

# Holy Thursday collection is ‘holy investment’ in diocese

written by Special to Arkansas Catholic |



Msgr. Scott Friend

Over the past seven years the Diocese of Little Rock has been able to raise an additional \$2.4 million for seminarian education through a new special collection.

The first Holy Thursday collection was taken up in 2009 across the state. All money was directed to be used for immediate seminarian expenses.

It costs an estimated \$36,000 a year to educate one seminarian.

Msgr. Scott Friend, vicar general and vocations director, said in a letter to be read at all Masses before the March 29 Mass that the diocese has been able to raise \$2,415,722.99 and has ordained 25 priests since the collection started.

“I am pleased to share with you the good news of your holy investment in faith,” he wrote. “This past year the Diocese of Little Rock ordained six men to the priesthood. They faithfully and enthusiastically serve your needs all across our diocese. I am proud to say, and they would confirm, that the fruit of their vocations are a result of your prayers and sacrifices.”

Msgr. Friend said the “holy investment of faith” will continue to pay big dividends in May and June when Bishop Anthony B. Taylor will ordain eight new priests, the largest number the diocese has ordained in one year since 1955.

Msgr. Friend added, “By 2020, we could have 18 more priests, counting those ordained this past year, giving us the possibility of having over 70 active diocesan priests.”

While donations to the Msgr. O’Connell Diocesan Seminarian Fund are invested and only the earnings are spent on tuition, room and board, the Holy Thursday collection can be used for immediate expenses.

“I invite you once again this year to open your hearts and help support these young men who will someday be your priests,” he wrote in his letter. “The education cost for each of the 29 diocesan seminarians is \$36,000 per year, which is equivalent to a total cost of \$1,044,000. We need your help to be able to prepare our seminarians for the priesthood. Every dollar is

important. Every gift is an expression of faith.”

Donations for seminarian education can be made during any Holy Week Mass or mailed directly to the Diocese of Little Rock, Finance Office, P.O. Box 7239, Little Rock, AR 72217.