



Diocese of Gary Vocation Office Newsletter

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New Vocation Director for the Diocese of Gary



Fr. Mick Kopil

On July 1 of this year, I became the new Vocation Director for the Diocese of Gary. I began this assignment while continuing in my position as Associate Pastor at St. Michael the Archangel parish in Schererville, with three days a week spent in each assignment. This is a big change for me because for the last two years since being ordained a priest, I have focused all my time and energy serving the people of the parish and trying to help the pastor meet their spiritual needs. I also serve as chaplain for the Knights of Columbus council at St. Michael as well as for the Schererville Fire and Police Departments.

Bishop Melczek helped me form my vision for what it means to be a Vocation Director.

As Vocation Director, I expect to help our diocese in three ways. First, my goal is to help our pastors, parishes, schools, institutions, and people understand the idea of vocation and to build a culture in their community where people are open to the idea that God calls us all to a way of life where we can serve others with joy. When we do this, more women and men will consider religious life, and more men will consider ordained ministry. Second, a Vocation Director is supposed to help women and men understand how God is calling them through a process of discernment. I hope to help people find God in their life, to understand how God speaks to us, and to pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Finally, as there are already men in formation for the priesthood in the Diocese of Gary, I will be working with seminary formators at various seminaries to help these men understand what it means to be a priest, and more specifically, to be priests in the Diocese of Gary.

I succeeded Fr. Kevin Huber, who held this position for seven years. Fr. Huber is the Administrator of Queen of All Saints Parish in Michigan City, while continuing as Priestly Life Coordinator for the Diocese of Gary.

Seminarians Finish Summer with Reflection and Fellowship

The seminarians completed their summer with a day of reflection and fellowship on August 6. Following Mass and breakfast at St. Michael in Schererville, the seminarians and Fr. Mick went to the Portiuncula for Prayer in Frankfort, Illinois. During the day, the group spent some time in prayer, shared stories and thoughts about the most recent year of formation, and reflected on how God was giving them glimpses of His glory in preparation for when they as priests will endeavor to reflect that glory to others. The day ended with a great meal at a German restaurant in Frankfort before returning home. The seminarians have now returned to formation at their respective seminaries.

Chris Stanish Accepted as Candidate for Holy Orders

On August 15, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Chris Stanish of St. Bridget Parish in Hobart was accepted by Bishop Melczek as a candidate for Holy Orders.

Candidacy means that the bishop, speaking for God and for the Church of Gary, exhorts Chris to learn the life of the Gospel and grow in faith, hope and love. Chris publicly declared his intention to bind himself more closely to the service of God and His people.

Bishop Melczek asked Chris to complete his preparation for ordained ministry and accepted his commitment on behalf of the Diocese of Gary.

In August, Chris began his theology studies at Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit. He will continue discerning and being formed in the priesthood for the next four years.

Seminarians of the Diocese of Gary

One of the brightest stars shining in the future of the Diocese of Gary is the potential that exists among our seminarians. With God’s grace and in accord with His Will, these seven men in formation, would make wonderful, holy priests for our diocese.

God willing, in two years, our two third-year theology students, Jaime Perea and Ben Ross, will be ordained to the priesthood. For now, Jaime will return to the University of St. Mary of the Lake-Mundelein Seminary in Mundelein, Illinois to prepare to be ordained a transitional deacon next summer. In the meantime, Jaime and his classmates are planning on taking a ten-week pilgrimage to the Holy Land this winter. Ben Ross is returning to his studies at the Pontifical North American College in Rome where he, too, is preparing to be ordained a transitional deacon. If God wills it, Ben will be ordained in Rome next September.

Beginning his studies in theology this year, Chris Stanish will be a seminarian at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, Michigan. This will be a year of firsts for Chris, and a year in which he anticipates being instituted in the ministry of Lector.

Finishing up their college studies in philosophy at St. Mary’s University-Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary in Winona, Minnesota are Jordan Fetcko and Roque Meraz. Our two college seniors will spend much time this year discerning God’s call to continue their formation for priesthood in theological studies next fall.

Joining them in Minnesota for their sophomore year in college are Gregory Bim-Merle and Robert Sarwacinski.

Please hold all of our seminarians in your prayers during this year as they seek to grow in spiritual, academic, human, and pastoral formation.



Seminarians of the Diocese of Gary

Front row: Chris Stanish, Bishop Melczek, Fr. Mick
 Second Row: Gregory Bim-Merle, Jordan Fetcko
 Third Row: Robert Sarwacinski, Ben Ross, Roque Meraz
 Not pictured: Jaime Perea

Vocations Calendar

25 August	Seminarians Return to IHM Sem.
26 August	Seminarians Return to Sacred Heart Sem.
29 August	Seminarians Return to Mundelein Sem.
8-10 October	Mundelein Sem. Explore Priesthood Weekend
4-7 November	Sacred Heart Sem. Discernment Weekend
13-15 November	IHM Information Weekend
7-9 January	Mundelein Sem. Explore Priesthood Weekend
9-15 January	Nat’l Vocations Awareness Week
27-30 January	Sacred Heart Sem. Discernment Weekend

Support Vocations!

I was recently thinking about vocations and wondering what the secret was to having happy, holy, effective priests for the Church. The secret I discovered was no secret: trust God and love. If God has promised to remain with us, to be present where we gather, then how could He ever leave His Church without good priests? The truth of the matter is that God is calling men to be priests for the Diocese of Gary.

But the second part of that “secret”, love, can’t be forgotten. Christ commands us to love, which means wanting and working for the good of others. Ultimately, the greatest love anyone can show is to sacrifice themselves for another. To strengthen us in love, Christ gave us the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. As we’ve heard before, however, “no priests, no Eucharist”. So, if we truly love our neighbor as we are called to do, it falls to every Catholic Christian—priest, deacon, religious, moms and dads, sisters and brothers, neighbors, teachers, and friends—to do our part. If we love, God will do the rest.