



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL REGIONAL SEMINARY

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OPENING OF THE CONVIVIUM ACADEMICUM

24 August 2015

It is with great joy that we officially inaugurate this new academic year! As returning faculty and students, we welcome our new seminarians, diaconal candidates, and non-resident students who join us for the first time. We welcome in a particular way our new faculty who make their Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity in our presence tonight: Fr. Arthur Proulx (who will be our new dean of spiritual formation), Fr. Steven Olds, Fr. Daniel Melaba, Fr. Nicholas Cachia, and Mrs. Shirley Luttio. All of you are a gift to us and we thank you for your “yes” to serve the Church in the ministry of formation. To Dr. Joyce Martinez, we thank you for sharing with us tonight the vision of our bishops regarding the importance of being a bilingual and multicultural seminary. The pastoral language that each of us is called to embrace is not an add-on to our formation program, but an integral part of what it means to minister in the United States today.

This annual event and the very word Convivium remind us that we are to pull up to the table and feast on the rich theological tradition that is ours. Study is both a privilege and a responsibility that each of us freely undertake. It is a privilege because it is Jesus who has called us to this banquet of love and learning. *He* is the convoker of the Convivium Academicum! Likewise it is a responsibility, as *He* reminds us: “to whom much is given, much is expected” (Lk. 12:48). We receive from the table of plenty so that we can in turn feed those we are called to serve. This means that we as professors and students can never take this privilege or responsibility for granted, but rather live lives of profound gratitude and service to our brothers and sisters who support us on this journey.

I would like to highlight a scriptural theme that I invite each of us to reflect upon this year. At ordinations this summer the reading of Hebrews chapter five stood out: “No one takes this honor upon himself but only when called by God” (Heb. 5:4). As you discern your vocation and open yourselves to formation here are St. Vincent de Paul, the author of Hebrews reminds us that we are not here to discern OUR will, but the will of God! In particular, no one should dare to take on the office of ordained ministry in the Church without having that call tested through discernment, our own and that of the Church. We are not here to do our own will, but the will of the one who sent us! We come and unite our hearts with Christ as we say, “Father not my will, but yours be done” (Lk. 22:42). With hearts filled with humility and gratitude we recognize as both faculty and student alike, that it was not we who chose Christ, but He who chose us and has appointed us to go and bear fruit that will remain (cf. Jn. 15:16). “No one takes this honor upon himself but only when called by God” (Heb. 5:4). Brothers and sisters, may tonight’s Convivium Academicum be a recommitment for each of us to *excellence* in our teaching and as students who desire to grow in relationship with our Triune God and respond whole heartedly to the invitation set before us at this Feast!