



THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE of SAVANNAH

VOCATIONS BULLETIN

FALL 2025

A MESSAGE FROM OUR VOCATION DIRECTOR PLANTING NOW FOR THE FUTURE HARVEST

Our diocese has renewed its efforts to reach young men and invite them to consider the priesthood—and we are seeing real fruit. Seven new seminarians began formation this year. The harvest has been good!

But to continue the farming analogy... a good harvest today only happens because seeds were planted years ago. As St. Anthony of Padua said, "We are all called to plant the seeds of trees under whose branches we will never sit."

Over the past several months, the Lord has placed on my heart a deep desire to build a true *culture of vocations* in our diocese. This certainly includes accompanying young men who are discerning today. But it also means asking a bigger question: What are we doing now that will make a difference twenty years from now?

More than ever, I believe the Holy Spirit is inviting us to involve *many more* people in this work. Not just the Vocation Office, but the whole Church:

- Families who speak openly about priesthood and religious life
- Schools that inspire children to seriously consider their vocations
- Parish priests who encourage and invite
- Lay people who inspire vocations in creative ways
- Prayer groups interceding faithfully for vocations

Only with a deeply entrenched culture of vocations—not dependent on any one priest or bishop—will we achieve our Vocation Office goals: to maintain a cohort of 30 seminarians so as to ordain on average two or three priests per year. Thank you for everything you do to create this culture of vocations!

Fr. Brett A. Brannen

Fr. Brett Brannen
Vicar for Priestly Life & Vocations



INVITATION TO PRAYER IN OUR CATHOLIC CLASSROOMS

Two years ago, we sent posters (above) to all Catholic schools in our diocese, inviting classrooms to pray a simple daily prayer. A student in each class says aloud: "We pray through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary that Jesus will call at least one girl from this class to be a religious sister, and at least one boy to be a priest or brother." Then all together pray the *Memorare*. We encourage all of our teachers—in Catholic Schools and Religious Education—to be faithful to this simple practice. It really works!!

NEED A POSTER?

ORDER A FREE POSTER FOR
YOUR CLASSROOM USING
COUPON CODE SAV254





This November, Fr. Brett Brannen and Fr. Kevin Braski led a pilgrimage for seven young men to St. Joseph and Notre Dame seminaries in Louisiana.

VISIT TO THE SEMINARY

"I COULD SEE MYSELF HERE"

Many Catholic men at least briefly consider the priesthood, but few ever get to experience the tremendous grace of seminary life firsthand. The idea of priesthood can feel daunting from a distance, yet actually stepping onto a seminary campus is often surprisingly encouraging. That's the purpose of our annual seminary trips: after praying with seminarians, sitting in philosophy and theology classes, sharing meals, and joining them for recreation, young men often find themselves thinking, "I could see myself here."

Fr. Kevin Braski, who helped lead the seminary trip in November, said, "The seven guys who came were overwhelmed by the normalcy and joy of the place. Seminarians play sports, lift weights, play music. There are good conversations and a lot of laughs. And of course, they pray. They're normal human beings. That is often the big takeaway from these visits."

Fr. Brett Brannen noted several participants realized for the first time that they belong to a much wider Catholic brotherhood. "As we drove home in the van, we talked about the graces from the trip," he said. "A number of the men remarked, 'I never knew there were other young men who love Jesus and the Church as much as I do.' For someone growing up in rural Georgia, who may never have experienced genuine spiritual fraternity, that realization is incredibly encouraging."

One special aspect of St. Joseph College Seminary is that it is run by Benedictine monks, and the grace of the abbey permeates the entire campus—all 1,500 acres of fields, woodland, and wildlife. "There is a special stillness and quietness," said Fr. Braski. "There is peace here, true peace—God's peace. You can feel that it's holy ground."



ORDINATION APPROACHES!

Please pray for our transitional deacons, Jared Miller, Fred Williams, and Noah Pace as they prepare for their ordination on June 6, 2026: "Enflame their hearts with love so they will be ardent and gentle shepherds for Your Church!"

CLERGY WORKING TOGETHER

OUR VOCATION TEAM

Across the country, dioceses are increasingly moving to a "Vocation Team" model. Rather than relying on a single Vocation Director, the team includes priests and deacons located throughout the diocese, who can mentor young men in their regions. Bishop Parkes has appointed seven priests and one deacon to be "Deanery Vocation Promoters." Their job is to run discernment groups, help with events, and most importantly, personally accompany young men as they discern their vocations.



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OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG MEN

HOW CAN I KNOW I'M BEING CALLED TO THE PRIESTHOOD?

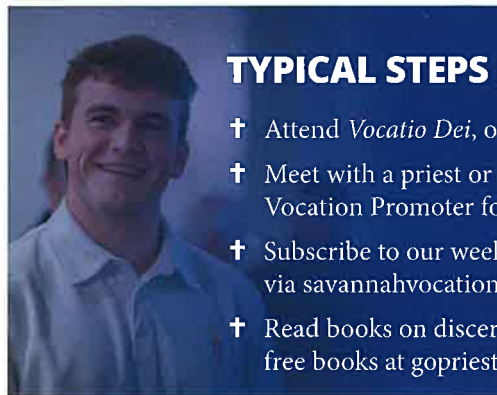
If you think you're called to be a priest, what should you do? Some men run from the call because they're afraid the priesthood may be their true vocation! Others are "certain" they should be priests and assume they'll easily hop right into seminary.

The truth is that discernment is a *process that takes time*, and that to discern well, you should avoid both fearfulness and presumption. The best path forward involves deep thought and prayer, but doesn't stop there. It's critical to "get out of your head" and take concrete steps: attend events, get to know other discerners, and talk to a priest. Below are some of the normative steps in a good discernment, as well as some ways to connect with other young men.



TYPICAL STEPS IN A GOOD DISCERNMENT PROCESS

- † Attend *Vocatio Dei*, our summer vocation camp
- † Meet with a priest or your local Deanery Vocation Promoter for spiritual direction
- † Subscribe to our weekly discernment message via savannahvocations.org
- † Read books on discerning priesthood (request free books at gopriest.com)
- † Join your local *Melchizedek Project* discernment group
- † Attend our *Quo Vadis* discernment retreat
- † Visit a seminary with other young men
- † Contact the Vocation Director early, so he can guide your discernment and make recommendations for next steps



THE MELCHIZEDEK PROJECT

DISCERNMENT GROUPS

Often the best way to discern the priesthood is with the support of peers. That's the idea behind The Melchizedek Project, a small group program that started in the Diocese of Savannah 15 years ago and has spread nationwide to involve more than 14,000 young men in 100+ dioceses! Today, our diocese has small groups in various cities, led by priests and deacons appointed by Bishop Parkes to help in our vocation efforts.

Find your local group leader at savannahvocations.org/discernment-groups



DECEMBER 12-14, 2025, TYBEE ISLAND

QUO VADIS DISCERNMENT RETREAT

Quo Vadis means "Where are you going?" It is a 3-day retreat for young men (high school juniors and older) to encounter Christ and discern God's call. Through inspiring talks, prayer, and fraternity, we will explore the priesthood and learn to recognize the voice of Jesus. This year's December retreat will be led by Fr. Blake Dubroc from Lafayette, Louisiana, an expert in vocation discernment. Enjoy time at the beach, connect with other young men, and open your heart to your vocation, whatever it may be!

Register at savannahvocations.org



THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF SAVANNAH
CELEBRATING 175 YEARS

WHOM SHALL I SEND? HERE I AM, SEND ME!

ISAIAH 6:8

OUR 2025-2026 SEMINARIANS ARE ANSWERING THE CALL!

ORDINATION CLASS OF 2026



Deacon Jared Miller
Configuration 4
St. Vincent de Paul Seminary
Our Lady Star of the Sea, St. Marys



Deacon Fred Williams
Configuration 4
St. Vincent de Paul Seminary
St. Joseph, Waycross



Deacon Noah Pace
Configuration 4
Notre Dame Seminary
St. Teresa of Avila, Cape Henry



Justin Motes
Configuration 4
Mount St. Mary's Seminary
St. Matthew, Statesboro



Gilbert Ofori Mensah
Pastoral Year
Sacred Heart, Warner Robins
St. Mary on the Hill, Augusta



Stephen Owusu Dwamena
Pastoral Year
St. Francis Xavier, Brunswick
St. Anne, Columbus



Matthew A. Nyikwagh
Configuration 2
St. Vincent de Paul Seminary
St. James, Savannah



Samuel Imoter Terkura
Configuration 2
St. Vincent de Paul Seminary
St. Teresa of Avila, Grapetown



Benjamin Aler
Configuration 2
Mount St. Mary's Seminary
Sacred Heart, Warner Robins



Matthew Yogus
Propaedeutic Year
Pope St. John XXIII Seminary
St. Matthew, Statesboro



Robert Sadowski
Discipleship 1
Mount St. Mary's Seminary
St. Francis Xavier, Brunswick



Mauricio Recendez
Propaedeutic Year
Saint Joseph College Seminary
St. Teresa, Albany



Christian Blasko
Propaedeutic Year
Mount St. Mary's Seminary
St. Joseph, Waycross



John Paul Brockman
College 4
Saint Joseph College Seminary
St. Francis Xavier, Brunswick



Chase Farrell
College 2
Saint Joseph College Seminary
Sacred Heart, Waynesboro



John Michael Powell
Propaedeutic Year
Saint Joseph College Seminary
Our Divine Savior, Tifton



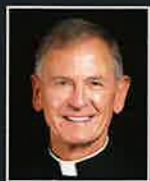
Dean Stubbs
Propaedeutic Year
Saint Joseph College Seminary
St. Anne, Richmond Hill



Seamus Hilleary
Propaedeutic Year
Saint Joseph College Seminary
St. Anne, Richmond Hill



Please pray for all men
who are called to the
priesthood



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**Most Reverend
Stephen D. Parkes**
Bishop of Savannah



FIND FOUR WAYS TO PRAY AT SAVANNAHVOCATIONS.ORG/PRAY

- † Our Diocesan Vocation Prayer
- † The 11th Ave (extra Hail Mary each decade of the rosary)

- † Suffering Prayer Warriors for Seminarians
- † Pledge to Pray (choose any way you wish to commit)