



# *Forming* Hearts, Minds, *and* Souls



BORROMEO SEMINARY

An Introduction to College Seminary  
Formation in the Diocese of Cleveland





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“Do not be afraid. Do not be satisfied with mediocrity. Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”

—JOHN PAUL II



*A Message from* OUR SHEPHERD

**A**s a young man, there are so many different voices in your life each day.

There are voices that challenge, place expectations, and pull you in many directions. Other voices will speak to you of worldly success, or ways to get ahead, or on how to be noticed. And there is the One Voice that you must answer, the voice of Jesus Christ and His Spirit that persistently appeal to your inner heart, nudging you toward what will be most fulfilling for your life. In the midst of this environment, it is, I believe, an inspiration from God that you would even have the courage to pick up this catalogue about a Catholic college seminary.

I would like to speak a fundamental truth to you in this short message: *you have a purpose and mission in this life*. There is a reason that God created you in this time and in this place. Before time even began, he had you in mind; as we are reminded in Luke’s Gospel, God knows you so completely that “The very hairs of your head are all numbered” (Luke 12:7). He has created you with certain gifts and talents that are meant to help you fulfill the mission that we all share to love Him, serve Him, glorify Him, and uplift others through the Good News of Jesus Christ. With this in mind, the question that you must answer is this one: “How is God calling me to best fulfill this mission?”

I am sure that you are filled with numerous longings and desires for what you may do with your life. Perhaps you have wanted to be a priest for your entire life. Maybe

you hadn’t thought about it until someone at your parish mentioned it to you during high school. Maybe you never thought about priesthood but somehow this booklet ended up in your hands! Whatever led you to this moment, I would encourage you to take a few moments to look through this catalogue. In its pages, you will find testimonies to the joy and peace that one can find when they give their lives generously to the unique call that God places in every human heart. In particular, you will see the fruit of what happened to young men, like yourself, who said, “Yes,” to giving God time to discern His will for them at Borromeo Seminary.

Dear brothers in Christ, please know of my prayers for you as you consider what vocation the Lord may be calling you to live out. Stay close to His Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart of His Mother, Mary. She told the servants at the Wedding of Cana to “Do whatever Jesus tells you” (John 2:5). In the midst of questions and doubts, the servants’ obedience to the Lord’s direction led to new wine, a symbol of the new life brought about by following Jesus. If you stay close to Jesus and Mary, you will certainly hear His voice lead you to a new life filled with mission, purpose, joy, fulfillment, peace and, ultimately, your vocation!

Your brother in Jesus Christ,

**Bishop Edward Malesic**  
Bishop, Diocese of Cleveland



“In my hand he has placed all his treasures, his sacraments, his graces; he has placed there souls, than whom nothing can be dearer to him; in his love he has preferred them to himself, and redeemed them by his Blood; he has placed heaven in my hand, and it is in my power to open and close it to others.”

—ST. CHARLES BORROMEO



## Who We Are



## A Letter from OUR RECTOR

**T**he fact that you are reading this booklet may suggest that you have thought about what life as a priest may really be like. Maybe you are looking at this booklet because you feel that priesthood is something you are interested in checking out. Whatever the reason, you will find that Borromeo Seminary is a place where college-aged men begin to discern priesthood by becoming missionary disciples of Jesus Christ. As you explore these pages, you will get a sense of how our men discover their vocation by living in community, seeking and knowing the Lord and engaging in active discernment. Furthermore, you will realize that discernment is a gradual process that takes one on a great adventure through self-knowledge and encounter.

The men enrolled at Borromeo Seminary really learn about who they are in their strengths and weaknesses as they encounter Jesus Christ with the help of formators and teachers. This is a place where all of one's gifts can be cultivated through rich experiences and a strong community. A Borromeo seminarian partakes in a liberal arts curriculum in collaboration with John Carroll University. He comes to know the people of northeast Ohio through weekly apostolic service. He also becomes a part of a great fraternity as he lives and works with brothers who will challenge and support him. All these facets of seminary life help transform him into a good and mature man of God.

At Borromeo Seminary I see men entering into an accompaniment with priests, mentors, and wisdom figures that bring about a new wholeness and excellence within their lives. As rector of Borromeo this is my highest desire - that men may be more fully themselves before transitioning into the next level of seminary, or exiting into the next arena of discernment where they will invest themselves.

I encourage you to reflect on these pages and take part in the many opportunities to visit us and see if the Lord is calling you to go deeper and actively discern your vocation to the priesthood or religious life.

*Fr. Mark A. Latcovich*

**Rev. Mark A. Latcovich, Ph.D.**  
President-Rector of Borromeo Seminary

**Borromeo Seminary**

is the college seminary in the Diocese of Cleveland. It is a community in which men discern the call to and are formed for diocesan priesthood or religious life through the integration of human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation.



**O**ur seminarians live at the seminary, which is on the campus of the Center for Pastoral Leadership in Wickliffe, Ohio. They commute to nearby John Carroll University where they are enrolled as undergraduate students and ultimately receive their bachelor's degrees. In addition to classes at the university, our seminarians are also taught at the seminary. Borromeo has several of its own John Carroll-accredited faculty members, both priest and lay, who instruct the young men in all the philosophy and theology classes that the Program of Priestly Formation requires them to take.

The Program of Priestly Formation, the document which governs seminary formation in the United States, encourages each seminary to build its approach to formation on four "dimensions" which undergird the life of every seminarian. These four dimensions of priestly formation are human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. Though they are separate, every dimension is inextricably connected to one another. While a certain area of formation may be labeled under a particular dimension, it always has some level of relation to the other areas of formation. The image that complements and

completes the concept of the four dimensions of formation is that of a 'seedbed,' which is the literal meaning of the word 'seminary.' A seminary is the fertile ground where priests are grown. As the four dimensions of formation indicate, priestly formation and discernment must be rooted in the good soil of a wholesome humanity, watered by frequent prayer, and nourished by the light of learning, making the candidate for priesthood able to begin bearing fruit through service to the Church.



B

**A—** Men at Borromeo foster fruitful and life changing prayer lives centered around communal liturgy in the chapel.

**B—** A powerful aspect of the Borromeo program is the genuine, life-long fraternity that is fostered. You can find seminarians walking and conversing together, hanging out in lounges, and stopping by each other's rooms to check in, chat, or study.

**C—** The seminary has a renowned library specializing in philosophy and theology where seminarians often go to read for class and write papers.

A



8

## Dimensions of Formation

Human Formation

Spiritual Formation

Intellectual Formation

Pastoral Formation

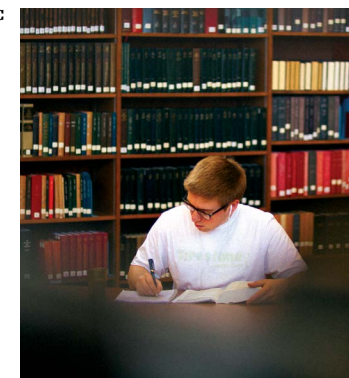
## Prayer to Discover One's Vocation

Lord, my God and my loving Father, you have made me to know you, to love you, to serve you, and thereby to find and to fulfill my deepest longings. I know that you are in all things, and that every path can lead me to you.

But of them all, there is one especially by which you want me to come to you. Since I will do what you want of me, I pray you, send your Holy Spirit to me: into my mind, to show me what you want of me; into my heart, to give me the determination to do it, and to do it with all my love, with all my mind, and with all of my strength right to the end. Jesus, I trust in you.

Amen

C



9





Through Him, With Him, In Him





## Jeremy Gaugler

Class of 2022

Through my time and formation at Borromeo, I have grown in confidence and have expanded my ability to encounter and accompany others in various walks of life.

I

# Men of Virtue

HUMAN FORMATION

“The divine call engages and involves the ‘concrete’ human person. Formation for the priesthood must necessarily provide adequate means to allow for maturation in view of an authentic exercise of the priestly ministry. To that end, the seminarian is called upon to develop his personality, having Christ, the perfect man, as his model and source.”

RATIO FUNDAMENTALIS  
INSTITUTIONIS SACERDOTALIS #93



St. Irenaeus of Lyons once said,  
 “The glory of God is man fully alive,  
 and the life of man is the vision of God.”  
 The central aim of Borromeo Seminary  
 is to allow young men to become fully  
 alive with love for God and to become  
 deeply rooted in Jesus Christ.

**H**uman formation is built upon the awareness that in Jesus Christ, God took on human nature and redeemed it. Through his perfected humanity, Christ was able to share the Gospel with those he encountered and achieve salvation for mankind. As “another Christ,” a priest is meant to fully understand and embrace his humanity in order to effectively bring Christ’s love and joy to the people. Thus, the goal of human formation is to allow seminarians to reach their fullest human potential so to best share the joy of their redeemed humanity with all their brothers and sisters.

Human formation at Borromeo accomplishes this goal by forming seminarians into mature, well-rounded disciples who are more capable of serving others through a strong grasp of humanity. Seminarians progress in human formation in a number of ways: developing healthy, responsible lifestyle habits; learning to conduct themselves as kind, respectful adults; and cultivating a social awareness of and empathy toward those they encounter. Such aspects of human formation help seminarians be approachable, compassionate men: the kind of men people want as their priests.

As a pillar with a strong social focus, human formation is meant to form seminarians as “men of communion” (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 43). Thus a prominent aspect of the seminary community is the fraternity in which seminarians create strong, meaningful bonds with each other, often lasting a lifetime. Brotherhood between seminarians grows when they spend time together. This time in community occurs every day at Borromeo, whether it be exchanging humorous stories in the student lounge, praying Morning Prayer in the chapel, playing a pick-up basketball game at the field house, or taking a stroll around the campus and having a deep conversation about the joys and struggles of formation.

In order to foster a deep sense of communion and of belonging to the Body of Christ, human formation at Borromeo Seminary is of broad and diverse character.

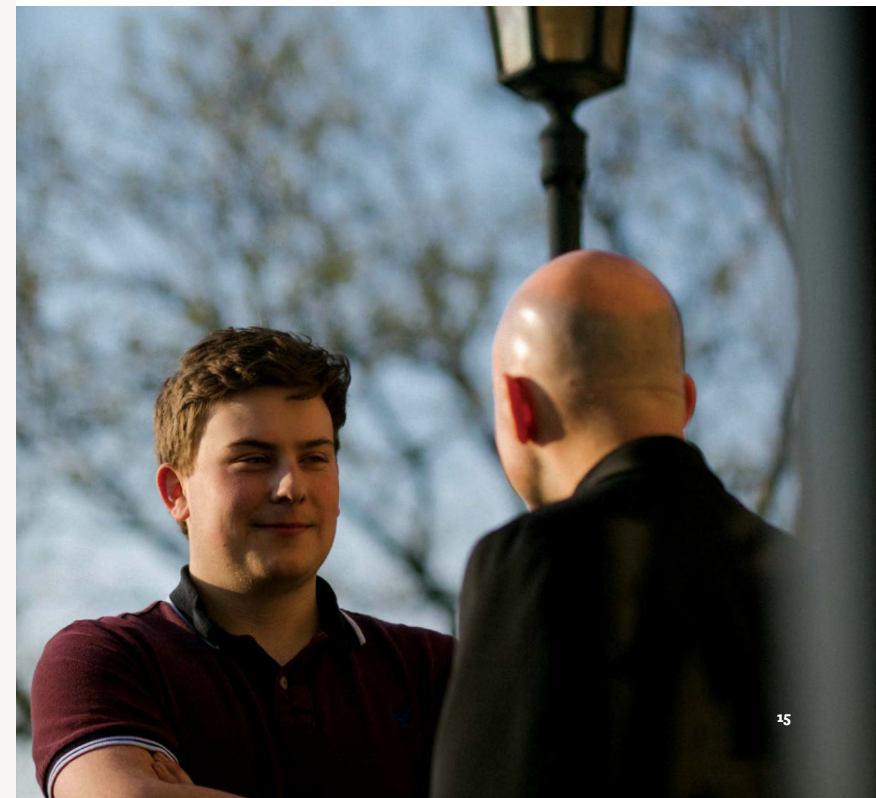
This means that the men are encouraged to cultivate mature relationships and friendships, not only with their brother seminarians, but with men and women from all walks of life. Since the Gospel penetrates the life of every culture, seminarians must become adept at making use of the “good and genuine elements of their own cultures and traditions” (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 55). They must learn to let the light of the Gospel radiate into the culture and the context of the world in which they live.

Seminarians engage in a wide variety of cultural events, which give them a better understanding of the world which they are called to encounter. They regularly root on sports teams at stadiums and in the seminary lounge. They visit the Cleveland Museum of Art, attend the Cleveland Orchestra, go to concerts by popular bands, enjoy food together at local eateries, and visit the historic and cultural districts that together make up the distinctive character of the greater Cleveland area.

By their involvement in their home parishes and ministries outside of the seminary, seminarians regularly interact with members of their Catholic family in their respective dioceses. They learn what it means to belong to a fellowship of believers that is one body in Jesus Christ.

Also, many seminarians take advantage of their time away from the seminary to enrich themselves through travel. Whether it be a flight to Rome or a road trip to Washington D.C., they journey to many destinations to give them a fuller view of the world and its bountiful treasures.

As the seminarian grows in love for Jesus, he also grows in love for his city and the world, for the good that exists in the culture, and for the people whom he may one day be called to serve. Human formation grows the foundational roots of a seminarian which are essential in healthy living and genuine human encounter.



“People often think human experience teaches us how to be human, but humanity doesn’t even know how to be human. This is because Jesus Christ, the perfection of humanity, is usually not at the center. Here, we look to Jesus rather than merely to ourselves or to our culture to know who we are and what it means to be human—to be a man. You are formed by the One who embodies the answer.”

**Fr. Patrick Anderson**  
 Director of Human Formation



II

# Men of Prayer

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

“Spiritual formation is directed at nourishing and sustaining communion with God and with our brothers and sisters, in the friendship of Jesus the Good Shepherd, and with an attitude of docility to the Holy Spirit. This intimate relationship forms the heart of the seminarian in that generous and sacrificial love that marks the beginning of pastoral charity.”

RATIO FUNDAMENTALIS  
INSTITUTIONIS SACERDOTALIS #101

## Jeffrey Lindholm

Class of 2020

“Borromeo has taught me that spirituality revolves around having a relationship with Jesus Christ—with whom I share all things. This has opened me up to the truth and love of God which has allowed my heart to fall in love with my faith.”





# Spiritual Formation

“Discernment is simply seeing what something is and what it is not. It increases our knowledge of what prayer is and what it is not, what belongs to The Spirit and what does not, what is a vocation and what is not; however, the primary purpose of discernment is not knowledge about things but intimately knowing the person of Jesus Christ.”

—FR. JOHN LOYA  
BORROMEO SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR, 1993-2020

B



A



**A**— Communal liturgy is an integral part of formation and fostering an ongoing relationship with the Lord.

**B**— Every year, the Borromeo community takes a silent retreat which offers them ample time for prayer, talks from the retreat director, and an opportunity to more profoundly reflect on their spiritual lives.

A seminarian’s spiritual life is crucial to his formation. He strives to make himself open to the gift of living water that comes from Jesus Christ and fills the hearts of those who are faithful to Him. Since discernment and formation are processes that primarily occur in the spiritual realm, a deep spirituality fed by Christ is incredibly important for a seminarian.

Pope Benedict XVI once said, “Life without prayer has no meaning or points of reference.” This conviction profoundly marks daily life at Borromeo Seminary. Like all Christians, every seminarian is expected to allow a deep spiritual bond to grow between himself and God, “which is born of, and nourished in, a particular way by prolonged and silent prayer” (*Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, 102).

Furthermore, the spirituality of a seminarian must be a priestly spirituality (*Program of Priestly Formation*, 109), meaning the celebration of the Church’s liturgies is at the very core of his daily spiritual life and his growth into Christian maturity. By entering into the prayer of the Church through the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours, seminarians truly enter into the life of the Church. They grow in their love for the Church and for its Head, Jesus Christ.

Upon entering Borromeo Seminary, every seminarian is assigned a spiritual director who accompanies the seminarian throughout his years of discernment at Borromeo. The spiritual director helps the seminarian understand the movements of God in his life. With the wisdom of many years of priestly ministry and formal training, spiritual directors can point out areas of strength in the spiritual lives of the young men whom they direct and also challenge them to respond with courage and prudence when spiritual trials present themselves.

One of the central topics that a seminary’s spiritual formation addresses is vocational discernment. While Borromeo Seminary forms men for priesthood, its primary function is to be a house of fruitful discernment where men can reflect on how God is calling them to serve His Church. That may mean a seminarian eventually becomes a priest, or, after discernment, it may become clear that he is being called to marriage and family life.



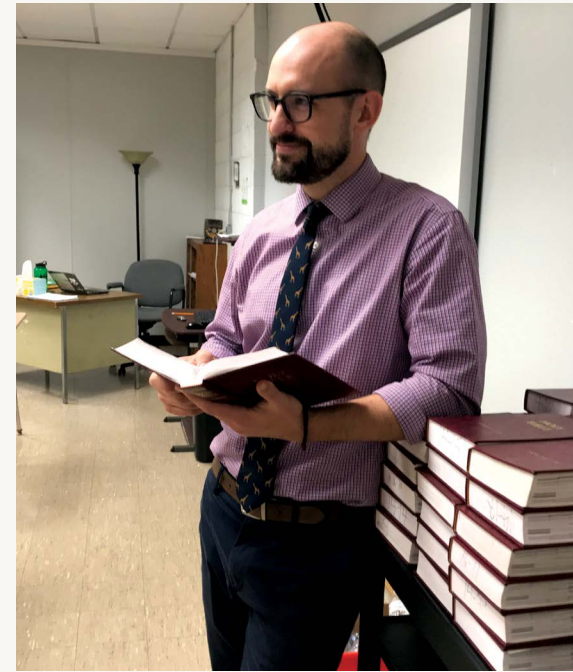
Another essential aspect of spiritual formation at Borromeo Seminary is appreciation for the gift of celibacy. Celibacy is a charism of Roman Catholic priests whereby they remain chaste and unmarried as a sign of their marriage to the Church. Since every priest is another Christ in Jesus’ perpetual priesthood (Hebrews 7:24), he is also wedded to the Church, just as Christ has the Church as his bride (Ephesians 5:29-32). This spiritual marriage is expressed by a priest committing his whole life to the people of God, the Church, instead of committing it to one woman and a family through an earthly marriage.

Therefore, one of the objectives of spiritual formation at Borromeo is to help seminarians understand the meaning of celibacy and make healthy progress towards a life of committed chastity. Our seminarians practice celibacy by abstaining from romantic relationships and incorporating this lifestyle into their spirituality. Celibacy does not block human intimacy; it broadens its scope to a whole family of people rather than one individual family. As a seminarian practices this lifestyle, he grows in his ability to give and receive genuine love.

The spiritual pillar is the wellspring of a seminarian’s formation from which a young man receives the essential grace and strength from God to grow in discernment. No matter which vocation a seminarian eventually pursues, he is sure to experience a deepening of his own spiritual life at Borromeo Seminary through the living water of Christ.



# What They're Saying. Reflections from Past Borromeo Students.



## Gregg Stovicek

My time at Borromeo was deeply blessed; I learned a discipline of prayer, and built fraternity with other men who were seeking to follow God's will for their lives. These two things have continued to form my life, both daily and in the big picture, long after I left priestly formation. The call to daily prayer, and the need for intimacy with Christ, apply to all Christians, no matter their state in life, and I am abundantly grateful to the seminary as one of the seedbeds where I learned those things most effectively, and where I was most challenged to consciously live them out.

## Fr. Scott Goodfellow

Borromeo exposed the lie that surrendering my life and desires to God would leave me empty and alone. Nothing could be further from the truth! Seminary encouraged me to give my all to God and His people, and I found greater intimacy and belonging by a generous response to this challenge. I began to truly love myself and see how I would be able to answer the call to priesthood with God's help and the support of those who loved me. I'm still the same man I was when I entered, but I'm also a man whose desires have been renewed, deepened, and fulfilled by Christ's grace.





**Maxwell Giorgi**

Class of 2019

“The study of philosophy in the light of my Catholic faith has helped me better understand and articulate why I believe what I believe. Instead of simply accepting tenets of the faith, I am able to reconcile the wisdom of the Church with the facts of science and other secular studies of the world.”



## III

# Men of Wisdom

INTELLECTUAL FORMATION

“Intellectual formation is aimed at achieving for seminarians a solid competence in philosophy and theology, along with a more general educational preparation, enough to allow them to proclaim the Gospel message to the people of our own day in a way that is credible and can be understood. It seeks to enable them to enter into fruitful dialogue with the contemporary world, and to uphold the truth of the faith by the light of reason, thereby revealing its beauty.”

RATIO FUNDAMENTALIS  
INSTITUTIONIS SACERDOTALIS #116



# Intellectual Formation

A

“Even though philosophy looks like a very narrow field of study, by entering into it, the rest of the world opens up to you.”

—FR. JEFF BARNISH

A passion for the truth is foundational to a seminarian’s formation. Seminary formation is directed towards the whole human person: mind, body, and soul. Intellectual formation at Borromeo seeks to strengthen and sharpen minds in order that seminarians can more fully understand the world which God intelligently created. Through this education, a seminarian learns the rich truths that undergird much of what the Church teaches and is always able to give a reason for his hope in Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:15).

Intellectual formation at Borromeo Seminary is collaborative. Seminarians work with one another to understand what they read and learn about in the classroom, and professors are eager to help their students understand the topics they cover, since they will be essential for their eventual study of theology and, potentially, their priestly ministry.

The intellectual formation at Borromeo is especially directed toward studies in philosophy as required for college seminaries. According to Pope St. John Paul II, the study of philosophy is indispensable to the study of

theology and to the formation of candidates for priesthood (*Fides et Ratio*, 62). Philosophy is the love of wisdom, where wisdom is knowledge of the deepest, most fundamental realities. Accordingly, it is inherently connected to theology because God is the deepest reality and the cause of everything else that exists. And our faith in God is not just a matter of believing in him with the heart but knowing him with our minds.

In its quest for knowledge, philosophy serves as a guarantee of the “certainty of truth,” which St. John Paul II says is the only firm basis for a total giving of oneself to Jesus and to the Church (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 52). Therefore, intellectual formation is not detached from the other pillars of formation. Indeed, all the other pillars converge in the unity of the Truth. We must know Jesus in order to love and serve him by ministering to one another.

To complement the philosophy and theology courses they take at the seminary, men at Borromeo partake in the liberal arts curriculum at John Carroll University to complete a bachelor’s degree. This educational experience exposes seminarians to all disciplines of study, expanding their knowledge to areas such as english, history, psychology, and biology. In taking a variety of classes alongside their studies in philosophy, seminarians receive a holistic education and can better understand how the philosophical principles they’ve learned apply to other areas of study.

Studying philosophy changes a person’s way of looking at the world. By becoming comfortable with reflecting on the deeper meaning of existence, seminarians broaden their intellects, becoming prepared to tackle the study of theology and partake in the New Evangelization in which they can spread the Gospel in the modern world.

Intellectual formation thus has a missionary and apostolic purpose (*Program for Priestly Formation*, 137). This pursuit of truth is undertaken for the sake of salvation, since by seeking a deeper knowledge of the divine mysteries, seminarians not only grow in their own appreciation for the truth but can also more clearly express to others the profound realities of God’s love for us. Through this pillar of formation, the rays of knowledge enable the seminarian to grow tall and strong, ready to share the rich fruit of ministry.

B



C



**A**—Borromeo fosters a vibrant learning atmosphere inside and outside the classroom. Classes are animated with lively discussion, laughter, and intriguing lectures; and intellectual discussions often flow over into the lunch room and lounge areas.

**B**—For those who might find themselves struggling in the college academic environment, Borromeo offers a number of helpful resources such as personal tutors, help with editing drafts of essays, and guidance for scheduling classes or building study habits.

**C**—Borromeo prides itself on its outstanding faculty of bright and engaging priests and lay people who help transform seminarians through what they learn in class.



## IV

# Men of Service

PASTORAL FORMATION

“Since the Seminary is intended to prepare seminarians to be shepherds in the image of Christ, priestly formation must be permeated by a pastoral spirit. It will make them able to demonstrate that same compassion, generosity, love for all, especially for the poor, and zeal for the kingdom that characterized the public ministry of the Son of God. This can be summed up as pastoral charity.”

RATIO FUNDAMENTALIS  
INSTITUTIONIS SACERDOTALIS #119

## Nathan Frankart

Class of 2021

“My first pastoral assignment gave me the opportunity to interact with and assist children with mental and physical disabilities. It reminded me of how Christ loved those in need, allowing them to draw close to his heart, and how he told his disciples, ‘What you did for the least of my brothers, you did to me.’ To serve the people of God represents one of my favorite aspects of seminary life: bringing the love of Jesus to those who need it most.”





# Pastoral Formation



In order to allow seminarians to cultivate the heart of a shepherd and experience what it means to be a pastor, Borromeo seminarians are connected to a variety of different pastoral engagements. A seminarian has a different pastoral assignment every year. He may help serve meals to the homeless, teach at a Catholic grade school, minister to those with autism, or visit the elderly or dying in local nursing homes and hospices.

Pastoral formation also goes beyond a seminarian's yearly pastoral assignment and includes his informal interactions with men and women inside and outside the seminary walls. Through such pastoral encounters, he grows in his ability to effectively lead others to Christ. These engagements also allow him to understand his identity as one who, though called to shepherd God's people, always remains a sheep himself under the care of the Good Shepherd.

All the pillars of priestly formation are visible and effective when a seminarian engages in pastoral ministry. Everything he has learned and prayed about aids him in these personal encounters

where he is able to be a compassionate shepherd after God's own heart. Though all the pillars of formation are interwoven, pastoral formation is still, in a certain sense, the culmination of the entire formation process since the goal of the seminary is to form men for ministry as pastors (*Program for Priestly Formation*, 236).

In the spirit encouraged by St. Paul in his First Letter to the Thessalonians, pastoral formation means that a seminarian learns how a good shepherd must compassionately live up to the exhortation: "correct wrongdoers, cheer the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient with all" (1 Thes. 5:14). By doing so, he follows in the example of Christ and learns what it means to be a shepherd of souls.

Through pastoral formation, Borromeo Seminary forms men for the Church who are ready and willing to bear fruit in loving service to those in need. Bringing together all other pillars of formation, the pastoral pillar directs priestly formation to the ultimate purpose of a priest—to serve God and others as a loving shepherd.

“I had to ask myself whether I would be able to relate to people—whether, for example, as a chaplain I would be able to lead and inspire Catholic youth, whether I would be capable of giving religious instruction to the little ones, whether I could get along with the old and the sick, and so forth. I had to ask myself whether I would be ready to do that my whole life long and whether it was really my vocation.”

—POPE BENEDICT XVI





# A Day

# In The Life

While in some ways the life of a seminarian is similar to that of a college student, the seminary is more than college. It is a greater commitment than the average college experience. Life at a seminary requires a daily commitment to vocational discernment and priestly formation, which gives it a distinctive character. Therefore, what sets the life of a seminarian apart from other college students is a routine of prayer, communal living, and the already growing readiness to become self-gift.





A Day in The Life

# Leading by Example

**A—** A seminarian at Borromeo develops meaningful relationships with the priests on faculty as well as priests outside the seminary who support their vocation. These connections are impactful for the young man as he discerns and often extend well beyond his years of formation.

**B—** As a part of human formation, Borromeo stresses the importance of exercise and a good diet to cultivate lasting habits of healthy living. Seminarians take advantage of playing sports, lifting in the weight room, going for runs and participating in the health and wellness group.

**A** “Second to the chapels, I think the holiest places in the seminary are the lounges, because what happens there is as rich as what happens in the chapel: In prayer we’re drawn into communion with the Lord, and in community, we extend that communion among our brothers.”

—FR. ERIC GARRIS

**W** eekdays at Borromeo Seminary start with Morning Prayer from the Church’s Liturgy of the Hours at 7:00 a.m. Communal prayer forms strong fraternity and becomes one of the bedrocks not only of a seminarian’s daily life but of his whole formation. After Morning Prayer, seminarians spend a short amount of time in silent prayer before Mass begins at 7:25 a.m. Encountering the Liturgy of the Word, hearing a priest on faculty break it open in the homily, and celebrating the Eucharist together every day is an essential part of formation that builds up the seminarians personally and communally. Following Mass, they head to the cafeteria for breakfast at 8:00 a.m.

After breakfast, the seminarians go to class. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, they remain on the campus of Borromeo for their classes in philosophy and religious studies, which are taught by Borromeo faculty members. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, the seminarians use the seminary vans to carpool to John Carroll University for classes. As they carpool to John Carroll, seminarians talk about what the day holds for each of

them, quiz one another in preparation for upcoming exams, or just listen to music.

After their classes at John Carroll are finished for the day, the seminarians return to Borromeo, where they may do homework, exercise, relax, engage in leisure activities they enjoy, or head out to serve at their weekly apostolates (service assignments). At 5:45 p.m., the seminarians gather in the chapel for Evening Prayer after which they eat dinner. Meal times at the seminary are not just about satisfying physical hunger but are a chance for seminarians to share stories, and the events of their days with one another. Meals are often occasions of joyful fraternity.

Every Tuesday afternoon from 5:00–6:00 p.m., the Borromeo men come together for a Eucharistic Holy Hour with Evening Prayer. This time of prayer, with its opportunities for Confession and Adoration, helps to center the week for the seminarians and ground their spiritual lives. It reminds them—

even amid the busyness of the semester—that the most valuable way to use their time is to spend it with Jesus Christ.

Evenings are often left open for more recreation, fraternity, and study time, though some formation events are held after dinner. On almost all Tuesday nights, the community has either a rector’s conference followed by small group discussions or a spiritual orientation session for each grade level led by the director of spiritual formation. Two times each semester an evening is set aside for small group reflection sessions on pastoral formation, and once a semester the bishop comes to spend time with and answer questions from the seminarians. About once a month, Borromeo seminarians have a Friday Night Formation session in which a guest speaker comes to address topics ranging from joyfully living out celibacy, to integrating modern technology into a Catholic lifestyle, to creating healthy and lifegiving friendships.

**B**



## Daily Schedule

*Monday*  
*Wednesday*  
*Friday*

**7:00 am**  
Morning Prayer

**7:15 am**  
Meditation

**7:25 am**  
Mass

**8:00 am**  
Breakfast

**9:00 am**  
Class at JCU,  
Study Time

**12:30 pm**  
Lunch

**1:15 pm**  
Class, Study,  
Service

**3:30 pm**  
Free Time

**5:45 pm**  
Evening Prayer

**6:00 pm**  
Dinner

**6:30 pm**  
Study, Recreation

**9:30 pm**  
Night Prayer



## Daily Schedule

*Tuesday*

*Thursday*

**7:00 am**  
Morning Prayer

**7:15 am**  
Meditation

**7:25 am**  
Mass

**8:00 am**  
Breakfast

**8:30 am**  
Class at Seminary,  
Study Time

**12:30 pm**  
Lunch

**1:15 pm**  
Class, Free Time

**5:00 pm**  
Eucharistic Adoration  
(Tuesday)

**5:45 pm**  
Evening Prayer  
(Thursday)

**6:00 pm**  
Dinner

**6:30 pm**  
Study, Recreation

**7:15 pm**  
Formation Night  
(Tuesday)

**9:30 pm**  
Night Prayer

## A Day in The Life

The weekend schedule generally allows for more free time than the weekdays. Weekends offer an opportunity for seminarians to catch up with friends or family, head out to dinner with brother seminarians, see a movie, or attend arts and cultural events in the Cleveland area.

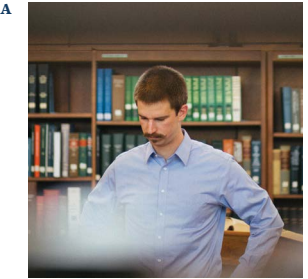
The weekend liturgy schedule begins later in the morning, giving the seminarians time to catch up on sleep or make good use of the free mornings. On Sunday, Morning Prayer is at 9:00 a.m. and Mass is at 10:00 a.m. Guests are welcome to attend Sunday Mass at the seminary, and benefactors of the seminary or other groups may be present in addition to the friends and family members of seminarians.

Some events that are mandatory for seminarians do take place on the weekend. For example, attendance at certain weekend diocesan liturgies, including ordinations, is required of the seminarians. There are also certain formal events at the seminary such as special lectures or dinners which the seminarians must attend. Sunday and Wednesday evenings are generally times that seminarians set aside for playing sports together. During warmer weather this means that they gather on one of the fields to play frisbee or soccer, while during the winter they meet in the field house for basketball or sometimes volleyball or dodgeball.

Amid their busy schedules, seminarians still find free time to rest and unwind through a wide variety of activities. They can often be found listening to music, watching movies or TV, playing an instrument, spending time reading, hanging out with one another, or setting aside some time for private prayer in the chapel.

Borromeo seminarians also have the opportunity of getting involved in communities outside of the seminary. At John Carroll, seminarians have been involved with faith groups, intramural sports, and social justice initiatives. Many Borromeo men also take part in activities at their own parishes, such as helping at youth retreats. These opportunities give seminarians the chance to connect with a variety of people similar to those they may one-day be called to shepherd in a parish.

In addition to these activities, there are plenty of opportunities for communal festivity and fun. Throughout the year, seminarians gather together to celebrate religious and cultural events, which include anything from the feast day of St. Charles Borromeo to the Super Bowl. These times of spirited fraternity are occasions of joy that strengthen the ties between the men in formation whose brotherhood comprises the seminary community.



A— Throughout his time in seminary, whether it's one year or nine, a seminarian will undergo dramatic transformation in numerous ways. In addition to a great spiritual growth, he also will grow in maturity, confidence, social skills, intellect, and character.

B— Seminarians have numerous opportunities to play in competitive atmospheres such as intramural sports at John Carroll, inter-seminary sports tournaments, and the highly anticipated annual basketball games against Saint Mary Seminary and priests of the diocese.



## 3

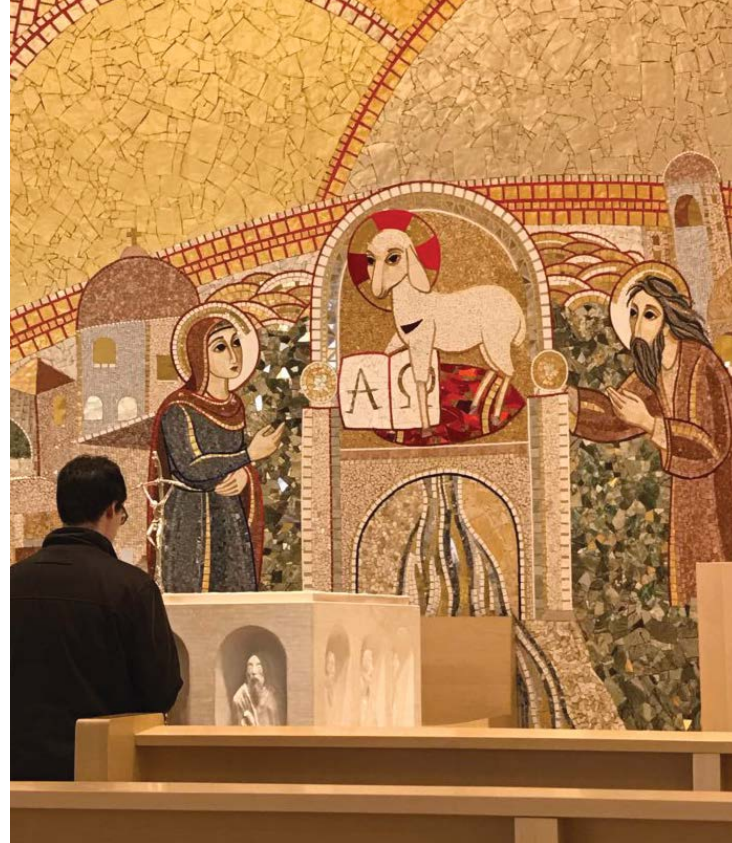
## Key Points

01.

Why Are Priestly  
Vocations Vital?

According to Pope Saint John Paul II, ordained priests are at the service of the common priesthood that is shared by all baptized believers. The priest offers the service of the sacraments to the Church and for the Church. St. John Paul writes, “The priest, as steward of the ‘mysteries of God,’ is at the service of the common priesthood of the faithful. By proclaiming the word and celebrating the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, he makes the whole People of God ever more aware of its share in Christ’s priesthood, and at the same time encourages it to live that priesthood to the full” (*Gift and Mystery*, 78). Therefore, the Church will always need priests to lead and accompany God’s people on the journey of life.

In sum, the Church and the priesthood are gifts from God, and priests are essential servants of the Church. They continue the mission of Christ by celebrating the Mass and all the sacraments. Priests are vital to bringing Christ into the lives and hearts of God’s children. Without them the Church would suffer because the sheep would be lost without their shepherds. Thus, vocations to the priesthood are essential to helping others reach eternal life.



## to Priestly Vocations

02.

## Why You?

Today’s culture is becoming increasingly secular. The rich values of Christianity that have been the solid foundation of American society for so long are being called into question. Many men and women believe they have understood Christianity and found it lacking, so they have left it behind. But this only means that they never truly understood Christianity in the first place. Thus, in this era especially, the Church needs good preachers and priests who can courageously proclaim the unchanging Good News of Jesus Christ and its bold message of salvation.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus offers wisdom that is always relevant to vocational discernment and the Church’s need for priests. He and His disciples are surrounded by vast crowds of people who are desperately seeking the fullness of life that they know can be found in Jesus. They are a fruitful harvest ripe for the gathering. They only need workers who are ready to gather them in and lead them to life. But are there enough harvesters—are there enough faithful priests? Who can gather and shepherd these anxious souls?

Jesus knows that the sheep need shepherds and that the harvest needs workers. Therefore, on seeing the lost crowd He tells his disciples: “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Matthew 9:37-38). The Church has petitioned the Lord for workers; and now, with God’s grace, the Church is asking if you are willing to be a laborer of the Lord’s harvest

Have you felt a desire during Mass, a retreat, or a random moment in your day to be a priest? Have people mentioned that you would be a good priest? Have you looked at your own abilities and talents and thought they could be used for priesthood? If you’ve responded ‘yes’ to any of these, God is likely asking you to consider priestly discernment.

03.

## What Now?

The first followers of Jesus were simple men. But they were men of courage as well. When they encountered Jesus for the first time they were amazed and perhaps a bit afraid. They felt a longing to follow Him and to join Him in His mission of seeking out lost souls, but they did not know for sure whether they should leave behind the comfort of the lives to which they were accustomed. So, in faith, they approached Jesus. His disciples did not ask Him what He was doing or why He had come. They knew that the only way to truly understand this man and to discern whether they should follow Him was to immerse themselves into His life. Therefore, they asked Him, “Where are you staying?” In order to discern Jesus’ call, they had to know how He lived. Jesus answered them, “Come and see.” And so the disciples went and stayed with him, and their lives were changed forever.



## A Story about Discernment:

# Get Out of Your Boat

Let's imagine...There is a young man who is a senior in high school. Through conversations with his priest and his youth minister he concludes that God is likely inviting him into a journey of vocational discernment. While most of his peers are concerned with their college plans, this young man is experiencing promising thoughts and desires surrounding both the married and priestly vocations. Moreover, this young man is aware that in the current moment he could choose several good options to see more about these vocational paths that have entered his mind and heart: possibly apply for the seminary this coming Fall or maybe pursue more conversation with the attractive girl he met on winter retreat. Although navigating this decision will require his heart to explore one path over the other - and he anticipates feeling some loss in doing this - he has come to trust that God's plans are the plans with the most life and that God will surround His plans with promises of peace and goodness.

When he prays, the seminary feels like an inviting place with something promising in store for him. Others around him - teachers, some family members, and even some peers - have been supportive of him pursuing the seminary. He imagines priestly life as well as he can and finds positive images of what life could be as a priest. He has noticed his excitement grow when in the midst of such support and personal invitation. Yet, the potential of talking more with this particular young lady is also very exciting; he finds so much about her attractive and beautiful: her faith, her family members, and her honorable character. When they talk he frequently senses the desire for there to be more commitment to each other.

Although there's excitement and energy coming from the image of walking down either path, when he's most honest he realizes that he

has thought about and imagined seminary life and priesthood for months. It has been emerging for some time actually - through high school youth retreats, time in front of the Blessed Sacrament, and when in holy conversation with others. And yet, he also senses a tension emerging when he imagines the moment of making a commitment towards the seminary. He knows he can't choose both paths; he needs to commit himself to one - only for a year's time at this point. But when this tension appears he feels susceptible to fear, indecision, and avoidance. The prayer, holy conversation, and encounters of the discernment process have allowed the Lord to reveal moments of clarity to him. Along the way, however, he encounters some



discouraging thoughts and feelings, too - moments where God's plans that once seemed "promising" now seem "so hard". The thought of struggling a year in the seminary looms over his thoughts at times, yet he can easily recall words of encouragement from others and even some peace and excitement in his heart when he imagines moments that might come within his first year at seminary. He's being asked to make a decision towards where God is *likely* calling him, but if chosen, that direction risks a year of suffering, or worse yet, it might set him behind a whole year if the seminary experience doesn't work out...

How would *you* proceed if this young man's story were yours? Would you "play it safe", minimizing the tense moments that sometimes seem to surround entering seminary, and just head to college in the hopes of finding new opportunities and people there? Would you try to run towards a relationship with this wonderful young lady and try to put the seminary option out of your mind totally? Or would you look at the sources of these paths and notice that God has very likely been behind this whole process and been presenting seminary as His desire from the beginning? Would you be open to hearing God say, "Don't be afraid," as He said to so many before? Remember Moses before he went to Egypt? Peter before he walked on the water? All the disciples prior to Jesus' crucifixion? God said, "Do not be afraid," and there was new life as a result. Are you open to Him saying "Don't be afraid" to *you*, *right now*?

Practically 100% of the time vocational discernment results in some conflict of our desires, preferences, thoughts, and plans. Confusion, fear, or delay are common default reac-

tions towards this agitation. When we meet discernment challenges we often look for the path of least resistance. The story above presents this very conflict, a conflict that a *majority* of young men find themselves in when they have felt a calling towards seminary formation while also being attracted to married life or other professional opportunities. Often this conflict results in the young man wanting a safe, non-committal, and non-risky option. In those moments, it is essential that any young man be open to see the choice set before him: will he walk out onto the waves like Peter or delay and remain "safe" in the boat? This is because the Evil One, who has been watching a young disciple come close to moments of courage and generosity, now hurls every idea of anxiety and fear he has at the man's mind and heart. While we are ready to jump off the edge of the boat into the deep waters, the Evil One always says something like this: "If you step out you will lose this and that...you will have to go on with less...you will be behind...you might even *die*." Satan's agitation is persuasive, and rarely does the Holy Spirit shield a discernor from it. But in choosing to discern, one should *expect* this kind of opposition. Typically when the tension looks like this, the Lord is already winning this son over towards the great and mysterious adventure of losing one's life so as to gain the kingdom. A time of tension is not time to run; it's time to get out of the boat. Discernment always involves taking a risk: a risk of squandering our opportunities or resources, a risk that God will not "come through", and risk that we will be lost or "behind" if this decision goes badly. Remember: No decision made faithfully with God can go badly. He cannot be outdone in generosity. Fear *always* attempts to rob us of the inspiration and

encouragement needed to take risks. It tries to convince us that God's help is unreliable and that following Him leads to lost opportunities and resources. But this is not God's identity. Remember Jesus' own words: "I am the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep". In the tension of discernment, we must remember we are a son that is being pursued by God who risks Himself to chase us. The reason why our Father has invited us to discern is to reveal to us a greater good and more abundant fruit in our lives. Decisions and risks made with God lead to new life - for us and for others.

Young Catholic men, when you begin to sense the Lord's voice inviting you to vocational discernment, be reassured. Seek stories of courageous risk-taking and receive encouragement so as to not become paralyzed. Keep taking steps of prayer, holy conversation, and exploration in trust so that fear, confusion, and delay will not get the better of you. Don't be afraid to get out of the boat; there comes a time when you need to jump out onto the water. You won't sink when you do.

God cannot be outdone in generosity.

"Do not be afraid.

Do not be satisfied with mediocrity. Put out into the deep and lower your nets for a catch."

—POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II



# See Yourself Here

## Ways to Visit The Seminary

### Duc in Altum Weekend

This two-night retreat weekend at the seminary is designed to allow young men in high school an opportunity to spend a couple days living the life of a seminarian while also having a chance to reflect on vocational discernment with the vocation director. Discerners arrive at the seminary on a Friday evening and leave after Sunday Mass and brunch. Throughout the weekend, the young men spend time together with the vocation director learning and praying about their personal vocations and have opportunities to be with the seminary community in prayer, meal time, leisure, and exercise. Through this experience, high school men can better envision what it means to enter the seminary and begin the process of dedicated priestly discernment.

### Weekday Visit

In addition to the regularly scheduled opportunities to visit the seminary, a young man who is interested in learning more about the seminary is welcome to set up a date at his own convenience with the vocation director where he can come and visit the seminary for a day or two. He can shadow some of the seminarians as they go to class and move through the daily life of the seminary. During this visit, the discern-er gets to be immersed in the regular seminary life and gets a feel of what it is really like to be a seminarian.

### Tuesday Holy Hour

Young men who are interested in the seminary are also welcome to join the seminarians from Borromeo for their Tuesday evening holy hour from 5:00-6:00 p.m. and to have dinner with them afterwards. This offers the discern-er a powerful opportunity to have quiet time with the Blessed Sacrament with the community he is deciding to join. Afterwards, the fellowship with the seminarians over dinner will give the discern-er a chance to see whether the seminary is a good fit for him through a shared meal, good discussion, and community.

### XLT

Once a month during the school year, the vocation office hosts a “Festival of Praise” geared toward high school students called XLT. The evening includes a live band playing contemporary Christian music, a speaker who offers a reflection applicable to a teenage Catholic’s life, time to worship Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, food and fellowship after, and Night Prayer with the seminarians to close out the event. While most of the attendees are not discerning priesthood, the experience gives discerners the opportunity to interact with seminarians, learn more about the seminary, and pray for their vocation.

### Dinner with the Bishop

Young men who are interested in the seminary are invited to attend a yearly dinner with the bishop at the seminary. While enjoying a steak dinner, they get a chance to dialogue with the bishop, tour the seminary, and meet and converse with seminarians while in the midst of young men from around the diocese.

### Melchizedek Project

A very important aid for discernment, as well as general discipleship, is community. In a community grounded in faith, one is much more able to discern and strive toward the Lord’s will. The Melchizedek Project offers this fellowship to young men in high school and college through prayer, discussion, and vocational support. These monthly meetings are held at the seminary as well as various places throughout our diocese, such as high schools and college campuses.

#### For more information

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# FAQ

What does the Church mean by “vocation?”

A vocation is a person’s calling from God to live his or her life in a specific way within the Church, or in other words, how one can best love and serve God and others. The four vocations, or ways of life, that the Church recognizes are the single life, married life, religious life, and ordained life. Vocational discernment means that a person prays about and reflects upon the way that his or her identity and talents can be fulfilled best in God’s service.

How should I discern my vocation?

Discernment must always begin with prayer. Since discernment is about knowing the will of God and following it, such prayer can even be as simple as saying: “Incline my heart according to your will, O God.”

Private prayer, however, cannot be the only tool in good discernment. Discernment requires engaging the wisdom of spiritual masters and seeking knowledge about the different ways of living one’s life in service to God and His Church. In discernment, one must look at who he is as a person, what skills and talents God gave him.

Does entering the Seminary mean I will definitely be a priest someday?

No. Borromeo Seminary is a place of growth in holiness and awareness of God’s will. Its primary goal is to aid young men in the path of discernment so they achieve clarity as to whether they are being called to priesthood or to another Christian vocation. While many Borromeo men choose to continue formation at Saint Mary Seminary and Graduate School of Theology, it is not uncommon for a seminarian to end up “discerning out” of seminary, with the guidance and support of the seminary faculty, to pursue another vocation.

Is a Seminarian required to attend Borromeo for four years?

If a seminarian desires the priestly vocation, he likely should stay at Borromeo Seminary through his graduation. However, at the end of each year, the student discerns his progress in the seminary and makes a commitment for the following year if he decides to continue. If a student decides not to commit to the next year, the student is free to leave the seminary. Also, a seminarian could finish the Borromeo program one or two semesters early if it’s academically feasible and if the faculty deems him prepared to move on in formation.

What should I do if I’m struggling financially during the school year?

Two good solutions to this problem are asking for financial support or finding work. For financial support, men often ask the rector of the seminary for aid. If he notices you are truly in need of assistance, he will either take money from the rector’s fund whose purpose is to pay for seminarians in need, or he will find a donor who is willing to assist seminarians.

Finding a job is limited due to the workload at Borromeo. The academic and spiritual formation in the seminary is a full-time load for a college student: 15-18 credit hours of college course work as well as numerous other commitments as a part of the formation program.

## A Call Worth Answering

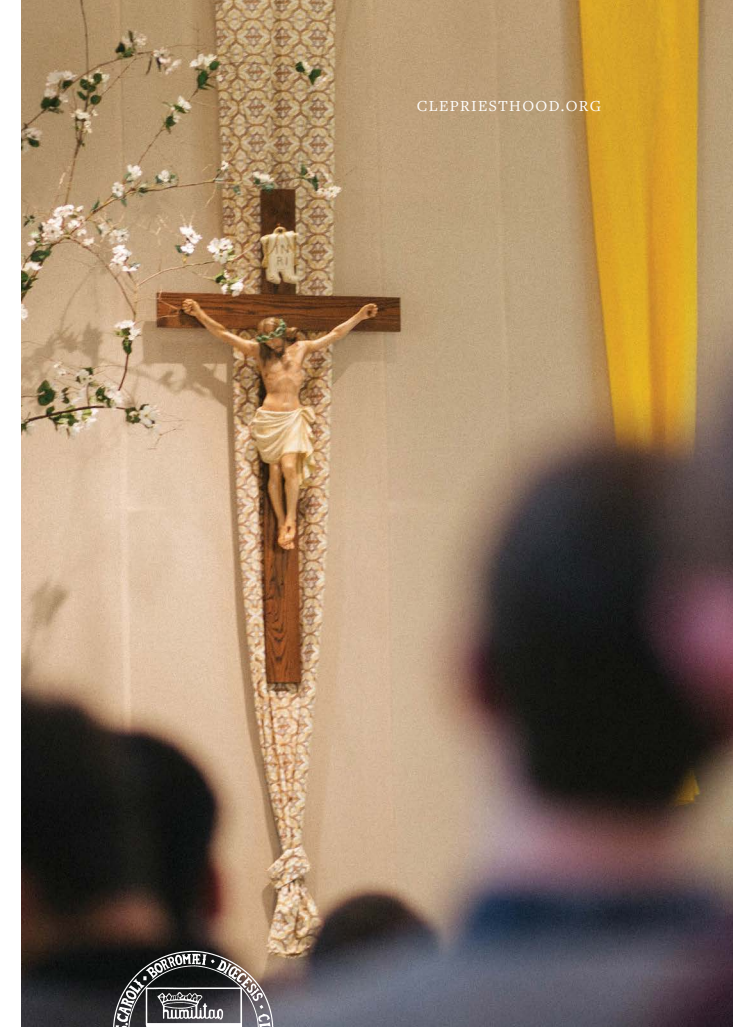
Discerning a priestly vocation does not just happen in the silence of one’s own heart, or even just in quiet prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, though prayer is essential to discernment. Since every person’s vocation is a matter of how he or she belongs in the Church, discernment takes place among a community of believers.

You cannot discern on your own, and you cannot discern what you do not know. Prayer must lead to action. Therefore, priestly discernment takes courage to make a decision and act upon it. This requires a young man to step beyond himself and what he knows and encounter the challenges and choices that God has set before him, even when this seems contrary to all that is held to be important in the modern world.

The will of God is made known in subtle ways. He does not grab hold of us and force us down a certain path. He whispers in our hearts. If you have thought about being a priest—if you are attracted to the life of a priest—there is a good chance that God wants you to discern that life.

There are a lot of misunderstandings about what it means to enter seminary formation today. These misconceptions only serve to muddy the waters of discernment and make it difficult to perceive God’s call. The only way to clear away these misunderstandings is to come and see for yourself what it means to discern a priestly vocation. Visiting the seminary will not make you a seminarian or put you on the fast track to priesthood, but it will certainly give you clarity in discernment.

So, fear not! Step out of the boat and onto the stormy waters. Christ is calling you. And he calms even the roughest of waves. He wants you to set out into the deep and become a fisher of men.



## The Call to Priesthood Starts Here

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