



ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

VOCATIONS 2008

- 74 men studying for the priesthood in seven seminaries
- The number of seminarians has risen steadily over the past 10 years, bucking the national trend
- Average age is 28; they range from 19 to 62
- Diverse backgrounds, from recent high school graduates to a retired World Bank executive
- Internationally, the number of seminarians and priests is increasing slightly

The number of seminarians in the traditional formation program for the Archdiocese of Washington has nearly doubled in the last 10 years. Msgr. Robert J. Panke, Director of Priest Vocations and Formation, attributes this to expanding the programs and vocations events that reach out to men considering the priesthood, such as Project Andrew dinners, retreats and discernment groups. “Our archbishops have made vocations a priority and there is a lot of support among archdiocesan priests to connect with the young men in their parishes and the Catholic community through praying for vocations,” Msgr. Panke said.

In addition to the traditional seminary program, the Archdiocese of Washington opened a seminary, Redemptoris Mater, in 2001, which prepares men to be diocesan missionary priests. These men come from around the world, speak multiple languages and, once ordained, will serve parishes in the local community and may serve as missionaries overseas.

Who are our Future Priests?

- They come from the U.S., Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Italy, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Puerto Rico and Spain.
- Three of the men in the traditional program are converts to the Catholic Church.
- Before entering the seminary, some were accountants, engineers, editors, architects, teachers, military personnel, magicians and farmers.

How We’ve Grown

Archdiocese of Washington Seminarians, 1998-2008

	Traditional		Diocesan Missionary		Total
	College	Theologates/ Pre-Theology	College	Theologates/ Pre-Theology	
1998-99	3	25	0	0	28
1999-2000	2	35	0	0	37
2000-01	4	35	0	0	39
2001-02	2	36	0	6	44
2002-03	5	39	0	10	54
2003-04	7	39	5	11	62
2004-05	9	37	2	15	63
2005-06	8	45	7	13	73
2006-07	5	37	9	15	66
2007-08*	3	40	13	18	74

* As of April 2008. All prior years are start-of-year figures.

The National Picture

In contrast to the Archdiocese of Washington, fewer men have been studying for the priesthood nationwide. There were 70 fewer seminarians across the country last year compared to 1998.

Seminarians in the United States

Year	Theologates/ Pre-Theology
1998-99	3,344
2006-07	3,274

Source: Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, Georgetown University

Around the World

- The number of priests rose by 0.21 percent and the number of seminarians increased by 0.9 percent in 2006.
- This is good news, and suggests a positive trend for the priesthood. Yet, the need for new priests remains as the world's Catholic population continues to increase at a faster rate than the number of priests and seminarians.
- According to the Vatican, the global Catholic population increased in 2006 by 1.4 percent, from 1.115 billion to 1.131 billion.
- There were 115,480 seminarians in the world at the end of 2006. Of those, 37,150 were in the Americas.

Profiles of our Seminarians



Juan Esposito, 34, is a seminarian at Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and will be ordained a priest for the archdiocese in June 2008. He is from San Luis, Argentina, where he earned a law degree. Juan began his seminary training in Argentina but after meeting some American priests on a visit to New York, he felt called to serve the growing Hispanic population in the United States. After four years here, "I feel very much at home," he said. He will participate in the papal Mass as a deacon.



Harry Stokes, 33, is a seminarian at Theological College in Washington, D.C. He will be ordained a priest for the archdiocese in 2010. Originally from Cape May, New Jersey, he has a bachelor's degree in English literature and public relations from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio and worked on Capitol Hill as a legislative assistant. He was a high school and Super League rugby player. "I'm looking forward to being in a parish and getting to know the people," he said.



Mark Ivany, 30, is a seminarian at Immaculate Conception Seminary in South Orange, New Jersey. His father is a retired Army General and Mark hopes to someday become an Army Chaplain. He will be ordained a priest for the archdiocese in June 2008. He hails from Washington, D.C. and earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Merrimack College in North Andover, Massachusetts, where he played lacrosse. Before joining the seminary, he worked as a legislative correspondent and a personal assistant in the U.S. Senate. He will participate in the papal Mass as a deacon.