



Dear brother priests of the Mount,

I would like to inform you that Most Reverend Timothy Senior granted me permission to apply for the novitiate at St. Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, PA. On February 26, the Archabbey approved my application and accepted me to begin the novitiate July 1, 2025.

Therefore, I will conclude my duties as Director of Campus Ministry at Bloomsburg University and Administrator of Christ the King when diocesan assignment changes take effect in June. This therefore means that I will also step down as the Seminary Vice President of the National Alumni Association for Mount St. Mary's University.

This decision derived from a period of intense spiritual consolation with which I was gifted this past year. That time of consolation led me to discern whether the Lord was calling me to monastic life according to the Rule of St. Benedict. While I have previously considered Benedictine monasticism, this year was more precise and unique in its spiritual intensity. I have chosen to understand these experiences of prayer as signs that not only affirm my discernment, but also undoubtedly clarify the timing to which I could and should pursue the novitiate.

It is important to note that this path could result in differing outcomes. The novitiate could be one of many steps that would lead to my solemn vows as a monk, but it could alternatively result in a reaffirmation of a vocation to diocesan priesthood. In the latter case, I would promptly return to the diocese upon that conclusion. Because of the various paths to which this process may lead, I intend to be open minded and receptive towards all possible outcomes. Regardless, it is clear to me that pursuing the novitiate is the necessary and only path for further clarity.

While I have made this decision with joyful and peaceful trust in God's will, this decision was also very hard to make. It is hard for me to make because of my love for the Diocese of Harrisburg, which has only deepened since my priestly ordination in 2019. I also feel very happy and fulfilled in my current role. This decision entails many diverse feelings of joy, peace, excitement, nervousness, and even grief. To the best of my discernment, my only motive in this decision is the conviction that the Lord is calling me to follow Him down this path, wherever it may lead.

Assignment changes will not take effect in the Diocese of Harrisburg until the middle of June, and my replacement will likely not be decided and announced by the diocese until the middle of May. However, I believe that communicating my departure this early in advance best guarantees a smooth transition for the new leadership in my current assignment. This also allows my diocese to begin the process of prayerfully discerning the best replacement for me in this role.

Thank you for your continued love and support. I would be most grateful for your prayers. Please know of my prayers for you, and always know of my love and gratitude for you as a brother priest. You are a blessing and gift to me in my life.

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Andrew St. Hilaire, S'19

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