

October 4, 2018

Dear Friends of the Seminaries,

As a new year of formation begins at The Saint Paul Seminary and Saint John Vianney College Seminary, our seminarians, lay students, priests, faculty and staff come together to pray, study, form, teach and work to build up the Body of Christ. We are filled with gratitude to Jesus Christ that he continues to call men to the priesthood and lay students to serve his Church. It is our duty and privilege to help them discover the maturity and skills needed for service in the Church.

As we learn more about revelations of sexual abuse of minors by ordained clergy, we also come together to pray for the healing of the victims of these crimes, to discuss the steps we are taking as a seminary community to ensure a safe environment, and to support one another on the journey towards holiness. This is an important, historical moment in the Church. We all have a part in renewing our Church, and we take this role very seriously at our seminaries. The current circumstances provide us with opportunities to engage in dialogue with our family, friends and co-workers. As difficult as these topics are, we are glad that God is shining His light on the darkness in the Church and the world.

We want to assure you that our seminaries are safe and holy places where excellent formation takes place every day. Our seminarians undergo thorough admissions, formation and evaluation processes. A team of lay and ordained formators provides them with ongoing guidance and feedback throughout the formation process. They have access to a staff of psychologists who provide one more level of support for becoming healthy, well-integrated men of service. Seminarians also have access to the necessary outside resources, should they ever need them, for reporting an incident or concern. It is our belief that you can be proud of the quality of formation at The Saint Paul Seminary and Saint John Vianney College Seminary.

We want to reaffirm that the seminaries are committed to forming chaste men who hold one another accountable. It is our expectation that everyone involved in their formation live and act in ways that model the teachings of the Church. Anything contrary to this will not be tolerated. We invite you to share this message with your family and friends.

As an additional resource, please see a recent *Catholic Spirit* article entitled “Is seminary a safe place?” (Sept. 11, 2018): [saintpaulseminary.org/catholicspirit](http://saintpaulseminary.org/catholicspirit).

Finally, these are your seminaries where your future priests will be formed for ministry. You are welcome to join us for prayer and worship during the academic year to see the faith, hope, and

joy alive in our seminarians as they answer God's call in their lives. Please visit our website for more information: **[saintpaulseminary.org](http://saintpaulseminary.org)** and **[vianney.net](http://vianney.net)**.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us. Let us continue to pray and work together for a spiritual renewal of the Church. Be assured of our ongoing prayers for you.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Andrew Cozzens (Interim Rector, The Saint Paul Seminary)

Very Reverend Michael Becker (Rector, Saint John Vianney College Seminary)