

# Vianney news

Saint John Vianney  
College Seminary  
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Fall 2010

Men in Christ.  
Men of the Church.  
Men for Others.

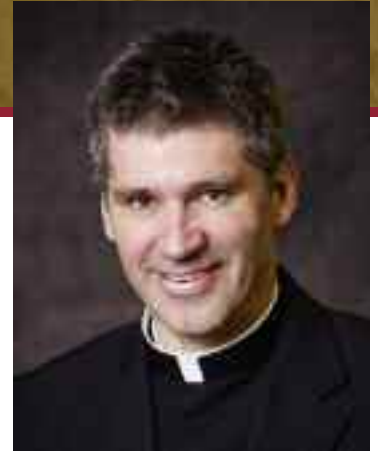


*Saint John Vianney Seminarians celebrate after a repeat victory over the Saint Paul Seminary at the 11th Annual Rectors' Bowl.*

*Are you willing to invest in the young men  
who are the future of the church?*

The Seminarians of Saint John Vianney ask for your prayers and support. Please pray for them. Read their stories and consider a gift to the seminary to help secure the future with new, vibrant young priests.

# Rector's Update



## *Vistas of Hope and Opportunity*

As Rector of Saint John Vianney College Seminary, I feel it one of my joyful duties to open up vistas of hope and opportunity for our young seminarians. Many come here with no habit of daily prayer, and only a vague sense that God might be calling them to the priesthood. The first vista which opens up to them is a marvelous experience of our personal God, Who is real, beautiful, beyond description and beckoning. This occurs through the avenue of our daily Holy Hour (6:15 a.m.) and Mass (7:15 a.m.). When these young men catch a first sight of God, for them it is something awe-inspiring, like a first view of the ocean, or majestic mountains, yet supernaturally far surpassing. The experience gives them tremendous conviction about what is true, good, real. It is the commencement of a spiritual adventure. It is a vista of hope and opportunity.

In today's culture there are many souls who live in bondage to their passionate nature. Pope Benedict says, "We are moving toward a dictatorship of relativism which does not recognize anything as definitive and has as its highest value one's own ego and one's own desires." Sadly a number of seminarians come to SJV each year with wounds of pornography, grief of families torn in two, addiction to technology (with its violent games and impersonal operation). We offer these seminarians a true remedy: the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, which are given through the Sacraments, the proclamation of the Gospel, retreats, spiritual direction, study of philosophy and theology, and fraternal groups. Our seminarians are rapidly convinced of the supreme endeavor, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Thereafter, the real work begins, and they must enter the pathway of sanctification, an arduous and at times painful transformation. In time, by God's grace, they come to know the liberty and joy of self-possession, the purity of our Mother Mary, the justice of St. Joseph, the wisdom of St. Thomas Aquinas, the faith of St. Abraham. This is the life of infused virtue, a vista of hope and opportunity.

Once or twice a week throughout the year, we invite 3rd and 4th year seminarians to publicly share either their vocation testimony or a 'priest-hero' story. In the life of the seminary, this is one of our most edifying moments. Our hearts are set ablaze, like holy priests of old, who possessed zeal for souls, courage to proclaim the Gospel in season and out, love for Mother Church, and a yearning for the heights of mystical union with the Divine. Every vocation is a leap of faith. Jesus said, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move" (Matthew 17:20). As Rector, I would rather have faith the size of a mountain, to see possibilities hidden within a mustard seed . . . which is sometimes the seed of a priestly vocation. For those called, the priesthood becomes a vista of hope and opportunity.

Experience of the indwelling Trinity, the life of infused virtue, a call to the priesthood . . . these are vistas of hope and opportunity found at Saint John Vianney College Seminary.

*Rev. Michael C. Becker Jr.*

Fr. Michael Becker  
Rector

# Apostolic Outreach at Saint John Vianney College Seminary

Saint John Vianney College Seminarians participate in an Apostolic Outreach program each year they are in the seminary. Over the course of four years, each will provide service to parishes and social service agencies throughout the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

The Seminarians teach religious education, lead confirmation groups, tutor underprivileged children, and offer a ministry of presence to children who have emotional issues. They also minister to the elderly by socializing, reading aloud and sharing meals, as well as work with adults possessing mental and cognitive disabilities.



*Daniel Schumaker from the Diocese of Lansing, teaches religious education to 5th graders at a local parish.*



*Coady Owens from the Diocese of Lafayette tutors a Minneapolis student.*



*Seminarian Philip Butler from the Diocese of Joliet with staff from Little Sisters of the Poor. Several seminarians visit with elderly residents on a weekly basis.*

# Saint John Vianney College



# College Seminary 2010-11



# Seminarian Profiles



*Archbishop John C. Nienstedt and Nick Vasko, Jack Haben, Chris Miller, Dan McClure, Joe Kuharski, Peter Ly and Kyle Kowalczyk, all seminarians for the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, canoed through the BWCA this summer.*



**Nick Vasko** is a senior seminarian from the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. Nick says, “I joined the seminary because after doing everything else that I thought would make me happy and still feeling empty, I knew there was only one thing left to do... ‘Come, leave what you have, and follow me’”(cf. Mk. 10:21).

Nick is an avid outdoorsman who says, “I have freely given up most of my previous ways and dreams of living, but in return I have received a double portion from God. I gave up an independent self-reliant life, but have found true freedom. I gave up constant hunting, fishing, and sports, but have found the answer to my deepest desires. I gave up many of my old friendships, but have found true brothers. I gave up the opportunity for many worldly experiences, but have found and experienced God’s infinite love and friendship.

“In seminary I use my previous experience and love of the outdoors as a tool for the New Evangelization. I use it first as a spring board in conversation when meeting new people and getting to know them, and secondly, as a way to encourage masculine virtue and fraternity by taking men to the Boundary Water Canoe Area Wilderness for retreats and vacation.

“God has given me these gifts so that I will have a solid human foundation to start from when I am teaching and encouraging men in their faith. I see God using these gifts as a means to renew masculine virtue in the Church, which will also have healthy ripple effects in marriages, family life, and society in general.”

**Brendan Megal**, a second year seminarian from the Diocese of Bismarck has played hockey since he was five years old.

Brandon faced the biggest decision of his life during his senior year of high school when he was presented two variant opportunities: to play Division I Hockey for Boston University or to enter Saint John Vianney College Seminary and discern a call to the priesthood. Brandon says, “I had several encounters with our Lord during my senior year and I figured that if I did not enter seminary right away, I never would. I knew I needed to try it now. I have not regretted this decision for one second, because God has been so very good to me.”



**Casey Smithley**, a second year seminarian from the Diocese of St. Cloud, joined Saint John Vianney College Seminary out of a great love for the Mass and because he “wanted to serve others in a very profound, life-giving way.”

Casey’s musical gifts are his unique way to serve others at Mass. He is a talented musician who plays several instruments including piano, harpsichord, organ, guitar, banjo, drums, saxophone, bassoon, trumpet, trombone and tuba.

Casey also cantors at Mass and sings with the Schola. He sees music “as a great way to praise the Lord and practice joyful service.”

## Fr. Baer's Farewell

On May 12, 2010 friends and benefactors of Saint John Vianney College Seminary gathered to bid farewell to Fr. William Baer. After eleven years as Rector of Saint John Vianney, Fr. Baer has returned to parish life at Transfiguration in Oakdale, MN.



Fr. Baer leaves quite a legacy at Saint John Vianney. In his years as Rector, Fr. Baer instituted the Seminarians' pledge and prayer – "Men in Christ. Men of the Church. Men for Others". A total of 475 seminarians took the pledge and studied at Saint John Vianney under his guidance. Enrollment more than doubled during his tenure as Rector.

Fr. Baer will also be remembered for starting the "Last Chance Mass" at the University of St. Thomas, a Sunday evening tradition, where over 300 students and neighbors attend Mass in the Saint John Vianney Chapel.

Fr. Baer's final gift to the seminary is a lasting one – a scholarship fund which was created in his honor to provide financial assistance to transfer students who join the seminary. Transfer students make up a third of each class of New Men, and traditional scholarship assistance for transfer students is very limited. An envelope is enclosed if you would like to donate to the scholarship fund, or make an unrestricted gift to the seminary.



*New Rector Fr. Michael Becker welcomes guests to Fr. Baer's farewell dinner.*

*Archbishop John C. Nienstedt thanks Fr. Baer for his eleven years as Rector of Saint John Vianney Seminary.*

*Outgoing Rector Fr. William Baer addresses the benefactors and friends of the seminary who attended dinner in his honor.*