

# Tuesday testimonials

On the first Tuesday after All Saints Day, November 1, we launched a new series, “Tuesday Testimonials.” We asked our seminarians to write about a particular way the Lord has worked in their life and/or how He has led them to Mount St. Mary’s Seminary & School of Theology.



TUESDAY TESTIMONIAL

NOVEMBER 2, 2021

David Homoele  
I Theology  
Archdiocese of Cincinnati

The call to the priesthood has always been in the back of my mind. I do not remember a time where I did not think about what it would be like to be a priest. The priest seemed to me like the coolest person ever, because they got to serve people and lived a life dedicated entirely to God. I wanted to do that too.

I went to Saint Xavier High School and wanted to become a Jesuit after my senior year of high school. My vocation director suggested I gain more experience in the world and go to college first to discern my calling so I went to Bowling Green State University near Toledo, Ohio.

While in college, I went on a discernment retreat with the Diocese of Toledo for men discerning the priesthood. That retreat changed my whole view of my vocation. I now felt a call to the diocesan priesthood,

primarily for its variety and closeness to the people.

I continued to talk to my vocation director and still felt this new strong call to the diocesan priesthood and a lessening call to the Jesuits. Having made my decision, I felt a great sense of peace. I finished my time at Bowling Green State University and entered Mount St. Mary's Seminary & School of Theology and am currently in I Theology.

My view of the priesthood has definitely matured in my time here and I now have no illusions that my life as a priest will be filled with only elation and joy as I once may have or that everything will be easy, but will also involve hardships and mortifications. This is true for any vocation though, so this has not discouraged me from the call. I still feel that this is where God wants me to be and will continue to discern my vocation.



TUESDAY TESTIMONIAL

NOVEMBER 9, 2021

Rev. Mr. Leonardo Morales  
IV Theology  
Diocese of Tulsa

A vocation is a call from God. Discovering my vocation was possible because of prayer and the support and prayers of my family and friends. Now I know that my vocation is to be a priest. I have a great love for God and His Church. Throughout my many years in the Seminary, it has been clear that God has been a source of encouragement to me. The first couple of years were uncertain and difficult.

My journey started in Mexico, and then I came to the United States of America. During those first years in Mexico, my faith developed into a deeper relationship with God. During those years, I was comparing myself with other people, particularly those my age. Then I realized it was not about me, but about God's plan for me.

As a priest, I look forward to sharing the joys and sorrows of people's lives. I left my

home, family and friends to study for the priesthood, but I have embraced a bigger family - the people of God.

My goal is to bring God, His tenderness, and mercy to the people. By doing so, people will experience the redemptive power that only God can give. I expect to encounter many parishioners wounded and hurt not only by sin but also by the evil in the world. However, I know that there is nothing impossible for God. He is the only one capable of bringing peace into people's hearts.

And one of the ways to cure pain and suffering is by building up a strong relationship with God, our savior. He knows what we need, and He is always waiting for us to come back to Him.



TUESDAY TESTIMONIAL

NOVEMBER 16, 2021

Stephen Hughes  
III Theology  
Archdiocese of Cincinnati

My vocation begins with my time as an altar server. My brothers and I would serve together. At first I thought it was a great way to avoid sitting around in the pews, it was much more interesting being right up by the sanctuary where the action was. Serving also taught me the parts of the Mass and their importance.

I continued to serve in college and began to think more about my Faith and what part of my life it would have. College introduced me to a great community of Catholics my age who would help me answer that question. I started to attend daily Mass. Those times are when I began to appreciate the role of the priest in the community as well. I saw there was much more to it than what I saw on Sundays as a child. I began to see myself living and serving as a priest.

I attended several discernment retreats in

college but was still unsure if I had a calling to the priesthood. I decided to wait until after graduation and working to see if perhaps I would find life outside of school an affirmation of the priesthood or not.

After a year working and living on my own I continued to have the priesthood on my mind. Often it was the preeminent thought on my mind as I can home from work. It was a thought that I just couldn't shake. I resolved to contact the vocations director and begin a more active discernment and went on visits to the seminary and retreats. That's when decided to enter seminary and see if the priesthood was for me. God has continued to affirm my choice to come to seminary and learn more deeply about Him and how I can serve His Church.



TUESDAY TESTIMONIAL

NOVEMBER 23, 2021

Ryan Timossi  
III Theology  
Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend

A particular episode of how the Lord has worked in my journey as a seminarian is the following. A couple of years ago I read a biography on the life of St. Gemma Galgani, an Italian mystic and stigmatist who lived at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. I was struck by the fact that her brother, a seminarian, died before becoming a priest. He happened to die on my birthday, September 11. I thought to myself, “Maybe I can make a deal with St. Gemma, if she helps me through seminary with her intercession, I will be like the ‘brother priest’ she never had.” I have often turned to her during the difficulties of seminary life.

This past summer a seminarian had the opportunity to visit Rome. While there, he acquired three different relics, one of St. Maria Goretti, one of St. Paul of the Cross and one of St. Gemma Galgani. The priest

who gave him the relics told him if he felt inspired to give them away, he should. This seminarian having the least amount of knowledge about St. Gemma Galgani decided that was the relic he would find a new home for. He asked around the seminary community and got word of my particular devotion. The first-class relic ex corpore of St. Gemma found its new home in my humble seminarian dwelling.

We are all alive and united through Christ in a very real and beautiful way. I am grateful for the intercession of St. Gemma and of all the saints of whom I am not aware who have helped me with their prayers on my journey towards fulfilling what I believe to be the will of God.



TUESDAY TESTIMONIAL

NOVEMBER 30, 2021

Adam Lewis  
II Theology  
Archdiocese of Cincinnati

In many ways, the Lord God led me to the seminary through the community. The people of God saw my desires before I could clearly see them. They nudged me along to explore the possibility of a religious / priestly vocation.

Particularly the Lord used my dad, however, to call me to the seminary. One day at a high school basketball game I asked him what he thought about my ongoing discernment to be a priest.

His words were graced by the Holy Spirit, “The Lord isn’t looking for Jesse’s eldest son but the one who has a heart for the ways of the Lord. He is the man he desires to anoint.”

He put to rest my fears of inadequacy and I was cut to the heart, knowing that I needed to apply to the seminary... now I’m in my fourth year at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary & School of Theology.

Those fears are still part of the daily battle but I’m confident that I’m growing into the man I was created to be. A man close to the Heart of Our Lord and the pure heart of Mary.



TUESDAY TESTIMONIAL

DECEMBER 7, 2021

Peter Rusciollelli  
III Theology  
Diocese of Charlotte

When I was about nine years old, my family gave a “spiritual bouquet” to my grandfather. A spiritual bouquet is the offering of prayers and/or sacrifices to another as a gift. I committed to praying one decade of the Rosary for one month.

It took me forever (way more than a month) to complete the 30 days of promised prayers because I was not in the habit of praying on my own. I can still recall the moment I completed the last decade and I made the decision to continue praying a decade every day. I didn’t recognize it at the time, but looking back I clearly see the strength to make the decision was a very important grace that Our Lord gave me at that very moment because it began my life of personal prayer.

Since that time, I have received many other graces which have continued adding to my

daily life of prayer. This is how the Lord works in our lives; He works through normal events and gently moves us to grow closer to Him.

He presents Himself to us with little, gentle graces that we can either choose to follow or deny. He specifically desires to lead us through His Blessed Mother Mary and thus, the quickest way to follow Him is to follow her.

If we are attentive to these little graces and remain faithful and persevere in them, we may not always realize that Our Lord and Our Lady are speaking to us and guiding us, but looking back after many years, we will see how their hands have always been there guiding us gently through this life.



TUESDAY TESTIMONIAL

JANUARY 11, 2022

Kevin McGraw  
II Theology  
Diocese of Toledo

During my time as a college student at Bowling Green State University (BGSU), I said “yes” to God and became involved with St. Thomas More University Parish and Newman Center, as well as the Catholic student group on campus. Having had a profound encounter with Jesus Christ, He transformed my life, and my relationship with Christ in His Church became my top priority.

In 2013, two years after graduating from BGSU, I discerned the Lord was calling me to enter formation with the Redemptorists, a religious congregation of priests and brothers founded in 1732 by St. Alphonsus Liguori. I was drawn to the missionary zeal and spirituality of St. Alphonsus and thought that religious priesthood might be my vocation. However, in 2019, discernment led to discontinuing formation. One month later, I began lay

ministry work as an Associate Campus Minister for the Catholic Campus Ministry at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, VA. I enjoyed my two years of helping college students encounter Jesus Christ through His Church.

In January 2021, I discerned that the Lord was calling me to apply for affiliation with my home Diocese of Toledo. The idea of priestly life and ministry remained persistent and grew during my two years in Virginia. My enthusiasm for the idea of “coming home” and serving the flock of the Diocese of Toledo, where both my life and this journey began, had ever increased. I entered MTSM in August 2021 and am at peace, thanks be to God, and God willing, I look forward to serving our beloved Diocese of Toledo as a priest of Jesus Christ, for His glory and the salvation of souls!



TUESDAY TESTIMONIAL  
JANUARY 18, 2022

Luke Martin  
I Theology  
Diocese of Charlotte

Peace is the topic of my *Tuesday Testimonial*. Peace, simply put, is the joy of correctly ordering of one's life with Christ at the center of all things. Peace is so strange because it, along with happiness, is that which all men desire, but so few of us attain. This is the case because we can seek it from everything and everyone, but the One who can truly give it is the Prince of Peace.

This notion of peace is one of the reasons I entered seminary, and why I am in it today. Many good, holy priests gave me the advice that when we do the Lord's will for our life,

He sometimes bestows a special peace upon us. Even though I am not at perfect peace at every moment, I have had enough peace of heart to seek to follow the Lord's will for my life by entering seminary.

At different periods of my discernment when I have been worried about the day-to-day things—whether that be my studies or some extra seminary obligations—and I turn to the Lord, He has provided me with peace. Therefore, I give testimony that God can give us peace if we follow His will for our daily lives. May God bless you.



TUESDAY TESTIMONIAL

JANUARY 25, 2022

Daniel Jasek  
I Theology  
Archdiocese of Cincinnati

When a friend and I visited Kraków, Poland in 2018, we went to Saturday morning Mass at the Dominican basilica. As we were leaving, we learned an ordination Mass was about to begin there. Although I was initially resistant to attending another Mass, my friend and I eventually decided this was not an opportunity to pass up.

Thank God we stayed! That Mass was the most beautiful experience of Liturgy I can remember. The music and the incense were majestic. I was particularly struck by elements of the ordination rite as well as the “Sanctus” and the moment of the consecration of the Eucharist. I was overcome with emotion and my thought amidst silent tears was, “If this is what heaven is like, I am so excited for it!” It is difficult to describe, but my heart was so full, and this Mass was truly one of the happiest moments of my life.

To this day, my experience of that unexpected Mass in a foreign country and a different language is a mystery. Why did God choose to “pull back the veil” and let me see a fuller glimpse of His heavenly glory that day? Nonetheless, I felt a special connection to the men who were ordained that day, and I believe Jesus used this experience to draw me closer to entering the seminary.

In many ways, my vocation is still a mystery as well. We may not feel worthy or understand why God has entrusted us with a particular calling. Even so, the Holy Spirit calls us to enter into this mystery. All He needs is our “yes”, and He can and will work wonders through us.



TUESDAY TESTIMONIAL

FEBRUARY 1, 2022

Michael Willig  
IV Theology  
Archdiocese of Cincinnati