



March 2020

INTO THE DEPTHS

Office of Priestly Vocations
Catholic Diocese of Peoria

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MEET NIC WILSON



Birthday: October 13

Home Parish: The Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Peoria & St. Jude Parish, Peoria

Year Entered Seminary: 2013
Ordination Class: 2021

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

Why did you enter seminary?
I felt the Lord leading me to

seminary through various circumstances throughout high school. Volunteering in a nursing home, serving at the Cathedral, regularly attending daily Mass and Adoration at Peoria Notre Dame, and the examples of holy priests and religious sisters helped me to hear Christ's call. Looking back on all of these points, I knew that I needed to go to seminary to discern if God was calling me to the priesthood.

What did you do before entering seminary?

I was a high school student at Peoria Notre Dame.

What is an interesting fact about you?

As a hobby, I enjoy making three-dimensional models of church architecture.

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

I am closest to Our Lady. The Rosary was the very beginning of my personal prayer life, and through it, Mary taught me to be a disciple of Jesus. Besides Mary, I'm especially close with St. Philip Neri, St. John Henry Newman, and St. Therese of Lisieux. For me, St. Philip models joy, St. John Henry Newman models perseverance in pursuit of the truth, and St. Therese helps me with the hope and love that delights in receiving everything from God.

What has the journey been like as you near ordination?

It's incredible how quickly the past seven years have gone! Our annual silent retreat at the beginning of January was a blessed time of preparation. This semester, we've had Homiletics and Deacon Practicum, so being able to give practice homilies and practice the rites of baptism and marriage has been incredibly exciting. Each day, I am more eager to be God's instrument in teaching and sanctifying His people, in helping them know his love for them, and then helping them to respond to that love in prayer and the sacraments as they are made holy by the Holy Spirit.

Vocations: A Perspective From the Pew

By Mary Edgerley

For those of us in the pews, it is very easy to think of a "vocation" as something reserved for a very few. And so, the challenge (and sweet reward) of vocations efforts at the parish level is this: that all of us in the pews begin to hear our own personal calls by God to vocation. We ALL are called! Whether called to sacramental marriage or single life consecrated to God, or to the priesthood or consecrated religious life, there are many beautiful ways God calls us to serve Him.

For the past two years, the parishes of **Sacred Heart, Granville, and St. Patrick's, Hennepin** have utilized a **Traveling Crucifix** program to foster prayer for vocations in all possible forms. An



individual or family takes home from each weekend Mass a small crucifix, along with provided prayers that ask God to grow within us and our families a desire to serve in the way He most wants us to. Father Pat blesses those who will pray for vocations in the coming week. A Spanish version of prayers is included with the Traveling Crucifix, so that our Hispanic families can easily participate. Some of our most endearing volunteers for



the Traveling Crucifix have been our parish youth. When Father asks for volunteers for the coming week, it is truly beautiful to see a student's hand pop up.

Our parishes in Granville and Hennepin have been blessed by the priestly vocations of beloved pastors down through the years. Our parishioners realize how important our role is in praying for and encouraging vocations to the priesthood. We need our priests! And we know that our priests (and those seminarians in formation) need our prayers as much as we

need theirs. In 2018, we launched an **Adopt a Seminarian**

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program which paired willing families and individuals with our diocesan seminarians. We committed to praying for a seminarian during their school year, letting them know through a card or note that we love and support them as they study and discern.

Last May 2019, as these young men completed their year of study at seminary, we invited them to be our guests at a special Mass and dinner. We were delighted to meet four of our seminarians in person that night, along with Fr. Tim Hepner, and to spend the evening with them. What a blessing to have them assist at Mass prior to dinner, and then to hear our parish hall in Granville filled with laughter and conversation as they joined us for the meal. Our hearts were grateful to God for the gift of these new friends, and for a joy-filled evening of connection with them. We are now well into our second year of Seminarian Adoption, and 50 parish households are currently involved.

Parish vocations efforts help us grow in holiness. When our hearts and minds are tuned to hear our own unique calls from God to serve Him, we are better prepared to give our “Yes” to those calls. Our relationships as laity with our priests and religious are so beautifully interconnected! Together we learn to hear and understand the ways God personally calls each of us “into the depths,” and together we encourage each other to accept our call and follow.



Sacred Heart (Granville)—St. Patrick's (Hennepin) Vocations Committee: (L-R) Mary Edgerley, Chairman; Christine Sabotta; Brian and Sara Gross; Vicki Gensini; Lisa Draper



Resource Packets from Vianney Vocations for **World Day of Prayer for Vocations** are available. They include useful ideas for priests; resources for kids, teens, and adults; and new initiatives to pray for vocations. If you would like one for your parish, please email achovan@cdop.org before March 31st.

A REFLECTION ON THE PRINCIPLE & FOUNDATION:

Aren't you happy your house has a solid foundation? No matter how well-built it is, if it didn't have a good foundation, it would collapse. Likewise, every Christian vocation needs a solid foundation upon which to rest. St. Ignatius of Loyola gives us this very foundation in a text called “The Principle and Foundation” from the first week of his thirty-day retreat. Here is the powerful text for you to meditate on:

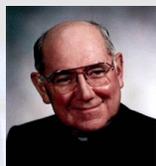
“Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul. And the other things on the face of the earth are created for man and that they may help him in prosecuting the end for which he is created.

From this it follows that man is to use them as much as they help him on to his end, and ought to rid himself of them so far as they hinder him as to it.

For this it is necessary to make ourselves indifferent to all created things in all that is allowed to the choice of our free will and is not prohibited to it; so that, on our part, we want not health rather than sickness, riches rather than poverty, honor rather than dishonor, long rather than short life, and so in all the rest; desiring and choosing only what is most conducive for us to the end for which we are created.”

This is certainly not easy. But it does simplify life: We are made to glorify God and save our soul. Anything that aids that is to be accepted. Anything that prevents it is to be rejected. This only makes sense if we have a personal relationship with Christ, if we know the immense love he showed for us on the cross, and if we trust him enough to hand our lives over to him. God's will can scare and challenge us. In fact, it can crucify us. But it always leads to peace and abundant life. We suggest taking this text to your next prayer time so that, with Jesus' grace, we can all have a solid foundation to build a culture of vocations!

CAN YOU SUPPORT 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](#).