

April 2020

INTO THE DEPTHS

Office of Priestly Vocations
Catholic Diocese of Peoria

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MEET DANIEL DIONESOTES



Birthday: May 12

Home Parish: Holy Trinity,
Bloomington

Year Entered Seminary: 2017
Ordination Class: 2023

Studying at: Mount St. Mary's
Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD

Why did you enter seminary?

After I took my first college
accounting exam, I knew that

my plan for my life was not going to work out. It was through this time of uncertainty that I heard God first call me to priesthood. As I began to pray about this, I continually felt an immense amount of joy coming from the idea of God calling me to be a priest. I knew that my own plan for my life was nothing compared to God's plan. In striving to more perfectly live out God's will, I entered seminary.

What did you do before entering seminary?

For two years, I went to college at Marquette University in Milwaukee.

What is an interesting fact about you?

When I was taking the train back to Bloomington from Milwaukee one day, I was stopped by a worker at the train station who was asking to see my ID. She didn't think I was old enough to be riding on the train by myself. I was 19.

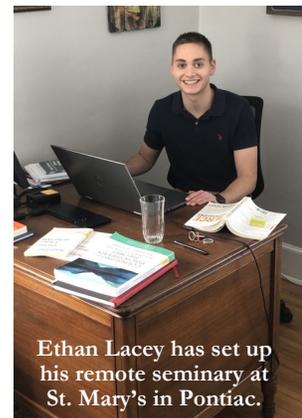
Which saint(s) are you closest to and why?

There are multiple saints that I have strong devotions to and sometimes the intensity of my devotion changes with the circumstances of my life. St. Therese of Lisieux is a saint that I have been closest to for a long time. When I first told my parish priest that I wanted to go to seminary, he informed me that the parish had just finished a vocations novena to St. Therese on that very day. She has been watching out for me throughout my whole discernment process. Another saint that I am very close with is St. Anthony of Egypt. He is a saint that I stumbled upon in high school and I was immediately attracted to his radical life of faith.

Coronavirus and God's Plan

By Fr. Tim Hepner

I don't know how people who are unaware of God's loving plan remain sane during these times. We've all been humbled and shown that none of our plans are set in stone. "Man proposes, but God disposes." And so, with all due reverence to the medical, emotional, and financial tragedies caused by COVID-19, we have a beautiful opportunity to reflect on how dependent we are on God's providence, and how much peace of heart can flow from simply being docile and open to his will in our lives.



Ethan Lacey has set up his remote seminary at St. Mary's in Pontiac.



Ryan Mann and Jacob Martini (not pictured) are set up at St. Columba in Ottawa.

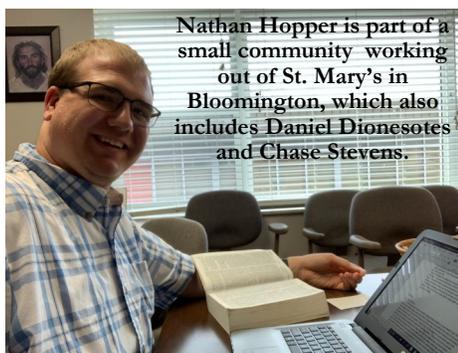
I am amazed at those who have worked so hard to help us through the turmoil: medical personnel, teachers, and diocesan and parish staff (including Bishop Jenky and our tireless vicar general, Msgr. Halfacre). This includes Fr. Henehan, who orchestrated the transition for our seminarians. There was a 24-hour time span in which the plans for the seminarians had to be completely changed three or four times, and

Fr. Henehan calmly communicated between seminary staff, seminarians, the bishop, the vicar general, and myself through all of it. All while also running a big parish! As his collaborator, I can tell you that the future of the Church is blessed to have him serving as the Vocation Director of Formation right now.



Austin Bosse and Jonathan Robinson are under the watchful eye of Msgr. Deptula at St. Matthew in Champaign.

The seminarians, too, have greatly impressed me. More than just a school, seminary is a deliberate community willed by Jesus, which has very specific elements determined by the Church to form men into the best possible priests they can be. The faculty at Mount St. Mary's and Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary work incredibly hard to accomplish this, and they are continually improving it. So you can imagine how difficult it is for our



Nathan Hopper is part of a small community working out of St. Mary's in Bloomington, which also includes Daniel Dionesotes and Chase Stevens.

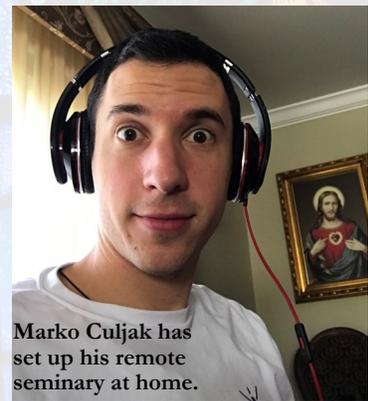
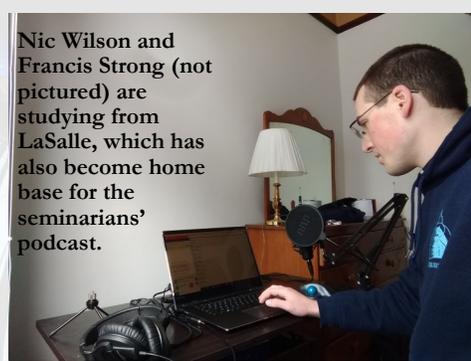
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seminarians, who were flourishing in this environment, to be suddenly thrust out of it into a place of instability, cut off from the physical community.

But you would never guess that when you see and hear from the men. They are all moved into their parishes or their homes, commencing online classes and formation, building a routine with the priests they live with, and joyfully taking everything in stride. We've shared just a few pictures of the men praying, living in community, and continuing to be as ridiculously joyful as they are in the seminary. For more pictures and videos of them being prayerful and ridiculous, go to [facebook.com/FollowMePeoria](https://www.facebook.com/FollowMePeoria). We are very grateful to the priests who welcomed the seminarians into their homes, even while they themselves are trying to figure out life during Corona just like the rest of you.

Please continue to pray for these men. Those who have access to daily mass and Eucharistic adoration are especially praying for you, the laity, that in this sad time of physical separation from Jesus in the Eucharist your faith in his presence will be enflamed, and not snuffed out. May you long for him even more, and may your spiritual communion be more fervent than ever, so that, when the day finally comes that we can gather together at Mass, you will receive him with an even more grateful heart! See you in the Eucharist!

Nic Wilson and Francis Strong (not pictured) are studying from LaSalle, which has also become home base for the seminarians' podcast.



Marko Culjak has set up his remote seminary at home.

DATE TO REMEMBER:

MAY 3, 2020: World Day of Prayer for Vocations

A REFLECTION:

On March 19th, we celebrated the solemnity of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary. On May 1st, we will celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker. During this confusing time when things are unpredictable and we may feel far from Jesus, St. Joseph is the perfect model to turn to. As he held Jesus close to him and protected Mary, so he holds us close to him and protects the Church. His intercession gives us the grace to embrace Christ in faith, even when we can't physically receive him. Meditate on these quotes from saints about the power of St. Joseph:

"I took for my patron and Lord the glorious St. Joseph I cannot call to mind that I have ever asked him at any time for anything he has not granted. I am filled with amazement when I consider the great favors God has given me through this blessed saint." – St. Teresa of Avila

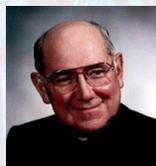
"St Joseph is the model of those humble ones that Christianity raises up to great destinies...he is the proof that in order to be a good and genuine follower of Christ, there is no need to do great things it is enough to have the common, simple and human virtues, but they need to be true and authentic" – St. John Paul II

"Some Saints are privileged to extend to us their patronage with particular efficacy in certain needs, but not in others; but our holy patron St. Joseph has the power to assist us in all cases, in every necessity, in every undertaking." – St. Thomas Aquinas

"The Lord has arrayed Joseph, like with a sun, in all which the saints possess together in regard to light and splendor." – St. Gregory of Nazianzus

CAN YOU SUPPORT OUR SEMINARIANS?

We know times are hard for everyone right now, and we greatly appreciate any support you can give our seminarians.



The **Msgr. George A. Carton College Seminarian Scholarship Fund** helps fund our college-level seminarians by providing money for their tuition, room and board. To donate to the Msgr. Carton Fund, [click here](#).



The **St. Therese Fund** pays for the tuition, room and board for theologians; salaries; office costs; and marketing expenses that help keep our seminarian program afloat. To donate to the St. Therese Fund, [click here](#).



The **Seminarian Aid Fund** helps our seminarians pay for expenses regarding medical emergencies, or travel home for a death or other family emergency. To donate to the Seminarian Aid Fund, [click here](#).