



ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW ORLEANS

Office of the Archbishop

7887 Walmsley Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70125-3496
Office: (504) 861-9521
Fax: (504) 314-9614
Email: archbishop.office@arch-no.org

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My brothers and sisters in Christ,

It certainly has been a joy to meet so many of you since my arrival here in New Orleans, whether meeting you at Mass in your parishes, schools, or other Catholic institutions I have visited, parades or Mardi Gras balls, high school or Saints football games, wherever! I have been so impressed with your love of Jesus and His Church, your families, your dedication to traditions, and your loyalty, too. Thank you for all you have done to strengthen our archdiocese over the years; you are clearly a blessing.

Being so new, it is not so pleasant to ask for your help, but we need it. Certainly, major blessings for our local Church are Notre Dame Seminary and St. Joseph's College Seminary. I believe we have the largest diocesan-run major theologate in the United States with 137 seminarians at Notre Dame and over 100 at our college seminary, too. That is outstanding! Would that they were all being formed for service to our archdiocese, but they come from all over our region. Our archdiocese is blessed with 23 seminarians at this time. While wonderful, it is also a significant expense as we pay tuition, room, and board for them all, in addition to health care expenses and other expenses, as needed. On the weekend of **March 14 and 15**, every parish in the Archdiocese will have a second collection to cover this expense. It is over a million dollars each year!

Several years ago, an endowment was started to help ensure long-term, sustainable support for our seminarians. This fund is only in its initial stages and we have a long way to go, but gratefully it is started. As you can imagine, funds are very tight this year, so we are going to use the second collection this year to pay the seminary tuition bills, and any excess collected will be put into this permanently restricted endowment. So I ask you to dig deeper than before for next weekend's second collection, if you are able, so we can collect a million dollars to support the young men who are preparing to lead, teach, sanctify, and shepherd the next generation of Catholics.

I am deeply grateful for your continued generosity in supporting the men who are answering God's call to the priesthood. Your prayers and financial support make a lasting impact—not only in their lives, but in the life of our Church for generations to come.

As this year's collection approaches, I humbly ask that you please be generous. Together, we can continue forming holy and faithful priests for the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Know of my love, prayers, and gratitude for you and please remember to pray for me.

With renewed best wishes, I remain

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend James F. Checchio, JCD, MBA
Archbishop of New Orleans