



United States  
Conference of  
Catholic Bishops

# Pilgrims on the Way of Hope: A Resource for the Jubilee of Seminarians

## Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of Hope

United States Conference  
of Catholic Bishops

## Jubilee of Seminarians: Resource Packet

June 23-24, 2025

## INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

The Holy See has designated a number of Jubilee Days throughout 2025 to recognize and celebrate different groups of people and various ministries in the Church. The Jubilee of Seminarians will be held from Monday, June 23, to Tuesday, June 24, 2025; however, these resources can be used for engaging and celebrating seminarians at any time throughout the Jubilee Year.

In the Catholic Church, seminarians are men in formation to become priests in their diocese, eparchy or religious institute or society of apostolic life. A seminarian's formation takes place in community where he receives not only intellectual formation, but also human, spiritual, and pastoral formation. Seminarians, through cooperating with God's grace, are prepared to serve the Church as priests upon ordination

through their formation in imitating Christ as the Good Shepherd (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, [Program of Priestly Formation](#), Sixth ed. U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2022, no. 14).



Baptism, where life devoted to imitating Christ first begins, serves as the foundation for the call to the priesthood. In preparation for this vocation, seminarians strengthen their Baptismal identity through their participation in the life of the Church ([Ibid.](#), no. 10). By communing with Christ in the sacraments and engaging with the intellectual tradition of the Church, seminarians begin to slowly ground themselves in the mysteries of the Trinity ([Ibid.](#), no. 24). Seminarians engage with these mysteries not in isolation, but rather in union with their brothers in seminary, religious institute or society of apostolic life and with the wider Church community as a whole (Second Vatican Council, *Decree on Priestly Training* ([Optatam Totius](#)), no. 8). By meeting Christ in prayer and in the people they meet, seminarians become another Christ: assuming Jesus' mission of serving the Father and healing his creation ([Program of Priestly Formation](#), 6th ed., no. 14).

This resource packet is for anyone who finds it useful. It can be used and/or adapted by



dioceses, eparchies, religious institutes or societies of apostolic life, parishes, schools, campuses, apostolates, movements, organizations, or individuals to plan their celebration of the Jubilee of Seminarians. It might also serve as a catalyst or inspiration for the creation and development of local or year-round resources for those active in these associations.

For seminarians who are making a Jubilee pilgrimage to Rome or to a particular Jubilee celebration in a diocese or eparchy within the United States during 2025, this packet can also serve as an aid in the preparation or experience of that trip.

Additional resources for the Jubilee of Seminarians and other celebrations can be found online at the USCCB Jubilee Year web pages: available in English at <https://www.usccb.org/committees/jubilee-2025> and available in Spanish at <https://www.usccb.org/es/committees/jubileo-2025>.

## SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

In his address to the Pontifical North American College, Pope Francis identified “three elements that . . . are essential to priestly formation: dialogue, communion and mission” ([Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Community of the Pontifical North American College](#), January 14, 2023). After first seeking Christ in prayer, sacraments, and communion with others, seminarians are called by God to serve his Church throughout their formation. In responding to this call, seminarians are “imbued with that truly Catholic spirit which will accustom them to transcend the limits of their own diocese, nation, or rite, and to help the

needs of the whole Church, prepared in spirit to preach the Gospel everywhere” (Second Vatican Council, Decree on Priestly Training (*Optatam Totius*), no. 20).

[Venerable Guido Vidal França Schäffer](#) embodied this spirit. Driven by love of God, Ven. Schäffer began a prayer group during his last year of medical school. Ven. Schäffer’s work as a General Practice physician deepened his understanding of Christ’s message to serve the poor, and he began inviting this community formed around prayer to serve with the Missionaries of Charity. Ven. Schäffer left his position at the hospital and eventually entered seminary after hearing Tobiah 4:7 recited in a homily: “Do not turn aside your gaze from the poor and the Lord shall not depart from thee.” Ven. Schäffer did not stop working with the poor after entering seminary. As the provost of Ven. Schäffer’s seminary recounts, “he had ‘an anxiety to perform as many deeds as he could for God, and at the same time, an obedience to accept ‘NOs’ to some of his ideas.” Ven. Schäffer’s earthly work with the poor ended shortly before his ordination due to a surfing accident. Ven. Schäffer died at the age of 34 in 2009, about one year before finishing his studies to become a priest.

Formation calls the Christian to recognize their weakness before God and others. Hope in eternal beatitude with God depends on embracing this weakness: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 5:1-3). In this poverty before God, you receive the grace to not only encounter the poor, but also those who are destitute in faith. Seminarians: in this Jubilee Year, ask God to strengthen your hope in a spirit of poverty, and, with God’s grace, bear this message of God’s faithfulness to the poor and marginalized.



## SUGGESTIONS FOR PILGRIM PREPARATION

One major element of the Jubilee celebration for Catholics is making pilgrimage. For some, that may involve going to Rome, where international pilgrims traditionally visit the Holy Doors of the four great basilicas (Saint Peter, Saint Paul Outside the Walls, Saint Mary Major, and Saint John Lateran). For most others, though, local Jubilee pilgrimages can be made to diocesan or eparchial cathedrals, churches, and/or religious sites.

*If headed to Rome for the Jubilee of Seminarians:*

Should you or your diocese decide to travel to Rome, in particular for the Jubilee of Seminarians (June 23-24, 2025), the following may be helpful:

- You can develop a trip on your own or go through a licensed tour operator that specializes or has experience in religious travel. The latter option may cost extra, but it can save time; additionally, those operators may have existing connections with vendors and may be able to advise on travel concerns. PLEASE NOTE: The USCCB does not endorse nor identify any licensed tour operator as the official U.S. tour operator.
- The official Jubilee events for seminarians include passage through Holy Doors and Mass with the Holy Father on Tuesday, June 24. Pilgrims and groups may also consider taking part in additional activities, either planned on their own or events hosted by other apostolates/groups.
- Prepare for the trip with liturgies, retreats, devotional and service experiences, community building, catechesis, and fundraising, as needed. Take time for prayer, especially with the Blessed Sacrament, as well as practical travel planning (packing, supplies, water bottle, hat and comfortable shoes, etc.).

- Upon the return home, consider in advance ways to share the experience with others and put into practice the missionary lessons received during the Jubilee moments in Rome.

*If coordinating a local pilgrimage within the United States:*

It is highly recommended to make pilgrimage to one's own diocesan or eparchial cathedral or other church(es) or religious site(s) designated by the bishop or eparch. Pope Francis has invited every diocese and eparchy to designate their cathedrals or a popular Catholic shrine as special places of prayer for Holy Year pilgrims, offering opportunities for reconciliation, indulgences, and other events.

- Plan for a local pilgrimage which can take place at any time of year or can be done at the same time as the events for seminarians in Rome (June 23-24, 2025). The timing, as well as the exact local destination, is at the discretion of the local organizer(s).
- Research the pilgrimage destination to ensure that your visit does not coincide with liturgical or local community events and is being done within the posted opening hours for the site. You may wish to contact someone in leadership at the location in advance, especially if you plan to bring a group.
- Before embarking on a local pilgrimage, consider taking time for prayer and community-building.
- After returning home (even if the trip was local), take time for prayer and theological reflection on the graces of God received during the pilgrimage experience. If you went as a group, continue to gather in the weeks and months following the trip to support one another and coordinate missionary actions.



## SUGGESTIONS FOR CELEBRATING SEMINARIANS LOCALLY

### *Suggestions for Parishes*

- Use the weekend liturgies on June 21-22 to recognize all seminarians: in the homily, general intercessions, with a special blessing, or by inviting them to serve in key liturgical roles. An example of a petition for the Prayer of the Faithful might include:

*For seminarians and those discerning the priesthood in this diocese and around the world, (including \_\_\_\_\_ in our own parish\*), that they may be guided by the Holy Spirit in responding to God's call.*

- Have a reception or networking activity after weekday Masses on June 23-24 for the parish's seminarians, as well as lay parishioners. During those gatherings, offer food and drink, and opportunities to meet-and-mingle. As you plan, keep in mind that the Jubilee of Bishops is June 25, and the Jubilee of Priests is June 25-27.
- Livestream or replay video of key Jubilee events (i.e., Mass with the Holy Father) taking place in Rome from June 23 to 24 at the parish (noting the time difference between Rome and your local area). You may also consider coordinating programs at the parish during the livestream viewings such as liturgies, Eucharistic adoration, confessions, catechesis, service projects, small groups, or socials.

### *Suggestions for Dioceses and Eparchies*

- Celebrate a liturgy or host a prayer service for the diocese's seminarians at the diocesan/eparchial cathedral between June 23 and 24, concurrent with the Jubilee celebrations happening in Rome.

- Hold a diocesan/eparchial-wide Jubilee walking pilgrimage for seminarians from the cathedral (or another site of your choosing) to religious sites, churches, and/or to a Catholic-led social services center or institution.
- Post the stories of the seminarians on the diocesan or eparchial website, social media channels, and communications (magazine, newspaper, newsletter, etc.) prior to and/or during the Jubilee of Seminarians in June 2025.
- Host a special diocesan/eparchial-wide dinner or reception for seminarians and their families, highlighting the charitable, devotional, or spiritual activities of each group and their members at some point during the Jubilee Year. Consider an award or recognition program for those who make key contributions to the life of the diocese/eparchy and/or society at large.
- Consider the role discerners(s) may have in these celebrations and how a gathering like this may help promote vocations or may strengthen the hearts of discerners by inviting them.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & DOCUMENTS

- [Program of Priestly Formation](#), 6th edition, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations (2022): document that is particular law in the Church in the United States and serves as a guide for seminaries and priestly vocation programs that form men for the ministerial priesthood. Available online.
- [Optatam Totius](#), Second Vatican Council (1965): decree on priestly training, outlines basic guidelines for the formation of seminarians. Available online.



- **[Institute for Priestly Formation](https://priestlyformation.org/?id=1730)** (IPF): institute that provides ongoing formation for seminarians and priests. Resources for seminarians can be found online here: <https://priestlyformation.org/?id=1730>.
- **[National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors](https://www.ncdvd.org/)** (NCDVD): the organization that provides formation and support to vocation directors. The NCDVD website can be found here: <https://www.ncdvd.org/>.
- **Diocesan Priest and #thinkingpriesthood:** website with resources where a discerner can find contact information for diocesan vocation directors to those discerning the priesthood. The website can be found here: <https://diocesanpriest.com/>.
- **[National Religious Vocation Directors](https://www.ncdvd.org/)** (NRVC): the organization that provides formation and support to religious vocation directors. The NCDVD website can be found here: <https://www.ncdvd.org/>.
- **Vision and Horizon:** media outlets promoting religious life. They can be found here: <https://vocationnetwork.org/en/> and [https://www.new.nrvc.net/horizon\\_library](https://www.new.nrvc.net/horizon_library).
- **[Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Community of the Pontifical North American College](#)**, Pope Francis (2023): Available online.
- **[Pastores Dabo Vobis](#)**, Pope John Paul II (1992): post-synodal apostolic exhortation on the formation priests in the present day. Available online.

## KEY SAINTS

*Holy Companions for Seminarians*

- **St. Joseph (1st Century A.D., feast day March 19)**, spouse of Mary and foster father of the Lord.

- **St. Charles Borromeo (1538–1584, feast day November 4)**, cardinal and archbishop remembered for his important role in the Council of Trent, and patron saint of seminarians.
- **St. John Vianney (1786 – 1859)**, priest known for his apostolic work with the poor, disaffiliated and unaffiliated. He is also known for his dedication to the sacraments, his perseverance through his academic struggles in seminary, and as the patron saint of parish priests.
- **St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897, feast day October 1)**, French Carmelite cloistered nun and mystic who prayed fervently for her seminarian spiritual brother.

## PRAYER

Prayer for Seminarians

*O Lord Jesus Christ, great High Priest, I pray that You call many worthy souls to Your holy priesthood. Enlighten the Bishop in the choice of candidates, the Spiritual Director in molding them, and the professors in instructing them. Lead the seminarians daily in Your unerring footsteps; so that they may become priests who are models of purity, possessors of wisdom and heroes of sacrifice; steeped in humility and aflame with love for God and man; apostles of Your glory and sanctifiers of souls.*

*Amen.*

*Mary, Queen of the Clergy, pray for us.*

– Diocese of Corpus Christi

(Prayer for Seminarians, taken from the Pontifical North American College, <https://www.pnac.org/support/prayers-for-seminarians/#:~:text=Lead%20the%20seminarians%20daily%20in,Amen.>)

