



Issue #2
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The Vine

Official Newsletter of St Charles' Seminary,

A Roman Catholic Seminary forming men for the Priesthood in WA.



Latest News

- The seminary community have visited St. Columba's Parish (Bayswater) and Our Lady of Grace Parish (North Beach). We joined the parish community for Mass and shared our experience of vocation discernment.
- At a recent Prize Giving Ceremony of the School of Philosophy & Theology, UNDA Fremantle, fifth year seminarian Errol received two prizes. He received the *Pastoral Liturgy Prize* – awarded to the undergraduate student with the highest mark in a course on Liturgy, Sacramental Theology or Pastoral Theology. He also received the *Anthony Imbrosciano Philosophy Research Essay Prize* – awarded to the student with the best research essay in an undergraduate Philosophy course.
- Seventh year seminarian Nicholas has begun his Pastoral training in Hospital Ministry at the St. John of God Hospital, Midland.

Come and See!

No matter where you are in your discernment journey, you are always welcome to introduce yourself to us and join us for a meal. Whether you're someone who has only begun to have thoughts about becoming a Priest, or someone who has already made the first steps towards seminary life - come and see! We would be delighted to meet you. No strings attached!



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“Our Lives with the Saints”

Part I of a series in which the seminarians reflect on the Saints who inspire them

Saint Joseph

One of my favourite religious artworks is the Dutch painter Gerard van Honthorst's *Childhood of Christ*, which I think wonderfully leads us to contemplate the mystery of the Incarnation and the role of St. Joseph in the life of Jesus. It is an image filled not only with theological detail but also with the love and tenderness that would have characterised Jesus' relationship with St Joseph. He who is the Light of the World is pictured lovingly holding a light for St Joseph. He who is nearest to the Father's heart is pictured near the humble workman with his eyes fixed on St Joseph's face. The angels in the background marvel that he through whom all things were made is in the workshop of Nazareth, working with human hands and loving with a human heart.



I think van Honthorst's painting captures well the reason I chose to write about St Joseph here. St Joseph, having no words of his ever recorded in the Scriptures, teaches us in a very special way what it means to be Christian: to surrender ourselves to God's plans with trusting fidelity, to welcome Christ into our lives, and to place ourselves entirely at the service of others. And he shows us that we can do this not begrudgingly but with tenderness and love. We too have a part in God's plan for the world and in our own journey of faith we can, like Jesus in the painting, turn to St Joseph who in his turn, will lead us to Jesus. **– Errol**

Saint Charles Borromeo



St Charles is best known as one of the great reformers of the Church. He grew up around wealth and prestige, yet he perplexed many by rejecting it, instead adopting an austere lifestyle. While he was greatly influential in Rome as Secretary of State during the Council of Trent and the implementation of its reforms, it would be his later life as the Archbishop of Milan which would endear him to the humblest of folk.

Borromeo's austere lifestyle and serious pursuit of reform in Milan elicited hope from some and disdain from others, even some clergy. However, through his preaching, governance and charity, he demonstrated a closeness and love for his people unseen in many of their other leaders, personally ministering across the large breadth of his diocese traversing treacherous terrain

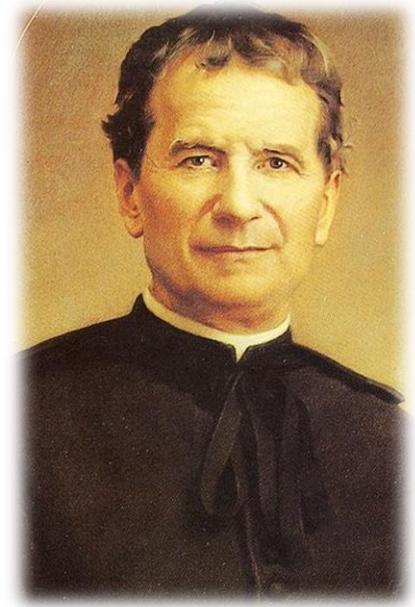
and visiting even the smallest hamlets. He died at the age of 46 due to poor health and was canonised 30 years later.

As a seminarian, his story hits close to home as his personal ideal "*humilitas*" is emblazoned on our seminary crest. For me he is first and foremost a model of humble submission to the will of God, genuine closeness to those in his care and diligent attention to one's responsibilities. One of my favourite moments in his life took place during the plague of 1575-1578 in Milan, and the famine that ensued. Contrary to many of the City's leaders who fled the city out of fear, Borromeo remained and visited the sick daily, spending whatever resources he had. Even the curtains of his episcopal residence were sold to clothe and feed the poor. This story resonates with me because it is an example of genuine leadership and true heroism – a saintly standard which I can aspire to.

- **Jason**

Saint John Bosco

Born 16 August 1815 in Becchi, Italy. Died 31 January 1888 in Turin, aged 72. John Bosco was born into a poor family that worked as farmhands. Tragedy struck the family when John was only two years old, his father died. His mother worked hard at raising him in the Catholic Faith but struggled with a lack of a father figure. When he was nine, he had one of his first dreams. These dreams would play an influential role in the way he viewed life and work. In his first dream, Bosco apparently saw a multitude of very poor boys who play and blaspheme, and a man, who "appeared, nobly attired, with a manly and imposing bearing." The man said to him: "You will have to win these friends of yours, not with blows, but with gentleness and kindness. So, begin right now to show them that sin is ugly, and virtue is beautiful." After this dream he devoted himself to entertaining other young people through games, work, and religious stories that educated them.



Throughout his life, he had unlimited confidence in Mary and a passion for rescuing and educating the forgotten children and the young offenders. He changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of poor and endangered youth. He was a priest, teacher and spiritual father to many. Bosco's story resonates with me because he was willing to totally give himself to the work of being a true evangeliser of the Gospel. He went out to the margins of society, had a great passion to teach the faith, especially to the young who were lost and despite the many who said he couldn't do it.

- **Matthew**

Ten Things to Know About Discerning A Vocation (Part 2)

An extract from an article by Fr. Christian Raab, O.S.B.

5. Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life

An authentic Christian vocation is always rooted first of all in being a disciple of Jesus Christ. To better know God's will for our lives and follow it is imperative that we first come to know Jesus Christ and begin to model our lives after his. By encountering the Word of God in scripture, we receive the light that "enlightens everyone" (John 1:9). His life inspires, motivates, and directs ours.

6. Find your place in the symphony

The church is like a symphony. It is one group playing one score but it's also full of uniqueness. There are lots of different instruments and parts. Personally, I think of that score as love, and I think of the different instruments and parts as being the different vocations in the church. Finding our vocation, then, is like finding our instrument in the symphony, our unique way of "playing" God's love in the world.

It helps in discernment, then, to get as involved with the faith community as you can. It is by taking part in the life of the church and trying out different instruments—at the parish, on mission trips, in Bible studies, in lay apostolate groups—that you will most naturally find your place in the symphony.

7. Ask for help

No one can discern a vocation alone. One's friends, ministers, family members, and fellow parishioners can be helpful sources of support and insight. These folks can often see things in us that we don't readily perceive. As one progresses a little bit along the path of discernment, a spiritual director is often necessary, especially if one is discerning priesthood or religious life.

8. Expect some "blindness"

I have yet to meet anyone whom God has struck with a lightning bolt and told exactly what to do with his or her life, nor can I say that ever happened to me. But I have learned to appreciate that "blindness" must in some sense be there. That is true because our vocation must be a gift made in faith. If we knew exactly what God wanted or what would make us most happy, there would be no risk, no cost, and, in effect, no love.

9. God writes straight with crooked lines

Scripture reminds us, though, that God writes straight with crooked lines. Whatever we have done or whoever we have been in the past, God can still use us. We have only to recall Saints Peter, Paul, and Mary Magdalene to be reminded what God can do with weak human beings!

10. Discernment is not your vocation

Perhaps the most helpful bit of wisdom I received in discernment was the nudging of my spiritual director when he said, "Discernment is not your vocation." There comes a time in the process of exploring who we are and what we want to do with our lives that we must take a risk and try something. God rewards our efforts, and God can do much more with a mistake than with inertia.

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