

15 January 2021

Office of the Rector



The Government of Ontario, announced on 12 January 2021, a lock-down and stay-at-home order effective 14 January 2021 to respond to the growing COVID-19 health emergency. I am writing to you to inform that residence at St. Peter's Seminary for our seminarians will not be made available until conditions allow. This decision was not taken lightly. I consulted with the resident priests, the seminary formation team, Bishop Fabbro and Bishop Dabrowski, and the Middlesex-London Health Unit.

It became clear that the residential life requirements placed upon us would not allow for a healthy formation environment. Out-of-province seminarians would be required to self-isolate for 14 days. Cohorts could be no more than five persons, and would be required to be isolated from each other. Lounges and social spaces would be limited to maximum five persons and liturgies to ten. Strict face coverings and physical distancing would need to be in place. Meals would require two or three sittings or served in takeout style and consumed in residence rooms.

While the closing of the residence is not optimal for formation, I am mindful of the responsibilities we have to our seminarians, to the Seminary community, to our bishops and your dioceses to foster priestly formation. Accordingly, we are expanding our current formation programs that are online. These include: regular and increased seminarian contact with spiritual directors and formation advisors; weekly group meetings; spiritual conferences; evening prayer; and ongoing access to our human formation counsellor; all classes are online. Further, I am asking for your support to help the quality of formation during these pandemic times. It is essential that our seminarians attend daily Mass. Your help in making the necessary arrangements for seminarians of your diocese to do so would be invaluable. We will be encouraging all seminarians to do what they can as well in this regard. We will do our best to engage with them and encourage them in their discernment and to uncover the blessings and insights that will come from this very challenging situation.

For your records, I have attached a copy of my letter that was distributed to the faculty, staff and seminarians, outlining our plans. This letter was communicated to your Vocations Director on, 13 January 2021.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fr. Denis Grecco". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Rev. Denis Grecco