

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Cardinal Blase Cupich

Cardinal Blase Cupich

Archbishop of Chicago

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

I wanted to see if I had a vocation.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I was in high school, but in the summer managed a city swimming pool.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I played guitar for Masses in the seminary.

FAVORITE SCRIPTURE QUOTE:

Peace be with you.

—John 20:19

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Fr. Patrick Gorman

Fr. Patrick Gorman

Birthday: January 10

Home Parish: Immaculate Conception,
Elmhurst

Director of Chicago Seminarians

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

I believed that Jesus was calling me to follow him through the path of the priesthood.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I worked in microfinance, poverty alleviation through small loans to the poor.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I attended Game Two of the World Series for 2005 World Champion Chicago White Sox.

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. –John 15:13

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Fr. Timothy Monahan

Fr. Timothy Monahan

Birthday: November 3

Home Parish: St. John the Baptist, Arcola, IL

Vocation Director

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

I felt Jesus inviting me to become a priest, and I said yes. It's been an incredible adventure and I love it!

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I was a finance major in college and wanted to go into banking.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I was captain of my Division I fencing team at Notre Dame.

**I am the way and the truth and the life.
No one comes to the Father except
through me.** –John 14:6

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Fr. Connor Danstrom

Fr. Connor Danstrom

Birthday: April 20

Home Parish: Divine Mercy, Winnetka

Associate Vocation Director

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

I didn't know if I was called to the priesthood, but I knew God was inviting me to discern it.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I studied biochemistry at University of Illinois and fought fires for the U.S. Forest Service.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I like to write and record songs.

Yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me.

–Galatians 2:20

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Dcn. Timothy Berryhill

Dcn. Timothy Berryhill

Birthday: July 15

Home Parish: St. George, Tinley Park

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2024

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

I have a special love for the sacraments and want to provide for God's people.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I was a helicopter pilot in the military.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I have scuba-dived a sunken ship.

...he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

—Matthew 16:13

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Cristian Garcia

Cristian Garcia

Birthday: March 13

Home Parish: Our Lady of Czestochowa and
Charity, Cicero

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2024

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

I enjoy walking with others, hearing their concerns, and discussing spiritual matters. I believe this points to a happy life in the priesthood.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I was the Volunteer Coordinator at Kolbe House Jail Ministry, an agency of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I've been getting into painting my own version of famous paintings.

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Dcn. Martin Nyberg

Dcn. Martin Nyberg

Birthday: June 10

Home Parish: St. Edward, Chicago

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2024

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

As my desire for priesthood persisted and grew, I realized that I was trying to make time for the things I would “get to do” in seminary (prayer, study), and that I wouldn’t have any more clarity about my vocation until I gave seminary a try.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I taught English in Spain.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I played in the cello section of the orchestra at the Canonization Mass of St. Junipero Serra.

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Dcn. Andrew Panzer, SJC

Dcn. Andrew Panzer, SJC

Birthday: December 3

Home Parish: St. John Cantius, Chicago

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2024

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

I wanted to serve God and his people especially by offering the sacraments.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I was a part time jazz musician and studied music at a university.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I love to play squash.

Blessed is the man who is found without blemish. –Sir 31:8

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Dcn. Juan Carlos Vargas

Dcn. Juan Carlos Vargas

Birthday: December 27

Home Parish: Immaculate Conception &
Five Holy Martyrs, Chicago

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2024

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

Realizing my call was more than to serve the way I wanted to.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I was a case manager for kids in foster care.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I love serving others – currently known as the accompanying machine!

Traten a todos con amor, de la misma manera que Cristo nos amó. –Efesios 5:2

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Br. Kevin Menard, SJC

Br. Kevin Menard, SJC

Birthday: September 14

Home Parish: St. John Cantius, Chicago

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2025

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

To give my life for Christ and His Holy Church through the ministry of ordained priesthood.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

Data analytics and email marketing.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I used to rap in college.

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

—John 6:68

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Conrad Espino

Conrad Espino

Birthday: June 13

Home Parish: Our Lady of Mercy, Chicago

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2026

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

The Lord placed a clear desire for priesthood on my heart which I tried to stifle, but it became obvious that where He wanted me to go was seminary.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I entered college seminary right after high school, where I had played on the varsity lacrosse team, was part of a Filipino folk dancing troupe, acted in school plays, and was a Quigley Scholar.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I'm an only child.

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Raymond Grieshaber

Raymond Grieshaber

Birthday: August 18

Home Parish: St. Francis of Assisi,
Orland Park

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2026

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

My hope is to help others understand that Jesus holds them dear in His heart, and no matter what they do, He will always love them.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I worked as a chemical engineer.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

When I was younger I was an avid skateboarder.

Behold your Mother.

—John 19:27

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John Rahimi

John Rahimi

Birthday: December 27

Home Parish: St. Theresa, Palatine

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2026

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

I felt Christ's invitation to follow Him as a priest, and I wanted to answer Him. Being a seminarian is helping me to respond as generously as I can to God's will for my life.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I studied advertising at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and graduated in May 2019.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I have jumped out of a perfectly good airplane.

This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. –John 15:12

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James Bryant

James Bryant

Birthday: December 5

Home Parish: St. Gilbert, Grayslake

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2027

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

I want to give God the opportunity to show me His plan for my life wherever it leads, and seminary seemed like the best place to do that.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I was a full-time student at Benedictine College in Atchison, KS and graduated in 2020.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I love to travel. So far my favorite place I have visited is Kolkata, India.

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Salvador Castañeda

Salvador Castañeda

Birthday: April 3

Home Parish: Our Lady of Nazareth, Chicago

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2027

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

I wanted to be a good spiritual father so
I joined seminary!

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I worked at Krazy Kaplans and a deli where I fried
chicken for the most part. Now I'm a professional
chicken fryer.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I like to longboard and restore old tobacco pipes.

**A clean heart create for me, God; renew
within me a steadfast spirit.** –Psalm 51:12

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Anthony Davies

Anthony Davies

Birthday: December 6

Home Parish: St. Paul of the Cross, Park Ridge
Mundelein Seminary Class of 2027

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

To discern the Catholic Priesthood. I felt God call me from a young age to be his priest!

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I went to Notre Dame High School, and was on swim team and Campus Ministry, as well as working with people with special needs.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I am a triplet!

You are mine. –Isaiah 43:1

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Michael Frankiewicz

Michael Frankiewicz

Birthday: August 13

Home Parish: St. James, Arlington Heights

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2027

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

After returning to the faith in 2018, my home parish became the center of my life. The idea of priesthood came to me in prayer so decided to give serious discernment to where God was calling me in the Spirituality Year. And here I still am.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I graduated from the University of Chicago and then worked in the real estate industry.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I enjoy studying languages. My favorites are Japanese, Akkadian, and Latin.

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Luke Lato

Luke Lato

Birthday: September 30

Home Parish: Our Lady of Perpetual Help,
Glenview

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2027

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

I am accepting a call from God. So that I may grow in holiness and allow God's will to be done in my life, He called me to discern my vocation in seminary.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I attended The George Washington University in Washington DC, pursuing a career in politics.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I ran the Chicago Marathon at 18 years old in 2018.

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Hector Daniel Garcia

Hector Daniel Garcia

Birthday: September 20

Home Parish: Our Lady, the Mystical Rose,
Cicero

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2028

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

To serve God and serve the people of God.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I was a claims adjuster.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I was born in Mexico.

**Yo soy la luz del mundo; el que me sigue no
andar  en tinieblas, sino que tendr  la luz
de la vida.** –Juan 8:12

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Joshua Jones

Joshua Jones

Birthday: June 23

Home Parish: Our Lady of the Blessed
Sacrament, Elk Grove Village
Mundelein Seminary Class of 2028

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

Through participation in the InSearch program, it became clear the the next step in my discernment was to enter seminary.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I have a degree in Information Systems & Analytics from Miami University of Ohio. I worked as a consultant for an accounting firm for two years.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I have been to 48 U.S. states and 30 countries.

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Joshua Polark

Joshua Polark

Birthday: August 25

Home Parish: St. Gilbert, Grayslake

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2028

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

I want to seek, to know, and to love the God of all creation by making Christ present to his people and spreading the Gospel.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I studied electrical engineering at the University of Michigan.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I enjoy frisbee golfing in my spare time.

Late have I loved you, beauty so ancient and so new; late have I loved you. –St. Augustine

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Benjamin Anderson

Benjamin Anderson

Birthday: October 13

Home Parish: St. Julie Billiart, Tinley Park

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2029

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

People close to me suggested that one day I would make a great priest. I then started to notice that the moments of greatest joy in my life came when I was talking about Catholicism or doing some sort of service.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I was studying theology at Holy Cross College in South Bend, Indiana.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I worked as a cameraman for Notre Dame athletics.

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José C. Gonzalez

José C. Gonzalez

Birthday: May 15

Home Parish: Our Lady of Czestochowa and
Charity, Cicero

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2029

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

To grow closer to God and discern more deeply if He is calling me to the priesthood.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I was a middle school teacher at St. Leonard Catholic school in Berwyn, Illinois. I taught a variety of subjects to 5th- and 7th-graders.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I enjoy walks, biking, swimming, learning guitar and playing drums. I also know how to beatbox.

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Br. Mateusz Szymanski, SJC

Br. Mateusz Szymanski, SJC

Birthday: September 5

Home Parish: St. John Cantius, Chicago

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2029

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

To discern my vocation to the priesthood in order to serve the Church in a fuller way.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I studied Materials Science and Engineering at WUT, Poland and worked as a scientist.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I used to teach swimming at the pool.

Ite, missa est!

–Holy Mass

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Gregory Wilk

Gregory Wilk

Birthday: June 25

Home Parish: St. Clement, Chicago

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2029

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

I felt called by God reading Samuel 3b two years ago. Bringing people to Jesus and ultimately heaven is an incredibly rewarding vocation.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I worked as a mechanical engineer at S&C Electric company and was on the young adult board at St. Clement.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro and witnessed my only sunrise at the top of the mountain.

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Cody Beeber

Cody Beeber

Birthday: March 9

Home Parish: St. Edna, Arlington Heights

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2030

Propaedeutic

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

I want more people to be able to experience Jesus through the sacraments.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I graduated University of Kansas as a Master of Architecture.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I have been able to visit 19 different sports stadiums in my lifetime.

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Matthew Duff III

Matthew Duff III

Birthday: September 2

Home Parish: St. Alphonsus, Chicago

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2030

Propaedeutic

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

To return God's love in the unique way He made me to do so.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

Accounting.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I'm a good self taught cook and baker.

The Gospel of John.

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Kevin Ellis

Kevin Ellis

Birthday: September 2

Home Parish: St. Edna, Arlington Heights

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2030

Propaedeutic

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

I heard the Lord calling me into the deep to know him and his Church more intimately.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I was at Illinois State University studying Sustainable/Renewable Energy.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I have climbed and stood on top of a wind turbine.

The anointing of David. –1 Samuel 16:11–13

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Patrick Santino

Patrick Santino

Birthday: July 12

Home Parish: Christ the King, Chicago

Mundelein Seminary Class of 2030

Propaedeutic

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

To follow God's Call to discern the priesthood, deepen my prayer life, and pursue theological curiosities.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I was previously working in a financial sales role.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I did a bike trip around the whole of Lake Michigan.

He said to him, "My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours."

—1 Luke 15:31

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Derek Damasco

Derek Damasco

Birthday: May 12

Home Parish: SS. Peter and Lambert, Skokie
St. John Vianney College Seminary
College Senior

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

After a period of conversion where I was brought closer to the Lord, the priesthood began to appear in my heart, and it never left.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I was a high school student.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I was a big fan of Rubik's Cubes and other puzzles like them.

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Alexander Thiel

Alexander Thiel

Birthday: April 18

Home Parish: St. Paul the Apostle, Gurnee
St. John Vianney College Seminary
College Senior

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

Through the example of many incredible priest and seminarian role models, I came to realize that a life offered to God by following the call placed on my heart is not a life given up, but rather a life lived the most fully.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I attended Carmel Catholic High School in Mundelein.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

My favorite gift as a six-year-old was a drum set, but it became my parents' least favorite gift!

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José Antonio González

José Antonio González

Birthday: January 29

Home Parish: Immaculate Conception &
Five Holy Martyrs, Chicago

St. John Vianney College Seminary
College Junior

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

To see where God is guiding me.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I was a Cristo Rey Jesuit High School 2021 graduate and also worked for the University of Chicago's medicine business administration team through the Corporate Work Study Program.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I was a semi-pro youth U-10 soccer player.

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Brenden Lake

Brenden Lake

Birthday: November 13

Home Parish: St. Damian, Oak Forest

St. John Vianney College Seminary

College Junior

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

I formed a friendship with Jesus Christ that allowed me to listen and discern His will for my life. I attended the Quigley Scholars Program, and through prayer the Lord has called me to Seminary.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I was a content creator and also worked in the service department at an automotive dealership..

You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.

–St. Augustine

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Carlos Sepulveda

Carlos Sepulveda

Birthday: July 22

Home Parish: St. John Vianney, Northlake
St. John Vianney College Seminary
College Junior

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

God placed in my heart a deep desire to be a priest. Seminary is a place where I can love and know the Lord more deeply and know my vocation.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

I was studying accounting.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I make rosaries.

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you. –Jeremiah 1:5

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ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Daniel Keefe

Daniel Keefe

Birthday: June 17

Home Parish: St. Paul of the Cross,
Park Ridge

St. John Vianney College Seminary
College Sophomore

WHY I BECAME A SEMINARIAN:

To glorify God through serving the faithful in all aspects within the life of the Church.

WHAT I DID BEFORE SEMINARY:

Alongside high school, I have experience in general building maintenance.

INTERESTING FACT ABOUT ME:

I have sailed across Lake Michigan.

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