ARCHDIOCESE OF WINNIPEG

SEMINARIANS NEWSLETER

Updates from the Archdiocese of Winnipeg's Seminarians

Hello Everyone!

At one time the Seminarian Newsletter was a tradition of our Archdiocese, and after a few years absense, we have decided to bring it back.

We hope in our newsletters you will get to learn about us, how we are doing and get to know about our lives in the Seminary.

Please know that we pray for you, our brothers and sisters back in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg daily, and we hope that you continue to support us in prayer.

We humbly ask that you pray for an increase in vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, and religious life in our Archdiocese.

Your continued support means a great deal to us.
God love you.

Myles Cesario & Douglas Fergusson

Seminarians, Archdiocese of Winnipeg

An Introduction & Year in Review

DOUGLAS FERGUSSON
ST. JOSEPH'S SEMINARY

For those of you who do not know me, my name is Douglas Fergusson, and I figured it would be worthwhile to introduce myself to you, as one of the two Archdiocese of Winnipeg's seminarians. To the ends of increasing visibility and ingratiating myself with the wonderful people of our Archdiocese, I thought it prudent to use this space to share with you some of my story, and in so doing become acquainted through the word to one another.

I was born in 1994, the fifth child of five, to two loving parents. Raised a Catholic, I attended St. Charles' Parish, going to St. Charles' Catholic School, and St. Paul's High School in Winnipeg. Following these core years of my youth, I attended the University of Manitoba, where I received a double honours degree in Political Studies and Religion. In 2017, I left Winnipeg for Ottawa, where I earned my Master's in Political Science from Carleton University. After a couple of years in consulting and COVID, I returned to Carleton to begin my Ph.D in Political Science. During my studies there, especially in Political Theory, studying ancient, modern and contemporary philosophy (Plato, Hobbes, Hegel, Heidegger), our Lord called me from my studies to follow Him.

Leaving my studies in 2024, I took a year to discern actively with our Vocation's Director, Fr. Peter Nemcek, and received our dear Bishop Murray Chatlain's approval to attend St. Joseph Seminary for further formation, and God-willing ordination. Though a later vocation, entering seminary in my 30th year, I cannot help but give thanks to our God, the gentle and Loving Lord who tends his sheep, giving them the time and development they need to open their hearts to him and follow their vocation – whether to the consecrated, married, single or ordained life. Indeed, having always held a deep passion for my faith, as a young man, I was still unprepared to follow His call for me. But thankfully, throughout my 20s, I continued to grow in discipleship, and finally, having been led by the Lord through my core studies, He gave me the concepts, philosophies, and language to follow Him into formation for the priesthood.

Entering the spring and the final months of my first year, I am blessed to have been given this call by Christ through the archdiocese. Since my entry in September, I have been given the opportunity to grow closer to our Lord with my fellow seminarians from across Western Canada. In our first year, our propaedeutic year, we take time away from contemporary technology and telecommunications, and engage in an elaborated formation regime that includes introductory instruction, prayer, and a month-long apostolic assignment outside the seminary. As I come to the end of my first year in formation, I am delighted to have received from Christ cascading consolations. Taking to formation, I have and continue to thrive at St. Joseph Seminary. God willing, I will continue to grow closer to Christ and follow Him, configuring my heart ever more fully to His.

Moving forward, I will likely use my time and space in this Seminarian Newsletter for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg to reflect more academically on theological themes, but I figured it was prudent to use my first article to introduce myself in thanksgiving to the Church, which has invited me to follow Christ into formation for His priesthood.

Come & See

MYLES CESARIO
ST. JOSEPH'S SEMINARY

The month of January is a busy month for any seminarian: the beginning of a new term, a new schedule, a return to regular seminary life following the Christmas break. Yet January 2026 for me was a unique and memorable month due to the seminary's Come and See Weekend. A Come and See Weekend is a weekend when men from across Western Canada come to the Seminary to experience our life for a weekend. They pray with us, eat with us, ask questions, hear vocational testimonies and are immersed in seminary life for a short period of time.

Seminarians across Western Canada often say that when they step into St. Joseph's Seminary for the first time it is different than at any other moment. There can be fear, excitement, awe—all good feelings. These same emotions happen for even Come and See participants.

Leading up to the Come and See, I remembered what it was like when I first entered the seminary building. I was also on a Come and See, and I remember the sheer awe at the size, the design of the Chapel, but also the Seminary itself. Part of me could hardly believe I was in a seminary, I kept asking myself, "is God calling me here?" I imagine many of our visitors thought the same thing.

The Come and See began with Vespers, Evening Prayer, in our chapel. We were more than thirty guys filling that chapel singing hymns and praying the Liturgy of the Hours. Sitting in the back, I couldn't help but notice the solemn atmosphere and the prayerful dispositions of both Seminarian and the participants. It is rare to see our Chapel full, even more rare to realize that some of the men in the chapel may be future priests.

Following prayer, I gave a tour with the Vocations committee, the team responsible for the weekend. I needed to prepare in advance for this, I had to look up the history of the Seminary—from the time it was an Oblate Scholastic in 1927 until today. I learned about the theological symbolism behind the architecture and the reasons why things were set up the way they were. I have to admit before this year I took for granted that I was a seminarian in a Seminary whose history saw the faith of Western Canada develop into what it is today. If anything, I learned just as much from preparing for that tour than those who went through it.

The next day the schedule had the participants listen to talks about Seminary life and the formation process for the Diocesan Priesthood. Although I didn't have to attend the conferences, I found them to be interesting, and a couple minutes turned into a couple hours hearing the same talk I heard when I attended the Come and See. But hearing it again for a second time struck a different chord. I had two years of experience and could see how true the talk was in my own formation. It gave me a new perspective on questions such as 'why am I here?' 'How do I discern God's plan for me?' That Saturday afternoon saw many praying in front of the Blessed Sacrament and reflecting on what this weekend meant for them, me included.

Later that evening I took the initiative and gathered the participants from the Archdiocese of Winnipeg and had an optional meeting with them. There were five young men, and I wanted to get to know them and share my joy of having them there. That meeting was the chance for me to encourage them to keep discerning wherever the Lord was calling them to be, reminding them that they were not alone and that the Lord does not abandon anyone, especially those who seek to do his will.

Sunday marked the last day of the Come and See and the most prayerful. We began the day with Mass celebrated by Archbishop Stephen Hero, Archbishop of Edmonton and former Rector of St. Joseph's Seminary. After everyone had left and my official duties were finished, I took time for prayer and reflected on the weekend. It seemed odd to think that only three years ago I was like those participants trying to discern where God was calling me. Part of me was grateful for having walked with those young men and another part of me was reflecting on what I learned about my own discernment. One key takeaway was the power of God's grace.

Seminary Life

Seminary can be a challenging and, at times, demanding place. It introduces new people, a new environment, and a range of unfamiliar experiences. The early stretch of formation invites a man to deepen his prayer, read with intention, sit in silence, and release many of the distractions he once carried easily.

Yet within that stretching, something beautiful unfolds. Those initial stages of seminary life begin shaping each man into a discerner, a disciple, and a servant—someone learning to live not only for himself, but for others.

There were so many moments that led to this Come and See Weekend, even more moments that led me to be placed on the committee running the weekend. But at the center was God's grace in my life, that this Seminary journey I am on, discerning the Diocesan priesthood, is similar in many ways to the young men who attended that Come and See Weekend. But in a personal way, my journey is one that only God could orchestrate to be my own. My time in Seminary has been a whirlwind of prayer, classes, fraternity and more prayer. But it has also been a time of growth and discernment. Seeing that Come and See Weekend, living through it, allowed me to reflect on where I come from, where I was three years ago, but also where I am going, and who is leading me there.

There are many moments that call a Seminarian to reflect on his vocation and on why he is discerning the priesthood with his particular diocese. This Come and See Weekend was one of those moments for me. A Come and See is not simply a time for a man to check out the place; it also involves him trusting in God's providence and being okay with taking steps even when it is scary. For me, it is the same. As I complete my second year in the Seminary and my first year of Theological studies I reflect on what it took for God to call me to enter to the Seminary, that I didn't always make it easy for Him, but that His plan for me was the best thing I could imagine doing.

And so, if the Lord is calling you, answer. Take concrete steps to answer, we do not discern alone, our vocation is never alone.

God be with you.

Archdiocese of Winnipeg

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