



## Forward! With hope!

The theme "Forward! With Hope!" expresses what I'm experiencing right now, as I enter my final year of theological studies. In fact, this theme rekindles in me the memory of how my desire to embrace the path of the priesthood came about. But it also brings to life the memory of how rich that path has been, and how life-giving it continues to be. And so, I live this theme in the way the apostle Paul says, "...I know in whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is powerful enough to safeguard...the deposit of faith he has entrusted to me." (2 Tim 1:12).

As each day that passes brings me closer and closer to the moment of my ordination, I want to hope that my vision of the identity of the Catholic priest will become more and more mature. As Pope Francis says, "It is imperative to remember that the People of God hope to have shepherds according to the will of Jesus...shepherds full of compassion and in love with the care of the sheep. Men of courage, ready to approach those who suffer and lend a hand." This is also my hope. I hope to carry this charge and call high as my ordination approaches.

My pastoral experience at St. Emile Parish was one of the great periods of growth and maturation of my vocation. It was a rich and invigorating experience that fully developed my appreciation and admiration for the priestly life. This was because of the welcoming and fulfilling environment, thanks to my pastor/supervisor, Father Gerry Sembrano, but also to the community of parishioners. Their support and commitment to spending this time with me was magnificent. They supported me with their prayers, but also by entrusting me to take care of certain parish activities such as the formation of altar servers, confirmands, and adults through RCIA.

The Good Shepherd Campaign plays an important role in the process of my formation. This support allows me to spend my time at the seminary without worrying about providing for my student life. In fact, the diocese covers my academic expenses, my accommodation at the seminary and many other related needs and demands. This financial and material support is proof



of the archbishop's deep desire to promote vocations, but also to provide for the continuity of priestly ministry throughout the archdiocese of St. Boniface.

There are many who inspire me every day to persevere and move forward. Among those who have supported and certainly continue to support my vocation are my family. I always remember my mother's daily prayer that one of her five boys would become a priest. Her support contributes to my zest for living and encourages me more and more to contemplate how worthwhile the idea of becoming a priest really is. I'm also encouraged by my brothers and sisters, who always express to me their appreciation and hope of having a priest in their family. I also think of all the faithful who encourage me, here and elsewhere. These people are living proof for me of the simple truth that I'm becoming a priest not for myself, nor for my family, but above all for this great family of the People of God to which I belong and to which I commit myself to be a humble servant.

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