

Seminarians of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg Newsletter

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Reflection from Deacon Oliver Omega



Oliver Omega

Theology 4

Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology

The Power of the Word

When I was in college, one of my classmates who was a former Catholic turned born-again Christian criticized Catholics, calling us superstitious and paganistic. Among his many accusations, the bible, he would say is explicit in forbidding the making of statues and images. Shamefully, I lacked knowledge to respond to many of them. He would quote the bible as if it were written in the back of his eyelids. But I asked him once, if they believed in the Eucharist and without hesitation, he said “No. It is just symbolic”. His accusations did not bother me thereafter, because I was content despite lack of knowledge. I fully believed then, that the Eucharist is Christ himself.

Firstly, Our Lord Jesus had power over nature. The world came to be, by him and through him. We recall in the gospel that, all things came into being through the Word and what has come into being was life (John 1:3). The Word commanded and the earth was created. If the Word can create the world out of nothing, he therefore also has the power to change something, to something else. It is by the power of the Word and through his words (the words of consecration) that can effect this change of bread and wine

to his Body and Blood through the Holy Spirit, precisely because He is God. The Eucharist is thus not symbolic. It is Christ himself.

Secondly, the Eucharist is the work of Christ. If the Eucharist were only symbolic, it would then simply be reduced to being the work of human hands and not divine. But how can the work of human hands effect divinity? Humanity cannot give to itself something, which it does not possess. As we read in Isaiah 1:11, what good are the multitude of sacrifices, the blood of bulls or of lambs or of goats for God? It is only Christ who is divine that can make us divine. And it is only when our action of self-offering is done in union with Christ’s self-offering in the Eucharist, that we gain merit of being made divine.

Thirdly, if it were only symbolic perhaps one may still gain merit only to the extent that one acted in observance of Christ’s command, and not in the belief that it is Christ himself. Hence, the merit of faith is significantly diminished. Also, there is no sanctifying grace received from the sacrament itself. This false understanding of the Eucharist is therefore dangerous, and it endangers the worship of the faithful to become perfunctory rather than a willful, conscious, deliberate act with reverence, awe, and devotion.

Reflection from Vince Diestro



Vince Diestro
Philosophy 2
St. Joseph Seminary

Now that my summer has ended, it is that time of the year again to return to my third year of formation at St. Joseph Seminary. As I look back this past summer, I can honestly say that I am eternally grateful to have gained such experiences and memories during my time off seminary formation.

This past summer I have been blessed to have attended several priestly ordinations of my brother seminarians from St. Joseph Seminary. There were 3 of my brothers ordained to the priesthood this summer, though I was only able to attend two. The first ordination was in Prince Albert and the second was in Winnipeg in the Archdiocese of Saint Boniface, and the third was in Edmonton. It was the first time I was able to attend an ordination and it was something I've been looking forward to attend for the longest time since none of my brothers were ordained coming off my first year of formation. On one occasion I just simply attended (without serving); the other, I served as the Mitre and Crozier. As a seminarian, I often pondered on how attending an ordination would make an impact on my own discernment to the priesthood. And to no surprise, I was not disappointed. To finally see in person, my brothers whom I have journeyed with in seminary are now lying prostrate on the ground before the altar as they themselves prepare to live out their vocation to the priesthood was quite a profound and moving experience. To witness their "Yes" on full display throughout the celebration was one experience I will never forget and will always look forward to seeing in future ordinations. It prompted me to reflect deeply on the act of denying oneself in love and the beauty that lies beneath the act of selflessness. Attending ordinations is certainly one of my highlights of the summer.

I was also fortunate to have worked for the school attached to my home parish, Our Lady of Victory School. I worked as an assistant to the janitor and was tasked to help around the school grounds, in cleaning, maintenance,

and also cutting the grass for the Church and school property. Occasionally, I would also help out Fr. Eric whenever he needed some assistance with serving mass or running errands. It was a great pleasure to have worked with the principal and several staff members who were already parishioners at Our Lady of Victory Church. It really helped with making the work environment a place of fun and joy, as well as being surrounded with a bunch of energetic kids at the school!

Toward the end of my summer, I visited my Uncle and Aunt from the US for a few weeks to help babysit and help around the house as they worked. Particularly, I was blessed to have taken care of one of their daughters who was diagnosed with Autism in her early years. Though it was hard at first to break the ice with her—since it's been a while since I last saw her—she really taught me a lot about patience and what it meant to serve others with a generous heart. I still remember her big smile that would fill the room. With that also came with spending time with her two siblings who were also a source of joy. To fill in the gaps, most of my summer was filled with spending some quality time with family and friends.

As I return to the seminary this fall, I thank everyone that has supported and contributed to my vocation and discernment. I look forward to returning to the seminary with my brothers and the formation team for another year filled with joy and memorable experiences! Even though the question of whether God is calling me to the priesthood or not has yet to be answered, what I do know is that I am where I need to be, and that is at St. Joseph Seminary to further discern this profound vocation to serve Christ.

"He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30)

Our Lady of Sorrows...

St. Joseph...

St. John Vianney...

Pray for us!

Reflection from Christopher Pugh



Christopher Pugh
Theology 3
St. Joseph Seminary

Even though we are only physically at the seminary from September until April, seminary formation does not end when we leave the building for the summers, especially in the later stages of formation. This past year I was on internship at St. John Brebeuf parish in Winnipeg, and as my time was ending there for the year, I was informed I would be doing a one-month placement in Camperville. After moving around a few plans I had already established for the summer, I found that I would be there from the middle of July to the middle of August. Ministry can often be an exercise in adaptability!

Sometimes it can be more difficult to relate the training we receive in the seminary to the life of a pastor in a parish, but with internships, both the longer and shorter ones, the formation received is directly and immediately applicable. One aspect included in this formation, and something I had never really thought of before, was the importance of rest and vacation. Before and after my one-month internship in Camperville, I had two weeks of vacation which needed to be planned carefully as I tried to fit everything I was going to do in two months, into one month.

For the first two weeks I attended two ordinations to the priesthood for two friends of mine from the seminary, one from the Archdiocese of Edmonton, and one from the Archdiocese of St. Boniface. Attending an ordination, especially as I draw closer to my potential ordination, God willing, is a very powerful experience. At the same time as being very happy to watch my friends become priests for Christ, I can see myself in that position, answering the same questions, and having the Bishop's hands laid on my head. Observ-

ing this has an immense impact on my discernment at this stage of formation. I was also delighted and honoured to be able to serve at the transitional diaconal ordination of Deacon Oliver Omega for our own Archdiocese. He is such a blessing for our Archdiocese and I look forward to attending his priestly ordination next summer!

Another necessary experience for my vacation time is to visit with family and friends, especially ones I may not have seen for many years. I had the wonderful opportunity to travel to Halifax to visit a friend I had not seen since before the pandemic began. I was also able to reconnect with many other friends during this time. It is so important to take time for rest and vacation so that we can be recharged and ready to fully commit ourselves to our ministry. This is something I have certainly learned the importance of during my pastoral internship year.

Through the course of the summer, I have learned many aspects about myself and ministry as well. For more information about my experience in Camperville, you'll be able to find an article I have written for the next edition of *On The Way*. So many great experiences!

As I return to the seminary for another year of study and formation, I bring all these experiences with me and pray with them to help form my future ministry. I look forward to this upcoming year back in the seminary but I am also very excited to return back home to our Archdiocese for my potential future ministry. May God bless and be with each and everyone of you on your journeys as well!

Prepared by the seminarians of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg

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