



## **Bishop Ricken Seminarian Collection Message 2010**

Hello, my brothers and sisters. Recently I received a phone call from Archbishop Pietro Sambi, The Apostolic Nuncio for the United States, who is the Holy Father's ambassador to this country. He greeted me by saying, in his Italian accent, "Bishop Ricken, do you know that you are the Bishop of the Diocese of Hope?" I asked why he thought I was the Bishop of the Diocese of Hope and he said, "You are the Bishop of Green Bay and green is the color of Hope – therefore you are the Bishop of the Diocese of Hope."

You know, he's right. We have much to be hopeful about in our Diocese. One great sign of hope has been the number of seminarians who have said yes to God and are working hard preparing to be ordained as priests for the people of northeastern Wisconsin. The number of seminarians continues to grow and as that number of seminarians grows so does the need to help them with their educational costs. Did you know the average cost of one year of seminary education is roughly \$35,000 per seminarian. Last year the Seminarian Collection raised over \$450,000 to benefit seminarian education. This year I hope you will help again and, if possible, increase your gift or if you have not given before, that you consider giving for the first time. The overall educational cost for the Diocese for our seminarians is almost \$700,000 a year. Anything you can do to help is so much appreciated.

I am also grateful for your prayers. I know the tremendous growth in men saying yes to the priesthood is a direct result of your prayers all these years. It's a result of God blessing us and of the hard work of our vocations director, Fr. Tom Long.

I have asked Fr. Long to become the Vicar of Ministers, which has him oversee the diocesan vocations, the diaconate and lay ecclesial ministry. Our new director of vocations will be Fr. Dan Schuster. You remember Fr. Schuster from two years ago when he was featured in the seminarian collection materials. He shared with us that the best part of being ordained a priest is really feeling he is using his God given talents and is able to bring others closer to Christ.

This year I ordained two men to the priesthood on June 5 at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral. Each of them brings a deep love of Jesus and the Church. Each one brings many talents and an eagerness to begin serving the people of our diocese.

The envelope for the seminarian collection will be in next week's bulletin.