

THE EPISTLE

OF THE SAINT PAUL SEMINARY | WINTER 2024
Annual Report Edition



CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

HOW SAINT PAUL SEMINARY ALUMNI ARE BUILDING UP THEIR PARISHES – EVEN IN WHAT MIGHT SEEM LIKE UNLIKELY PLACES

INSIDE:

- Twin Cities archbishop: Seminary alumni 'bringing Christ's love into every corner of the world' (page 1)
- Meet the priest from Northern Minnesota who ministers in Lake Country and across the ocean (page 3)
- Checking in with priest, deacon and lay alumni (page 5)
- 2023-24 annual report (page 7)



My Dear Friends in Christ,

It is with immense gratitude that I reflect on the ongoing work of The Saint Paul Seminary, where

students are not only trained to serve Christ's flock but also to give their entire hearts to Him. It has been a blessing to witness how our seminary forms future leaders who are steadfastly devoted to building God's kingdom.

Under the leadership of Fr. Joseph Taphorn, The Saint Paul Seminary has continued to uphold the vision of Saint John Paul II in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, ensuring that the Church will be blessed with shepherds who embody Christ's love and selflessness. This mission extends beyond the borders of our archdiocese, impacting the entire Upper Midwest and even the wider Church.

We are witnessing the fruits of this formation, as alumni step into roles that bring hope and vitality to our parishes, schools and ministries. These graduates include not only priests but also

deacons and lay leaders, all of whom are bringing Christ's love into every corner of the world. Their joyful, humble leadership is exactly what our Church needs in these challenging times. I am deeply grateful to you and our many generous benefactors; your support ensures that the Seminary's vital mission continues. Your commitment to The Saint Paul Seminary enables the formation of priests, deacons and lay leaders who will carry the Church forward.

Thank you for your prayers and support. Together, we are building a bright future for the Church.

With my prayers and best wishes,
Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Bernard A. Hebda
Archbishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis
Chairman of the Board

About the Epistle

As the official publication of The Saint Paul Seminary for benefactors, alumni, partner (arch)dioceses and friends, the Epistle is intended to:

1

Inspire hope and encouragement for the Church's future.

2

Inform friends of the seminary about the formation taking place here, and the impact of their support.

3

Invite readers to deepen their engagement with the seminary's work.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support for The Saint Paul Seminary. If someone you know may be interested in receiving this publication, ask them to visit saintpaulseminary.org/magazine.



Dear Friends,

While being the rector of a seminary is a challenging assignment at times, it is one in which gratitude comes easily. That is especially true this time of year, having just celebrated Thanksgiving and moving into the Advent and Christmas seasons. I am deeply thankful for the incredible generosity of those who support us in our mission of forming priests, deacons and lay leaders who are on fire with the Holy Spirit. These men and women daily live out the Gospel and serve the Body of Christ.

I am also grateful when I see the many ways our alumni faithfully live out their vocations. In these pages, you will read about a few of our alumni and the transformative impact they are having on their parishes and communities (see pages 3-6). What a gift! These are the kind of leaders that we all hope for in our local parishes and apostolates.

It is also easy to be thankful when I look back on the blessings of the previous academic year. We had 100 seminarians in formation with us, celebrated the ordinations of 17 new priests and 18 new permanent deacons, and enrolled over 100 lay students in our degree programs. And this year, when looking at these signature programs along with our ongoing clergy formation programs and our Catechetical Institute, over 1,000 seminarians, priests, deacons and lay leaders are currently in formation with us at the Saint Paul Seminary. They are eager to go out and serve in your parishes, families and communities, and they will touch innumerable souls in the course of their ministry.

And finally, it is easy to be grateful for our friends and benefactors who have generously supported us in these efforts. The enclosed financial report shows us to be an institution that is fiscally sound and responsible – thanks in large part to your ongoing generosity (see pages 7-12). We continue to financially position ourselves to take on important and much needed capital improvements, including investments in our physical infrastructure and deferred maintenance projects, so we can advance our mission of forming the next generation of joyful, Catholic leaders.

As our patron, Saint Paul, writes in second Corinthians, “I am filled with encouragement; I am overflowing with joy” (7:4). Each of these pieces of gratitude are a blessing from God, which inspire hope in the future of our Church. Many thanks to each of you for your support and prayers and for standing with us in our mission.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Reverend Joseph C. Taphorn, JCL
Rector and Vice President

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE

Fr. Scott Padrnos, a 2022 Saint Paul Seminary alumnus, helps lead souls to Christ — at home and halfway across the world

- Fr. Scott Padrnos balances his ministry in Minnesota with missionary work in Cambodia, sharing the Gospel with those who have never heard the name of Jesus.
- Locally, he nurtures young men's faith through weekly gatherings and vocational guidance, helping them discover God's calling in their lives.
- Grounded by his formation at The Saint Paul Seminary, Fr. Padrnos embraces his busy, fulfilling vocation with gratitude and a desire to lead others to Christ.

The bottom half of Fr. Scott Padrnos' black cassock has turned white, caked with concrete mix underneath the sweltering Cambodian sun.

The priest of the Diocese of Duluth grew up on his family's classic Minnesota cabin resort. He celebrates Mass in the same sanctuaries where he altar served as a child. Attending The Saint Paul Seminary — 144 miles away from the Brainerd area — was about his farthest foray away from home.

Until now.

For the past two years, Padrnos has joined Duluth native Nic Davidson, his wife Jacelyn and their five children at the family's Catholic mission in Krong Siem Reap, the second-largest city in Cambodia.

Here, Padrnos and 8-10 other Brainerd-area volunteers spend their days doing manual labor — today, it's paving a sidewalk at a nearby school — and introducing the locals to Catholicism.

For many, it's the first time they've ever heard the name "Jesus."

"It is a lot of fun going over there and watching the Lord work," Padrnos said.

But ask Padrnos, and he'll tell you he doesn't need to go to the other side of the world to see that.

Back home, he leads a weekly gathering of local high school men seeking to grow deeper in their faith. In addition to serving at St. Francis and All Saints in Brainerd, he's begun work as the Diocese of Duluth's associate director of vocations.



Fr. Scott Padrnos, center, and seminarian Josh French help locals mix concrete for a sidewalk at a Krong Siem Reap, Cambodia school.

On July 1, 2025, he'll become the diocese's first full-time director of vocations, accompanying and guiding young men from northeastern Minnesota who experience a call to the Catholic priesthood.

All this before Padrnos' third ordination anniversary this spring.

"It's busier than I ever could have imagined, but way more graceful than I ever could have imagined," Padrnos said. "Even with all the busyness, I wouldn't trade a second for anything else."

Padrnos says the human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral dimensions of seminary formation, as called for by the Church and brought to life at the seminary, made him “unbelievably prepared.”

So, he didn't blink when a high school senior asked him, on the way back from a Steubenville Catholic youth conference, to lead a weekly gathering for young, Catholic men. Today, 20-25 of them show up every Sunday for evening prayer, dinner, conversation and regular viewings of the show “Band of Brothers.”

The group, named after that 2001 TV miniseries, also meets for the occasional paintball tournament and participates in Exodus 90 — a spiritual exercise for men based on prayer, asceticism and fraternity — during both Advent and Lent.

“It's coming from a desire that they have, and they're owning it,” Padrnos said. “It's not us trying to impose something on them that we know is good for them, but it's coming from a response within them.”

It's the same type of response Padrnos observes in his vocations work. As a younger priest who experienced a reversion to Catholicism when he was 25, he relates to young men at different stages of their faith journeys.

Padrnos is one of 45 priests listed on the Diocese of Duluth's website. To take one of them out of a parish setting to become a director of vocations represents a sizable investment in fostering priestly discernment

among the next generation, Padrnos said.

“I'm grateful for Bishop Daniel Felton, because he's putting his money where his mouth is,” Padrnos said. “One of his phrases is ‘the fruit we are getting currently is good fruit. The guys going to seminary are great men. But it's also a low-hanging fruit — these are the guys that are coming to us. I wonder what will happen if we go out and start shaking the trees a little bit.’”

Literal, physical fruit — especially fresh-picked melon — is one of the things that keeps Padrnos going back to Cambodia each year, too. His February 2025 trip to the Cambodian mission will be his third.

The tropical country is roughly the size of Missouri and has a population of 17.3 million. In 2023, about one-fifth of those people earned less than the equivalent of \$2.15 per day.

Cambodia is also 98 percent Buddhist. The first Christian missionaries in the area arrived after 1900, and the communist Khmer Rouge regime essentially wiped out Christianity during the latter part of the 20th century.

That means plenty of opportunities for evangelization.

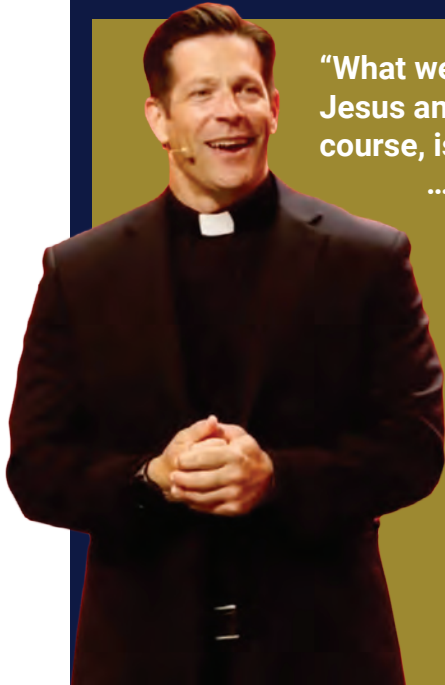
“It is a time that always fills my heart with great zeal for preaching the Gospel to people,” said Padrnos, who brought current Saint Paul Seminary seminarian Josh French along with him this year. “It's been a gift”



Fr. Scott Padrnos leads a high school mens' fraternal group, dubbed "Band of Brothers," in Brainerd, Minnesota.

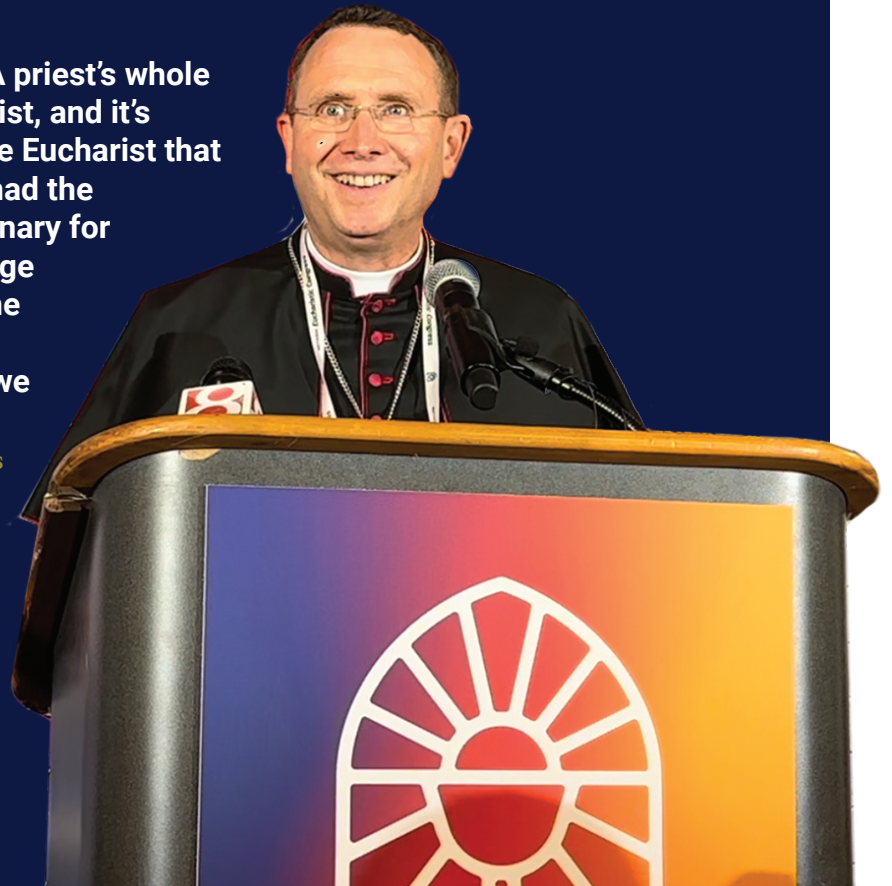
What happens next

These Saint Paul Seminary alumni are making an impact in the local, regional and national Church



“What we’re doing with media is attempting to bring the message of Jesus and the Church to people wherever they’re at. But the invitation, of course, is not just to know the stuff; the invitation is to respond to the truth. ... How do we create a compelling vision for life? How do we create a compelling proposal for the Gospel? It’s not just ‘make the Lord relevant,’ because God is always relevant. But it’s bringing that goodness, truth, the love of God to them. I’m convinced of this: that the more and more people encounter that through whatever media it is, the response is going to be ‘I need to be close to Him.’” – Fr. Mike Schmitz ('03), host of the Bible in a Year and Catechism in a Year podcasts, Ascension contributor, director of youth and young adult ministry for the Diocese of Duluth, and chaplain for the Newman Center at the University of Minnesota-Duluth

“This is really the truth of our faith: A priest’s whole life has to be centered on the Eucharist, and it’s through his daily relationship with the Eucharist that he becomes who he’s called to be. I had the privilege of teaching that in the seminary for eight years, and it was a great privilege for me to teach seminarians about the Eucharist, knowing that ... this is our spirituality. It’s at the Eucharist that we discover who we are and who we’re called to be.” – Bishop Andrew Cozzens ('97), Diocese of Crookston | chair of the National Eucharistic Congress, Saint Paul Seminary board member



“I have come to see theology as the master science – something that orients all other disciplines toward God, their final end. ... I am drawn to the works of St. John Paul II on the body, sexuality, marriage and the family. I feel this pull because I am convicted that every member of Western society feels the attack on marriage and family life today and should be prepared with a basic understanding of God’s plan in these areas. ... I want to spend my life teaching, writing and publicizing God’s beautiful plan for marriage and family.” – Catherine Patros ('24), Master of Arts in Theology graduate | doctoral student at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family.



“I feel like the Lord is building this little orchard that I’m going to go to one of these days, and I’m going to look at the fruit of what has happened ... and all I can say is just all things in glory to God. There’s so much to process and to bask in his love for me and for our family.” – Deacon Chris Vance ('23), carpenter and IT professional, St. Agnes church and school, St. Paul



“To have had the opportunity to cultivate friendships through [The Saint Paul Seminary Certificate in Catholic School Leadership] program has been truly remarkable. In addition to the community, I think there was a strong emphasis on the importance of the principal in forming Catholic school culture, and our professors did an excellent job of immersing us in the beautiful vision the Archdiocese has for Catholic education. Between the community and the shared vision, I feel like I have both the permission and the resources as a Catholic school principal to bring renewal to our school, our faculty, our students and our families.” – Ben Montedonico ('24), Certificate in Catholic School Leadership graduate | principal, Epiphany Catholic School, Coon Rapids Minnesota



ANNUAL REPORT

2023-24





A look back

100

men in priestly formation, the most in 10 years

16

dioceses and religious communities served

17

men ordained priests for four different dioceses

18

men ordained permanent deacons, the most for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis

100

lay graduate students

33

men in permanent diaconate formation

800+

registrants served by 25 Institute for Ongoing Clergy Formation events

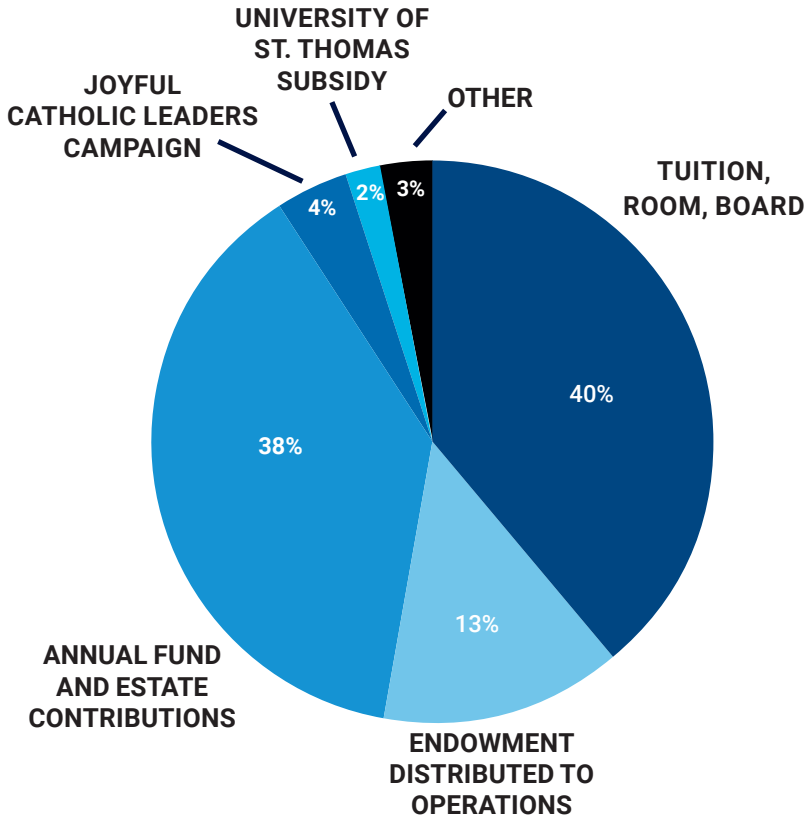
800+

Catechetical Institute students



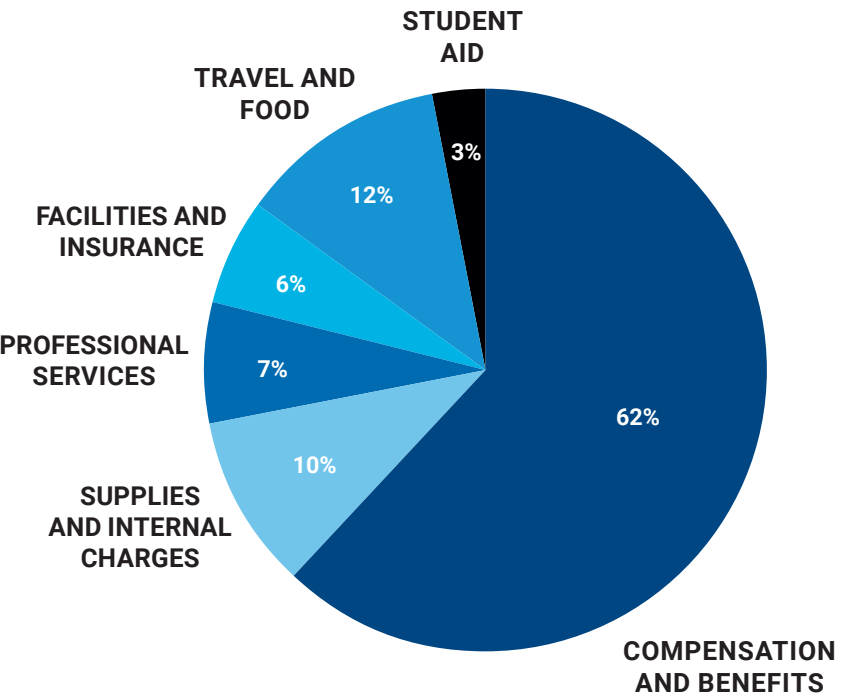
Statement of Activities

July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024



Operating Revenue

Tuition, Room, Board	\$4,247,343
Endowment Distributed to Operations	1,393,390
Annual Fund and Estate Contributions	4,086,442
Joyful Catholic Leaders Campaign	457,943
University of St. Thomas Subsidy	250,000
Other	316,229
Total	\$10,751,347



Operating Expenses

Compensation and Benefits	\$5,504,828
Supplies and Internal Charges	944,885
Professional Services	632,549
Facilities and Insurance	529,697
Travel and Food (including J-term and study abroad)	1,042,465
Student Aid	254,792
Total	\$8,909,216

Non-Operating Revenue and Expenses

Change in Net Assets – Operating	\$1,842,131
Investment Earnings	5,365,134
Endowment Distributed to Operations	(1,393,390)
Contributions for Endowment	445,858
Depreciation Expense	(450,432)

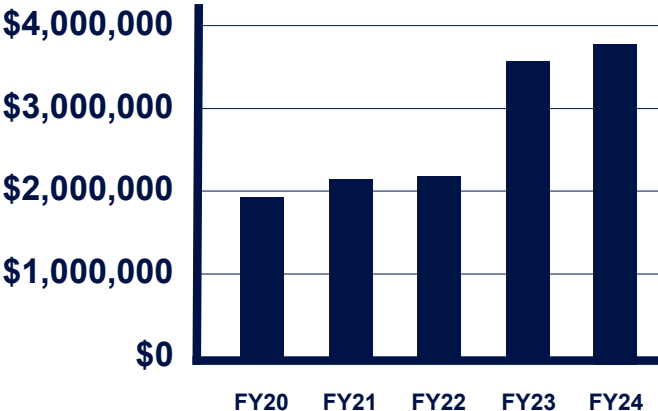
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS \$5,809,301

Giving Profile

Donors by Category

Donor Category	Number of Donors
\$500,000 – \$999,999	1
\$250,000 – \$499,999	1
\$100,000 – \$249,999	5
\$50,000 – \$99,999	6
\$25,000 – \$49,999	19
\$10,000 – \$24,999	52
\$5,000 – \$9,999	61
\$1,000 – \$4,999	372
\$500 – \$999	264
\$250 – \$499	310
\$0 – \$249	1,470
Total	2,561

Annual Fund Contributions by Year



By the numbers

\$1,077
average gift amount

313
New donors

906

donors have been giving for 5 or more consecutive years

Donors in 2023-24 were from

90%

of donors were from Minnesota

55

donors directed over \$230,000 from IRA distributions

36

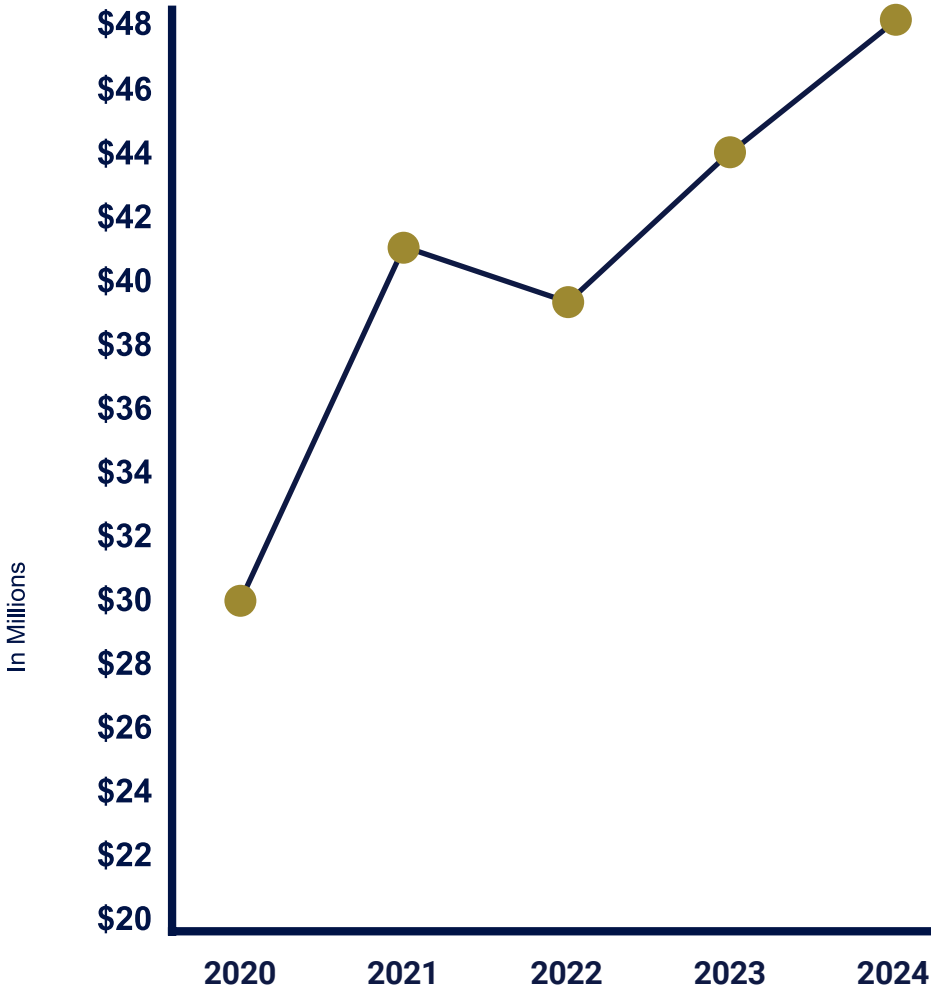
different states

66%

of donors renewed their giving

Endowment Financial Report

As of June 30



	2023	2024
Beginning Balance	\$39,279,038	\$44,446,726
Contributions	2,569,080	445,858
Income and Gains (Losses)	3,837,528	4,968,229
Distributed to Operations	(1,238,920)	(1,393,390)
Ending Balance	\$44,446,726	\$48,467,423

The Saint Paul Seminary has invested its endowment assets at the Catholic Community Foundation of Minnesota since 2009. Endowed funds of The Saint Paul Seminary are invested strategically and prudently for their intended use. The current five-year-average rate of return is 9.3%. The Board of Trustees provides regular oversight of the seminary endowment.



Endowed Funds

Agnes Bordenave Seminarian Scholarship Fund
Ann and Charles Mergens Memorial Scholarship Fund
Ann and Louis Stromberg Visiting Scholars
Endowment Fund
Anonymous Endowment Fund
Archbishop Harry J. Flynn Institute in Homiletics
Endowment Fund
Archbishop Robert Carlson Endowment Fund
Bishop Paul V. Dudley Memorial Scholarship Fund
Cyril and Matilda Rotter Scholarship Fund
Diocese of Cheyenne Scholarship Fund
Ephrem and Agnes Pouliot Family Endowment Fund
Florence M. Kueppers Endowment Fund
Fr. Charles Froehle Endowed Scholarship Fund
Fr. Robert M. Wittman Scholarship Fund
Frank J. Indihar, M.D. Endowment Fund
Galligan Endowment Fund
Hickey Scholarship Fund
I Will Give You Shepherds Endowment Fund
Ireland Library Fund
James J. Hill Trust Endowment Fund
Joan of Arc Endowment Fund
John A. & Veronica H. Commers Endowment Fund
Joseph A. Diefenbach and Anna Haasel Diefenbach
Memorial Fund
Joyful Catholic Leaders Endowment Fund
Kinsella Memorial Fund
Kubesh Endowment Fund
Lawrence and Marie Flynn Ellstrom Fund
Lee and Penny Anderson Endowment Fund
Louise J. and Henry A. Dankleman Endowment Fund
Lucille Elizabeth Bonczek Endowed Scholarship Fund

Margaret and Paul Cox Scholarship Fund
Margaret Marie Eunice Kelly Scholarship Fund
Mary, Mother of the Church Endowment Fund
McGough Family Fund
Msgr. George Keefe Memorial Fund
Msgr. Jerome D. Quinn Institute of Biblical Studies
Endowment Fund
Msgr. John J. Cullinan Scholarship Fund
Msgr. William L. Baumgaertner Endowment Fund
Msgr. William L. Baumgaertner Endowment Fund
Phase II
Muckley Endowment Fund
Nancy H. Punch Endowment Fund
Nicole Bernardi Endowment Fund
O'Neill Endowment Fund
Quentin and Sally Hietpas Scholarship Fund
Raymond F. and Lawanda C. Keller Endowment Fund
Rome Studies Program Endowment Fund
Saint Alphonsus Endowment Fund
Saint Junipero Serra Student Assistance Fund in
Memory of Michael J. Pohlen
Sandquist Endowment Fund
Siebenaler Endowment Fund
Sitzmann Scholarship Endowment Fund
Spiritual Formation Endowment Fund
Teaching Parish Endowment Fund
Tony and Jean Westerhaus Pro-Life Endowment Fund
Weber Scholarship Fund
Wendelyn and Marie Sellner Scholarship Fund
Wharton Charles Smith Guest Lectureship Fund
William P. and Louise J. Wegscheider Scholarship Fund



Statement of Financial Position

As of June 30

ASSETS	2023	2024
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$2,956,593	\$215,795
Contributions Receivable and Other	173,106	106,804
Receivable from the University of St. Thomas	—	853,287
Right of Use Asset	530,731	448,159
Investments	45,141,555	52,831,333
Property and Equipment, Net of Depreciation	5,581,623	5,266,186
Total Assets	\$54,383,608	\$59,721,564
LIABILITIES		
Payable to the University of St. Thomas and Other	\$471,633	\$82,860
Operating Lease Liabilities	530,731	448,159
Total Liabilities	\$1,002,364	\$531,019
NET ASSETS		
Without Donor Restrictions	\$14,204,405	\$16,552,682
With Donor Restrictions	39,176,839	42,637,863
Total Net Assets	\$53,381,244	\$59,190,545
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$54,383,608	\$59,721,564

The Saint Paul Seminary was audited by CliftonLarsonAllen as of as of June 30, 2024 and 2023. The financial information contained on pages 11 and 13 is derived from the audited financial statements.

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2023-2024

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Thank you for your support of The Saint Paul Seminary

To find out more about how your support makes a difference, or if you have any questions about making a gift, please contact Tizoc Rosales, director of institutional advancement, at **651-962-5056** or tizoc.rosales@stthomas.edu.

**The Saint Paul Seminary is reliant on faithful Catholics like you.
Please consider making us a part of your monthly tithe.**

Learn more at saintpaulseminary.org/give.



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