



# The Saint John's Seminary Magazine

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Winter 2017



COVER STORY:

## Growing for Tomorrow



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## The Saint John's Seminary Magazine

**Publisher:** Monsignor James P. Moroney, *Rector*  
**Managing Editor:** Sandy Barry, *Director of Annual Giving*

**Photography:** Bobby LeBlanc (Pre-Theology II, Boston)  
 George Martell, *Boston Catholic Development Services*

**Contributing**

**Writers:** Reverend Romanus Cessario, O.P.  
 Dr. Janet Hunt, FAGO  
 Greg Quenneville (Pre-Theology I, Fall River)  
 Anne Rennie, Administrative Assistant, MTS and  
 Catechetical Certificate Programs, Theological Institute  
 Joseph Stevens '16, Special Projects Manager, MAM Program,  
 Theological Institute  
 Donis Tracy

**Design:** Susan Kochinskas, *Flocksholm Design*  
**Printing:** Drake Williams, *Drake Print Management*

**On the cover:** Photograph by S. Barry

**Mission:**  
*Saint John's Seminary prepares Roman Catholic seminarians for ordination to the priesthood through programs of human, pastoral, spiritual and academic formation. It is governed by a Board of Trustees, chaired by the Archbishop of Boston.*

*While primarily in service to the bishops of New England, Saint John's Seminary also enrolls seminarians from other (arch)dioceses, institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life in its several degree programs.*

*The seminary's Theological Institute for the New Evangelization prepares laity, deacons and religious for ministry and service to the dioceses of the region. Saint John's Seminary is sponsored by the Archdiocese of Boston. It observes the applicable norms of the Holy See and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in defining and realizing its mission.*



L-R: Seminarians Brian Ashmankas (Pre-Theology II, Worcester), Steven Lewis (Theology I, Rochester), Joseph Ferme IV (Pre-Theology I, Boston), Joseph Moynahan (Pre-Theology II, Manchester), Matt Norwood (Theology I, Boston), Michael Rora (Theology III, Boston)



**Saint John's Seminary**  
 127 Lake Street  
 Brighton, MA 02135

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Dear friends of Saint John's,

As winter snows blanket the Seminary, the seminarians are just returning from Christmas break and prayer retreats to embark on another semester. With our largest-ever group of men in formation this year — 132 men! — our halls and home are as full as our hearts these days. You will learn more in this issue about the terrific problem we have of being so replete with seminarians, and what that means for the future of Saint John's Seminary. I hope you will continue on this journey with us, dear friends, as you have supported us from the very beginning. Without our supporters, those who pray for us and work through Him to provide for us in so many ways, the future of SJS and the greater Church would not shine as bright as it does today.



Along with other glimpses into our life, I hope in this issue you will find inspiration, comfort in knowing that the future of the priesthood grows more secure each day, and plenty of opportunities to work and interact with us to make possible the great things God does in this Holy House!

Finally, please allow me to take a moment to recognize all of those who participated in our second-ever Giving Tuesday campaign this year. **On November 29, 2016, we were able to raise over \$6,500 towards the purchase of a new nativity set for this year's Advent worship, shattering our \$5,000 goal (which had been doubled from the previous year!).** All proceeds above and beyond this purchase have been applied to our Annual Fund, to support our core mission of preparing future priests for the Church in New England and beyond. We are so fortunate to have such a loyal and supportive family of donors who answer the call whenever we are in need. **So to those of you who donated, shared our campaign with friends or family, or even prayed for our success on this day — THANK YOU!** Because of you, we did it. We are so grateful!

In the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. J. P. Moroney".

Monsignor James P. Moroney



**Did you know?** Seminarians come to Saint John’s from fifteen different dioceses and six institutes of religious life, as well as an ecclesial movement. In each issue of the *SJS Magazine* and our *Currents* newsletter, we focus on one man to give you an “insider’s perspective” on the life and calling of a future priest.

## Deacon Jason Giombetti



**Hometown:** Ashland, MA

**Parish:** Saint Cecilia’s, Ashland, MA

**HS/College Attended:** Ashland High School, Dean College (A.A.), Suffolk University (B.S. Psychology)

**Who or what have been the most formative influences on your faith identity and development (at home or at SJS)?** There are several people. Various priests like Fr. Jeremy St. Martin, Fr. Paul Clifford, Fr. Shawn Carey & Fr. Paul Mulligan have shown me how the life of a priest, when lived correctly, is a life of joy. Msgr. Moroney, Msgr. McLaughlin, Fr. Derek Borek and other faculty members at Saint John’s have been great at forming us through their various examples of priesthood (you learn a lot about a person when you live with them). Most of all, my parents have had the greatest influence on me. For as long as I can remember, their unconditional love for me has been a mirror of the unconditional love of the Father. Without that model, I would have never had the inclination to listen for a call to the priesthood or the strength to respond to it.

**What is the most surprising thing you’ve learned about yourself or your faith at SJS?** One of the best parts about being a seminarian is coming to a deeper understanding of the relationship between faith and reason. Here we study not only what we believe but why it is true. Cardinal O’Malley once compared the faith to a beautiful woman a man sees standing far away from him. The closer he gets to the woman, the better he can see and the more beautiful she becomes which increases his desire to draw closer to her. The more I learn about the faith, the more I come to love it and my desire to learn more about it only deepens.

**People might be surprised to learn this about me or about life at SJS:** Sometimes when talking to people, I find they have a “romantic” idea of what Seminary life is like. I remember thinking when I was young that life at a Seminary would be like something you would see in the movies ... men in robes chanting in Latin day and night by candlelight. Well, we do wear different clothes ... and we do our fair share of chanting ... but life at Saint John’s is so much more than that, yet it is incredibly simple. It’s a group of men who, with the help of the Church, are discerning God’s will and preparing for a life of service to God and the people to whom He will send us. It is not easy, but at the end of the day, it’s incredibly beautiful. ■



Dcn. Jason with his parents, Kathy & Joseph Giombetti, following his Diaconate Ordination

*Deacon Jason is studying for the Archdiocese of Boston and will, God willing, be ordained with the rest of his classmates on May 20, 2017.*

**Introducing a new segment:** “My Vocation Story”. The men of Saint John’s Seminary come to us from across the globe, spanning decades of life experiences, and from an impressive array of past careers. We have seen former bankers, lawyers, town selectmen, audiovisual and software engineers... you name it, someone in the house probably has a talent for it! In each issue of *SJS Magazine* moving forward, we will select one seminarian to give you his backstory: how and what his life looked like when he first heard the call, and what he did about it that brought him to us at Saint John’s Seminary, ready to give himself over to the Lord, leave behind all of the comforts and securities he knew before, and dedicate his life to becoming your future parish priest. We hope you will enjoy! —Msgr. M

## My Vocation Story

by Gregory Quenneville

I grew up in a Catholic family, attended religious education as a child, and received all of my sacraments in the Church. Unfortunately, after receiving Confirmation I stopped attending Mass regularly throughout high school and the early years of my college education. When I was in college, my Dad gave me a copy of *The Purpose Driven Life*. This book prompted me to examine my life more deeply, which led to my reversion back to practicing the Catholic faith. I began the practice of reading scripture daily throughout the remainder of college and graduate school.

After completing a Master of Social Work Degree I began working as a psychotherapist. I worked for several years at McLean Hospital and then four years for the Vet Center Program, a small satellite of the Veterans Administration. I was a homeowner and had accomplished many of the goals that I had strived for. Yet I recall feeling that there was a part of my life that was unfulfilled.

A few years ago, during the season of Lent I decided to take up the practice of attending daily Mass. At the time, I was working out of an office in Worcester and due to the abundance of Catholic Parishes in Worcester I was able to fit daily Mass into my work schedule. During this time, I began to notice that regardless of what I was doing, attending Mass and encountering Christ in the Eucharist was always the best part of my day. I began to spend more time in prayer and to eventually consider a vocation to the priesthood.

Through getting to know a few priests well and witnessing the happiness of how they lived their vocations, I began to consider that perhaps Christ was calling me to enter the seminary. After praying to God for guidance in leading me to my vocation, I decided to apply to Saint John’s Seminary. Prior to entering the seminary I was very happy in my life. Through the few years that I spent in persistent prayer and learning more about the Catholic priesthood I grew in personal security in deciding to enter Saint John’s Seminary. ■



*Gregory has just finished his first semester of 1st Pre-Theology. He is studying for the Diocese of Fall River, with an anticipated ordination date in the Spring of 2022.*

## Rev. Christopher O'Connor '98

by Donis Tracy



Father Christopher O'Connor wears many hats at Saint John's Seminary — vice rector, president of the Theological Institute for the New Evangelization, professor of ecclesiology for the Theological Institute, professor of contemporary philosophy to pre-theology students at Saint John's Seminary, just to name a few.

"It really does sound more daunting than it is," he laughed.

"Basically, as the vice-rector, my role is to support the rector in the administration of the seminary," he explained. "I'm here to help with whatever needs to be done."

This year, Father O'Connor has added another, albeit temporary, hat: doctoral candidate and student at Boston College.

"I am trying to finish up my doctorate, and will hopefully be finished with my thesis within a year," he said. His thesis, which is about the pastoral acts of the bishop, builds on his knowledge of ecclesiology, and he resides at St. Anselm's Abbey in Manchester, NH several days a week in his quest to complete it.

"Because of (the thesis), I have had to cut back on teaching," he said, "but only for this year." In addition to his duties at the seminary, Father O'Connor also serves as a prison chaplain to three correctional facilities: MCI Norfolk, Pondville Correctional Center and Souza Baranowski Correctional Center.

"As part of my pastoral formation as a seminarian at Saint John's Seminary, I was sent to Walpole Prison," he explained. "That's where the love for prison ministry comes from."

"On a purely personal note, I like to eat, cook and walk," the 44-year-old said, adding with a smile, "regrettably in that order."

Born in Dorchester, the oldest of three children, Father O'Connor always knew God was calling him to serve the Church. "Having grown up in Dorchester, where your identity was very closely linked with what parish you attended, I always was raised in the faith," he recounted, adding that although the family moved to Quincy when he was 9, they would make the 20-minute trek to St. Margaret Parish every week without fail.

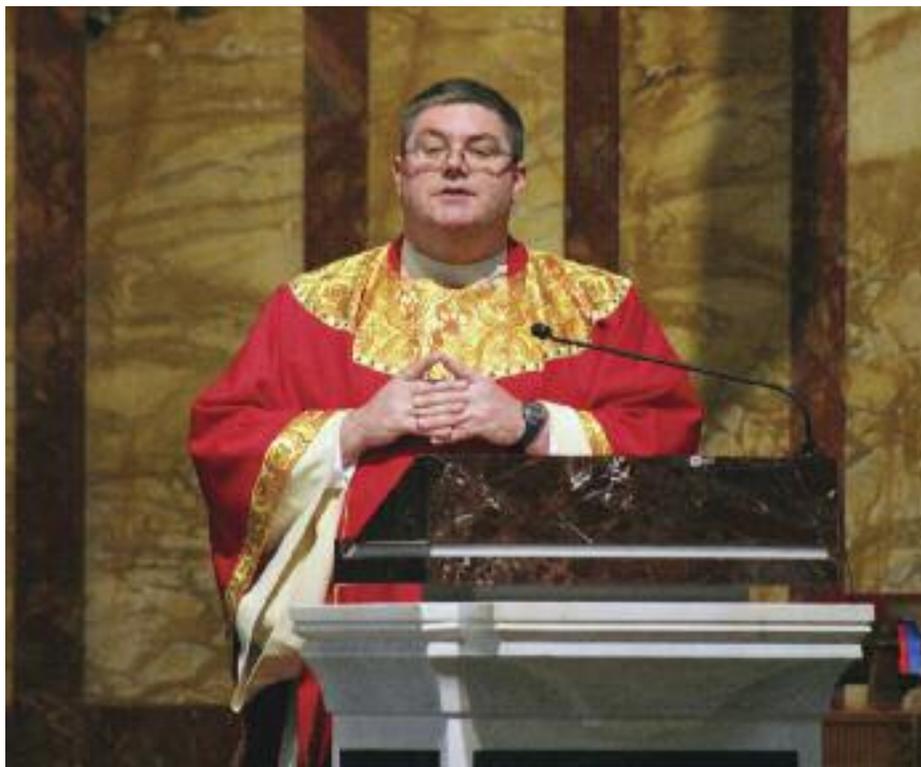
"The Sister of Charity of Halifax were also extremely formative for me, teaching me to see God's love in every aspect of my life," he added.

As a young boy, Father O'Connor became an altar server at St. Margaret's. His call to the priesthood was made even more clear to him during Holy Week, he said.

"The drama of the Triduum — from Holy Thursday right up to Easter Sunday — everything I celebrated those three days left me wanting more," Father O'Connor said.

In 1993, when Mother Teresa (now Saint Teresa of Calcutta) came to Boston to visit the prisons, she stopped and paid a visit to St. Margaret's, where she prayed for vocations. Within a year, Father O'Connor entered Saint John's Seminary College.

In 1998, he was ordained and received his first, and to date, his only parish assignment: St. Mary Parish in Chelmsford.



Fr. Chris celebrates the Commemoration of the Lord's Passion, part of the Sacred Triduum, at Saint John's Seminary in April 2016

"It's funny, because I asked for an inner-city parish with a school and was instead sent to a large suburban parish with no school," he chuckled

"But it was there that my vocation blossomed and flourished," he added, "which goes to show that the wisdom of the Church is far greater than human wisdom."

After three years as a parochial vicar, Father O'Connor attended Catholic University in Washington DC, where he got his Ph.L in Philosophy. In 2004, after completing his studies, he moved into Saint John's Seminary and began to teach.

"Living at Saint John's Seminary, surrounded by men studying for the priesthood, helps me to think more deeply about the priesthood because I am immersed in it," he says. "So many of these men have such a strong desire to serve God and to serve the Church."

"It is also a great gift to be here, not only with the seminarians, but with the faculty," he continued. "The fraternity that exists is something that I am very fortunate to have in my life." ■

*Fr. Chris is the Vice-Rector of Saint John's Seminary and President of the Theological Institute for the New Evangelization.*

## Pray the Lord of the Harvest!

by Reverend Romanus Cessario, O.P.

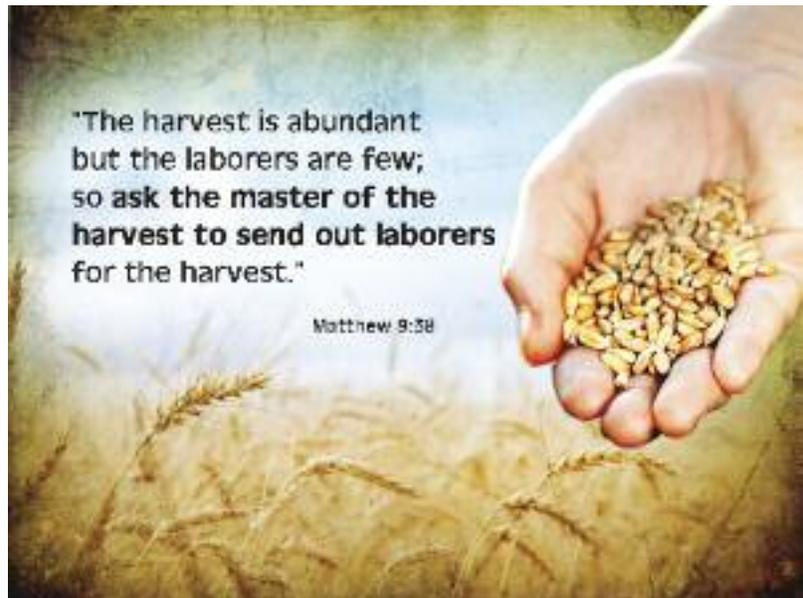


**T**he Church asks all Catholics to pray for priestly vocations. This imperative finds warrant in the holy gospels. Christ himself first pronounces the words that the Church repeats throughout the ages: “The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for the harvest” (Mt 9:38). To inquire about the reason why we pray for men to become priests leads us into the mystery of God’s plan for the salvation of the world. One thing remains certain: No man takes the priesthood to himself. Only God gives a man the grace to embrace the priestly office. “Like every grace,” affirms the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “this sacrament can be received only as an unmerited gift” (no. 1578). Because of the special grace which they receive, priests, who act in communion with their Bishops, occupy a privileged place in the divine plan of salvation. Their service to the Church centers on preaching and the administration of the sacraments, especially the Sacraments of Healing and the Eucharist. Without forgiveness and communion, nobody gets to heaven.

Within the past decade, Saint John’s Seminary has enjoyed the privilege of welcoming many “unmerited” gifts in the persons of new candidates for the priesthood. These young men have already been accepted by the several dioceses served by Saint John’s Seminary or by the institutes of consecrated life that avail themselves of the seminary’s formation programs. The recrudescence of the seminary population clearly reveals God’s unfailing providential care for the Church in New England and beyond.

At the turn of the century, several historical circumstances admittedly coalesced to bring about a decline in the number of priestly vocations. In the more than two decades that the present writer has taught at Saint John’s, he can recall a seminary population as small in number as the low twenties. Not a few critics of the Church even began to project the end of this venerable institution that dates back to 1884. The Lord of the Harvest clearly envisaged a different scenario. Blessed be he! To the praise of his glory, God gave not a few young men the grace to pursue a priestly vocation. For one reason or another, which even includes the fact that young Vietnamese men have volunteered for service in the United States, these new candidates have arrived at Brighton.

One response to the renewed growth in the seminary population appears in the reclamation of seminary property that had been sold in order to alleviate an unforeseen financial crunch. This felicitous development will allow for the refurbishment of rooms



for both seminarians and faculty as well as for much needed common areas where seminarians can learn the dynamics of their future rectory living. Common areas within the seminary's footprint will afford additional places where seminarians can read together, recreate together, and converse together. The refurbishment of this property, however, will require financial assistance from generous benefactors. The newly reclaimed space has not received serious maintenance since the middle of the last century! So the Saint John's Seminary Community continues to pray the Lord of the Harvest both for new seminarians and for adequate housing to receive them. Parish priests, especially in the foreseeable future, will not enjoy the luxury of maintaining close geographical proximity to other priests. A unified seminary environment enables our future priests to develop those friendships that living a common life under the same roof uniquely fosters among men.

The Church cannot survive without priests. No replacements exist for priests. Indeed, the salvation of souls according to God's ordinary providence depends on priests. No wonder that Cardinal O'Malley, the Archbishop of Boston, likes to remind his faithful that the seminary forms the heart of the diocese. No one would like to contemplate what the failure of Saint John's Seminary might entail for the Catholic Church in New England. Bishops would find themselves in the same circumstances that existed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when they had to send seminarians either to the mid-Atlantic region of our country or abroad. Not a few of Boston's early priests were trained in Montreal. Against such infelicitous prospects, Catholics of good will should expend every effort to ensure the stability of Saint John's Seminary in the Brighton district of Boston where the Lord of the Harvest obviously has brought to fruition many of the unmerited graces he has so generously bestowed on generous young men. ■

**A unified seminary environment enables our future priests to develop those friendships that living a common life under the same roof uniquely fosters among men.**

*Reverend Romanus Cessario, O.P., is a Dominican priest who serves as professor of Theology at Saint John's Seminary. He is a fellow of the Pontifical Academy of Saint Thomas Aquinas.*

## Growing for Tomorrow

by Donis Tracy

Growing up, seminarian Philip Scheer never thought he'd one day wind up being called to serve God as a priest for the Archdiocese of Boston.

Born in England, Scheer moved with his family to Harrisburg, PA when he was three years old. He describes his upbringing as “nominally” Catholic — his mother was Catholic; his father, who has since converted to Catholicism, was Lutheran. Although he attended Catholic schools, he admits he “knew about Jesus, but didn’t know Jesus.”

After graduating from art school, he began “muddling through” life — moved to Massachusetts, had a girlfriend, did what all his peers were doing, and yet, he noticed that instead of enjoying his young adult life, “I was dying inside.”

“I liked my life, but there was a malaise, a hollowness inside me that I cannot fully describe,” recounts Scheer. “I kept asking myself, ‘Why is there something missing?’”



Philip Scheer

It was in one of these moments of malaise that Scheer found himself turning to God once again. “I prayed to God for the first time in a long time,” he recalls. “I asked him, ‘Is there something you want me to do?’ And immediately a clear thought, that most certainly didn’t come from me, came into my head. ‘I want you to become a priest.’”

Initially, Scheer silenced that thought. Why would God choose him, he thought. But eventually, he turned to a priest he had come to know through his girlfriend and asked to speak to him.

“I had so many pent-up fears,” he admits. After speaking for a while, these fears subsided and Scheer agreed to attend a vocation discernment retreat, after which he applied to enter Saint John’s Seminary.

“I went into the Seminary because God made it clear to me, but I didn’t understand a lot of my faith,” he says. “I spent the first year in awe of the other seminarians who seemed to have a real relationship with Jesus.”

“I didn’t know Jesus Christ yet, but I can say that being at the Seminary was the most peaceful I had ever been in my life,” adds Scheer.

The summer after that first year, Scheer’s faith was tested. His mother died unexpectedly, and for a year, he admits he “spiraled into a dark place.”

Ashamed that he had rejected God, Scheer credits a parishioner for helping him turn back to God. She handed him a rosary, which he began to pray daily.

“Within a week, I had a profound change. Whereas before I was miserable, now I wasn’t crushed by shame or pain anymore. That’s when I realized, ‘I’m in! I want to teach the world about the Lord,’” he says.

Returning to Saint John’s Seminary, his inner peace was reestablished. The camaraderie with his fellow seminarians and professors has helped him establish his own relationship with Jesus.

Today Scheer is a second-year theology student who hopes to be ordained a deacon in 2018. Thinking over his years at Saint John's Seminary, he notes that the Seminary has changed over the years.

"It is a much more joyous place," he says. "Each year since I've been here, the quality of conversation is so much more valuable. The men coming in are more catechized and know more. These men know that it may not be an easy life, but it's the one God is calling them to," Scheer says.

Scheer is one of 132 seminarians studying at Saint John's Seminary this year, of whom 96 live on Brighton's Lake Street. (The remaining 36 seminarians either come from religious orders — the Oblates, the Assumptionists, and the Franciscans to name a few — or they reside at the Redemptoris Mater House of Formation and receive their formation from the Neo-Catechumenal Way.)

"When this school year opened, we had seven more seminarians than beds," observes Msgr. James Moroney, rector at Saint John's Seminary. "We are witnessing the most extraordinary growth the seminary has experienced in its entire history."

**"We are witnessing the most extraordinary growth the seminary has experienced in its entire history."**

According to Msgr. Moroney, Saint John's Seminary is currently among the five largest Catholic seminaries in the United States based on student enrollment. Just a decade ago, in 2005, the Seminary was at an all-time low of 22 students.

The reason for the growth in vocations cannot be easily explained away: for example, there has not been any consolidation of other seminaries into Saint John's Seminary. Msgr. Moroney believes the most "tangible and plausible" explanation comes from God alone.

"All those years when we were wanting for vocations, we prayed," he recalls. "The lady in the back pew, the priest in the pulpit, the Ladies' Sodality, the Pastoral Councils — all those people who prayed every day for an increase in vocations."

"We should not be surprised, then, to see that God has answered our prayers," concludes Msgr. Moroney.

In response to the growth of the student population, Saint John's Seminary has begun a physical expansion of the campus as well, with three new developments in the works.

The first of these opened this past summer. In response to the need for additional beds, the Board of Trustees at the Seminary purchased a house on Lake Street directly across from the main campus. Currently seven of the 12 transitional deacons reside at Cheverus House, named in honor of Bishop Jean-Louis Lefebvre de Cheverus, first bishop of Boston.



Cheverus House

“It was so named because Bishop Cheverus is the founding bishop not only of Boston, but also of all of New England,” explains Msgr. Moroney. “And so we found it fitting that, as we are forming men throughout New England, we should honor our founding father, as it were.”

Although Cheverus House currently houses transitional deacons, its future use will be as a residence for clergy engaged in continuing education at the Seminary.

“Saint John’s Seminary has several roles in fostering the life of the Church in New England. One of these is to provide continuing education and formation of the clergy,” Msgr. Moroney says, noting that clergy who enroll in multi-day workshops will have the opportunity to stay at Cheverus House rather than commute to campus.

“The possibilities for Cheverus House are infinite because the ways for us to support our clergy are infinite,” he adds. “We look forward to God showing us the way with this, as with all things.”



Deacon House, December 2016. Making progress!

In addition to Cheverus House, Saint John’s Seminary is currently working on Deacon House at the Our Lady of Presentation Campus. Slated to open this month, this house will be a “separate rectory-like setting” for transitional deacons in their final year at Saint John’s Seminary. Set up like a traditional rectory, rather than the dormitory-style bedrooms at the Seminary, Deacon House will house ten transitional deacons and two faculty members.

“Transitional deacons still continue to take classes — in fact they carry a full load that final year,” explains Msgr. Moroney. “They will sleep there, but will continue to follow the full Horarium with the Seminary.”

“It’s kind of a halfway house for deacons,” he laughs.

The expansion nearest and dearest to Msgr. Moroney’s heart, however, is the purchase of the Annex, a three-story, 13,000 –square foot section of the Seminary above the kitchen and refectory. In the early 2000s, Boston College had acquired the Annex as part of an expansion which included the purchase of Bishop Peterson Hall, a building adjacent to the Seminary. Because those rooms had not been used since the 1960s, Saint John’s Seminary agreed to a 99-year lease on the Annex.

“Right after I became Rector, acquiring this space has been one of the great dreams that both Cardinal (Seán P.) O’Malley and I began to articulate,” he says with a smile. “It restores the Seminary to a certain wholeness.”



Deacon House rear view, December 2016



One hallway in the recently-acquired space

“I doubt there has been a month that has gone by since I arrived here when Cardinal Seán and I have not spoken about it,” he says.

After signing the purchase and sale agreement earlier this fall, Saint John’s Seminary “owns the Annex — free and clear, without any leases or encumbrances of any kind.”

Because 50 years have passed since those rooms have been used, they will have to be “brought back to the studs,” explains Msgr. Moroney. Currently three different architectural firms have submitted proposals to the Board of Trustees, he adds.

“Certainly the Annex will have some seminarian bedrooms,” he predicts, adding that the remodel will possibly include library space and faculty offices as well.

“We are not going to rush into anything,” Msgr. Moroney adds. “But we definitely see the enormous possibilities that a newly restored Annex can bring.”

Contemplating the growth in both the population of the Seminary and its physical space, Msgr. Moroney becomes pensive.

“Archbishop Williams established a seminary here so many years ago in the middle of a cow pasture, and for so very long, this has been the face of what it means to be the Church in Boston. When any of our 3000+ priests who have studied and been formed here return to campus, it gives them a feeling of rootedness,” he muses. “To preserve that sign of our hope — and to even grow and grow — at the beginning of the 21st century is perhaps the greatest gift God can give to Saint John’s Seminary.” ■



SJS Board of Trustees celebrates the signing of the Purchase & Sale agreement for the Annex | September 19, 2016

## Interested in Helping Us Grow?

Gifts of all sizes will help us build and grow the Seminary’s Annual Fund to advance our mission of preparing your future parish priests. These gifts are our highest priority at this time and provide a way for everyone to participate.

Capital naming opportunities will be available at several price points, beginning at \$10,000, as our building projects are further defined. If you are able, we hope you will perhaps consider this an occasion to memorialize a loved one, honor a family name, or create a legacy in tribute to influential clergy and mentors in your life.

To make your gift online today, please visit [www.sjs.edu/donate](http://www.sjs.edu/donate) and choose “Other” as your gift designation. Then fill in the text field to let us know your specific giving priority. Gifts may also be made by check made out to **Saint John’s Seminary** and mailed to **Sandy Barry, Director of Annual Giving, 127 Lake St, Brighton, MA 02135**.

Questions? Thinking about a **multi-year pledge, estate gift, or gift of stock**? Email [rector@sjs.edu](mailto:rector@sjs.edu) or call 617.746.5413.

Thank you for supporting your future parish priests!



*I hope you enjoy the following profile of the O'Malley brothers: Jack, Tim and Mike, long-time students at the Theological Institute. I think you'll find their story compelling, particularly their ongoing commitment to adult faith formation at the Theological Institute. I would like to thank them for sharing their journey and for being such an important part of our learning community.*

—Rev. Christopher O'Connor, President  
of the Theological Institute,  
Vice-Rector of Saint John's Seminary

## Meet the O'Malley Brothers

### Nine classes and counting at the Theological Institute

by Joe Stevens '16

While most brothers get together to watch sports — the O'Malley brothers — Jack, Tim and Mike, attend classes at the Theological Institute. This past fall marked the ninth time they teamed up to take a course, the latest being *Catholic Social Doctrine*, taught by Rev. Eric Bennett. The O'Malleys took their first class together at the Institute in 2011; however their love of their faith and interest in furthering their education in the Church dates back to their early childhood in Cleveland, where they were born in the 1940s.

The O'Malley brothers are part of a large Irish Catholic family that includes seven children — six boys and one girl — who, with their parents, settled in Reading, MA in 1954. Brought up devout Catholics, their parents instilled a strong sense of faith and the importance of a Catholic education in their children early on. All three brothers attended St. Agnes Elementary School in Reading followed by Catholic high school, with Jack and Tim graduating from Central Catholic High School in Lawrence and Mike graduating from Austin Prep.

While Jack, the oldest of the three, spent four and a half years at Saint John's Seminary before enlisting, it was Tim who was the driving force behind the brothers pursuing adult faith formation at the Theological Institute. Tim signed up for the *Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius* in 2005 and encouraged Mike to join him. Both agree that taking the Exercises was a turning point in their lives — in fact Mike commented that it changed his level of devotion to his faith. Mike and Tim were then encouraged to take additional courses at the Institute — recruiting Jack to join them in 2011 after he retired.

Six of the classes the brothers have taken have been scripture-based courses taught by Prof. Celia Sirois, with the Old Testament an area of particular interest. “We all agree



O'Malley brothers from left: Mike, Jack, and Tim

that despite having 12 years of Catholic education, none of us knew much about the Old Testament,” says Mike O’Malley. “Several of these courses have enlightened us on this important aspect of the foundation of our religion.” He also emphasizes how much he and his brothers have benefited from learning in the communal environment at the Institute: “The classroom setting is an important factor in the learning process. We have learned as much from our classmates sharing their experiences as we have from the instructors teaching the courses.”

The fundamental role faith plays in the O’Malley family is most vividly demonstrated in two events which impacted not only the lives of the brothers, but their entire family. The first incident that occurred was the drowning of their oldest brother Pat in 1960. Jack O’Malley recalls his death as a life-changing event that helped strengthen his faith: “Our brother Pat died at age 18. Pat was ten months older than me — we fit the definition of Irish twins. This was a difficult time for me. It was because of a strong belief that God loved us that our family was able to get through this tragedy.”

The second event occurred when Tim O’Malley was struck by a car while walking on Rt. 93 after his car ran out of gas. “If not for the prayers of the people of St. Agnes Parish, and one priest in particular, I don’t believe I would still be alive,” says Tim. “It made me realize how lucky I am to have a caring, loving family, a strong faith-filled parish, and especially a priest who prayed for and with me. He anointed my leg when it was about to be amputated, and most importantly took the time to talk to me to make sure I didn’t lose my faith.” Tim credits the anointing and the power of prayer for saving his leg, an event that astounded his doctors, who told him there was no medical reason that the bone in his leg began to heal.

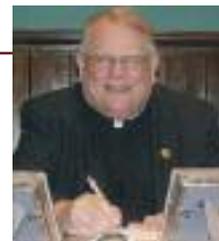
Over the years the brothers’ relationship has continued to grow stronger — a relationship forged, in part, by their mutual love of learning about their faith at the Theological Institute. In fact, meeting and talking about their classes has become something of a bonding experience: “The classes give us common ground for discussions,” says Mike. “The three of us talk throughout the week about the subject matter and often meet for discussions. The courses have become one of the main focal points of our lives.” As auditors, the brothers also collaborate on assignments, combining their perspectives on a single common answer which Mike, as the youngest, has to type up and submit!

When asked if they’ve discovered anything surprising about themselves or their faith while taking classes at the Institute, each brother gave a very different and personal response. “I discovered that I knew a lot more about my faith than I thought,” says Tim. “But at the same time I appreciate how much more I have to learn.”

Jack, on the other hand, says: “I would like to become more Christ-like, but also I understand how far from Christ-like I really am.”

And Mike adds that “he has come to realize that faith is an ongoing, never-ending, building process, and that the whole point of Christianity is sharing it with others.”

Finally, all three brothers agree that “anyone interested in learning more about Christianity should look into the MAM and MTS programs — that the variety of courses offered make it easy to find a class that you will be interested in.” At nine classes and counting, we hope to see the O’Malley brothers at the Theological Institute for many more years to come! ■



## From the Desk of Msgr. Moroney

Here are a few notes and musings from things that have crossed my desk lately...



Anne Rennie,  
Administrative  
Assistant, MTS  
and Catechetical  
Certificate Programs

### Certificate Program Update

This year the Theological Institute re-launched our **Catechetical Certificate Program**, a comprehensive, doctrinally-sound, holistic approach to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. This program is excellent for anyone interested in learning more about their Catholic faith, but it's particularly helpful for those teaching religion classes in parishes and those who are looking to evangelize in their homes and places of work. Several of our students are attending through parish subsidies. For pastors, this is an excellent way to ensure that their catechists are well-educated in the faith and have tools specific to teaching the faith. Our program includes lectures given by different presenters each month, online assessments, mentoring time where participants can ask about specific catechetical concerns, and a final project where participants demonstrate the knowledge they have gained over the 8-month program. The time commitment is minimal — one Saturday a month from September–April, and the cost is just \$350 for the entire program.

For more information or to sign up, please e-mail [anne.rennie@sjs.edu](mailto:anne.rennie@sjs.edu).

### The Saint John's Seminary Leadership Circle

My deepest thanks, as always, goes to the members of our Leadership Circle. This is a group of our most generous benefactors, who enjoy numerous benefits and invitations to special events throughout the year. If you are interested in joining this list, please contact [sandy.barry@sjs.edu](mailto:sandy.barry@sjs.edu) to learn more.

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*Gifts as of December 21, 2016*

## Coming in Summer 2017 to SJS: An English Renaissance Choral Music Workshop



This summer, Saint John's Seminary will be hosting the first Early Music Academy Boston, taking place July 29–August 4, 2017. Leading the course will be Janet Coxwell and David Woodcock, previous directors of the Tallis Scholars Summer Schools UK, and current directors of the UK-based Early Music Academy. They will be joined by Andrew Carwood, Director of Music at St. Paul's Cathedral, London and Director of the Cardinal's Musick.

Early Music Academy Boston is dedicated to exploring the great heritage of Renaissance choral music and developing a performance style appropriate to it. The focus for the initial Early Music Academy Boston will be English Renaissance music, featuring compositions by William Byrd, John Taverner, Thomas Tallis, and others. Activities are based around the seminary chapel, with a mid-week excursion to a Back Bay parish to sing Vespers.

The week's activities include daily rehearsals, where singers work on concert and service repertoire in a variety of small and medium sized groups, as well as informative talks and noon-time concerts in the seminary chapel. Each day ends with sung Compline. The week's activities culminate in a Gala Concert.

All services and concerts are open to the public.

We welcome singers of all voice parts aged 18 and over with good sight-reading skills. Dorm space is available at nearby Boston College. **The application deadline is March 1, 2017.** Please visit the website at [www.earlymusicacademyboston.org](http://www.earlymusicacademyboston.org) for more information, or e-mail [office@earlymusicacademyboston.org](mailto:office@earlymusicacademyboston.org) with any questions about the course and its events.

—Dr. Janet Hunt



Janet Coxwell



David Woodcock



Andrew Carwood



EARLY MUSIC ACADEMY BOSTON AND SJS COURTESY PHOTOS

### Publisher's Note

Speaking of growth, our magazine's managing editor will be growing her family this spring with the addition of a blessed baby girl. As a result, *SJS Magazine* will be on hiatus for the next issue. Keep your eyes on your mailbox for a special Summer edition of our Currents newsletter, instead, that will highlight this year's class of *ordinandi* and keep you up-to-date on their new assignments.

# SAINT JOHN'S SEMINARY 16<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT



## MONDAY, JULY 10, 2017

Wollaston Golf Club | Milton, MA



- 9:00 AM Practice Greens Open
- 11:00 AM Shotgun Start
- 5:00 PM Cocktail Hour and Raffle, followed by Silent Auction and Dinner

Registration Opens April 17, 2017 at  
[www.sjs.edu/golf](http://www.sjs.edu/golf)  
\$250pp

For more information on playing, sponsorships, donating an auction item, or joining us for dinner only, please email  
[golf@sjs.edu](mailto:golf@sjs.edu)

Sponsorships available from \$250-\$5,000



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Unless otherwise noted, all events are free and open to the public, thanks to the support of the Friends of Saint John's Seminary!

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21, 9:00 AM–NOON

### Finding Balance in Chaos: Three Legs to Stand On A Healthy Balance in Ministry Workshop

*The Theological Institute  
149 Washington Street, Brighton*

This workshop helps us examine three “legs,” which can help us regain our balance and identify how new stability can be achieved amidst the demands of ministry, home, and the spiritual life. **Dr. Nicki Verploegen**, formation faculty member for the Master of Arts in Ministry program facilitates this workshop, sponsored by the Theological Institute. Admission is free. To register, visit [theologicalinstitute.org](http://theologicalinstitute.org).

SUNDAY, MARCH 26, 3:00 PM

### Lenten Concert on Laetare Sunday

*Saint John's Seminary Main Chapel  
127 Lake Street, Brighton*

The Saint John's Seminary Festival Choir and organist Janet Hunt present a concert of Lenten music on Laetare Sunday. The featured work is Franz Liszt's Via Crucis for chorus and organ. Compositions by Hovhanness, Vaughan Williams, Byrd, Ireland, and Heiller complete the program.

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 9:00 AM–3:00 PM

### Co-Workers in the Vineyard Conference

*Our Lady Help of Christians Parish  
573 Washington Street, Newton*

The theme of this year's conference is Christian Leadership. To register, or for more information about keynote speakers and breakout sessions, visit [theologicalinstitute.org](http://theologicalinstitute.org). Cost: \$45. Sponsored by the Master of Arts in Ministry program at the Theological Institute.

SUNDAY, APRIL 9–SATURDAY, APRIL 15

### HOLY WEEK AT SJS

Please check back mid-February at [sjs.edu](http://sjs.edu) for information on joining us for the Sacred Triduum in the SJS Chapel.

SUMMER 2017

### Presbyteral Ordinations

Check your local diocesan website for details!

SATURDAY, MAY 20

Boston, MA ■ Hartford, CT

SATURDAY, JUNE 3

Manchester, NH ■ Providence, RI

SATURDAY, JUNE 10

Springfield, MA

SATURDAY, JUNE 17

Burlington, VT

MONDAY, JULY 10, 11:00 AM

### Saint John's Seminary 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Tournament

*Wollaston Golf Club  
999 Randolph Avenue, Milton*

Please save the date for this year's golf event, now in its 2nd year at Wollaston Golf Club. Featuring a great day on the links, raffles, prizes, a silent auction and more! \$250pp; sponsorships and dinner-only tickets are also available. Registration will open on April 17 at [www.sjs.edu/golf](http://www.sjs.edu/golf). For more, please email [golf@sjs.edu](mailto:golf@sjs.edu).

Keep checking back to [sjs.edu](http://sjs.edu) for more exciting lectures, concerts, and events this semester, or send an email to [sandy.barry@sjs.edu](mailto:sandy.barry@sjs.edu) to be added to the mailing list for our Event Newsletter.



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**Y**ou can connect with the Seminary community in a number of ways:

Our Websites: [sjs.edu](http://sjs.edu) and [theologicalinstitute.org](http://theologicalinstitute.org)

**Facebook:** search "Saint John's Seminary" and "Theological Institute for the New Evangelization" and "like" us!

**Instagram:** @SJSBoston

Monsignor Moroney on **Twitter:** @rectorSJS

**Monsignor's Blog (updated multiple times per week!):**  
[sjsrector.blogspot.com](http://sjsrector.blogspot.com)

Or just send an email to [contact@sjs.edu](mailto:contact@sjs.edu) with your name, mailing address, and email address and we'll be sure you get added to our mailing list for notifications of all future events and news from Saint John's Seminary.

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