



# THE VINE



*Official Newsletter of St Charles' Seminary,  
A Roman Catholic Seminary forming men for the Priesthood in WA*



## Happy Easter

*From the Editor*

Welcome to this new-look edition of The Vine. On behalf of the St. Charles Seminary Community, I would like to wish you a very blessed Easter. We are incredibly fortunate in this part of the world to have been able to partake in our Holy Week and Paschal celebrations. Unfortunately for many others far and near, this was not the case. With this in mind, Pope Francis addressed the entire world in his traditional Easter message saying, "amid the many hardships we are enduring, let us never forget that we have been healed by the wounds of Christ (cf. 1 Pet 2:24). In the light of the Risen Lord, our sufferings are now transfigured. Where there was death, now there is life. Where there was mourning, now there is consolation. In embracing the cross, Jesus bestowed meaning on our sufferings and now we pray that the benefits of that healing will spread throughout the world."

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# A New Chapter

*Introducing first year seminarian Chris*

My name is Christopher John Gracio De Freitas. I was born in 1991 in Fremantle, Australia.

My story does not differ from many of the youth of the world today who had lost their faith to the attractions and heartbreaks of the world. I say heartbreaks because what the world offers us is false promises and this would be my story, circumstances as they were. I had a broken home and so I left that home when I was only 15, and the faith of a child never matured.



Although it never matured, looking back I believe it never completely left. This made a difficult time of coming into adulthood, torn between a self-imposed morality and the understanding that God existed. Nearly ten years I was away from Holy Mother Church. I listened to the lies that surrounded her and decided that I only needed my own guidance to make it through life. For nearly ten years I chased what I thought would fulfil me, which would often change. The one thing that never changed was the desire to be a husband and a father. I always wanted this life, and I always thought God wanted that life for me as well. But if you want to hear God laugh, tell him your plans, right?

There came a point in my life around the age of 24, that I was granted a great grace, a deeper understanding of my sins, my life's choices, and their consequences. I came to miss the younger man I once was. It was perhaps here where things changed, with that single desire to no longer be a man of the world.

I am thoroughly convinced God has the greatest sense of humour. When I look back at the people that came into my life over the next few years, at precisely the time when I needed them and changed the slightest things that would help me get here today. Each encounter (and there were a few challenging ones) brought me to a deeper place of searching for God. Finally, I was ready to pursue marriage in the way God intended. More importantly I was willing to lay down my will for His.

Here in my search for marriage is where God would take my faith to a deeper level. I met an amazing woman, and through this relationship my faith was tested and deepened. It deepened to a level that I did not know was possible. A lot of the treasures of our faith became so much more real, and where perhaps I expected there to no answers, I only found more depth. That relationship would ultimately end, and for the first time I knew there was something else, where there would normally be pain there was peace.

In the deepening of my faith, I found the depth of the priesthood and the call I never heard before. Shortly after I would decide to enter into a time of discernment to find out if I was being called to the seminary.

Truly something I do not have the words for are the things that began to fall into place shortly after that.

I found the answer to all my inclinations, ways of thought, my want to serve our Lord, the purpose of truth and the gift of healing that can only be given through the truth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The night that it all clicked together, I was praying the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary. When it came to the “finding of the child Jesus in the temple” there was a discernment question attached to it: When Jesus says, “did you not know I must be in my father’s house?” What does this mean to you?

I looked at this passage and I simply concluded, he was in the temple teaching and today he is still in His Father’s house, in the tabernacle, present to us.

After this Rosary I decided to get in some Scripture before bed. As I read on, perfectly timed, as if guided, I stumble across John 12:25-27,

“*Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be.*” 🙏

Within thirty minutes, I came to dwell on our Lord’s place, and then in his words be told to come and serve him where he is.

With that I filled in the paperwork and applied for St. Charles Seminary.

### Prayer for Vocations

Almighty and eternal God,  
in your unfailing love  
you never fail to provide  
ministers for your Church.

We pray for those whom you call  
to serve the Church in Perth  
as priests and religious.  
Grant them courage,  
and inspire in them  
a generous response  
to your call.

Send forth workers into your harvest,  
so that the Gospel is preached,  
the poor are served with love,  
the suffering are comforted,  
and your people are strengthened  
by the sacraments.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

**In the next issue...**

**I will give you shepherds!**

*An interview with new Vocations Director,  
Fr. Israel Quirit*

# Past Events

*What's happened since our last issue*

## Mass with the Rite of Candidacy

**October 11, 2020**

Archbishop Timothy Costelloe celebrates Mass with the Rite of Candidacy for Nicholas G. Diedler at Sacred Heart Church, Thornlie.

Seminarian Nicholas Diedler was formally received as a candidate for Ordination, seven years since first answering the call to a priestly vocation.

Nicholas had this to share about his seminary experience: "It is a beautiful thing to be formed after the priestly Heart of Christ, in a community of men where the bond of brotherhood is a deep love of God and His Church and a desire to serve the Lord as His priests."



## Archbishop's Annual Visit

**November 6, 2020**

Archbishop Timothy Costelloe made his Annual Visitation to St Charles Seminary that concludes with the Celebration of Mass and Dinner.

In his homily he spoke about the need for priests to imitate Christ in their ministry who "came to encounter the lonely, the confused and the broken not with condemnation but with gentleness, compassion and patience."

## Opening Mass 2021

**February 19, 2021**

Archbishop Timothy Costelloe presides over the Celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist and officially opens the seminary's Annual Year.

In his homily he spoke of the "first and most basic vocation" of the priest, which "is to be faithful disciples of Jesus and then, by virtue of our call, to live that discipleship as priests. What Saint Augustine said of himself – *for you I am a Bishop and with you I am a Christian* – must certainly be applied to anyone who takes on the dignity and responsibility of ordained ministry – *for you I am a priest and with you I am a disciple*.

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# The Discerner

*A column for those discerning a vocation  
to the Catholic Priesthood*

**An Extract from:**

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE  
FRANCIS  
FOR THE 2021 WORLD DAY OF  
VOCATIONS**

***Saint Joseph: The Dream of Vocation***

God looks on the heart (cf. 1 Sam 16:7), and in Saint Joseph he recognized the heart of a father, able to give and generate life in the midst of daily routines. Vocations have this same goal: to beget and renew lives every day. The Lord desires to shape the hearts of fathers and mothers: hearts that are open, capable of great initiatives, generous in self-giving, compassionate in comforting anxieties and steadfast in strengthening hopes. The priesthood and the consecrated life greatly need these qualities nowadays, in times marked by fragility but also by the sufferings due to the pandemic, which has spawned uncertainties and fears about the future and the very meaning of life. Saint Joseph comes to meet us in his gentle way, as one of “the saints next door”. At the same time, his strong witness can guide us on the journey.



Saint Joseph suggests to us three key words for each individual's vocation. The first is dream. Everyone dreams of finding fulfilment in life. We rightly nurture great hopes, lofty aspirations that ephemeral goals – like success, money and entertainment – cannot satisfy. If we were to ask people to express in one word their life's dream, it would not be difficult to imagine the answer: “to be loved”. It is love that gives meaning to life, because it reveals life's mystery. Indeed, we only have life if we give it; we truly possess it only if we generously give it away. Saint Joseph has much to tell us in this regard, because, through the dreams that God inspired in him, he made of his life a gift.

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A second word marks the journey of Saint Joseph and that of vocation: service. The Gospels show how Joseph lived entirely for others and never for himself. The holy people of God invoke him as the most chaste spouse, based on his ability to love unreservedly. By freeing love from all possessiveness, he became open to an even more fruitful service. His loving care has spanned generations; his attentive guardianship has made him patron of the Church. As one who knew how to embody the meaning of self-giving in life, Joseph is also the patron of a happy death. His service and sacrifices were only possible, however, because they were sustained by a greater love: “Every true vocation is born of the gift of oneself, which is the fruit of mature sacrifice. The priesthood and consecrated life likewise require this kind of maturity. Whatever our vocation, whether to marriage, celibacy or virginity, our gift of self will not come to fulfilment if it stops at sacrifice; were that the case, instead of becoming a sign of the beauty and joy of love, the gift of self would risk being an expression of unhappiness, sadness and frustration” (*Patris Corde*, 7).

Together with God's call, which makes our greatest dreams come true, and our response, which is made up of generous service and attentive care, there is a third characteristic of Saint Joseph's daily life and our Christian vocation, namely fidelity. Joseph is the “righteous man” (Mt 1:19) who daily perseveres in quietly serving God and his plans.