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# DIOCESE *of* GAYLORD

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July 24, 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am deeply grateful for the vital role you all play in fostering priestly vocations within your own parishes. Your daily prayers and the personal encouragement you offer to young men are truly the bedrock of this renewal. I am also grateful for the work of Fr. Ben Rexroat and the Vocations Team. They have found new ways to encounter and invite young men to consider the priesthood.

Through the **Called by Name** initiative, our Vocations Team connected with **266** new contacts. Thanks be to God, we are moving forward with multiple new seminary applicants for Fall 2026. God willing, we may break “double-digit” seminarians for the first time in many years.

As our number of seminarians increases, our cost for their formation also increases. This is a good problem to have but we need support to fund this important work of the church. It costs approximately **\$65,000** per year, per seminarian. This covers their tuition, room and board, and health insurance.

With that in mind, I am humbly asking for your participation in the upcoming **St. John Vianney Appeal for Priestly Vocations**, scheduled for the weekend of **August 1-2**. The funds raised will directly support our men in formation and ensure we can continue actively accompanying those discerning a priestly vocation here in the Diocese of Gaylord. In past years, we held an annual seminarian education collection each summer. Thanks to a generous gift from the Dorothy Caron estate, we were able to pause this collection in 2024 and 2025.

Many of you will be receiving information in the mail about this appeal, and everyone will hear more about it next weekend at Mass.

Thank you for your kind attention. May God continue to bless you and your family.

In Christ our Life!

Most Reverend Jeffrey J. Walsh  
Bishop of Gaylord