LETTER FROM THE RECTOR,

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

How quickly another scholastic year has been completed for Mater Dei Seminary! This makes 19 years since our seminary was transferred from Spokane to Omaha; yet, it seems only yesterday. During this span of time, we have, by the grace of God, experienced tremendous blessings in all areas—new priests, new Mass centers, and new churches.

For our laity here at Mary Immaculate Church, they have had the opportunity to witness young seminarians arrive and after six years of formation, to offer Holy Mass and to hear Confessions. And as the seminarians assist the priests for Baptisms, weddings, and funerals, they develop a very close relationship with the members of our parish.

Besides the Ordination of Rev. Mr. Alexander Kryssov to the diaconate, which was highlighted in our previous newsletter, Adam Ledwon (Poland) and Brendan Legg (New Zealand) received First Clerical Tonsure and were made clerics on May 3rd. On this occasion, Fr. Benedict Hughes flew in with one seminarian from St. Joseph Minor Seminary to assist at the ceremony.

As for our summer, our priests will make their annual retreat during the week of the feast of Corpus Christi. It is our long-standing custom to conclude our spiritual exercises with a Solemn Pontifical Mass and the procession of the Blessed Sacrament with the priests in assistance.

On July 2nd, the feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Caleb Short will receive the religious habit and begin his novitiate year in the Congregation of Mary Immaculate Queen. At that time he will be given a new religious name to signify his new life as a religious.

The date and the location for our next priestly ordinations have been set for October 7th, the feast of the Most Holy Rosary at Mt. St. Michael in Spokane, Washington. At that time Rev. Frater M. Bernard, CMRI, and Rev. Mr. Alexander Kryssov will be ordained to the holy priesthood; Frater Bernard will celebrate his first Solemn Mass on October 11th, the feast of the Divine Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Rev. Mr. Kryssov will celebrate his on October 13th, the anniversary of the Apparition of Our Lady of Fatima. How appropriate it will be for our first Russian seminarian to offer his Mass on such an occasion, as Our Lady made a special reference about Russia during her apparitions.

The last bit of news is the new address of Fr. Julian Gilchrist in New Zealand. Anyone wishing to contact him can send letters to the following address: 104 Anzac Road, Whangarei, New Zealand. His email address is: three_inone@hotmail.com. I am sure he would welcome news from his friends in the U.S.

One of the temporal concerns that we share here at the seminary is the rising cost of fuel. With our extensive Mass circuits throughout the Midwest and our main means of travel being the car, traveling continues to be more and more of an economic strain to provide the Mass and Sacraments. To relieve this, our priests will stay longer at these Mass centers and return less frequently to the seminary during the summer months. In late August and early September as we begin a new seminary year and school year, it will be necessary for our priests to return to Omaha to teach classes Monday to Friday. Hopefully, the gasoline prices will settle down. If not, this will definitely impact our missionary efforts.

Nevertheless, we leave this in the hands of God and have great confidence in His Divine Providence. Our Lord has told us “to seek first the kingdom of God” and all else will be provided. In all of our spiritual and temporal needs throughout the years, He has always taken care of us.

As we head into the summer months, we are reminded of Our Lady’s warning at Fatima about certain styles and fashions which would greatly offend Her Divine Son and that more souls go to hell for sins of the flesh than for any other reason. With the warmer weather ahead, we must all be on our spiritual guard to dress modestly and to avoid unnecessary occasions of sin.

Thank you again for your prayers and support of the seminary without which we would not be able to adequately operate!

With my prayers and blessing,

Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI
Clerical Tonsure

“May the Lord clothe thee with the new man . . .”

The Cutting of the Hair in the Form of the Cross

“Let us pray, dearly beloved brethren, to the Lord Jesus Christ for these His servants . . .”

Adam and Brendan Await the Call

“May the Lord clothe thee with the new man . . .”
BY WHOM INSTITUTED AND
BY WHOM IT CAN BE CONFERRED.

It is the persuasion of the Church, says the Roman Catechism, that the origin of clerical tonsure reaches back to apostolic times. St. Jerome and St. Augustine make mention of it as a general usage, and St. Gregory of Tours, who attests to its universality in many of his writings, attributes its institution to St. Peter himself: “Caput de super tonderi instituit.” A considerable number of the early doctors, St. Isidore of Seville, the venerable Bede, and all the ecclesiastical writers of the Middle Ages are of the same opinion. Thomassin, who thinks differently, still acknowledges that the rite of Tonsure was a universal practice at the time of St. Augustine, and moreover, confesses that he does not know at just what period this ceremony did originate.

As regards the power of conferring Tonsure, that belongs properly to those who have received from Our Lord, together with the plenitude of the priesthood and the authority to communicate it, the charge to rule the Church of God and to govern its ministers.

IS TONSURE AN ORDER?

Externally the ordination to Tonsure bears much resemblance to those which follow, but as regards the effect which it produces, it differs essentially. For, whereas the other ordinations confer Orders, that is to say, certain supernatural powers which have for their object the worship of God and the sanctification of souls, and which are necessary for the authoritative exercise of ecclesiastical functions, Tonsure has no other effect than to withdraw the recipient from the ranks of the simple faithful and to incorporate him into the clergy, thereby consecrating him in a more perfect manner to the service of God and the Church. Consequently, of itself it confers no authority nor any power; it merely places the recipient in that state in which he must be to receive Orders. It engages him in the preparation, and aids him in the acquisition of those qualities and dispositions which Orders require. It is as the Catechism of the Council of Trent teaches when it says that Tonsure is the preparation for Holy Orders, even as the novitiate prepares for the religious profession, exorcisms for baptism, and betrothal for the sacrament of Matrimony.

IS IT THEN A SIMPLE FORMALITY, A PURELY EXTERNAL CEREMONY, AND OF INDIFFERENT WORTH AS REGARDS THE WORK OF SANCTIFICATION?

Although it has not the efficacy of a sacrament, the ordination of Tonsure is no mere formality, without efficacy, or without value to the soul. It is a holy ceremony and acts upon the soul of the ordained in divers ways.

1. By way of monition. What instruction could be more practical for those to be ordained, or what more appealing exhortation could be made them to lead a pure and fervent life? What subject for reflection could be more enduring? It is not for a mere moment that the appearance of the tonsured is changed, but for life? Nor is it merely a change of costum that takes place, but of the person himself, and in a manner most impressive; “Clamat vestis, clamat professio sanctitatem.”

2. By way of supplication—prayer. The prayers which are offered for the sanctification of the Tonsured are said at the foot of the altar by the representative of the High Priest of the New Law in the name of the entire Church, and petition for the most precious of graces; v.g., purity of intention, love of God, zeal for the interests of Our Lord, fervor, and finally a complete renewal of heart together with an unwavering constancy in the practice of virtue.

3. As an initiation into the clerical life. This ordination, consecrating the Tonsured in a special manner to the service of God and imposing upon him special obligations, warrants his expecting from Heaven light and grace proportionate to the dignity received and the duties imposed, since the wisdom, goodness, and justice of God require that He accord to His servants such help as they need and as they are disposed to profit by it.

Therefore, one cannot esteem the ordination to Tonsure too highly, nor prepare oneself with too much care for receiving it worthily.
**How Soon is “Quam Primum”?**

**Question:** According to canon 770, infants of Catholics should be baptized as soon as possible. How is this phrase “as soon as possible” (quam primum) to be interpreted in definite terms of time?

**Answer:** Theologians differ widely in their attempt to state in definite terms of time just how soon after birth the child of Catholic parents must be baptized in order to fulfill the prescription of Canon 770, which commands that the sacrament be conferred quam primum. Some have believed that a delay of more than three days would be a transgression of this law; others have favored the opinion that no matter how great the delay the parents are not guilty of grave sin unless the child is in danger of death or there is a particular diocesan ruling on the period of time within which the sacrament must be conferred. I believe that most theologians nowadays would regard the former view too strict and the latter too lenient. Since the Code requires pastors and preachers to admonish the faithful frequently of their grave obligation to have their children baptized as soon as possible, and a definite statement is surely desirable, I believe that a priest can reasonably state that three weeks is the longest period to which the baptism can be deferred without some (at least venial) sin, and that a delay of an additional week (apart from some very good reason) would render the parents guilty of grave sin. Of course, if the child is in danger of death, the sacrament must be conferred at once, and if the local Ordinary has made a ruling on the matter it must be obeyed. It should be noted that in a recent decision the Holy Office emphasized the prescription of the Code pertinent to this point, and complained that many Catholics are unnecessarily deferring the baptism of their children beyond a reasonable time.

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**The Confession of Sins Committed Before Baptism**

**Question:** If an adult who has never been baptized is about to receive this sacrament, is any confession of previous sins required?

**Answer:** Sins committed before Baptism are not subject to the Church’s jurisdictional power of the keys, exercised in the Sacrament of Penance. Consequently, they cannot constitute sufficient matter for sacramental confession and absolution. One who was never previously baptized is not to be obliged, or even permitted, to make a confession of previous sins as a sacramental act before receiving the sacrament of regeneration. Of course, if the convert wishes to confess some previous transgressions, especially those that have been habitual, in order to receive advice and guidance from the priest, he may do so. But he should be definitely informed that Baptism, worthily received — that is, with faith and contrition (at least imperfect) — takes away all sins and the entire debt of punishment due to them.