

From the Seminarians of St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary, Boynton Beach, FL

SEEDS OF HOPE

ISSUE XXIV | FALL 2020



ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

HABEMUS EPISCOPOS

WHERE ARE THEY NOW / ALUMNI FEATURE

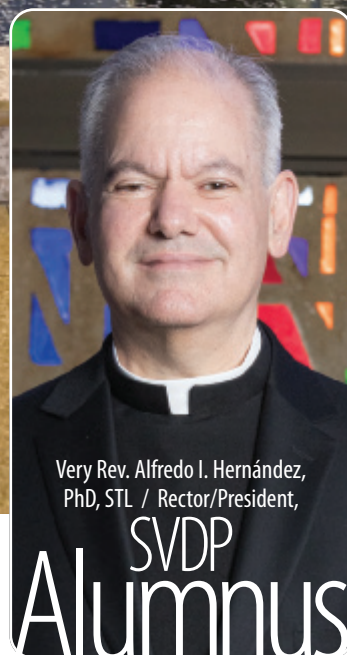
"Fiat Voluntas Tua"

A SHORT STORY OF OUR NEW RECTOR

CONFRONTING THE
CHALLENGE OF CORONAVIRUS

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT 10/2020

Appointments of Fr. Alfredo Hernández as new Rector and President of the seminary for a six-year term, Fr. Caggianelli as Vice Rector, Fr. Cusick as Academic Dean and Fr. Nursey as Dean of Pastoral Formation. The Seminary family is *elated*!



Very Rev. Alfredo I. Hernández,
PhD, STL / Rector/President,

SVDP
Alumnus

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SEEDS OF HOPE



Alumni
Edition
14-17

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CONTACT INFORMATION

HELP! We have discovered that much of our contact information is a bit outdated. Information that you provide to us is never shared. Please take a moment to update, and send info to development@svdp.edu and also let us know your preferences for communication.

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REFLECTIONS FROM THE RECTOR

Fall 2020

Dear Friends of SVDP,

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." The opening words of Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* seems like a very appropriate way to describe 2020. There is no way to deny the great suffering in our country and the world. In the midst of that great suffering, though, we have been witnesses to so many graces. In a time of pain and division in the world, here in Boynton Beach we are more united than ever and more confident that Christ is with us. For us, as we rejoice in a record number of seminarians in formation—122, it is truly the best of times.

I can say this because the resident seminarians and faculty at St. Vincent de Paul Regional might be in a bubble, but we have been more focused than ever on our mission. Our theme for the year comes from John 10:10: "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly." Indeed, receiving that life that Christ came to win for us and preparing to share it with others is at the center of all we do. Our nonresident seminarians at the Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Hialeah, our men on pastoral year, and all of our nonresident students and faculty and staff have also been drawn ever closer to Christ, the source of life. *The Seed of Hope*, indeed, is Christ who gives his life for us, that we might have life. Maybe even more than usual, being together in the bubble this semester has afforded us more time of prayer, more time to appreciate the great gift of life we have received and which we are called to bring to others.

In this edition of *Seeds*, you will see different views on the life we receive from Christ and are called to share with others: from seminarians who have just received the ministries of Lector and Acolyte, from one of our new international seminarians, from a transitional deacon preparing for ordination to the priesthood, from one of our newly ordained priests, and you will also enjoy reading about some of the things seminarians are doing simply to relax and stay fit during their extended time on campus. This edition includes a dedication to our former Rector, Bishop David L. Toups, who was named the 6th Bishop of the Diocese of Beaumont, Texas, as well as a dedication to one of our alumni, Bishop Stephen D. Parkes, who was named the 15th Bishop of the Diocese of Savannah.



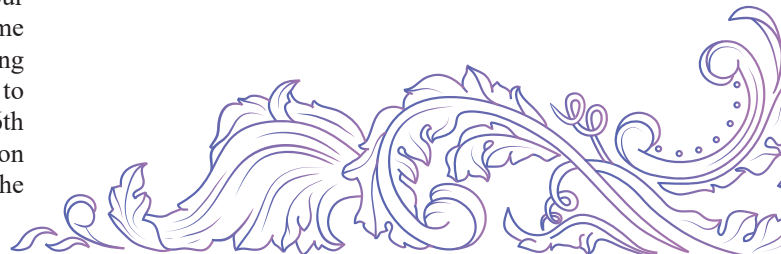
If our purpose is to prepare good, holy, joyful and effective priests, you will enjoy a new feature in this edition of *Seeds* about our alumni: *Where Are They Now?* The great support we have received from so many of you for our extraordinary *Friends of the Seminary 2020* is featured in a final article. Mentioning this article gives me one more chance to thank our benefactors for your generosity to St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary.

I am most grateful to the Bishops of the Board of Trustees for the trust they have shown in me, in asking me in October of 2020, to serve as Rector for a six-year term. I am very proud of this community that I am now called to lead. We would ask you all to continue to support us, certainly by your generous gifts, but above all by your prayers. While we long for the day when we can all be together again, you can see some of our recent major events at www.svdpc.edu. Know that we are praying for you, above all for any who have been sick or have lost loved ones during this year of so much pain.

In Christ, the Divine Physician,

Fr. Alfredo I. Hernández

Very Rev. Alfredo I. Hernández, PhD, STL
Rector/President



Receiving God's Word of Life

During the course of seminary formation, there are four ministries that seminarians receive on their journey towards the priesthood. The last two are the most obvious and well known; diaconate and priesthood. The first two, lector and acolyte, are a bit less recognized. In Seminary, these are two ministries that are important steps along the way to the diaconate and priesthood. They prepare and lead the seminarian deeper into the mystery of the liturgy. In the Early Church, the liturgy was often celebrated in Christian gatherings in people's homes. During these gatherings, people would come to hear the word of God proclaimed. As this grew, various people began to be entrusted to proclaim the word of God to the faithful gathered. From this, the Church then developed what were called the minor orders; orders such as lector, acolyte, porter, exorcist, etc. By the time of the middle ages, however, the only people really receiving these minor orders were those in preparation for the priesthood. In the liturgical reforms following the Second Vatican Council, the two orders that were favored were the ministries of lector and acolyte which we still maintain today.

When I was in college seminary, I remember thinking to myself, "Those theology students receiving lector and acolyte; that's far in the future. I don't have to worry about that."



Mr. Omeed Huemiller
(Diocese of Raleigh, I Theology)

The shift of mentality the moment you start theological seminary is incredible. Suddenly, you feel as though the priesthood and the reality of the responsibility that you are asking to be entrusted with are much closer than you thought. Receiving the ministry of Lector was a wake-up call for me. In my preparation for the reception of the ministry of Lector, it stood out to me in my prayer that this was my first yes to the Lord. A response to the Lord that showed forth my belief in the Word of God and that I would let His word be the center of my life.

The Word of God must be at the center of every Christian's life. In the Liturgy, the Church brings us to a deeper reverence and love for the word of God. However, sometimes I believe that we can take the word of God for granted. We tend to just see it as another part of the liturgy and not the Lord feeding us with the life that he has

promised. My installation as a lector of the Church has made me more aware and grateful for the word of God in my life. It has called me "to be faithful in handing on the word of God, so that it may grow strong in the hearts of his people." By the grace of God, I hope to fulfill what was entrusted to me on my installation as a Lector for the people of God. Therefore, allowing me to be evermore engrained with God's word so that I can be a faithful preacher of his love and mercy.



Seminarians Omeed Huemiller, Ross Williams, and John Lewis of the Diocese of Raleigh, North Carolina with Bishop Felipe J. Estevez of the Diocese of St. Augustine and Father Alfredo I. Hernández, Rector of St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary.



Omeed Huemiller proclaiming the readings at Mass on Sunday.



Bishop David L. Toups of Beaumont.

HABEMUS

On June 9, 2020, His Holiness Pope Francis, named Monsignor David L. Toups, a priest of the Diocese of Saint Petersburg and former Rector of St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary, as the 6th Bishop of the Diocese of Beaumont, Texas. Bishop Toups served our seminary community as a professor in Systematic Theology (2004-2006) and as our seminary President and Rector (2012-2020). On August 21, 2020, Bishop Toups was ordained and installed as the 6th Bishop of the Diocese of Beaumont, Texas. Bishop Toups was ordained at St. Anthony Cathedral Basilica where he became the first bishop to be ordained in the mother church of the Diocese of Beaumont. Bishop Toups chose Romans 8:28 (*"For those who love God, all things work for the Good."*) as his episcopal model which he based on his predecessor's motto and his mother's favorite scripture passage. St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary would like to thank Bishop Toups for all the work that he has done for our seminary community and for the priesthood in the Province of Florida. We send our prayers to Bishop Toups and to the faithful of the Diocese of Beaumont as they begin their journey with their new shepherd. Congratulations Bishop Toups! Ad Multos Annos!



T I M E L I N E

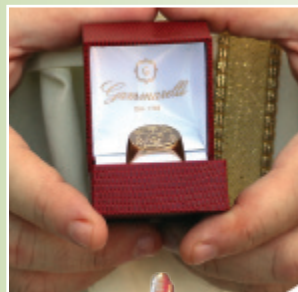
- Baptized as a Beloved son of the Father: On April 11, 1971.
- Ordained to the Transitional Diaconate: On October 3, 1996 by His Eminence Edwin Frederick Cardinal O'Brien at St. Peter's Basilica, Rome.
- Ordained to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ: On June 14, 1997 by His Excellency Bishop Robert N. Lynch at the Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle, St. Petersburg, Florida.
- Ordained and installed as the 6th Bishop of Beaumont: On August 21, 2020 by His Eminence Daniel Nicholas Cardinal Dinardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston, (Co-consecrators: Bishop Edward J. Burns, Bishop of Dallas and Bishop Curtis J. Guillory, Bishop Emeritus of Beaumont) at St. Anthony Cathedral Basilica, Beaumont, Texas.



His Eminence Daniel Nicholas Cardinal DiNardo of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston laying hands on Bishop David L. Toups.



Bishop David L. Toups prepares to enter St. Anthony Cathedral Basilica as the 6th Bishop of the Diocese of Beaumont.



Bishop David L. Toups signs his Oath of Fidelity.

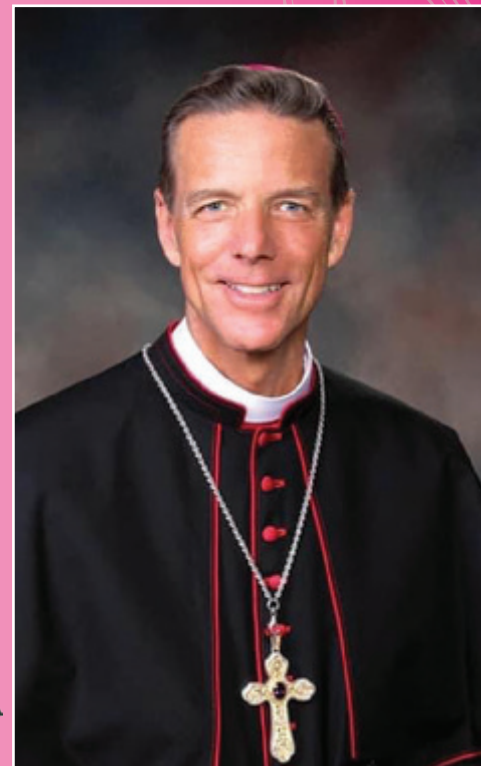


EPISCOPOS

On July 8, 2020, His Holiness Pope Francis, appointed Father Stephen D. Parkes, a priest and pastor in the Diocese of Orlando, Florida, as the 15th Bishop of the Diocese of Savannah, Georgia. Bishop Parkes is an alumnus of our seminary where he graduated in 1998 with a Masters in Divinity. Bishop Gregory L. Parkes of the Diocese of St. Petersburg and older brother to Bishop Stephen D. Parkes joined Archbishop Hartmayer, as a co-consecrator at the Mass of ordination. Bishop Gregory Parkes is also an alumnus of St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary. The Parkes brothers are one of 11 pairs of sibling-bishops who have been ordained to the episcopate in the history of the Catholic Church in America. Bishop Parkes selected as his motto: *"Rejoice in the Lord always, I say it again Rejoice (Philippians 4:4-8)."* We send our prayers to Bishop Stephen Parkes and to the faithful of the Diocese of Savannah as they begin their journey with their new shepherd. Congratulations Bishop Parkes! Ad Multos Annos!

T I M E L I N E

- Baptized as a Beloved son of the Father: On June 20, 1965.
- Ordained to the Transitional Diaconate: On April 12, 1997 by Bishop Norbert Dorsey of the Diocese of Orlando at St. James Cathedral, Orlando, Florida.
- Ordained to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ: On May 23, 1998 by Bishop Norbert Dorsey of the Diocese of Orlando at St. James Cathedral, Orlando, Florida.
- Ordained and installed as the 15th Bishop of Savannah: On September 23, 2020 by His Excellency Archbishop Gregory J. Hartmayer, Archbishop of Atlanta, (Co-consecrators: Bishop Gregory L. Parkes, Bishop of St. Petersburg and Bishop John G. Noonan, Bishop of Orlando) at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, Savannah, Georgia.



Bishop Stephen D. Parkes of Savannah.



Bishop Stephen D. Parkes of Savannah receives his Episcopal Ring from Archbishop Gregory J. Hartmayer of Atlanta.



Bishop Stephen D. Parkes with his brother Bishop Gregory L. Parkes of St. Petersburg.

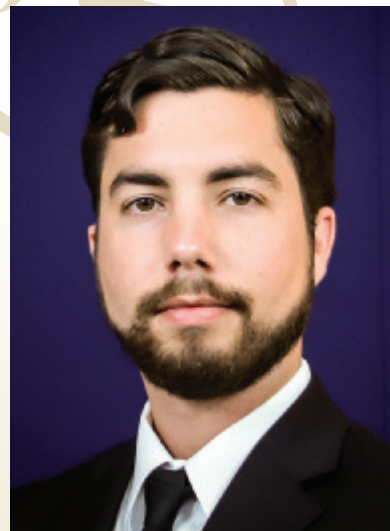


Bishop Stephen D. Parkes sits on the Cathedra of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist along side his brother Bishop Gregory L. Parkes of St. Petersburg and Archbishop Gregory J. Hartmayer of Atlanta.



Bishop Stephen D. Parkes with his predecessors, Archbishop Gregory J. Hartmayer and Bishop John K. Bolland.

A STEP CLOSER TO THE FATHER



Mr. Arturo Merriman
(Archdiocese of Atlanta, II Theology)

I think the title acolyte may seem for most people to simply be a derivative of “altar server”. Therefore, the idea of a *ministry of acolyte* hits some sort of polite vexation because the thought of there being anything more to the errands diligently carried out by altar servers is simply not there. Altar serving is understood by what we see at Mass – a liturgical job where someone hands things to the priest when he needs them and rings the bells when they need ringing. Any Catholic can do this on the spot, the thought goes, so, how could there be some sort of detailed ministry above and beyond the work of an altar server for an acolyte?

Well, for an acolyte there may be few differences in what is perceived by his liturgical duties in comparison to the altar server, but there is a profound difference in his *identity*. An acolyte is almost always a seminarian who has been given this ministry through a special rite administered by a bishop. For a seminarian to get to this stage he must feel ready to take on another purposeful step in becoming a spiritual father i.e., a priest. His formators (priests and faculty charged with guiding him on the journey to priesthood) must also believe he is ready.

Throughout his time at seminary, the seminarian has been learning how to become a son of God, and in doing so has been learning what it means to be loved in the fullest sense – that is love that is unconditional, creative, and constant. This love does not negotiate terms, it just writes a blank check opening itself up to the dangers of rejection and indifference.

Part of getting here has entailed studies in philosophy, studies in theology (where he receives the ministry of lector), and finally a Church-approved acceptance as a candidate for the priesthood. It may seem complicated and well, it is. These have been markers in the path to priestly ordination. Acolyte is another marker, and in fact, the last marker before a seminarian will arrive at his ordination of diaconate and priesthood. So, by the time he has gotten to the stage of acolyte, he has spent many years praying with the Lord and soaking in the love He manifests through our mother, the Church. Thus, the acolyte is not merely a glorified altar server, he has become, in a humble yet real way, a spiritual leader developing under the paternity of the priest. Technically speaking, he is now *configuring* his purpose in life to Jesus the High Priest’s purpose in life – loving the People of God with his whole self: unconditional, creative, and constant. Jesus did this as he embraced the love of God the Father and was in turn able to give that same love to us. The Acolyte is finding this divine love for humanity in his own life now. The time he spends in prayer, sacraments, studies or whatever else is now directed toward this father-like love for others. This is happening especially when he is assisting at liturgies because it is here that Jesus’ love pours out with its greatest passion. So, when an acolyte handles the Eucharist, he is not only handling the love of God for the world but is now also experiencing his own desire to give up his life for the world through that Eucharist which he too will one day offer.



Seminarian Arturo Merriman receiving the paten from Bishop Felipe J. Estevez of the Diocese of St. Augustine during the Rite of Installation of an Acolyte



Seminarian Arturo Merriman of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, Father Lane Briese of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, Bishop Felipe J. Estevez of the Diocese of St. Augustine, Father Alfredo I. Hernández, Rector of St. Vincent De Paul Regional Seminary, Seminarian Sean K. Crepin of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

THE SPIRITUALITY OF CHAOS



Mr. Ronan Sarmiento
(Diocese of St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, 1 Theology)

On the first of September 2019, hurricane Dorian made history in The Bahamas by becoming the strongest hurricane on record to smash the archipelago. Upon its impact, the 20-foot storm surge deliberately destroyed everything that came to its path, leaving the place unrecognizable — like an atomic explosion. Seventy people were confirmed dead while 282 remain missing. For days, many were injured, hungry, thirsty, and vulnerable. It was total chaos.

More than a year had passed yet the horror of the catastrophe has remained fresh and reverberating in my mind. How could I ever forget the day that changed my life forever? Back then, I was working as a teacher. School year 2019-2020 was going to be my last year. I was going to resign and return to the Philippines, enter the seminary and continue my discernment for the priesthood. That was *my* plan.

Unbeknownst to me, my plan was far too incomparable from God's greater scheme of things. What I thought would be a completely ordinary and normal school year turned out to be an adventure and a journey to where God was leading me: *His* plan. It was both terrifying and exciting at the same time.

Hurricane Dorian started out as category 1 down in the southeast Caribbean, approaching us at category 3. But on the morning of the approach, the signal was raised to a destructive category 5. The moment that followed was beyond description. It was nothing I had ever seen nor heard before. The sound — a mighty roar of pounding — evoked fear and trauma at the same time. The entire house was literally shaking, on its verge to be torn down or washed off. My companions and I took cover to stay safe and alive, but we knew we were facing death. So, we prayed the rosary and the *miserere*. Then, we commended our souls to the Lord.

I have seen death before, but it was the first time in my life that I had to deal with my own death. I knew I was going to die; I accepted that I was going to die. I thought about what form it would take: by drowning from the surge or by being buried under the debris.

But through a chain of miracles, my companions and I were able to ride out the storm without bruises. I found myself immensely grateful to God for saving my life. Yet, the chaos outside me reflected what was going on inside me: my world was also falling apart. I lost almost everything, including my job.

The days following the hurricane were a test of faith. I lived everyday dependent on God's providence. And, at that very moment, God came surging in me as if to possess me. For, in the midst of the chaos, I felt a powerful presence that transcended my physical exhaustion and psychological trauma. Instead, this presence strengthened me so that I was peacefully led until I reached safety.

As I recuperated, I also prayed intensely. I asked for guidance; I had no idea where I was going. All I knew was that I had to continue working because my family depended on me. A month after, God answered my prayer. I was accepted to teach at a Catholic school in the Virgin Islands. Along with it was the invitation to become a seminarian for the diocese. I took the offer without any hint of what was waiting for me.

While in St. Thomas, God blessed me with unsurmountable peace and assurance. I saw how God took care of me and carefully positioned me to my new environment. It was like being in a place that God had prepared for me! I had nothing to do with it; it was God all along!

My school year 2019-2020 started at St. Francis de Sales Catholic School in the Bahamas. It concluded at Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic School in the Virgin Islands. I resigned as a teacher only to become a seminarian for the diocese of St. Thomas.

Sometimes, God puts us into this darkness of unknowing — of chaos — to blind our ego from deciding for itself. Only to take us by the hand to the greatest plan He has in store for us. And the greatest lesson we can ever learn is to trust Him in all things, knowing that He has it all figured out. We move to the side and we allow Him to work His miracles.



Ronan and his companions after the storm.



Seminarian Ronan Sarmiento receiving the word of God from Bishop Felipe J. Estevez of the Diocese of St. Augustine during the Rite of Installation of a Lector.



Seminarian Ronan Sarmiento, Bishop Felipe J. Estevez of the Diocese of St. Augustine, and Father Alfredo Hernández, Rector of St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary.



Classroom destroyed by Hurricane Dorian.



High School building destroyed by Hurricane Dorian.



Hurricane Dorian Debris.

Love NEVER FAILS



Rev. Mr. Nicholas Toledo
(Archdiocese of Miami, IV Theology)



Deacon Nick Toledo and his classmates present themselves to the Archbishop as Candidates to be Ordained to the Diaconate.

"Love never fails." (1 Corinthians 13:8) In my short time as a deacon, I have seen and heard the struggles of the heart. Men and women open their hearts in confidence seeking to find the way that leads to truth, the way that leads to peace and joy and happiness. In them I see myself. Who am I to have the privilege to have a window into the soul of others? I too search for this happiness. I long for peace and joy. My journey is with my parishioners as we move towards eternity. Being an ordained minister is an honor that is born from love, a love that I have first received from my God and that I seek to share with His people. We share in this search and I cannot help but remember Saint Augustine. He understood that it was really within himself, in an intimate and profound way, that he found the God who called, shouted and broke through his deafness. He encountered the Creator who seeks to be in relationship with His creation. He encountered the God of life. It was in that encounter with God that Saint Augustine hungered and thirsted for more. "I know no other content but clinging to God, because unless my being remains in Him, it cannot remain in me." (Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, BVII no. 11)

I didn't know what to expect when I arrived in North Dakota to begin the Spiritual Exercises. The Spiritual Exercises are a 30-day silent retreat created by Saint Ignatius of Loyola modeled after his own spiritual experience during his conversion. Thirty days of silence, no technology, and no contact with the outside world. As I sat in the meeting room with the other 28 retreatants during the orientation workshop and sharing of desires, I could not help but think, "What did I get myself into?" Looking back now on my time in North Dakota, there was no better way of having spent those 30 days than surrounded by a community that is passionately seeking to deepen their relationship with God. One of my brother seminarians who lived the retreat this summer exclaimed during his testimony: "The silence is not really silent!" Throughout the span of a day, which includes four formal hours of prayer, mass and an hour of spiritual direction, I lost track of time. It was in the silence that I heard God speak loudly and like Saint Augustine describes, I heard Him calling within my innermost self, seeking to cultivate an ever-deeper relationship and gift me with a fuller life, a sharing in His inner life.

It is difficult to put everything that I experienced during the retreat in words, but perhaps what was most significant can be told in an anecdote from the life of Karl Barth. During a Q & A session at the University of Chicago

in 1962 a student asked Barth to summarize his theology in one sentence. Karl Barth, a renowned Swiss Protestant theologian, probably the most influential Protestant theologian in the twentieth century, responded saying: "In the words of a song I learned at my mother's knee: 'Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.'" This response may seem silly at first, but it holds a deep truth that Barth knew well. In the end, as Saint Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthians, "Love never fails". There is nothing more profound than the particular love Christ has for every person. It is a love that leads the greatest of sinners to become the greatest of saints.

Saint Augustine is often pictured with a heart in his hand that is aflame. This heart has been touched by the loved-filled flames that flow from the Sacred Heart of Christ. Every time we feel our heart burning during prayer or in an act of charity, it is the flames of Christ's love reminding us that he is present. In those same struggles that many share with me, I have experienced great joy in the realization that those hearts are being set aflame by the love of Christ poured out in Word and Sacrament. It echoes the words of the disciples in the story of Emmaus: "Were not our hearts burning within us?" It is a love that is given gratuitously. In this love we find our vocation. It is by this love that we live and move and have our being. This love never fails.



Deacon Nick Toledo and friends at their 30-Day retreat.



Deacon Nicholas Toledo receiving the Book of the Gospels from Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Miami.

Where are They Now?



SVDP Alumni share their lives



Fr. Daniel takes a selfie with a couple after celebrating their wedding.

Recently ordained Fr. Daniel Daza-Jaller

DIOCESE OF PALM BEACH

As priests, we are in a very real way “ministers of new life,” new life in Christ. We do this primarily through the sacraments: giving new life through Baptism, maintaining this life through the Eucharist, restoring this life through Reconciliation, and preparing souls for eternal life through the Anointing of the Sick. What a blessing it is to help others live out the life of Christ through their God-given vocation! I am forever grateful to SVDP for the “new life” formation they gave me; they helped me to discover it in my own life, and taught me how to operate from it, so as to be able to share it with others. (Class of 2018)



Fr. Daniel with seminarians after the ordination of two priests for the Diocese of Palm Beach.



Fr. Daniel celebrates a mock baptism for the students of St. Anastasia Catholic School.



Fr. Tom blessing parishioners from St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Orlando after his Mass of Thanksgiving.

Recently ordained Fr. Tom Pringle

DIOCESE OF ORLANDO

Looking back on my time at St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary, I can truly say that it changed my life. Every aspect of formation challenged me to be a better follower of Jesus, strengthened the foundation of my relationship with Christ, and encouraged me to listen more attentively to the stirrings of the Holy Spirit. Throughout my priesthood thus far, those aspects of my spiritual life have enriched my ministry, especially in celebrating Mass, anointing the sick, preaching, giving talks, leading retreats, providing advice and counsel in the confessional, and praying with and over others. It has truly been a privilege and an honor to witness the many incredible things the Lord has been doing in the lives of those I have been called to serve. What a gift the priesthood has been! (Class of 2020)



Fr. Derek celebrates Daily Mass at St. John Vianney Catholic Church in Orlando.

Recently ordained Fr. Derek Saldanha

DIOCESE OF ORLANDO

I look back at my time at SVDP with much gratitude for the formation that I received and the bonds of brotherhood that I was able to forge. One of the challenges and joys for me in my first year has been the ability to minister to people in Spanish, since Spanish-speakers form the majority of my parish community. I am very grateful to SVDP for the bi-lingual formation program which has helped me embrace this challenge with much ease. I have been ordained a priest for about a year and 4 months and I thank the Lord every day for calling me to this beautiful vocation. (Class of 2019)



Fr. Michael in the Holy Land.

5 years Fr. Michael Garcia

ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI

As I reflect on my priesthood and the journey God has set before me, I can't help but think of His fingerprints in the people who have impacted my life, from my formation at St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary to the laity who have helped me grow in my understanding of fatherhood as rooted in the ministerial priesthood. Five years have already gone by, and God willing, I hope he blesses me with many more years to come. May the Lord bless the work of our hands. (Class of 2015)



Fr. Kevin blessing the fire during the Celebration of the Easter Vigil.

10 years Fr. Kevin McQuone

DIOCESE OF PENSACOLA - TALLAHASSEE,

As a seminarian at SVDP, I wondered how I would navigate the unknowns of the path ahead of me. In prayer, I came to conclude that every vocation comes with both joys and sorrows greater than one can imagine. After ten years of priesthood, those theoretical experiences have become a reality. When we believe his mercy abounds in all circumstances, we don't need to know what lies ahead. We need only trust in Him who leads us. (Class of 2010)



5 years Fr. Chuck Dornquist

DIOCESE OF
ST. PETERSBURG

Father Chuck with seminarians from the Diocese of St. Petersburg and Father Connor Penn. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God.” (2 Cor 1:3) My 5 years of formation at St. Vincent's were years of challenge, healing and the consolation of various family dynamics and afflictions. Those years of formation have made possible these 5 years of manifesting the priesthood of Jesus Christ. I currently serve as director of vocations for the Diocese of St. Petersburg, team priest for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, I am immensely grateful and humbled by the Lord's ability and desire to manifest His consolation through me. (Class of 2015)



Fr. Kevin poses before the altar at his parish.



Fr. Bryan ministers to a sick young boy.

5 years Fr. Bryan Garcia

ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI

In priesthood, I have experienced a lot of “walking with”. In this beautiful calling I have been called to walk with those who are sick or suffering, those who are rejoicing, and everything in between. I am humbled constantly knowing that if I remain true to the calling I have received, I can continue to be the presence of Christ's love for those God sends me to serve. (Class of 2015)



Fr. Bryan witnesses the renewal of vows for his grandparent's 60th wedding anniversary.

...continued

SVDP Alumni
share their lives

Where are They Now?



Fr. Eric saying the words of consecration at his first mass.



Fr. Eric preaching the Gospel at Mass.

15 years Fr. Eric David Zegeer

ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI (*Serving in the Archdiocese of Denver, Colorado*)
The theme of World Youth Day 1993 with Saint John Paul II was, "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly" (Jn. 10:10). The event would bring me to Denver, Colorado, for the first time as a high school student. That week-long experience would become my personal Pentecost, where my call to holiness as a lay-person and eventually to the priesthood became more apparent than ever. For me, the priesthood has always

been one of sharing the extraordinary and life-changing mercy of God with others as I have always experienced from Him. Now I find myself at the parish (Risen Christ in Denver, CO) within whose boundaries is Cherry Creek State Park—the site of the closing mass of World Youth Day '93—serving as parochial vicar and teaching Homiletics at the local major seminary.

My priestly ordination card carried this scripture quote that was true throughout my formation and remains true to this day: "No trial has come to you but what is human. **God is faithful** and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. 10:13). (Class of 2005)



Father Scott preaches his homily during Mass at Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church in Indiantonic.

15 years Fr. Scott Circe

DIOCESE OF ORLANDO

This year I am blessed to be celebrating the 15th Anniversary of my Ordination to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ! I fondly remember my years of seminary formation at St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary (1999-2005) which prepared me for priestly ministry in the Diocese of Orlando. Over the past fifteen years I have truly been blessed to share in the sacramental life of those whom I have served. Every assignment has challenged and strengthened me to be the priest I am today, and I am very appreciative of the many people the Lord has placed in my life throughout these different experiences. I know the best is yet to come, so I look forward to many more years of service, God willing, in the Vineyard of the Lord. (Class of 2005)



Fr. Eric showing off his amazing beard.



Father Brian with a couple whom he has known since they were both 12 years old. He celebrated their wedding and baptized their children.

20 years Fr. Ralph DuWell

DIOCESE OF ORLANDO

I was ordained in 2000 after spending six years at St Vincent's. Looking back on my time at the seminary, I have fond memories of friends, professors, classes, pastoral work and seminary life in general. One thing I have carried with me these twenty years of priesthood is what Fr. Steve Olds said to us in Sacraments - "gentleman, when the hospital calls at 2:00 AM, don't just roll over, get up and go. It will be a moment of grace." He was right! After all these years, when asked what my favorite part of priesthood is, I have the same answer: being able to walk with a family through the sacraments- from marriage to births and baptisms, birthdays, anniversaries and finally commending them to God. (Class of 2000)



Father Ralph raises the ciboria during the Prayers over the Offerings at his parish, St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Orlando.

20 years Fr. Brian King

DIOCESE OF PALM BEACH

Throughout my years at St Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary we were constantly reminded that whether a seminarian or priest, we were always in formation and had to be open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Needless to say, no one goes to seminary and gets ordained to be the Bishop's secretary, *sed fiat voluntas tua*. I am blessed in that the Bishop allows me to do baptisms, weddings, funerals, etc. and to assist in various parishes when we do not have a ceremony. And while I would like to think that my preaching, teaching and example have changed or affected the people I minister to, I can say without a doubt that their faith, hope and love have had a profound impact on me. I give thanks to God for twenty truly happy years of priesthood! (Class of 2000)

25 years Fr. Richard George II

DIOCESE OF PALM BEACH



Father Rick celebrates the baptism of a young child at his parish, St. Anastasia Catholic Church in Ft. Pierce.

Mystery, Intimacy and Love gently held up an invitation for me (at nine years old, while attending Mass at my home parish), to come and follow. Many interior and exterior steps would lead me to St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary and then ordination on May 12, 1995. My short years of formation fueled a desire for "more". That "more" is daily manifested and received, in the Word of God, His saints and the Word Made flesh; as I celebrate the Divine Liturgy. The Liturgy is my life line, my all, my everything. Without Christ, my limitations are debilitating (for me and others), but with Him, in Him and through Him my human limitations are transcended. I can summarize my 25 years of priesthood in two words, "Spiritual Fatherhood." (Class of 1995)



Archimandrite Glen poses at a parish where he serves as a priest.

25 years Rt. Rev. Archimandrite Glen J. Pothier

DIOCESE OF PALM BEACH

My most cherished ministry in my vocation is the celebration of the Byzantine Divine Liturgies of both the Ruthenian and Greek-Melkite Churches *sui iuris*. As a Latin-rite priest with bi-ritual faculties, it is especially rewarding to be able to 'breathe with both lungs' of the Catholic Church. My title of Archimandrite is both a testament and reward for ministry in both the East and West. (Class of 1995)

Fiat Voluntas Tua: A Short Story of our New Rector



*A life of charity in service to
our Lord and Lady is epitomized in the life of*
Father Alfredo Hernández



Father Alfredo I. Hernández Addressing the Seminary Community during the seminary's Commencement Exercises.



Mr. Jacob Gwynn
(Diocese of Venice in Florida, I Theology)

On September 8, 2020, at the Mass celebrating the feast of *Nuestra Señora de Caridad* (Our Lady of Charity), the newly appointed Rector of Saint Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary (SVDP) shared with his seminarians a story that has greatly influenced his ministry.



Father Alfredo I. Hernández with his parents, Julio Luis and Loló Hernández.

In 1963, Alfredo I. Hernández, was born in Miami but then later grew up in West Palm Beach. Alfredo maintained good grades all throughout his school career and showed promising qualities of a good leader. After graduating from the University of Florida with a bachelors in accounting and a masters and specialist degree in student personnel in higher education, Alfredo stepped foot for the first time as a student on the grounds of Saint Vincent de Paul Seminary –little did he know that he would later return in his ministry to serve as a priest in many different capacities.

In 1992, Alfredo was ordained to the Priesthood for the Diocese of Palm Beach. It was no surprise that Father Alfredo Hernández would con-

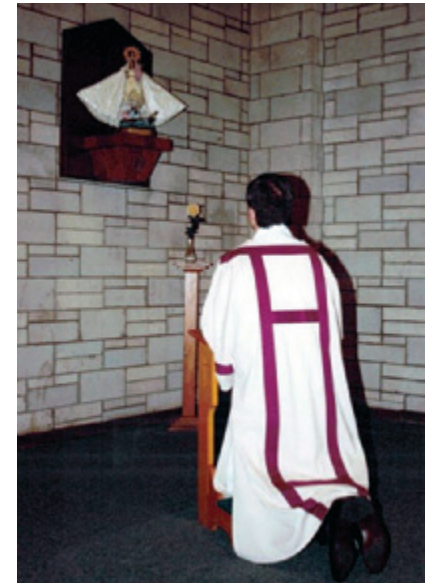
tinue his education to obtain his License in Dogmatic Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in 1997 and a Ph.D. in Pastoral Studies from North-West University in South Africa in 2019. After his ordination, Fr. Hernández served for two years on the full-time faculty at SVDP and then began his 14 years as pastor at his home parish in West Palm Beach while continuing to serve as an adjunct professor at SVDP. In 2013, Fr. Hernández re-joined the full-time faculty and served as Dean of Pastoral Formation (2013–205), Director of Liturgy (2013–2020), Academic Dean (2015–2020), and Vice Rector (2019–2020).

Going back to the *Nuestra Señora de Caridad* Mass this past September 8th, Fr. Hernández shared with his seminarians what the feast of Our Lady of Charity means to him. Fr. Hernández was born on September 5th, just three days before the feast of the Patroness of Cuba. Twenty-eight years later, as a newly ordained deacon, Rev. Mr. Hernández dedicated his ministry to Mary, under the title of Our Lady of Charity, by consecrating himself to the patroness. In his remarks that evening, Fr. Hernández said that he has felt a strong connection with Our Lady ever since. Twenty-nine years later, Fr. Hernández is still grateful and dedicated to Mary, who has walked with him all throughout his life of ministry.

Mary, our Mother, is honored in the Church with many titles: Mother of the Church, Queen of Apostles, Undoer of Knots, etc., and one that plays a particular role in the life of Fr. Hernández— Lady of Charity. We invite you to pray for Fr. Alfredo Hernández as he begins his new ministry as Rector of Saint Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary, that he may be guided especially by the intercession of Our Lady, Mother of Priests. *Nuestra Señora de Caridad— ¡ruega por nosotros!*



Fr. Seamus Murtagh vesting the then Deacon Alfredo Hernández during the Ordination Rite to the Diaconate.



Fr. Alfredo kneeling before the Our Lady of Charity statue when he was a Deacon.



Father Alfredo preaching his Homily during the Our Lady of Charity Mass in St. Vincent de Paul Chapel.



Chris Larkins
Archdiocese of Atlanta, I Pre-Theology



RE-CREATING RECREATION

During this past semester, I learned that one's transition into seminary is a whirlwind of new people, classes, and expectations. I was told before coming to seminary that I would need the entire first year of formation to adapt to seminary life before fully entering my discernment of the priesthood. My first thought was: "I will everything under control!"...like usual, the Lord quickly allowed me to see my frailty and dependency on Him. Thus, amid the many changes, I have come to see the great-er need and value for recreation during my first semester of seminary.

According to the book, *True Leadership* by the Habiger Institute for Catholic Leadership, recreation is to "re-create". This understanding of recreation is misunderstood in our world; however, it is not lost. We have an innate desire for recreation as it resurrects life and energy into the human person. Recreation is not checking the phone, watching YouTube videos, or completing unfinished tasks from the last week. Recreation is something that allows for the human person to enter more fully into their humanity and accordingly into their relationship with God. It allows for the person to be fully aware in the present moment and recognize reality for what it is.

Thus far, at St. Vincent de Paul, I have partaken in recreation in many ways. First and foremost, team sports have always been my favorite way to have community with family and friends. I most enjoy playing soccer; however, I am willing to play almost any sport in existence. Thankfully at St. Vincent de Paul, we usually play soccer or basketball a few times a week, and through these frequent pick-up games, I also come to better know the brothers here. There is nothing quite like the feeling of seeing your shot pass the goalkeeper and "swish" the back of the net. Even today, whenever I walk onto a field of freshly cut grass, I remember fond memories of my childhood days, spending hundreds of hours playing soccer with the smell of fresh turf.

Music is another hobby I have enjoyed for many years, and that I have employed as both recreation and service to the seminary. I played in the band through middle school and high school, however in college I started to learn the guitar and develop my voice. I learned in high school how music not only allows one to experience beauty, but furthermore allows one to be present in the moment, free from anxiety, and harmonize with others to create something novel in both time and space. Now in seminary, I am working on writing my third song with the guitar; and I sing for the SVDP seminary choir.

As one of my newest forms of recreation, I have started to read novels. Since March 2020 and the start of COVID-19, I have read *Till We Have Faces* and *The Great Divorce* by C.S. Lewis, several Flannery O'Connor short stories, and *East of Eden* by John Steinbeck. I appreciate reading novels because I learn about the complexity and frailty of humanity while also learning about history, psychology, theology, or whatever other subjects in the story. While I already read many pages of philosophy each week, reading novels allows me to relax, partake in creativity, and remember that life is not simply about asking existential questions, but also about fully engaging in the incredible joys and sufferings of each day. Ultimately, the stories connect me to the reality of the human condition and a place where I can rest with the Lord.

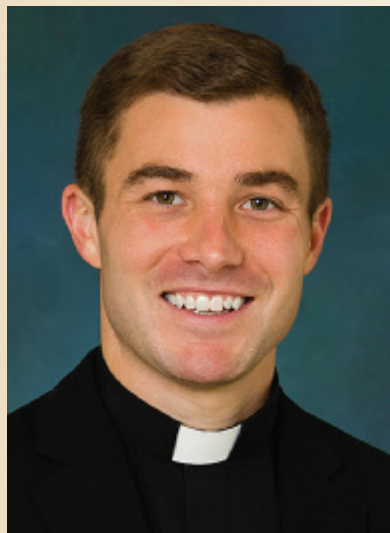
My last major source of recreation at SVDP has developed into chess. In realization that my classmates and philosophy professor were great fanatics of chess, I decided to resume my playing of chess. With the help of a professor, we started an official chess club at the seminary that meets weekly on Friday afternoons. I played chess all throughout elementary school, and I have always enjoyed the game because of the strategy and the need for analytical thinking. Like reading, it also enables me to think critically!...



... All in all, I am greatly thankful for the talents and gifts that God has given me to participate in His divine creation through recreation. Recreation allows you and I to place work and the many distractions of each day in their proper place. I partake in some recreation most days of the week; however, I especially reserve my Sundays to rest through recreation, as did the Lord in His creation of the universe.



Chris participating in the Seminary Chess Club that he started along with Professor Mario Cardone



Fr. Connor Penn
(Priest of the Diocese of St. Petersburg)



Fr. Penn elevates the host and chalice for the very first time at Mass.



the Shepherd's

On the annual memorial of St. Gregory the Great, the Church prays an exceedingly beautiful Opening Prayer (also called a Collect) at Mass: the priest—praying on behalf of the people—asks “that the flourishing of a holy flock may become the eternal joy of the shepherds.”

JOY



Following priestly Ordination with Bishop Gregory Parkes of the Diocese of St. Petersburg.



Fr. Penn joins Lino Rulli of The Catholic Guy Show during a live recording on campus in 2016.



Since graduating from St. Vincent de Paul last May and being ordained for the Diocese of St. Petersburg, my first few months of participation in the priesthood of Jesus Christ have been, in the words of this same Collect, an invitation to share in the joy of a shepherd who observes the flourishing of a holy flock.

Now serving as a priest at St. Catherine of Siena in Clearwater, Florida, I interact daily with the faithful of our Diocese in ways that previous years of seminary formation did not allow. Through this daily interaction, I am continually edified and inspired by the holiness of God's people in their devotion, their sacrifice, their generosity, and their faith. In fact, celebrating the Sacraments with and for them fills me with joy—and this is what the Collect for the Mass in honor of St. Gregory the Great captures so well: the shepherd's joy at the flock's holiness.

St. Vincent's prepared me remarkably well for ministry as a Catholic priest—principally because of the emphasis stressed on each seminarian's unique conformity to Jesus Christ throughout the formation program. This conformity entails uncomfortable “stretching,” “pulling,” and “growing” by which old habits are discarded and new ones adopted through the encouragement of spiritual directors, formation advisors, and even fellow seminarians. Yet as the formation process aids a future priest in growing closer in conformity to Jesus Christ, it also grants him a taste of the privileged participation in Jesus' priestly heart proper to holy orders: a heart which rejoices at the flourishing of a holy flock.

In priestly ministry, I participate in this joy when I celebrate daily Mass for the faithful of our parish. I participate in this joy when, in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, I witness powerful encounters between



Joining a beautiful family for a photo after the celebration of their child's Baptism.

penitents and God's great mercy. I participate in this joy when I see young children in our faith formation programs display contagious excitement in learning about our common faith. In all these ways and countless more, the flock flourishes in greater holiness—bringing joy to the heart of the shepherd.

The challenges we have all experienced in these past months need no great elaboration: sanitizer, masks, and social distancing have remained with us longer than first anticipated. Yet the flourishing of a holy flock has continued as well. God's people carry on as they strive for holiness: they continue to attend Mass (either in-person or virtually), continue to request Baptism for their children or Anointing of the Sick for their parents, and continue to discover new ways to grow in their relationship with Jesus.

All of this fits so perfectly well with the theme for this issue of Seeds of Hope: “that they may have life.” As each of us among the flock strives towards the flourishing of holiness, God desires to fill us more and more with life. Receiving this life brings about our flourishing—and indeed, the great joy of a shepherd fortunate enough to participate in the priestly heart of Jesus is witnessing the flourishing in holiness of the flock entrusted to him.



Fr. Penn with local friends at the annual Joe-Paddy Festival.



Posing for a picture in 2017 with priests of the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

Friends of the Seminary

Faithful Friends of the Seminary stepped up to support our virtual event held on October 23, 2020

We are blessed with the most remarkable donors and supporters whose dedication to our seminary and the event was unwavering despite the challenges that existed. Not being able to gather in person was such a disappointment, but with faith, we have exchanged the bounty of God's message without restraint.

The success of the event was aided by the support of our Chairs, Amanda and Stephen Heese from the Diocese of St. Petersburg. We were also able to rely upon our Auction donors and volunteers. The virtual auction was a first for the seminary and was a great success. We will leave our event page available for a bit, please have a look at the welcome message from our Rector, Fr. Alfredo Hernández and two beautiful messages from seminarians Deacon Mac Hill and Dan Donohue, where they describe their journey to priesthood and their experience at the seminary.

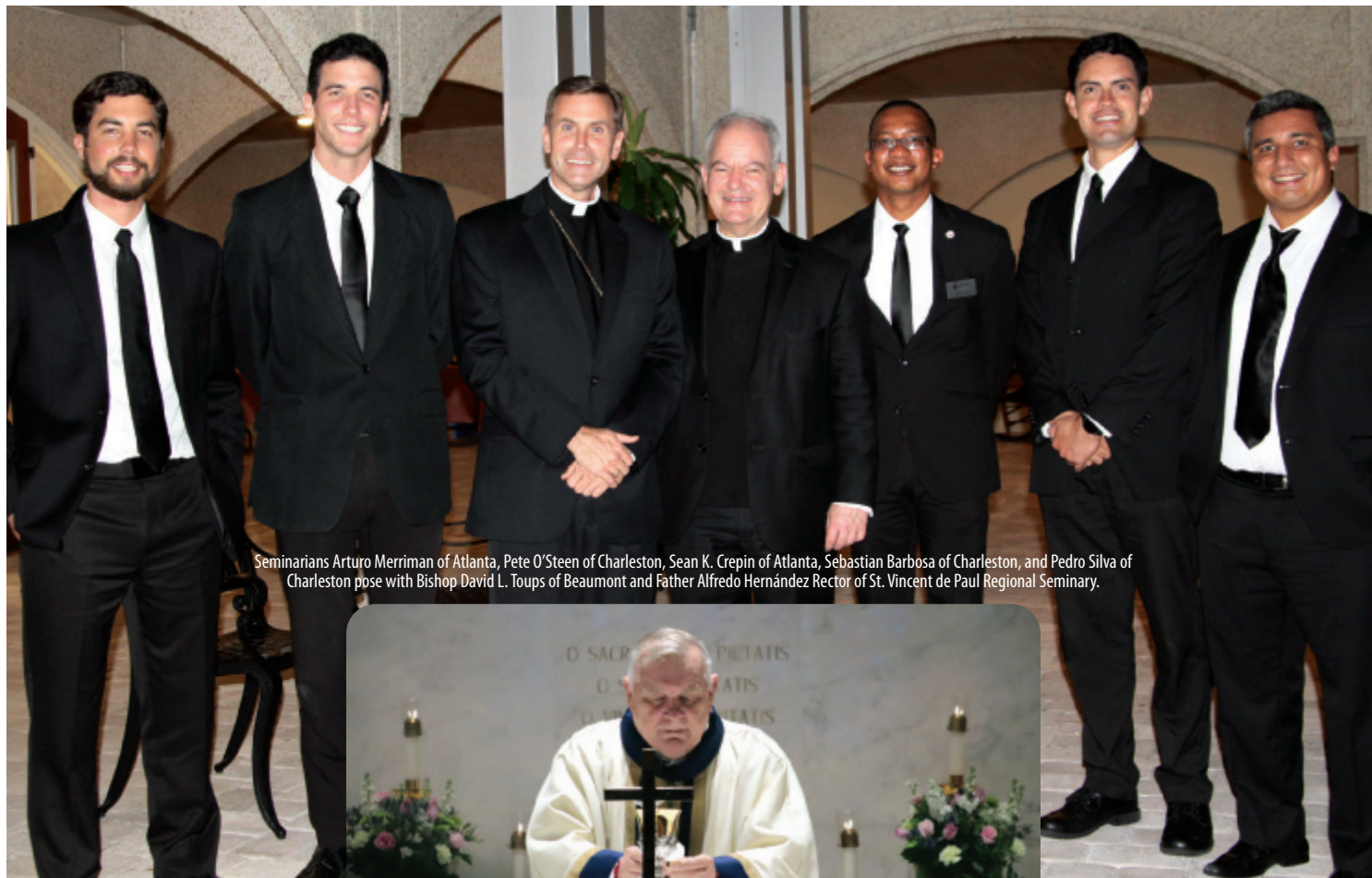
svdp.edu/friends2020



Ms. Deb Lindsay
(Director of Development & Public Relations)



2020 SVDP Schola.



Seminarians Arturo Merriman of Atlanta, Pete O'Steen of Charleston, Sean K. Crepin of Atlanta, Sebastian Barbosa of Charleston, and Pedro Silva of Charleston pose with Bishop David L. Toups of Beaumont and Father Alfredo Hernández Rector of St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary.



Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami Consecrates the Host in the Body of Christ.



Deacon Jeremy Lully of Miami, incensing Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami prior to the Eucharistic Celebration.



Father Alfredo Hernández gives his thanks to our Friends at the conclusion of the celebration of our Annual Friends of the Seminary Mass.



...continued

Please take a moment to help... We have discovered that much of our contact information is a bit outdated. Information that you provide to us is never shared. Send your updated information to development@svdp.edu and also let us know your preferences for communication.

TO RECEIVE SEEDS OF HOPE MAGAZINE AND OTHER UPDATES SEND YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS TO development@svdp.edu



(L to R) Bishop David L. Toups of Beaumont, Archbishop Gregory J. Hartmayer of Atlanta, Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski of Miami, 2020 SVDP Award Recipients: Msgr. Christopher J. Schreck, Rev. Michael J. McNally, Very Rev. Alfredo I. Hernández, Rector & President of St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary. (Not Pictured: 2020 SVDP Award Recipient, Rev. Gerald Grace)

SVDP Award Recipients

Monsignor Christopher J. Schreck

is a priest of the Diocese of Savannah and is currently serving as Pastor of St. William Parish of Simon's Island, GA.

Just prior to this assignment, he served as the 16th Rector and President of the Pontifical College Josephinum, as well as Professor of Sacred Scripture in the School of Theology from (2012-2019). In 2007, he joined the Josephinum's faculty and served as founding Executive Director of the Pontifical College Josephinum's Institute for the Formation and Ministry of the Permanent Diaconate (2007-2012), and likewise served as Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations (2008-2010), Director of Pastoral Formation (2009-2010), and Executive Vice President (2010-2012).

Ordained in 1977 for the Diocese of Savannah, he served five years as Associate Pastor at Saint James Church in Savannah, Georgia (1978-1983). He has devoted more than thirty years to seminary education and administration; first, as Academic Dean, Associate Professor, and Professor of Sacred Scripture at the Saint Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary, Boynton Beach, Florida (1983-1986; 1990-1993); and subsequently, as Professor of Sacred Scripture and Vice Rector at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary, Overbrook, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (1993-2007).

Monsignor Schreck received his undergraduate A.B. in Classical Studies from the College of William and Mary in Virginia (1973); his graduate S.T.B. (Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology) from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy (1976); his S.S.L. (Licentiate in Sacred Scripture) from the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, Italy (1978); and his Ph.D. / S.T.D. (Doctorate in Sacred Theology, with a concentration in Sacred Scripture) from the Catholic University of Leuven, Louvain, Belgium (1990/1991).

Since 1978, Monsignor Schreck has taught and given

conferences and workshops in pre-ordination and post-ordination formation programs for permanent deacons and continuing formation programs in numerous (arch)dioceses (e.g., Savannah, Miami, Philadelphia, Wilmington, Camden, Columbus, Covington, Allentown, Scranton, Harrisburg, Palm Beach, Saint Augustine, Providence, Birmingham, Burlington).

Father Michael J. McNally

is a priest of the Diocese of Palm Beach.

He was ordained in 1973, after receiving a B.A., a M.Div., and a M.Th. from St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary in Boynton Beach. He went on to receive an M.A. and a Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame. After pastoral assignments in two parishes, he taught at St. John Vianney College Seminary in Miami from 1975 to 1979, St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary from 1982-1993, and St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia from 1993 to 2005.

Father McNally was appointed Pastor of St. Mark the Evangelist Church in Fort Pierce in 2005, serving there until his retirement in 2018. Since then, he has served as Chaplain to the Poor Clare Nuns at San Damiano Monastery in Fort Myers Beach.

Father McNally is the premier Catholic historian of Florida and a prolific author of book reviews, scholarly articles, and books. He has recently published a biography of Bishop John Moore titled: *John Moore: Catholic Pastoral Leadership During Florida's First Boom, 1877-1901* (Jacksonville, FL: Diocese of St. Augustine, 2020). He is also the author of: *Catholic Parish Life on Florida's West Coast, 1860-1968* (St. Petersburg, FL: Catholic Media Ministries, 1996) and *Catholicism in South Florida, 1868-1968* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1984).

Father Gerald Grace

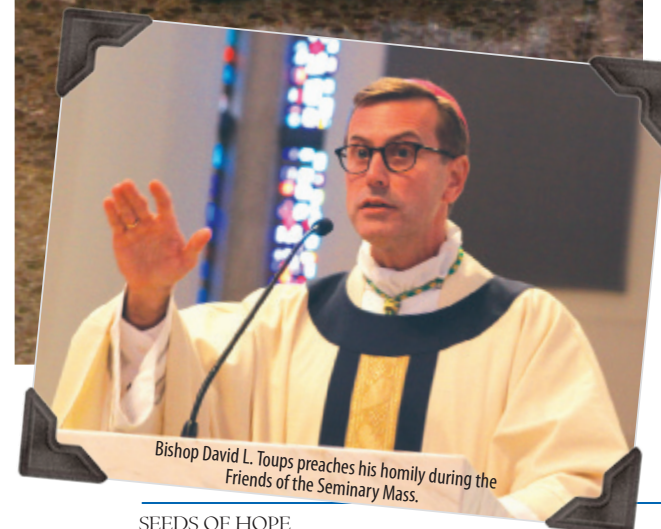
was ordained June 13, 1965, at St. Patrick's College, Thurles, County Tipperary in Ireland. He studied at Manhattan College in New York and Pontifical University of St. Thomas in Rome, receiving degrees with distinctions. He also received a doctorate in sacred theology from Pontifical University in 1975.

As a young priest, his ministry began in South Florida, and he continued to minister here all of his life. He was incardinated into the then-Diocese of Miami in 1965 and later became a priest of the newly established Diocese of Palm Beach (formed in 1984).

He started his ministry at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Parish in Fort Lauderdale, serving two years before coming to serve as associate pastor and assistant director of religious education at St. Coleman Parish in Pompano Beach. He served St. Vincent Ferrer Parish in Delray Beach as assistant pastor from 1969 to 1972. In July 1976, he was appointed to the teaching staff of St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary in Boynton Beach where he continued to serve until 1993.

He was known for his quick Irish wit and sense of humor. He was respected by the faculty of St. Vincent de Paul for his balanced approach to the formation of priest. A consummate reader in theology, allowed him to be engaged in theological discussion on all levels and from various points of view. He made an impact upon and was loved by many parishioners throughout South Florida from numerous parishes. Many of the seminarians he ministered to and helped are now priests in the dioceses, Florida and around the world.

He was appointed parochial vicar of St. Vincent Ferrer in 1994 until his appointment as pastor of St. Lucy Parish in September 1996. He retired in April 2017. Fr. Grace passed away on August 10, 2018 at the age of 78.

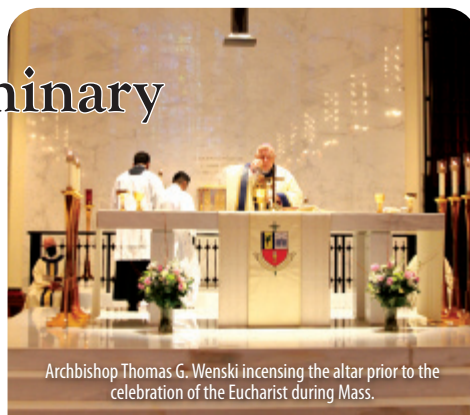


Bishop David L. Toups preaches his homily during the Friends of the Seminary Mass.

more Friends of the Seminary



Bishop David L. Toups speaks with Father Dominic Buckley and Father George Nurse of Orlando prior to the celebration of the Friends of the Seminary Mass.



Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski incensing the altar prior to the celebration of the Eucharist during Mass.



Dcn. Jeremy Lully preaches the Gospel during the Friends of the Seminary Mass.

WELCOME, NEW STAFF & FACULTY MEMBERS, TO THE SVDP FAMILY



Carmela Grande

Carmela Grande joined SVDP in June 2020 as the new Assistant Director of Development and Public Relations. She previously worked in administration at Bethesda Health for 11 years, and where she got to know Deb Lindsay, the current Director of the department. Carmela will apply her expertise to the design, implementation and oversight of the many processes that contribute to the success of the Development Department. Originally from Caracas, Venezuela and naturally fluent in Spanish, Carmela resides currently in Delray Beach with her family.



Dr. Antonio Balsón

Dr. Balsón has been teaching for over fifteen years. A native of Madrid, Spain, he has lived in New York, London, Geneva, Lausanne, Paris, Bordeaux, and Boston. Although he has worked in investment banking, photography, and management (running his own company for ten years), teaching is his passion, leading him to earn a PhD in Spanish Literature at UNC in Chapel Hill NC. His dissertation is on Padre Isla, the Jesuit writer of the best-selling novel in Spain in the 18th Century! Before coming to Boynton Beach, he was teaching at the European School of Economics' Madrid Campus. He enjoys cooking and sports as well as cinema, and of course, literature.



Seminarian Peter Jutras Adjusts the camera prior to the live-streaming of Mass.

LIVE STREAM TEAM: CONFRONTING THE CHALLENGES OF CORONAVIRUS



Mr. Peter Jutras
(Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, I Theology)

It is incredible how important video conferencing and live streaming have now become in our day-to-day lives. Before the COVID pandemic, it was nice to facetime with friends and family, yet so often it could be seen as a hassle. Now, after being stuck inside for the past few months, we realize and appreciate the great importance of sharing our lives with others in the community. While we are here inside our “bubble” at St. Vincent de Paul Seminary, we continue to miss this aspect of community in our lives.

A big question became clear once the shutdown began: now that we are unable to go outside, how can we reach out to our family and friends from inside the seminary itself? One very important aspect in the life of a priest is serving and ministering to the people of God. When the people we are called to be serving are just out of reach, what are we to do?

One of the answers came in the form of the Live Stream Team. The goal of the Live Steam Team is to assist with bringing the outside world into our home on campus. While we would normally be opening our gates to the public for events such as Family Weekend, Friends of the Seminary and our Wednesday public masses, the Live Stream Team has been diligently working on bringing us to the public like so many other parishes this year. Thanks to the Live Stream team, the opening academic exercise and Family Weekend - (where the Theology I and Theology II seminarians were installed as Lectors and Acolytes respectively), - were live streamed to hundreds of people.

The process of live streaming is, as many of you know, fairly complex and can be difficult to figure out. Issues and problems pop up last minute and changes must be made. Although sometimes stressful and complicated, it is an exciting and beautiful process to be a part of. The beauty of live streaming is not just in the broadcasting process, but rather in how many of our loved ones can attend the different events. There were family members and friends watching this broadcast from all over the world! Many people would have never had the chance to attend these events in person due to distance, health, availability or other reasons. Thanks to the Live Stream team, we were able to have our families present for these important moments in our formation. More people watched the stream than could fit in our beautiful chapel, and each one of them had front row seats.

Let us recall Romans 8:28: “We know that all things work for good for those who love God.” In these challenging times, we know that God is able to bring about so much good. Even in times of COVID we must continue to stand in the virtue of Hope. Hopefully soon, we will be able to welcome our family and friends physically back to our home here at St. Vincent de Paul Seminary. Until then, we will continue to bring our home and events to our community and families through the live streaming of certain events.



Seminarians Mathew Jacob, Daniel Donohue, and David Portorreal work behind the scenes.



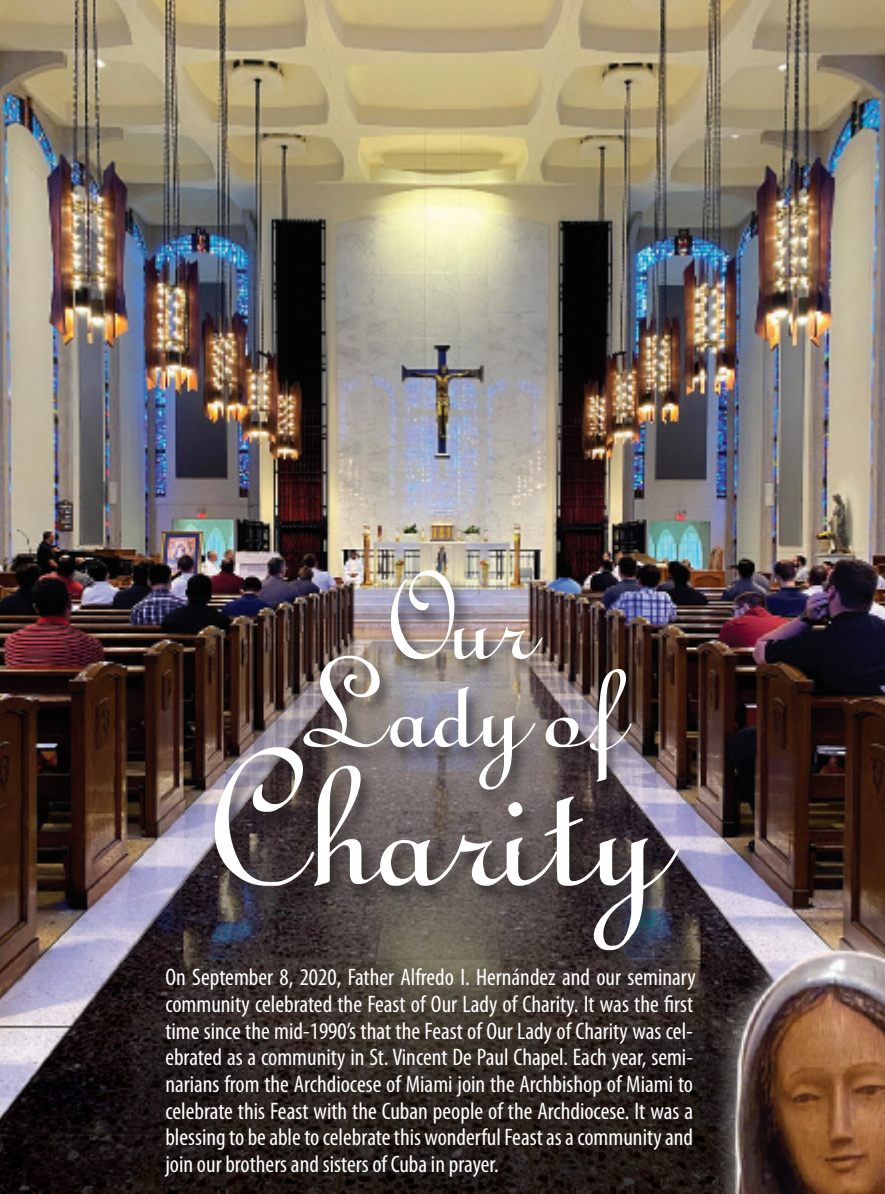
Seminarians Christian Bis and Chris Loester adjust their cameras prior to the live-streaming of Mass.



Seminarian John Buonocore films during the Friends of the Seminary Mass.



Seminarian Milton Martinez films during Mass.

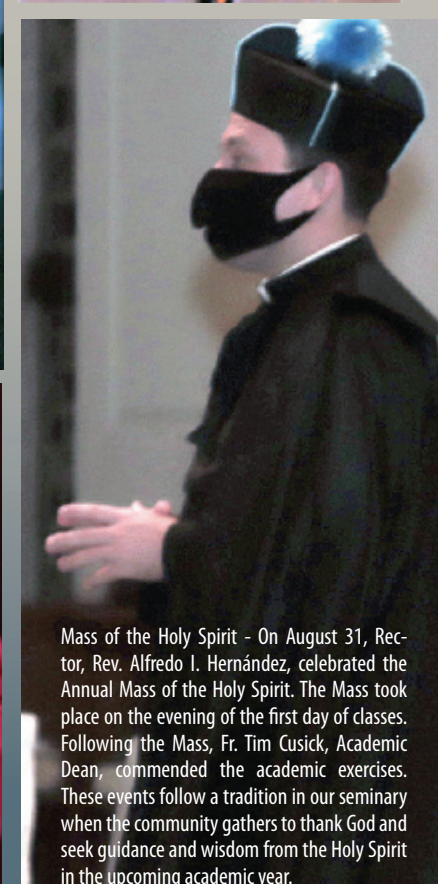
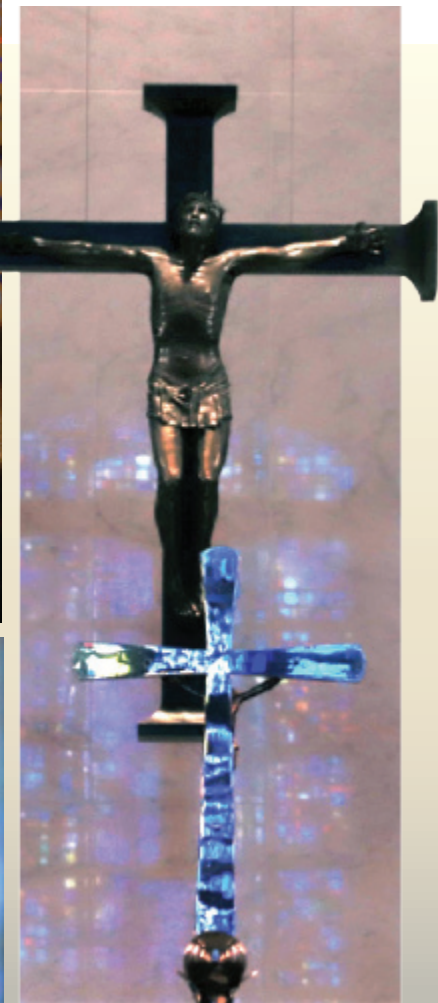


Our Lady of Charity

On September 8, 2020, Father Alfredo I. Hernández and our seminary community celebrated the Feast of Our Lady of Charity. It was the first time since the mid-1990's that the Feast of Our Lady of Charity was celebrated as a community in St. Vincent De Paul Chapel. Each year, seminarians from the Archdiocese of Miami join the Archbishop of Miami to celebrate this Feast with the Cuban people of the Archdiocese. It was a blessing to be able to celebrate this wonderful Feast as a community and join our brothers and sisters of Cuba in prayer.



Mass of the Holy Spirit



Mass of the Holy Spirit - On August 31, Rector, Rev. Alfredo I. Hernández, celebrated the Annual Mass of the Holy Spirit. The Mass took place on the evening of the first day of classes. Following the Mass, Fr. Tim Cusick, Academic Dean, commended the academic exercises. These events follow a tradition in our seminary when the community gathers to thank God and seek guidance and wisdom from the Holy Spirit in the upcoming academic year.

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