

Call out: The priesthood is essential to our Catholic faith and growing community.

Headline: *Encountering Christ* supports seminarians and vocations

With great joy and thanksgiving, Bishop Joe Vásquez ordained three men to the priesthood for the Diocese of Austin at St. Vincent de Paul Church on June 23.

Energized and well-formed priests — like the newly ordained Fathers Henry Cuellar, Andrew Dinh and Paul-Michael Piega — are crucial to the ministry and operations of all parishes and offices in the diocese, which is why “Supporting Our Clergy” is a key element of *Encountering Christ*.

Encountering Christ will direct \$5 million toward the seminary endowment to encourage vocations, especially among the Spanish-speaking population; to offset the cost of education and formation and reduce the financial effect on seminarians; and to provide additional support for the increasing number of men who enter the seminary with student loan debt.

Currently, 28 diocesan seminarians are discerning their vocation while preparing to serve as priests. Seminarian education is built on three essential pillars: intellectual, spiritual and human formation. Supporting seminarians across all pillars of their formation allows them to fully discern their call and explore their vocation.

Our seminaries take great care in providing opportunities that focus on seminarians’ personal strengths so they become the best pastors possible. This is achieved through immersion and excursion experiences in communities within and outside of our diocese, as well as support in coursework that may fall outside the seminary curriculum.