayers we receive from all of you - we cannot thank you enough! It was great to see so many people there, and we hope to see you again at next year's 15th Annual Bishops and Rector Dinner. Please continue praying for IHM, and know that we are praying for all of you. See you next April!



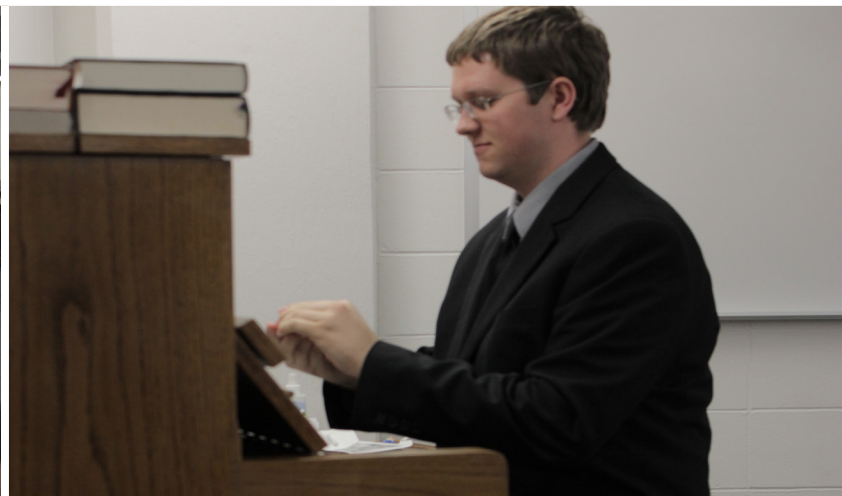


# RecFEST

BY DAVID DREFCINSKI  
Sophomore, Diocese of Madison

The REC (which stands for recreation room) Fest is an event put on at the seminary where the seminarians sign up to perform and show off whatever kind of amazing talents that they might have, ranging from music to funny acts. This was my first year of seminary, but what I have heard from experienced seminarians is that in years past, before the show, there would be a potluck. Seminarians would make different food dishes and desserts to share. Unfortunately, we were unable to do the potluck, being temporarily located at Watters Hall and not having access to a functional kitchen. Thankfully, next year in the newly renovated Kelly Hall, we will be able to bring that tradition back.

This year before the show began, there were some competitions going on for our annual tournament for the Ecce Cup. When those were finished, everyone headed to the conference room to watch the show. There was a variety of talent shown during the REC Fest. Most of it was music related. The Karol Club, which is a club within the seminary that promotes the arts, sang a few songs. One of the guitar players played some Johnny Cash songs and if you closed your eyes, you could imagine that it was Johnny Cash singing them. Then there was a mix of seminarians that put together "the Band" that played music using everyday items you would find in your house. One of the most unique acts was when we had one of the seminarians dressed as Clover the Clown and performing his famous routine. He even got the Rector involved in one of his magic tricks. It was a great night full of laughter and for me was probably my favorite fraternity event that occurred this year so far.



# My Vocation STORY

**BY TYLER PRANGER**

Freshman, Diocese of Sioux Falls

My name is Tyler Pranger, and I was born in May, 1996. I am the oldest of three adopted children and grew up in the small farming community of Platte, South Dakota. As a boy, I spent substantial amounts of time working on our family farm. There is a proverb that says “you can take the boy off the farm, but you can’t take the farm out of the boy”, and this certainly applies to me. These experiences of farm life had a great influence on me, and by the time I reached high school I was making plans to have a career involving agriculture, most likely as a farmer or tractor mechanic. At times, however, I also dreamed of being a railroad engineer or even a country music singer. I was homeschooled my whole life using a strongly Catholic curriculum, so I received an excellent education in the Catholic Faith. My family attended daily Mass regularly, and I often participated in the liturgical life of the parish. As a result, I obtained a strong faith foundation which, thanks be to God, never left me.

As I matured, my knowledge of God and his love was for the most part of an intellectual nature; it was not a personal, loving relationship, but really just a collection of ideas and concepts. In my early teenage years I experienced what I would describe as an “inner rebellion”. I continued to outwardly practice my faith, but I was not motivated by an interior desire for holiness. Eventually, I became associated with several people who were not leading me to Christ and a life of virtue, which led to some poor decisions and a deep spiritual darkness; I was essentially living a double-life. Around the same time, however, I began to attend various young adult retreats in my diocese, where I experienced something very special: I saw a sacred joy in the people there, a joy which I didn’t have but wanted to experience for myself.

Everything changed on a warm July day in 2014 as I attended a Steubenville youth conference in Rochester, Minnesota. At that conference, I felt the love of God in a new and personal way. I made a decision that weekend to live my life as a disciple of Jesus Christ; I chose to live for Him and Him alone. What an adventure it has been! As I grew closer to the Lord, I began to realize that He had a specific plan for me; I felt that he was calling me to share his love with the whole world. This call was solidified in adoration of the Holy Eucharist one evening when I heard his voice speak to my heart very clearly, saying “Tyler, I want you to go to seminary”. It was during that time of prayer that I understood how God had been calling me for quite some time, and I knew that the time had come to answer his call. I would like to conclude by citing one of my favorite passages of scripture, which is truly an accurate summary of my vocation story: “... Behold, I make all things new.” -Rev. 21:5



## ALEXANDER CYPHERT

*Diocese of Sioux Falls*



## ERIC MASHAK

*Diocese of La Crosse*



# FRESHMAN *Perspective*

The first year of seminary is interesting to say the least; the amount of change that occurs is astronomical. The common trend among my freshman brothers and myself is our awareness of how lukewarm we are and what we need to do to live lives imitating Christ. These changes made throughout the year occur and we gradually build our character. It is amazing to look back at the day we all arrived and see how much we have changed over this past year.

There is also a level of awkwardness being a freshman seminarian. It is very unlikely that a freshman seminarian knows one hundred percent that he is to become a priest, and with that there is a level of uncertainty toward the future. On the other hand, coming out of high school where dating was encouraged it is surprising for others that a person would choose to live a celibate life. While married life is not completely out of the picture, seminarians are still focused on living the celibate life while being in seminary. I started to think about what it means to be in this position and, to me, freshman year is there to help incoming men develop a personal mission. Just as one walks into a building on campus and sees the mission statement, so must we have a mission statement. It is different in many ways except that we are all trying to develop virtue and imitate Christ.

# SENIOR *Perspective*

I remember my first day of Seminary pretty well. Upon arriving at the Seminary some of the seniors, one of whom was wearing a cowboy hat, helped me to move into the Seminary. This small act of charity was only the beginning, but it did help me to put into perspective how great the fraternity and camaraderie was going to be for the next three years. It seems like that day of arrival was just yesterday. Like many other points of moral wisdom, the tradition of the senior seminarians helping the new men move into the seminary has been passed on from year to year.

Like most seminarians, I came into the Seminary with a lot of zeal. To a great extent, IHM Seminary has helped this zeal to take on the mission of the Church. Although the time seems to have flown by, so much has happened in my years at IHM. From holy hours, to academics, to a vast assortment of liturgies, fundraisers, and everything in between—my time at IHM has been a precious gift. A high degree of gratitude is elicited from me in response to the formation I have received at IHM. It is a great service that the Diocese of Winona is doing for many Seminarians throughout the Midwest.

Having been formed at IHM Seminary, I have a certain confidence about going forward to Theology School. The formation received here has given me a high level of preparedness. Although I had only been to Winona a few times in my life before entering Seminary, I now feel very much at home in the Winona Diocese. I look forward to revisiting IHM in the future.





# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

By Zachary Leskanich, Senior, Diocese of Peoria

Fr. Timothy Hepner is a priest of the Diocese of Peoria. He graduated from IHM Seminary in 2008, and was ordained to the priesthood in 2012. Some of his favorite memories from his time at IHM include gathering for Sunday Night Prayer, being introduced to spiritual direction by Father Moore, running the Seminary segment of the radio show on 92.5/94.3 KSMR (the St. Mary's University radio network, and sliding down the bluffs surrounding the campus in the ice and snow. After leaving the seminary, he says that he has carried many of the things he learned at IHM into his priesthood. In particular, the human formation he gained helped to make him more conscious of other people. Spiritually, he learned how to pray and fall in love with Christ under Fr. Steffes, who was the rector at the time. Now as a priest, Fr. Hepner serves as the Vocation Director for recruitment, travelling across his diocese in search of men who want to respond to God's call to the seminary. He says that this job has been incredibly rewarding for him as he gets to see God working in others. His time as a vocation director also has helped him to appreciate parish life. Overall, he is incredibly thankful for his time at IHM Seminary; it truly changed his life and made him who he is today.

## FR. TIM HEPNER





SOLOMON LIEBL  
Freshman, Diocese of Crookston

# MARCH For LIFE

Attending the March for Life this year on the anniversary of Roe vs. Wade was a wonderful opportunity to take part in and support the wonderful Pro-Life movement. I was inspired by the sheer amount of people who turned out against this injustice even after more than 40 years. This was the first Pro-Life event that I have ever attended, and I was shocked by the strength and witness present in this state. Being able to walk in support of life with my many brothers and sisters from all walks of life with many different stories was truly a blessing and a unifying moment in the church.

For me personally, the March for Life this year was a real eye opener. This year, as is custom, the march began at Saint Paul's Cathedral and went to the capital building. To be able to make a pilgrimage to the state capital and stand shoulder to shoulder with people from all over the state truly touched me and inspired me. I cannot imagine the seminary year without this very important moment of fraternity and unity made possible by our benefactors, and I look forward to this moment again in following years. Thank you so much for making this possible.



# FRESHMAN & SOPHOMORE

## Annual Retreat

Every year after the craziness and stress that is most people's Christmas and New Year's festivities, the freshman and sophomore classes are invited back to seminary before classes start for the semester for a 5-day silent retreat. At the beginning of this retreat, the seminarians hand over their cell phones and other electronic devices to become attuned to the voice of God. During the first couple of days, many a seminarian could be seen looking longingly down at empty palms or taking naps in a variety of places. While the naps remained, the longly looks soon passed as the seminarians of IHM were able to become accustomed to the more intensive schedule of prayer and conferences, that were included throughout the week. With both daily morning and evening prayer, three holy hours and twice daily conferences the seminarians' schedules were not left wanting, but with struggle and stretching comes great growth.

Throughout the retreat, led by Fr. Pratap Reddy Salibindla, OFM, who currently ministers in the Diocese of Winona, we were invited to enter more fully into a greater awareness of our desires, and the desires God has for our lives, as we grew to identify and bring our hearts and interior desires into greater accord with the heart of Jesus. Through the respite from studies and conversation with others, we were more able to direct our bodies, mind, and hearts to God. As the retreat came to a close, each seminarian left with a precious gift from God. As the months passed I personally heard from a number of freshmen that one of their favorite memories of the whole year thus far had been the silent retreat, and they were excited to return earlier once again next Christmas break and enter again more deeply into the love of Christ.

# JUNIOR & SENIOR

## Silent Retreat

The junior and senior silent retreat was held this year at Broom Tree Retreat Center in the Diocese of Sioux Falls for a period of eight days right before we returned back to Saint Mary's University for our spring semester. Each day at Broom Tree was filled with daily Mass, four hours of personal prayer, and an hour-long meeting with each of our respective spiritual directors.

While there were personal challenges for each of us over the course of the retreat, I do not think it would be far-reaching to say that our time at Broom Tree was beautifully refreshing. It provided us with the occasion to reflect upon and seriously develop the most important aspect of our formation, that being our relationships with the Triune God. So often within the busyness of a semester at IHM, various activities can detract from true attentiveness to the Lord's voice in prayer. I oftentimes feel akin to a piece of clay on a pottery wheel - spinning at great speeds without direct knowledge of the potter's intentions. It is our lives of prayer, especially when embraced in a spirit of silence, that provide us with the awareness of the Divine Potter at work - shaping, moving, and forming us into vessels of His divine grace. I am deeply grateful for all those who helped make our time at Broom Tree such a beautiful experience.

## SAMUEL HURST

*Diocese of Crookston*



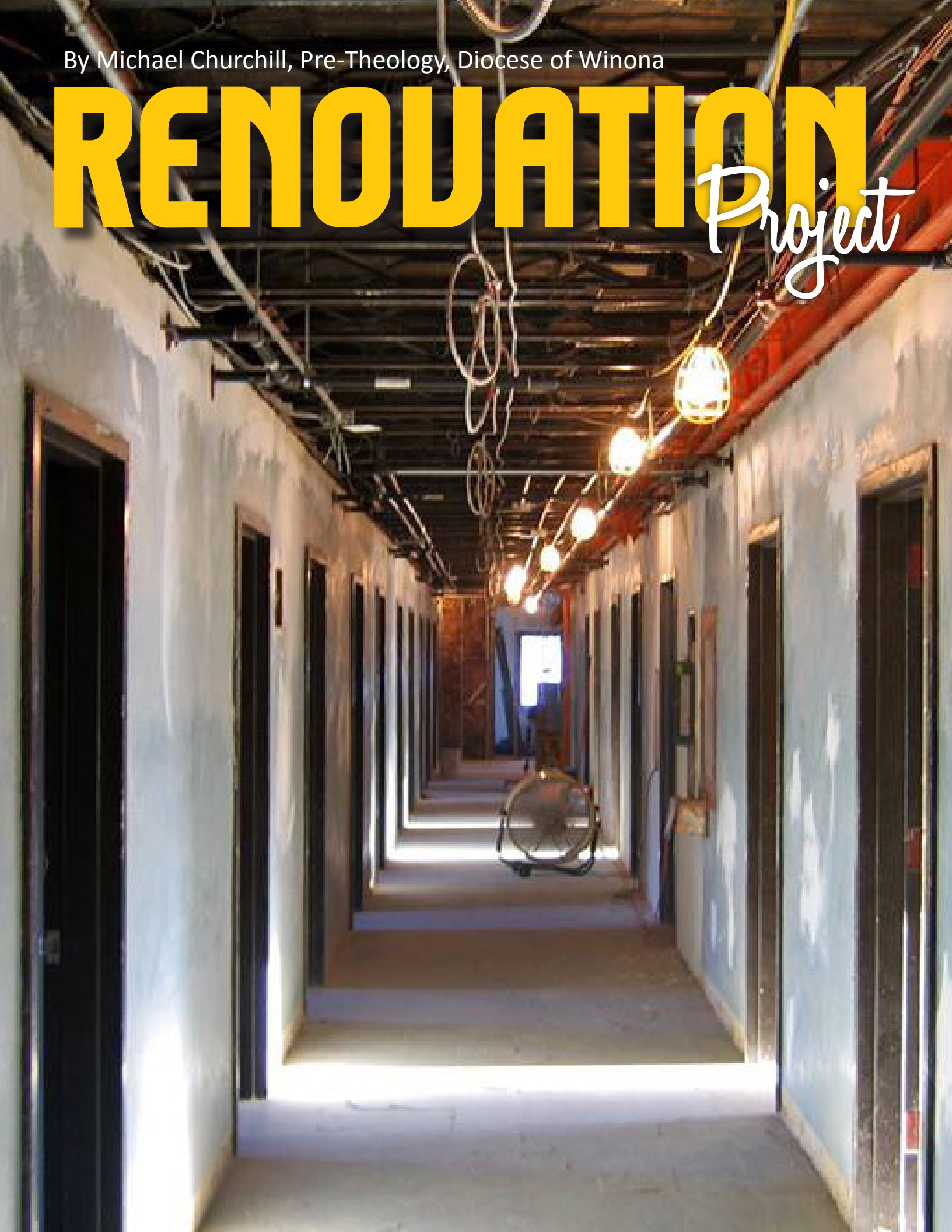
## ROBERT KINYON

*Diocese of Rapid City*



By Michael Churchill, Pre-Theology, Diocese of Winona

# RENOVATION *Project*





As much work and transformation has taken place in the hearts of the seminarians this academic year, so too has loads of work and transformation taken place across the highway in Kelly Hall of IHM Seminary. I recently went on a little tour through the building to see the progress. The basement and main floors have the most amount of work yet to be done, although the kitchen is beginning to look more like a kitchen with new tile walls up all around. The main floor is getting some painting done, and the balcony seating and music area for the chapel is slowly but surely starting to take form. The work that is most notable and eye catching are the second and third floors, which serve as the dorm living for the seminarians. The walls are painted, new windows are in, the doors and wardrobes are in, the heating and air conditioning units are in, and the sinks and vanities in the rooms are also in. The bathrooms on the two floors are nearly completed with new showers, sinks, toilets, tiled walls and floors. The renewal of Kelly Hall is still on track to be completed by early July of this summer. Things are certainly coming together and there is great excitement on the part of the faculty and seminarians to move back in come fall.

We want to thank everyone who has been so supportive of this project through your prayers and donations. A special thank you to all those who have taken part in the 'Rooted in Faith, Rejoice in Hope' Campaign. What a blessing are all of you! You remain in our prayers for your generosity and we hope that you will soon be able to visit and tour our newly renovated Seminary. God Bless!



By Mark Miller, Junior, Diocese of Crookston

# MUDELEIN BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

The Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) seminarians were again blessed to participate in the annual Father Pat O'Malley Invitational, otherwise known as the Mundelein Basketball Tournament, hosted at the beautiful and spacious Mundelein Seminary in Northeastern Illinois. This year over a dozen IHM seminarians joined fifteen other seminarian teams from all around the United States for a weekend of physically exhausting and spiritually enriching fun.

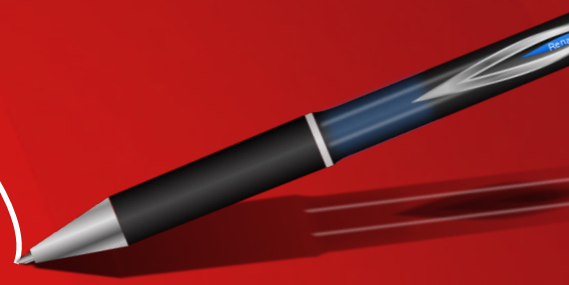
The structure of the tournament allowed for each team to play at least three games, with those teams advancing to the playoffs having the opportunity to play two more. Although IHM did not have much success on the scoreboard and did not make it to the playoffs, I would have to say that we ranked in the top three for being the most joyful and energetic team present. Whether a person banked in a three pointer, made a free-throw or even just shot the ball, the bench was always shouting out encouraging and spontaneous remarks. Along with the continuous cheering and encouragement from teammates on the bench, we were always accompanied by the St. Mary's University Cardinal mascot cheering us on at every game.

After being sufficiently exhausted from playing three games on Saturday and having spent time conversing with seminarians from other regions at the Mundelein cafeteria, we celebrated the tournament by going out to eat at Jimmy's Charhouse, a steakhouse that had wonderful food, and probably the largest portions sizes of any restaurant that I had ever been to. After finishing at the restaurant, we spent the remainder of Saturday evening exploring the campus, watching tournament play, socializing and getting some much-needed rest.

To end our time at Mundelein Seminary, on Sunday morning we joined the whole community of seminarians gathered for the tournament in the chanting of Morning Prayer and the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. It was a blessing to end the tournament on a wonderfully holy note, and to be able to participate in such wholesome fraternity with seminarians from all across the United States.



# From the office of **INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT**



A priest once told me that when celebrating the New Year our focus must be on God and including him in our new year. Instead of saying “Happy New Year” we must say “God bless your New Year”. This year God has personally shown His love to me by blessing me with my son Malachi. Spending time with my newborn has allowed me to have a greater understanding of how fast time can pass and that we must relish every moment.

God has blessed IHM Seminary with men who are passionate about growing in their vocation, faculty and staff that support the mission of IHM Seminary. Students spend 2-4 years at Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary, growing emotionally and spiritually and gaining a better understanding of themselves. This time, though short in comparison to the work they will perform as an ordained priest, is important for each of them. Each seminarian chose to include God in his life and continues to choose to follow the call. Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary continues its mission assisting men in growing in holiness and virtue, men who are willing to love and serve God’s people.

As always, IHM Seminary is grateful for your support of prayer and sacrifice. Many say it “It takes a village to raise a child”; in the same sense it takes a Catholic community to support vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

*Rebecca Brown*

**Rebecca Brown**  
Director of Institutional Development

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## **THE DIOCESES WE SERVE**

**Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary** is pleased to have had students from the following dioceses during the 2016-2017 formation year:

- Crookston
- Duluth
- La Crosse
- Madison
- Peoria
- Rapid City
- Saint Cloud
- Sioux Falls
- Winona
- Marquette
- Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis



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**UPCOMING  
EVENTS**

**JUNE 23, 2017**

Diaconate Ordination  
Thé Hoang and Brian Mulligan