

Questions/Answers regarding discontinuation of seminary program at Cardinal Muench Seminary

What number of seminarians would be required to bring the cost of education at Cardinal Muench Seminary to a reasonable level?

Somewhere between 30 and 40 college-level seminarians. This would need to be the number sustained over several years' time. A one or two-year spike to this level would not make it financially feasible to reinstate the college-level seminary program at CMS.

Has there ever been that many seminarians at CMS?

Cardinal Muench Seminary has gone through many transitions over the years, beginning as a high school and college-level seminary. In those days, enrollment was high and costs of education were much lower. The high school program ended in 2001 due to declining enrollment. Since 1988, the number of seminarians has risen above 20 only twice. (A graph indicating enrollment is available on the CMS Web site, under History. The Web site is: www.cardinalmuench.org). More than 900 men have studied at CMS over the years and more than 100 have been ordained priests. .

How many seminarians currently attend CMS?

Currently, 10 men attend CMS and three will graduate in May. These seminarians are from the dioceses of Fargo, Bismarck and Sioux Falls. So far, seven men are registered to attend next year, but that number may change. The Diocese of Fargo currently has 10 men studying at the major seminary level at three institutions: The Pontifical North American College in Rome, Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver. Those in major seminary are in their final years of formation and discernment for the priesthood.

Are you considering closing or selling the seminary building in addition to discontinuing the seminary program?

No, we are not currently considering closing or selling the seminary properties. We feel the facility could be put to good use by a number of diocesan and parish programs. The review will help us identify those uses.

What possible uses do you foresee for the seminary?

Currently the seminary is used for several activities and events outside of typical seminary use. Marriage preparation weekends are held there as are classes for those studying for the permanent diaconate, retreats and other events. The review we are beginning will help us determine how to best utilize the facilities.

Did the seminary's location on the Red River influence this decision?

Flooding is certainly a concern in the metro area. The seminary is currently protected by an earthen levy constructed for the 2009 flood which continues to protect the seminary and much of northeast Fargo. So, no, the potential for flooding was not a primary consideration as this decision was made. The primary consideration was the number of seminarians and potential seminarians together with the cost of education.