

## Fr. Tom's Desk

I would like to take this opportunity to explain more about a special collection envelope that you find in the packets mailed to your homes. It is the blue envelope labeled "Seminarian Burse" the endowment fund for the education of our seminarians.

In 1995 the Diocese of Crookston reached out to the parishes in a "mini-capital campaign" to establish a fund through the Catholic Community Foundation (investments) that would help offset the tremendous tuition costs of our seminarians. To date there is approximately \$2.3 million invested in this Burse, but the interest generated (income) is not enough to cover all the expenses of our seminarians. It is estimated that it will take \$4.5 million to produce sufficient income to meet goals. The diocese needs to also pay for these expenses from its annual operating budget and from the Diocesan Annual Appeal (DAA). This is financial strain on the budget. A renewed goal is to once again solicit donations from the parishes and individuals to endow the Burse to provide more funds for the education of our seminarians.

In June 1996 St. Peter's opened a parish Burse in the amount of \$1000. Twenty-two years later the parish community has not added any money to our account. There were several parish members that established an individual Burse.

St. Mary's does not have a Burse. But one will be established!

What does it cost to educate and prepare a man for priesthood? Well first of all, a seminary is a specialized graduate school. There is the cost of tuition & text books, room & board and other costs directly related to their program of studies. In addition to these educational expenses the diocese provides health insurance and a modest allowance so the seminarian can maintain a vehicle and travel to visit family on school breaks. There are occasions when the diocese makes a low interest loan to a seminarian. When all is said and done, nearly \$200,000+ is expended to get just one man to ordination. That's quite an investment in the spiritual lives of our parishes.

That's where these special envelopes come in. By pooling your designated contributions together, we are able to provide financial support to these men who are studying to become our future pastors. What a great gift your support is to them in their 4-5 years of seminary where they can pursue their studies without having to worry about finances.

I encourage you to use these special envelopes. Choose how often you want to make a contribution to the parish Burse. Any size contribution you are able to make benefits our diocese and helps prepare for our future. Your contribution becomes part of the principle in this fund and as it increases, the more interest can be generated to help educate our seminarians. And of course you may also choose to create your own individual Burse.

If you have any questions about this please don't hesitate to ask. Please pray for vocations to the priesthood for our diocese.

