



IMMACULATE
HEART OF MARY
SEMINARY

SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER

 Behold, how good and how pleasing it is for brothers to dwell as one.

Psalm 133:1





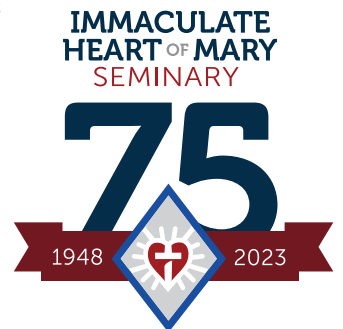
To him we raise our hearts, giving thanks that he has guided this community in its seventy-five years thus far, and beseeching him that he continue to do so as the years ahead unfold.

Rev. Robert Horihan
Rector

Letter from the Rector

On July 16th of this summer, Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary will turn seventy-five years old, having been established by Bishop Leo Binz, then-coadjutor bishop of the then-Diocese of Winona, on that date in 1948. As my mind drifts over these three-quarters of a century, I cannot help but think of the myriads of individuals who have been part of this community since its inception: nurturing it, guiding it, shaping and contributing to its history. Were I to try generating an exhaustive list of the people who have made this place what it is, I doubt that I would ever be able to complete the task.

As the current rector, I am acutely aware that I am but one element in a “link in a chain,” as it were, a chain which reaches into a venerable past and extends into a grace-filled future. I am even more acutely aware that the strength and durability of this chain comes not from any single link, nor even the sum of individual links, but from the one who is ever trustworthy and true, the one who ensures that the chain holds together. Even as we celebrate the history of IHMS and recognize the contributions of those who have brought it to this happy anniversary, we celebrate even more the truest caretaker of this community throughout its history: Christ the Lord, who has continued to call men to this community and drawn them ever nearer to him; Christ the Lord, who has seen fit to use this community as an instrument of his love for the seminarians and for those whom those seminarians go on to serve as priests. To him we raise our hearts, giving thanks that he has guided this community in its seventy-five years thus far, and beseeching him that he continue to do so as the years ahead unfold.





2022/2023 Seminarian Graduation

23'

Every spring, we say solemn congratulations to our graduating seniors. Congratulations on all their hard work in completing their course work towards graduation and the beginning of the next chapter in their lives; solemn because it is sad to see them go after spending four years of their lives traversing these halls.

IHMS is not just a place of formation for future priests, but a place to grow as a person and build fraternity and brotherhood, and this year's graduating seminarians highlight these principles of formation immensely. From stepping up in leaderships roles throughout the different seminarian activities like music, communications, athletic teams and mentoring new seminarians, to creating a space where friendships can grow, these seniors have shown the impact of a community dedicated not only to following God but nourishing its members.

IHMS has much to offer its seminarians in terms of experience. Senior Ryan Saltness (Diocese of Winona-Rochester) took away the lesson "that formation is an ongoing process. The goal is not to make me a

perfect human being but someone who is learning to rely more and more on the Lord." Senior Zavior Franck (Diocese of Duluth) recalled a group hike on one of Winona's steep bluffs, where "being a part of this group, helping each man surmount this obstacle, was a memory I have always held fondly. It was beautiful witness to what it means to live in community: to be present to each other every step and encourage each other to keep pressing on and finish the race". IHMS creates not just a life of faith but a life of joy for its seminarians.

IHMS strives every year to nurture and guide its seminarians into a faith-filled relationship with God while preparing them in showcasing God's love for His children on Earth. The faculty and atmosphere of seminary teaches the seminarians to trust Him in all that He does and His plans for each of them. Here, they may find what God is calling them to do and take the calling out into the rest of the world. Graduation is the sign that these 13 seminarians are ready to begin the next phase of that calling.

— Carlee Shimek, IHMS Communications

2023 BISHOPS & RECTOR DINNER



Another successful evening for the annual Bishops and Rector Dinner occurred at the Rochester International Event Center on April 14, 2023. It was a night of community, delicious food, and support for the Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary and its seminarians. Bishop Robert Barron of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester was the keynote speaker and Rector Fr. Robert Horihan was the host of the night. They presented our gratitude to the group of former rectors who served IHMS for the past 75 years, the honorees for this year's recognition ceremony of the night.

The former rectors included Rev. Msgr. Gerald Mahon, rector from 1979-1989, Rev. Timothy Reker (1989-1996), Rev. William Becker (1996-1998), Rev. Msgr. David Kunz (1998-2002), Rev. James Steffes (2002-2008), Rev. Andrew Beerman (2008-2012), and Rev. Msgr. Thomas P. Melvin (2012-2016). The dinner also honored the deceased rectors of IHMS, Bishop George Speltz, rector from 1948-1963, Rev. Msgr. Joseph McGinnis (1963-1968), Rev. Leroy Literski (1968-1970), and Bishop Robert Brom (1970-1979). The night was a gracious thank you for their hard work and dedication to the seminary, along with celebration for IHMS' 75th Anniversary.

Rev. Msgr. Mahon, ordained 1971, spent 18 years of his priestly duty at IHMS, ten as rector, and has worked at Cotter High School and St. Mary's in Winona. He currently serves the Co-Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist. Rev. Reker has served in parish ministry across Rochester, Albert Lea, Twin Lakes, Mankato, and Lake Crystal since his ordination in 1982. Along with being rector of IHMS, he also served on Saint Mary's University of Minnesota's faculty. Rev. Becker, ordained 1988, has been an ecclesiastical reviewer for Saint Mary's Press, taught theology at Saint Mary's University, and served as pastor at multiple parish ministries, along with being the rector of IHMS.

Rev. Msgr. Kunz has served parishes in the Diocese of La Crosse since his ordination in 1980. Before becoming rector of IHMS, he served as their spiritual director starting in 1995. Rev. Steffes was a student at IHMS beginning in 1983 and was ordained in 1993. He spent the first 18 years in parish and school ministry before serving as IHMS' vocation director, then spiritual director until he became rector. Rev. Beerman also attended IHMS and served as vice rector before becoming rector. He has served multiple parishes from Rochester to Albert Lea to Winnebago, as well as coordinator of Totus Tuus in Winona, spiritual director of Pathways TEC, and more. Rev. Msgr. Melvin, ordained in 2001, has served several parishes across the diocese, along with being rector of IHMS. He currently serves Immaculate Conception, Kellogg and St. Joachim, Plainview.

The evening was the typical night of light-hearted revelry, as guests met and chatted with the seminarians. A dinner of walleye, steak, or ravioli was enjoyed, and live music greeted the guests from IHMS' ensemble, Immaculate Jazz. After dinner, the Schola Cantorum choir sang "If Ye Love Me" and an original song by Ethan Wilcox (Diocese of Marquette) titled "Who Am I?". The evening ended with a blessing from Bishop Barron and the singing of "Ecce Quam Bonum".

The Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary would like to give a gracious and wholehearted thank you to all who attended the 2023 Bishops and Rector Dinner.

Events like this are great opportunities to spend time with the seminarians and create support for them not just at the dinner but throughout the whole year. IHMS is forever grateful for every manner of kindness and aid that helps them toward serving the Church and community in the future. God bless you all!

— Carlee Shimek, IHMS Communications



Save the Date

Please mark your calendars for next year as we will host the **21st Annual Bishops and Rector Dinner on April 12, 2024.**

We hope to see you there!

2023 BISHOPS & RECTOR DINNER

HONORING FORMER RECTORS:

BISHOP GEORGE SPELTZ

1948-1963

Born in Altura, MN, Bishop George Speltz was ordained to the priesthood in 1940 and served in various roles in the then-Diocese of Winona before being named as the inaugural rector of IHMS in 1948, a role he held until 1963. He was appointed auxiliary bishop of Winona in 1963 and coadjutor bishop of the Diocese of Saint Cloud in 1966; in 1968 he became the sixth bishop of Saint Cloud, serving there until his retirement in 1987. He passed away in 2004 at the age of 91.



BISHOP ROBERT BROM

1970-1979

Originally from Arcadia, WI, Bishop Robert Brom was ordained a priest for the then-Diocese of Winona in 1963. From 1970-1979, he served as rector of IHMS; other roles he fulfilled within the diocese included rector of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart and vicar general. In 1983, he was named the bishop of Duluth, and in 1989 he was appointed coadjutor bishop of San Diego. After fulfilling the role of coadjutor for a year and some months, he became the fourth bishop of San Diego in 1990, where he remained until his retirement in 2013. Bishop Brom passed away in 2022 at the age of 83.



REV. MSGR. JOSEPH MCGINNIS

1963-1968

A native of Caledonia, MN, Msgr. Joseph McGinnis was ordained a priest for the then-Diocese of Winona in 1946. Prior to his work at IHMS, he exercised priestly ministry in several parishes in the diocese, including St. Augustine's, Austin; St. Agnes', Kellogg; and St. Mary's, Worthington. After serving as rector of IHMS from 1963-1968, he returned to parish ministry, with successive assignments at Holy Family, Fairmont (East Chain); Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Winona; Sacred Heart, Waseca; and St. Mary's, Chatfield. Msgr. McGinnis retired in 1996 and passed away in 2004.



REV. MSGR. GERALD MAHON

1979-1989

Seized by Jesus Christ through the waters of baptism on December 23, 1945, at St. Francis of Assisi, Rochester and living out his belonging to Christ, Fr. Mahon was ordained to Ministerial Priesthood in the same Church on May 28, 1971. He came to IHMS one year after his first assignment at St. Mary's and Cotter High School in Winona. Priestly formation was a gift for his well-being and after 18 years on the faculty (ten as Rector), his path led to St. Casimir's as pastor for three years while serving the diocese. His time in Winona included an office at the Pastoral Center for 21 years, culminating in the role of Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia. His heart overflows with gratitude for almost 52 years serving as a priest. He's fortunate and deeply inspired to serve the community of Co-Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist as he marks his 28th year of ministry with these encouraging people of faith and life.



REV. LEROY LITERSKI

1968-1970

Msgr. Leroy (Roy) Literski was ordained a priest in 1953 and began his priestly ministry serving as the parochial vicar of St. Stanislaus parish in Winona, the town of his birth. After earning a PhD in philosophy from the University of St. Thomas (Angelicum), he spent several years teaching at Saint Mary's College and ministering as campus chaplain. From 1968 to 1970, he was the rector of IHMS; following his years as seminary rector, he served in various diocesan assignments before regaining the "rector" title, this time as rector of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, a post he held from 1991 until his retirement in 1996. Msgr. Literski passed away in 2018.



REV. TIMOTHY REKER

1989-1996

A native of Worthington, MN, Father Timothy T. Reker was ordained a priest in 1982. Prior to his work at IHMS, he exercised priestly ministry at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart; St. Pius X, Rochester; and at then-St. Mary's College. After serving as Rector of IHMS from 1989-1996, he served as Executive Director of the Secretariat for Vocations and Priestly Formation for the National Council of Catholic Bishops for three years and then returned to parish ministry at St. Francis of Assisi, Rochester; St. Theodore's, Albert Lea and St. James, Twin Lakes; and currently at St. Joseph the Worker, Mankato and Holy Family, Lake Crystal.



REV. WILLIAM BECKER

1996-1998

Rev. William Becker is a native of Blooming Prairie, MN, and was ordained in 1988. He first served at St. Pius X Parish in Rochester. He then completed a doctorate in theology at Rome's Gregorian University and was Rector of IHMS from 1996-1998. He has also taught theology at Saint Mary's University in Winona, served in various chancery roles, and was an ecclesiastical reviewer for Saint Mary's Press. His pastorates have included Queen of Angels, Austin; St. Mary's, Winona; St. Joachim, Plainview; Immaculate Conception, Kellogg; and currently, St. Columbanus, Blooming Prairie; Sacred Heart, Hayfield; and Holy Trinity, Litomysl.



REV. ANDREW BEERMAN

2008-2012

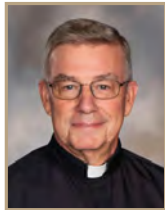
Fr. Andrew Beerman graduated from St. James High School in St. James and attended IHMS in Winona. He studied theology at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome, while attending the North American College Seminary. While in Rome he received a license in the field of moral theology. He was ordained in 1996 and has served as parochial vicar in Rochester, pastor of St. Catherine's in Luverne and St. Mary's in Ellsworth, dean of formation/vice rector and then Rector at IHMS, pastor of St. Adrian in Adrian, St. Anthony in Lismore, Our Lady of Good Counsel in Wilmont and St. Kilian in St. Kilian. He has been the pastor at St. John Vianney in Fairmont, and Holy Family in East Chain since 2016, and added SS. Peter & Paul in Blue Earth and St. Mary in Winnebago to his assignment in 2019. He has two sisters and one brother, but both of his parents are deceased. Other responsibilities in the diocese include: spiritual director of Pathways TEC, coordinator of Totus Tuus in Winona Diocese, Director of Formation for the Permanent Diaconate, Elected Mankato Deanery Representative for the Presbyteral Council, College of Consultors, and Chaplain for TEC (Together Encounter Christ).



REV. MSGR. DAVID KUNZ

1998-2002

A priest of the Diocese of La Crosse, Msgr. David Kunz was ordained on May 17, 1980. He served for 13 years in full time High School until 1995. He joined the faculty of IHMS in 1995 as spiritual director and from 1998-2002 was Rector of the Seminary. After seminary work, he became the pastor at Mary, Mother of the Church Parish in La Crosse, WI until 2008 when he became pastor of Ss. Peter and Paul Parish in Independence, WI. and St. John Parish in Whitehall, WI. In 2010, Bishop Callahan asked him to become Vicar of Clergy, a post that he held until August of 2020. He is currently pastor of Queen of the Apostles Parish in Tomah, WI.



REV. MSGR.

THOMAS P. MELVIN

2012-2016

Msgr. Tom Melvin was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Winona-Rochester in 2001 and has served in several parish and administrative assignments, including Rector of IHMS from 2012-2016. Rev. Msgr. Melvin is currently serving as pastor of Immaculate Conception, Kellogg and St. Joachim, Plainview.



REV. JAMES STEFFES

2002-2008

The sixth of seven children, Fr. James Steffes was born to Ralph and Darlene in Brookfield, WI. He entered IHMS in the fall of 1983, continued to Mundelein Seminary for his 1st year of Theology, and completed his studies in Rome at the Gregorian (STB) and Angelicum Universities (STL) before being ordained in 1993. He spent the first 18 years of priesthood in special ministry: high school teacher/chaplain at Loyola Mankato; St. Joseph the Worker and Holy Family. He was the Vocation Director/ Director of Seminarians from 1996-2002 and Spiritual Director of IHMS from 1997-2002. He served as IHMS Rector from 2002-2008. He was the Executive Director of CCLV (USCCB) in 2008-09, Vicar General/Moderator of the Curia/Vicar for Clergy from 2009-11. The past 12 years Fr. Steffes has been serving as pastor in St. Augustine/St. Edward, Austin.



IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY SEMINARY

75

1948



2023



75 Years of IHMS

Vocational Formation and Fraternity

Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary is an institution with roots in its home of Winona, MN dating back to July 16, 1948. For the past 75 years, over 1,500 men have lived and learned in its walls, with more than one third of those past seminarians becoming priests. Its history is laced with the call of God and spiritual formation for guiding young men toward the service of the Church and its citizens across the country and the whole world.

IHMS was founded by Coadjutor Bishop Leo Binz of Winona in 1948, though groundbreaking and the construction of a building separate from then Saint Mary's College specifically for future seminarians wasn't established until 1950 by Bishop Edward Fitzgerald. The building was named Kelly Hall after Most Rev. Francis Martin Kelly, the third Bishop of the Diocese of Winona; due to Bishop Kelly's health issues from 1942 to 1949, Bishop Binz acted as his proxy.

Bishop Binz believed a four-year seminary in the then Diocese of Winona would encourage more men in entering formation to combat the priest shortage in the diocese at the time. His first thoughts about the seminary were recorded in an episcopal letter he sent to all the priests of the diocese on July 28, 1948: "To date, however, it has not been possible to make fullest use of the excellent facilities available at St. Mary's College because that institution, though an acknowledged theological or divinity school, has not been canonically erected as a diocesan seminary."

Bishop Binz's dedication in creating a canonical seminary for the diocese proved fruitful, for 75 years later, his efforts have garnered a sanctuary for faithful men entering the priesthood from not just the now Diocese of Winona-Rochester, but 13 other dioceses across the Midwest.



Since its origins in 1948, vocational teaching and brotherly friendship have been the principle foundations keeping IHMS energetic and thriving. Seminarians discern the four dimensions of formation: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral in order to discover the best qualities of themselves. The four dimensions provide a full-rounded sense of learning in all aspects of life for seminarians in their future doctrine of interpreting and communicating the mysteries of God to parishioners. From Saint Mary's University of Minnesota professors teaching the seminarians core philosophy and Latin courses to the IHMS rectors and formators preparing them for a dedicated life to the Lord, seminarians are provided the support toward fulfilling their calling to serve God.

Many men have graced IHMS' halls. The highest attendance occurred back in 1966 with 90 seminarians. The second highest happened in 1987 with 80 enrolled seminarians. Our own enrollment for the past several years has been an impressive display of around 54 seminarians.

Opportunities and changes have flourished at IHMS throughout the years. They include seminary students

IHMS is not just a place of learning, it is where the bond between future priestly brothers begins and a connection between a seminarian and God deepens.

and faculty offering 73 Teens Encounter Christ (TEC) Retreats to the youth of the diocese from 1971 to 1986, the implementation of the national Program of Priestly Formation as a seminary guideline back in 1971, and the renovation of Kelly Hall just recently in 2016.

IHMS is not just a place of learning: it is where the bond between future priestly brothers begins and a connection between a seminarian and God deepens. With the support and dedication of all who care about IHMS, its seminarians (and halls) plan to stand and grow for the next 75 years and beyond. It is a place to truly behold "how good and how pleasing it is for brothers to dwell as one" (Psalm 133:1).

— Carlee Shimek, IHMS Communications

Senior Q&A

Jacob Bruns

Archdiocese of Milwaukee

What was the most important lesson you learned while attending IHMS?

The most important lesson I learned was the importance of prayer. Prayer has become a daily necessity since entering IHMS, and it would feel like something is missing if prayer was not present on a given day. Through prayer, I am able to draw closer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and learn how to be a better disciple.

What are your plans after graduation?

After graduating, I will be heading to Creighton University in Omaha, NE. There I will be studying at the Institute of Priestly Formation (IPF). Following that I will be attending St. Francis de Sales Seminary in Milwaukee as I enter Theology I in the fall.



Robert Budzius

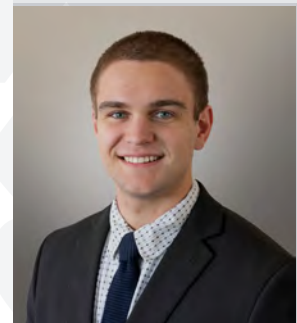
Diocese of Gary

What was the most important lesson you learned while attending IHMS?

I had some knowledge of this before entering, but it blossomed here these past years. That is the necessity of prayer at all times and from prayer relationships with friends.

What are your plans after graduation?

My plans are to continue formation in theology school in Detroit at Sacred Heart Seminary.





Zavior Franck

Diocese of Duluth

What was the most important lesson you learned while attending IHMS?

The most important lesson I have learned is the importance of trusting the Lord with everything. It may seem like an overly obvious lesson, but when it has truly sunk into the depths of the heart it becomes the most profound of insights. To know about this lesson is one thing. To live it is to embrace what the Holy Father calls the “daily martyrdom”: to surrender your life day by day and bit by bit wholly for the sake of Christ.

What are your plans after graduation?

I will be continuing seminary formation in the configuration stage, at the Pontifical North American College in Rome, Italy.



Josiah Hanson

Diocese of Rapid City

What was the most important lesson you learned while attending IHMS?

The most important lesson I have learned from IHMS certainly is the importance of prayer in my life. IHMS has formed my heart to long for an intimate relationship with Christ, and IHMS has given me the opportunity to establish this relationship. IHMS has given me a Eucharistic worldview which has been indispensable to my prayer life.

What are your plans after graduation?

Next year I will be starting my theological studies at Saint Paul Seminary in Saint Paul, MN.



Scott Kahler

Diocese of St. Cloud

What was the most important lesson you learned while attending IHMS?

One of the most important lessons I have learned while at IHMS is the importance of prayer and making sure that it stays as the anchor for the day. I have found the time in the chapel a great time of reflection and refreshment while keeping it all centered on relationship with Christ. It has helped me come to a fuller awareness and self-knowledge which is needed in the public ministry of the priesthood.

What are your plans after graduation?

My plan after graduation is to enter Saint Paul Major Seminary in the Twin Cities to continue my studies for diocesan priesthood.



Mark Nosbush

Diocese of St. Cloud

What was the most important lesson you learned while attending IHMS?

An important lesson I have learned is that to hear the Lord and to follow him takes trust in the Lord and patience to wait for His response. Through formation and prayer, I have come to understand that the Lord is to be trusted, but sometimes I need to just wait for His response and trust that He hasn't abandoned me.

What are your plans after graduation?

I plan on entering Saint Paul Seminary to continue my studies and formation as a seminarian. As the Lord continues to work in my heart, I am excited to enter the next stage of formation.



Alexander Peters

Diocese of Winona-Rochester

What was the most important lesson you learned while attending IHMS?

One of the most important things that I learned while at IHMS was that it is ok to trust in the other guys in the house and to lean on them when needed. It is easy to try and do everything alone, but you cannot succeed when going through life's challenges by yourself.

What are your plans after graduation?

My plan after graduating from IHMS and Saint Mary's University is to continue in seminary formation at Saint Paul Seminary.



Ryan Saltness

Diocese of Winona-Rochester

What was the most important lesson you learned while attending IHMS?

The most important lesson I've learned is that formation is an ongoing process. The goal is not to make me a perfect human being but someone who is learning to rely more and more on the Lord.

What are your plans after graduation?

I plan to begin Theology I studies at the North American College in Rome, Italy.



Gabriel Rysavy

Diocese of Winona-Rochester

What was the most important lesson you learned while attending IHMS?

I must wholeheartedly trust in the Lord, for He 'is our refuge and our strength, an ever-present help in distress' (Psalm 46:2). Of the copious lessons I have learned while here at IHMS, this is one of the greatest. Each day, I am reminded of my own need for God's grace and how abundantly He provides it. When I get caught up in concerns and doubts, He is waiting there to comfort me and bring me back into His embrace.

What are your plans after graduation?

After graduation, I will be attending the IPF Summer Program for Seminarians (IPF denotes the Institute of Priestly Formation, based out of Omaha, Nebraska). Beginning in the fall, I will be studying theology at the Saint Paul Seminary in the Twin Cities.



Collin van Waardenburg

Diocese of Gary

What was the most important lesson you learned while attending IHMS?

I'd say one of the most lasting and impactful lessons that I learned at IHMS was that I didn't need to be an extrovert to be a good pastoral figure to others. It was tempting for a long time to think that being more reserved was a flaw in myself that I needed to get rid of, but over the years, I've seen that human formation is designed to build from who I am, and not change who I am. It's been a tremendous blessing to see how people behind me in formation--and even my classmates--depend on me, and trust in me, all through the priestly heart that Jesus is configuring within each of us.

What are your plans after graduation?

After graduation, I plan to spend the next four years continuing in priestly formation and studying for my degree in theology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary, in Detroit, MI.



John Vrchota

Diocese of Winona-Rochester

What was the most important lesson you learned while attending IHMS?

The most important lesson, for me, was what faithfulness to the prayer life does. The time spent in relationship with God flows into everything else we do. God's love transforms us, and centering our life on Him opens our hearts and minds to His graces. Prayer opens the reality that God transforms hardships and difficulties into great graces.

What are your plans after graduation?

This summer, I plan on attending the Institute of Priestly Formation in Omaha, Nebraska. In the fall, I plan on entering Theology School at Saint Paul Seminary in Saint Paul, MN.



Ethan Wilcox

Diocese of Marquette

What was the most important lesson you learned while attending IHMS?

For me, I think the most important lesson I learned here at IHMS is to always keep my eyes fixed on Jesus. He is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. The motto of my Diocese's first bishop echoes in my heart: unum est necessarium. I know now that Jesus is the one thing necessary in every moment, every day, for all eternity.

What are your plans after graduation?

I plan to attend Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, MI.



Lawrence Wirries

Diocese of Crookston

What was the most important lesson you learned while attending IHMS?

The most important lesson I learned was to have faith that The Lord is leading me and will continue to lead me toward His will, and that He is always giving His love to me, including when I fall or make mistakes. This gives me courage to try and give myself to The Lord and to trust in discernment.

What are your plans after graduation?

My plan is to continue in seminary formation at Saint Paul Seminary.



Living Christ's Love in Body and Spirit

Through Apostolic Work

This year, I and some fellow seminarians were blessed to be able to visit the residents of Speltz Estates Assisted Living Center in Lewiston, MN on a weekly basis for our apostolic work. We began to get to know residents as we would chat, do puzzles, and share stories every Thursday. When we first started, we were told that the goal of these visits was to bring Christ to those whom we were visiting. On the surface level, it didn't seem like this was actually taking place. I realized, however, that it was through the simple encounters with the residents and the relationships we were forming that Jesus would do His work through me.

Throughout the year, I learned that to be a person through whom Christ works does not have to be a dramatic act but could also be through the simple love with which we go about our weekly visit. Being present to each resident, listening to their stories, and developing a genuine relationship with them taught me this lesson. In this, I am learning to become Christ's body on earth.

One of the biggest graces of this apostolic was being able to take Holy Communion to a resident every time we would visit. Taking Jesus to someone who is unable to go

to Mass has been a very unique and life-giving experience. As a seminarian, I am in formation to become one who brings Jesus to the world in my own person, but also in a literal way through the Holy Eucharist. Being able to do this has given me the opportunity to be the hands of Christ on earth ministering to His people.

Not only have I learned what it means to give the love of Christ through this apostolic work, but also to receive it. As we continued to make our visits throughout the year, I noticed myself looking forward to Thursday afternoons as the highlight of my week. I would always leave feeling as though I had just spent time with a grandparent, and it became a source of great joy. One phrase that sticks out to me is something one resident would say every Thursday. As we were getting ready to leave, one of us would usually say, "God bless you!" Every time she would respond, "Oh, He already has!" To be honest, I could say the same thing.

"Christ has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours.

– St. Teresa of Avila



John Assaf

Freshman

Diocese of Peoria



Reflection Essay

Charles Tackman
Junior, Diocese of Marquette

We asked Charles, “In this age of secular abundance and excess, how do you remain close to God and your vocation?”

This secular age of abundance and success is not a small obstacle in the walk of a relationship with God. It is an obstacle that most Christians are familiar with. Metaphorically, it is a dense, thorned thicket filled with delicious looking but rotten fruit; it entices and disappoints those who are in it, and it cuts and tears those who try to leave it.

On viewing my entire life as a journey toward seminary and toward God, I see that I was offered worldly success many times on the journey, and that I accepted the offer almost as many times. It is a beautiful mystery as to how I did not stay trapped in that thicket of abundance and worldly success; my only answer is that God, in His providence, started the process of cutting me loose when He knew the time was right.

The greatest, single help that God has given me to remain close to Him and His call is the places that He has given me to live in. The Catholic community at my previous university parish, St. Albert the Great in Houghton, MI, was strong. Soon after arriving for college, I joined students from all different walks of life who came together daily to eat, pray, receive the sacraments, and fall deeper in love with God and each other. A similar, but much stronger culture of fraternity and

sanctity awaited me when I entered IHMS a year later in 2021. When in places like these, it is much easier to stay close to God’s side than when living in the thorned thicket that is “the world.”

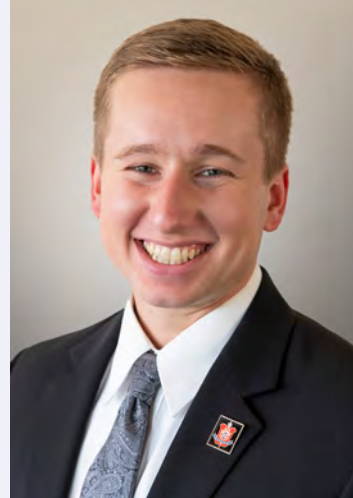
Places and communities are not the only things God uses to keep me close, however. He also helps me by giving me the freedom to wander. If I decide to wander back to the thicket of the world and entertain thoughts like: “Oh, I can’t wait to have/get X material thing” or “I don’t think I could ever give up X worldly pleasure for God”, He looks at me lovingly and then lets me cut open the juicy looking “fruit” to see the dry and rotted inside. After God reveals this to me, I have no choice but to stop wandering and echo the words of Peter: “Master, to whom shall [I] go? You have the words of eternal life.” (John 6:68)

And so, when I feel that my connection with God is thin, or that my vocation seems far away, I search out the community that will nurture it, and I ask God to reveal even more the deceit of the world and the richness of His love. I beg Him to show me how to “live in the world, but not of it.”

Senior's Summer at the Institute for Priestly Formation

Jacob Bruns

Senior, Archdiocese of Milwaukee



This summer, six of my brother seminarians from IHMS and I will be attending the Institute for Priestly Formation (IPF) at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. It is a nine-week program for seminarians that helps them deepen their spiritual life. At the beginning of the program, we will partake in an eight-day silent retreat. Retreats have always been a time when I have more profoundly encountered our Lord in prayer. Silent retreats are a great restart button for me where I can center my attention on the Lord and be open to the graces He has to offer.

I believe this retreat will be a great starting place for the summer program before we enter the bulk of the formation that they offer. IPF focuses on the practical application of Ignatian discernment of spirits. Discernment of spirits is a process of

understanding our thoughts, feelings, and desires and how we relate them to the Lord in prayer. During my time at IHMS, I was able to get a solid understanding of Ignatian spirituality, but I am excited to learn more about it and how it will help me grow in my relationship with Jesus Christ.

We will partake in classes during the weekdays and engage in spiritual formation which includes weekly spiritual direction. Amidst the classes and other activities, we will have time to engage in leisure with brother seminarians while at IPF. Programs such as IPF give us the opportunity to partake in learning in a more relaxed setting and teach us how to enjoy the continual process of life-long learning. Thank you to all the benefactors and supporters of IHMS for the prayers as we enter IPF this summer!



Recent IHMS graduates attending IPF

IPF focuses on the practical application of Ignatian discernment of spirits. Discernment of spirits is a process of understanding our thoughts, feelings, and desires and how we relate them to the Lord in prayer.



Alumni Spotlight

Mark Wagner: Serving God, Country, and Soldiers

“The biggest thing that IHMS taught me how to do was surrender myself to the Lord. To really be able to give of myself and give of my heart so that Christ can really take over and be the one who shines through me. That’s primarily what I took away from there, that deep desire to give of myself.”

Mark Wagner, 2022 IHMS alum, is taking his heart’s desire for service one step further by joining the Air Force Reserve Chaplain Candidate Program.

A military chaplain serves the same role as a civilian priest, just for the soldiers of the United States military branches. They experience the same training and are assigned to bases, and if need be, are called to action in times of conflict. But their primary purpose is always to provide a sense of religious support and community for soldiers serving in the military.

“Our military members sacrifice a lot. They give of themselves in a lot of ways, they put themselves into harm’s way to protect our nation. There’s this old saying, ‘there’s no atheist in a foxhole’. When you’re in battle, the guns and fire blazing overhead—nobody is an atheist in that circumstance,” said Wagner. “So, it’s recognizing there’s still a humanity within our servicemen and servicewomen. We can train them to work as a cohesive unit, we can train

them to fight our enemies, but they still have needs, emotions, and a life of faith, and that’s something that is protected by our constitution.

“[It’s] an important right to be able to practice religion as we see fit,” said Wagner. “The military may put you in places where you may not be within a thousand miles of the nearest church of your faith group, so to have that spiritual support and well-being [from someone] who is living through the same things you’re living, doing the same things you’re doing, takes the same oath you take and really understands you and your state in life—how important and how beautiful it is that our service members can have that available to them.”

As early as participating in Mass as a server in third grade, the call to priesthood was always present in Wagner’s mind. He entered IHMS in 2017 and graduated in 2022, before continuing in Detroit for his theological studies.

“The community life [at IHMS] is very unique among seminaries. I’ve noticed, being at Sacred Heart Seminary, a huge difference in how the community is formed in an intentional way,” said Wagner. “What happened at IHMS that sticks with me is just how close we all were, how much we did things together as brothers forming our hearts to the priesthood. And that was something very unique that can exist in a



seminary like IHMS because of its size and its focus on being more college-level formation where it's a little bit more intense at times but it's intense for a reason."

However, Wagner had another dream, even before he heard the call to priesthood, all the way back when he attended preschool. Growing up in a military family with a father in the Air Force, he developed a keen desire to serve his country. Such an endeavor, however, seemed to be postponed when Wagner began following his vocation to the priesthood.

When Wagner learned about military chaplains and their duties to the United States' soldiers in his final year at IHMS, he discovered a way to accomplish all his dreams and callings of service to both his God and country; and choosing the Air Force as his military branch was an additional perk in fulfilling his childhood love of planes.

"I knew that I had to follow the Lord's call and go to seminary and eventually, God-willing, become His priest. Because anything I want to do will only ever pale in comparison to what the Lord wants from me," said Wagner. "But I still had this desire in my heart to serve our country and give back to what has given me so much in my life, the opportunities I've been afforded simply because of my father's service in the military."

During summers for his next three years of theology studies at Sacred Heart, Wagner will train as a soldier and shadow other chaplains as a candidate to learn about, experience, and prepare for Air Force chaplaincy.

Once Wagner successfully finishes this program and his formation at Sacred Heart Seminary, he will be ordained and spend three years as a reserve chaplain. During this time, he will serve only a small amount of time on military bases as a chaplain throughout the year while ministering as a fulltime civilian priest. After three years of this reserve chaplaincy, Wagner will move on to be a fulltime air force chaplain, to take on assignments at a base anywhere across the nation or the world.

"I'm really looking forward to giving back to those who have given so much for our country [and] doing something I've dreamed of for a long time, of just being in the military in general," said Wagner. "But also, being able to accompany the airmen and airwomen in the Air Force, just be there for them, be that model of hope in their life, and be able to bring Jesus Christ to them in their individual circumstances."

— Carlee Shimek, IHMS Communications

Come Visit IHMS at the Eucharistic Congress

As the three-year National Eucharistic Revival continues, the Diocese of Winona-Rochester is hosting their first Eucharistic Congress: *This Is My Body*. On June 10 in Mankato, MN, an estimated 5,000 Catholics from the Diocese of Winona-Rochester and beyond will come together to celebrate the Eucharist. An abundance of activities, including speakers, musicians, sponsors and exhibitors, a procession through downtown Mankato, child-friendly activities, adoration, and more will ensure an amazing day. IHMS will be there too.

IHMS will have a booth in the exhibit hall, along with other exhibitors at the Eucharistic Congress. Here, you will have the opportunity to meet and chat with some of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester seminarians attending IHMS, as well as alumni and faculty. For anyone who may be curious about their vocation and learning more about the seminary, this is the booth to visit.

The Diocese of Winona-Rochester's Eucharistic Congress: *This Is My Body* is a chance to renew one's sense of faith and relationship with God; to revive the spirituality of the Catholic Church through a community's effort to share the greatness of the Eucharist, the Holy Trinity, and more.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to join fellow brothers and sisters in experiencing the power and love of Jesus in the Eucharist.

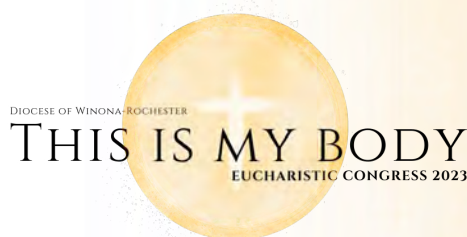
"A Eucharistic Congress is meant to not just be another interesting conference, or another spiritual gathering, but is meant to draw the local body of Christ together for worship, adoration, education, service, joy, and especially mission," said Bishop Robert Barron in his online invitation to the Eucharistic Congress: *This Is My Body*. "We are called to share the good news, and this Congress is going to be our starting line for a new age of mission in southern Minnesota."

To learn more about the Eucharistic Congress event hosted by the Diocese of Winona-Rochester,

you can visit the diocese's information page eucharist.dowr.org.

You can also learn more about the National Eucharistic Revival at eucharisticrevival.org.

— Carlee Shimek, IHMS Communications





BEHOLD,
how good and
how pleasing it is
FOR BROTHERS
TO DWELL AS ONE.

Psalm 133:1



UPCOMING EVENTS 2023

May 12

Ordination of IHMS Alumni to
Transitional Diaconate:
David C. Drefcinski, Diocese of Madison

May 20

Ordination of IHMS Alumni to
the Priesthood: John Wilebski,
Diocese of Crookston

May 20

Ordination of IHMS Alumni to
Transitional Diaconate:
Jonathan Swoik, Diocese of Peoria

May 21

Ordination of IHMS Alumni to
Transitional Diaconate:
Juan Altamirano, Diocese of Green Bay

May 27

Ordination of IHMS Alumni to Transitional
Diaconate: Brian Klein and Nicholas
Gawarecki, Diocese of Winona-Rochester

May 31–June 10

Totus Tuus Training at IHMS

June 24

Ordination of IHMS Alumni
to the Priesthood:
Alex Kren and John Zweber,
Diocese of La Crosse.

July 15

Propaedeutic Students Move-In

August 18, 21, 24

Seminarians Return

August 28

Fall Semester Begins

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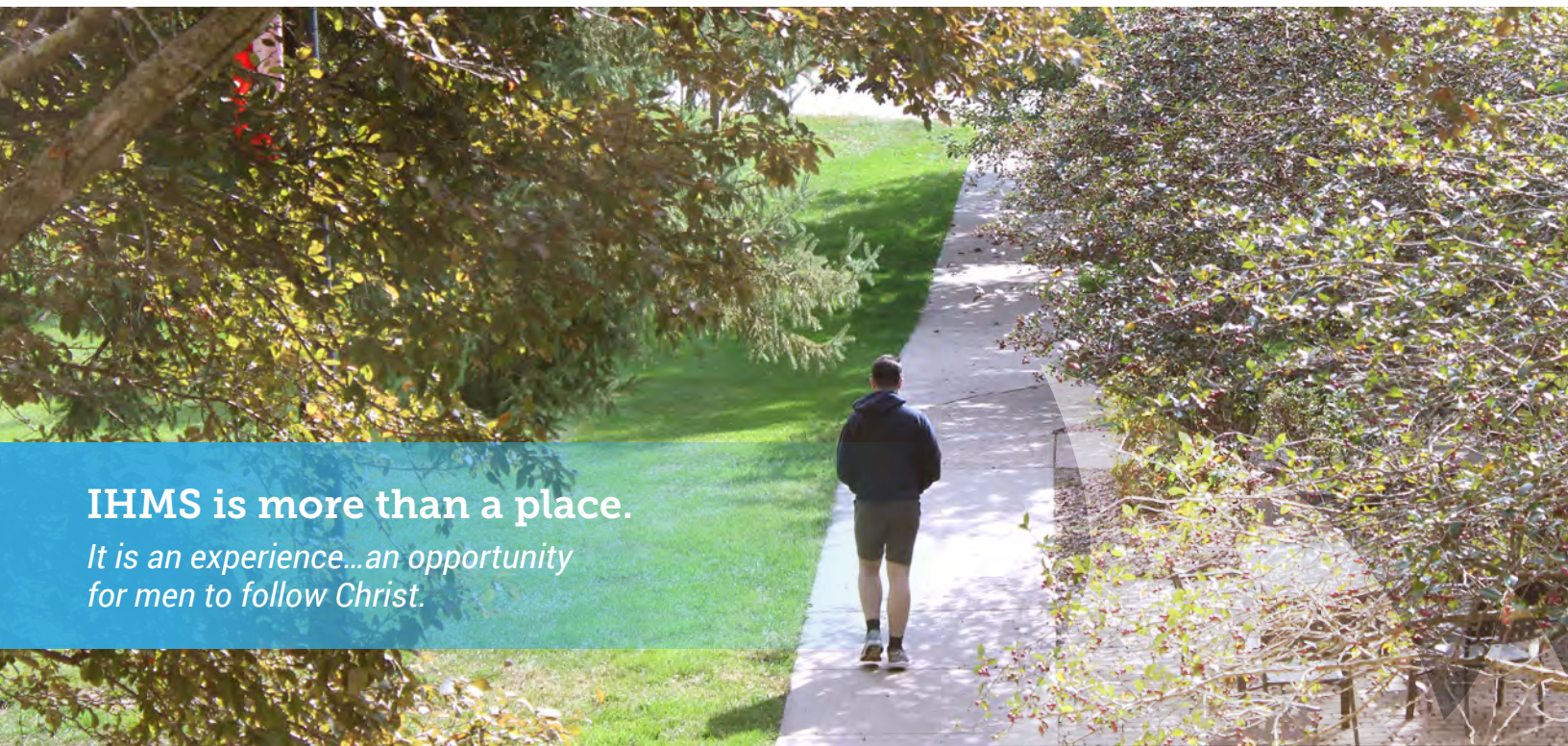
Please let us know of others who
should receive the IHMS Newsletter or
if you have an address change.

Please let us know if you are an
alumnus of IHMS. We are always
looking for alumni spotlight stories,
please share yours!



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IHMS is more than a place.

*It is an experience...an opportunity
for men to follow Christ.*

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Diocese of Green Bay, Diocese of La Crosse, Diocese of
Madison, Diocese of Marquette, Archdiocese of Milwaukee,
Diocese of Peoria, Diocese of Rapid City, Diocese of Sioux
City, Diocese of Sioux Falls, Diocese of St. Cloud, Diocese of
Winona-Rochester.

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