

Meménto

THE PRIESTLY FRATERNITY OF ST. PETER

North American Province



Easter

APRIL 2026



The Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter
North American Province
Fr. William Lawrence, FSSP · Provincial

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Meménto is a publication of the North American Province of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter (FSSP). It is published 10 times a year for the benefit of the supporters of the FSSP.

For inquiries, call or contact:
Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter
450 Venard Road, South Abington, PA 18411
(570) 842-4000 · (570) 319-9770 fax
www.fssp.com · info@fssp.com

Canadian Readers:
To send donations or for information, contact:
Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter (Canada) Inc.
PO Box 7248, Station V - Ottawa, ON - K1L8E3
(613)567-0287 · (613)288-1341 fax
www.fssp.ca · fsspcanada@gmail.com

Front Cover: Feast of the Ascension at Birnau Pilgrimage Church, Birnau, Baden-Württemberg, Germany. May 29, 2025.

THE PRIESTLY FRATERNITY OF ST. PETER

Enroll your Loved ones in our Mother's Day Mass



On Mother's Day, May 10th, we will celebrate and honor our own earthly mothers who, in imitation of Mary Mother of the Church, have consoled us in our pilgrimage through this valley of tears. On that Sunday the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter will be offering Holy Mass, and we would be happy to take your intentions with us as we ascend to the altar. To send us your requests and to request Mother's Day cards (depicted at left) that you can share with your loved ones, please visit our website at the URL or QR code below:

fssp.com/mothers-day



Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter

450 Venard Road

South Abington Twp, PA 18411

Phone: (570) 842-4000

Fax: (570) 319-9770

Email: info@fssp.com



2026 Mother's Day Card
(available while supplies last)



Laudetur Jesus Christus!

Easter gives us a special opportunity every year to celebrate Our Divine Savior's triumph over sin and the results of sin. A major theme is the transfer from sin to grace, death to life, darkness to light, discouragement to hope. On Holy Saturday evening the symbolism in the Traditional Liturgical Rite is profound: the altars of the church were stripped on Holy Thursday, the flowers removed before Lent, the sacred images covered on Passion Sunday, the bells silenced, the Holy Water removed, and the church sits in darkness devoid of all these symbols of life and joy. Even the Blessed Sacrament is reserved elsewhere and the tabernacle is empty. Then, there is a spark of light in the darkness, the Paschal Fire is lit and blessed followed by the solemn chant: "*Lumen Christi!*—The Light of Christ!" From the starting point of light in the darkness, everything is restored.

Unfortunately, though, with all that is going on in the world, our society, the Church, and, often enough, in our own lives, we can sometimes still feel as if we remain in that darkened church, devoid of true joy. What should we do about it?

St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that joy is caused by love, either because we enjoy the presence of the one loved, or because we rejoice in the good of the one that we love. For example, if a mother loves her son, she rejoices at his presence when he returns from being away at university. Even if he remains away at university, she still rejoices when she learns that something good has happened to him—he has passed a difficult exam, he has won the football game, he has returned to the practice of the Faith, etc.

When we experience a lack of joy, we can consider if we have a lack somewhere in the realm of love which is the cause of joy. Perhaps those friends and family members that we love are away from us—either physically or emotionally. Perhaps too, we don't hear much good news about them, *e.g.* if the son in the above example failed his exam, lost the football game, and stopped practicing the Faith. How can we have joy?

We can always have joy, even in the midst of the sorrows and vicissitudes of life, because the greatest love of our life should be God and He is always with us. Only mortal sin

on our part can banish Him from our soul, but He became man and laid down His life on the Cross to wipe away our sin if we just confess it with sorrow. Granted that God may be with us, but we still don't always feel His presence. We can have joy, however, if we call to mind His presence frequently with love. The great spiritual writers frequently encourage us to practice the presence of God, *e.g.* having a crucifix or holy



image in our rooms, or on our computer or phone and regularly looking at it while making some aspiration: "Lord Jesus Christ, I love Thee," "Thank you, Lord, for suffering for me," "Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me," "Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for me." etc. There are unlimited aspirations we can make, and they can be changed depending upon the time, day, liturgical season, our own mood, etc.

We can also rejoice in the good that God, the One we love above all things, possesses. This is particularly easy during Paschaltide when we rejoice in the victory of Our Lord. He triumphed over His human enemies by gloriously rising from the tomb after they persecuted and killed Him. He triumphed over the devil and the legions of hell, He triumphed over sin, He triumphed over death and suffering and disease. He opened the gates of Heaven which had been closed since the sin of Adam. He now reigns in glory at the right hand of the Heavenly Father.

Despite everything happening in the world, the Church, society, and our lives, we have cause to rejoice. Joy comes from love. The One we love, the One Who loves us with an infinite love, is with us. He showed His love by becoming man, suffering, dying, and rising for us. He is gloriously triumphant. The world, the flesh and the devil may be causing severe problems, but such problems are temporary. The victory that is permanent and eternal has already been won, and the Triumphant Victor offers us a share in it forever.

I wish you all a Blessed Easter and Paschaltide! ✠

Fr. William Lawrence, FSSP

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North American Provincial

PERU MISSION 2025 REFLECTION

Fr. John T. Killackey, FSSP

August 30, 2025 | Feast of St. Rose of Lima

What a blessing it was to return to Peru this past August to do missionary work. I had gone with a group as a seminarian nine years before; and the memory of the work we did, and especially of the faith, appreciation, and the hospitality of the people we served there has lived in my memory as one of the most formative experiences of my summer apostolate work as a seminarian.

That is why when I heard that we would have an opportunity to go to Peru again with a group of young men through Bosco Ministries, I was overjoyed. I knew that what I had experienced nine years ago would also be a very powerful time for the young men we would take and be a strong anchor to confirm them in their faith.



Our group had three priests and two seminarians of the Fraternity of St. Peter with us along with thirteen young men from various parts of the United States. Our trip started on August 8 with a day in Lima where we visited several important pilgrimage sites, including the city's cathedral, a Franciscan monastery, and the Dominican convent where St. Rose and St. Martin de Porres are buried. We had been praying a novena to St. Rose over the preceding eight days, so we were able to finish our novena at the tomb of St. Rose and ask her for her intercession as we started our mission work. The next day we took a short flight up to a city in the north of Peru called Piura where we would stay at Santísimo Sacramento Parish and aid them in the network of spiritual and corporal works of mercy that they have organized for many of their impoverished parishioners.

We started each day with Mass and morning prayers, and then spent most of the day in the work assignments given to us by the parish. We ended the day after dinner with a group activity, followed by a group discussion led by one of the priests or seminarians and then some quiet prayer time



before Our Lord in the parish's Adoration Chapel. Each day brought different activities, depending on what the parish needed, but in every activity, it was wonderful to meet the people and see their appreciation and their faith. We helped to build five houses for poor families, as well as distribute food and clothing to those who needed it. We also visited several schools where it was very humbling to be enthusiastically greeted by the entire student body and to participate in activities that they had arranged for us. In two cases, we enjoyed watching the cultural dances that the students had prepared for us.



As one of the priests on the trip, I had the particular joy of visiting many families to bless their houses and to give them sacred images and materials about the Catholic Faith. It was wonderful to see how much they appreciated these things. Though their devotion to the Faith seemed strong, it is also evident that due to so few priests being in that area, the people do not know much about the Faith. This work of catechesis is so important, and I am happy that our missionaries got the chance to participate in this through Bosco Ministries. The priests were also able to visit the elderly and sick in their homes or in the hospitals to bring them Our Lord in Holy Communion and in some cases to give them Extreme Unction. One particularly memorable moment for me was bringing Holy Communion to one poor woman who seemed close to death from cancer. She looked wasted away and she



could not speak and I felt powerless as a person to bring her the relief that she needed. Moments like these, though, remind me that the priest is nothing in his own person. But by having the privilege—unworthy though he is—of bearing Christ to people in their distresses, he can give them the One Thing—or rather Person—Who can bring them true relief. The priest can in that sense give them everything!

I will close with one further experience that left a deep impression on us all. The Piura region is home to several giant sacred images of Our Lord or of our Lady, such as “El Señor Cautivo” (the Captive Lord) and “Maria Auxiliadora” (Mary Help of Christians). These images serve as pilgrimage destinations and on their respective feast days, certain *hermandades* or “brotherhoods” help to organize a

large procession with their image. While we were in Piura, the archbishop decided that due to the Jubilee Year, he wanted to have a large procession with eight of these images from one of the city schools all the way to the Cathedral. It was an unforgettable experience to see these heavy images being carried about two miles by many of the members of these brotherhoods and be followed by different marching bands. Thousands of people were out to take part in the procession. I had never seen anything like it, and it was a joy for the Bosco Ministries missionaries to take part in this procession and to witness such a powerful public display of faith. We were even able to help at one point in carrying the image of our Lady Help of Christians.

Thanks be to God and to the intercession of our Lady, St. John Bosco, and St. Rose of Lima for this opportunity to do missionary work in Peru. Many thanks too to all the donors who made this trip possible. I am sure that in addition to the physical labors we accomplished there, this trip also—and more importantly—helped to strengthen the faith of the missionaries themselves in the opportunity to step back from the busy and distracting lives that many of us lead in the United States and help serve the Peruvian poor and be ourselves fed by the example of their simple lives and fervent devotion. ✝

A promotional poster for a Latin Mass Pilgrimage. The text at the top reads: "LATIN MASS PILGRIMAGE HUNGARY SLOVAKIA AUSTRIA & ITALY MAY 25TH - JUNE 4TH, 2026 WITH THE FRATERNITY OF SAINT PETER". Below the text is a photograph of a large Gothic cathedral with a prominent red dome. In the bottom left corner, there is a QR code. In the bottom right corner, contact information is provided: "Call: 1-800-334-5425 Email: info@syversentouring.com or visit www.syversentouring.com". The Syversen Touring logo is also visible in the bottom left.

WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE MASS: THE PRIEST'S HIDDEN PREPARATION

Fr. Gerard Quirke, FSSP

For many Catholics familiar with the Traditional Latin Mass, the opening words spoken by the priest are among the most evocative: *Introibo ad altare Dei*—I will go to the altar of God. And indeed these words should be evocative, because in that short phrase is contained the very reason for his—and our—presence at Mass. He, and he alone, is going to ascend to the altar to offer prayers to God, as Moses ascended Mount Sinai and as Elijah ascended Mount Horeb alone to commune with the Lord. Indeed, as Christ alone ascended to the altar of the Cross, the priest alone ascends to the altar *in persona Christi* to offer that same sacrifice to the Father. It is a lonely place, preparing to come face to face with the Lord; it is daring and burdensome; it is audacious. No one can enter into this lightly! Preparation is essential.

The prayers at the foot of the altar are not the beginning of the priest's preparation for Mass—we will come back to these prayers later. It should go without saying that the priest's entire life—his manner of living—should be a preparation for Mass, helping him to guard a fitting disposition for offering the Holy Sacrifice. The Irish Cistercian monk and Abbot of Roscrea Abbey, Dom Eugene Boylan (1904–1964), in his book *The Spiritual Life of the Priest* underscores this point. While noting that the value of the Mass for the Church does not depend on the dispositions of the priest, he says the following:

If a priest only knew it, his daily Mass is—as far as he is concerned—more or less a deliberate lie if he be not endeavouring to live a life of holiness...It is obvious then that as a personal sacrifice it could even be meaningless if his own life and interior sacrifice do not in some way correspond to what the Mass says.

It is the very Sacrifice which the priest offers, continues Dom Boylan, which lays upon him the “terrifying obligation” to live as Christ lived, but it is also through the fruit of the Sacrifice—Communion—that the priest receives the “strength and the means to carry it out”.

The soul of the priest must be cleansed from sin: he must be in the state of grace. We are reminded of the admonition of St Paul to the Corinthians:

...[I]f anyone eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily, he will be held to account for the Lord's body and blood. A man must examine himself first, and then eat of that bread and drink of that cup; he is eating and drinking damnation to himself if he eats and drinks unworthily, not recognizing the Lord's body for what it is. (1Cor. 11:27-29)

For both the celebration of Mass and the reception of Holy Communion the priest must be in the state of grace—a priest conscious of mortal sin must avail of sacramental confession before offering the Holy Sacrifice. In an urgent case, where the priest must offer Mass and no confessor is available, he should make an act of perfect contrition with a resolution to avail of sacramental confession as soon as possible.

The law of the Church prescribes a Eucharistic fast for both clergy and laity before the reception of Holy Communion. Current law states that a “person who is to receive the Most Holy Eucharist is to abstain for at least one hour before holy communion from any food and drink, except for only water and medicine” (CIC 919.1). Fasting is, in fact, one of the oldest customs observed

in the Church with regard to the Eucharist. Tertullian (c.155–c.220) wrote about the Blessed Sacrament being received “before all other food”. St Augustine of Hippo (354–430) speaks of the Eucharistic fast being a universal custom throughout the Church—“the Sacrament is everywhere partaken of by persons fasting” (Letter 54, *To Januarius*). Further on he remarks that “for the honour of so great a sacrament... the body of the Lord should take the precedence of all other food entering the mouth of a Christian”. This was clearly echoed in the Apostolic Constitution *Christus Dominus* of Pope Pius XII in 1953: “When we receive His precious Body and Blood before we take any food, we show clearly that this is the first and loftiest nourishment by which our soul



is fed and its holiness increased”. St Thomas Aquinas points out that the physical preparation for receiving the Eucharist through fasting is appropriate because we are beings with bodies as well as souls.

Of course, when we think of the priest’s preparation before Mass, our minds probably go to the sacristy where the priest gets ready immediately before Mass. It is best if the priest arrives to the sacristy with plenty of time to spare—this allows him to maintain a recollected disposition, which he may not be able to keep if he is rushed or under pressure. The sacristy itself should be a place of calm and quiet, and many sacristies still have a notice on the wall: *Silentium—Silence!*

The Roman Missal includes several prayers which the priest may recite as part of his preparation in the sacristy. In the first place, are five psalms: Psalm 83 (“Lord of hosts, how I love thy dwelling-place...”), Psalm 84 (“What blessings, Lord, thou hast granted to this land of thine...”), Psalm 85 (“Turn thy ear, Lord, and listen to me in my helplessness and my need...”), Psalm 115 (“I trusted, even when most I bewailed my unhappy lot...”) and Psalm 129 (“Out of the depths I cry to thee, O Lord...”). These psalms are followed by a series of invocations and responses. Following the psalms, there is a series of prayers—one for each day of the week—composed by Jean de Fécamp (but previously attributed to St Ambrose). In reciting these prayers, the priest asks the Lord to teach him reverence for the mystery he is about to celebrate and that he may approach the altar with a clean soul and pure heart. There are further prayers such as the *Prayer before Mass* by St Ambrose, a prayer by St Thomas Aquinas, a prayer to Our Lady, to St Joseph, to the angels and saints, and a prayer to the saint in whose honor the Mass will be celebrated. Following these prayers is a prayer composed by Pope Gregory XIII which formulates the priest’s intention before offering the Holy Sacrifice.

The vesting prayers are possibly the best-known element of the priest’s preparation for Mass. While the vestments may

have been purely utilitarian in their origin—being part of everyday Roman clothing—they took on a deeply symbolic and spiritual meaning as the Church retained the garments in liturgical use even after they fell into disuse in general society. The first vestment donned by the celebrant is the amice, a rectangular piece of linen, originally worn over the head. The priest kisses the cross in the center of the amice, briefly places it over his head before fastening it over the neck, while saying the following prayer: “Place upon me, O Lord, the helmet of salvation, that I may overcome the assaults of the devil”. Next, the alb—the long white linen robe recalling baptismal purity—is put on, with the accompanying prayer: “Purify me, O Lord, and cleanse my heart, so that, washed in the Blood of the Lamb, I may enjoy eternal bliss”. The cincture, which traditionally symbolizes chastity, is then tied around the waist, while the priest says: “Gird me, O Lord, with the cincture of purity, and quench in my heart the fire of concupiscence,

that the virtue of continence and chastity may abide in me”. The maniple, which is like a short stole worn on the left forearm, has become symbolic of the burden of sin and of the weightiness of the priestly duties. As with the amice, the priest kisses the cross on the maniple before placing it on his arm while saying this prayer: “May I deserve, O Lord, to bear the maniple of weeping and sorrow, that I may receive the reward for my labors with rejoicing”. The stole is a long strip of silk of the liturgical color of the day, which is placed



around the neck and then crossed over the chest. It represents the authority of the priestly office. As the priest puts it on, he kisses the cross, and says: “Restore unto me, O Lord, the stole of immortality, which was lost through the guilt of our first parents: and, although I am unworthy to approach Thy sacred Mysteries, nevertheless grant unto me eternal joy”. Finally, the chasuble, the outer garment of the priest during the celebration of the Mass, representing the yoke of Christ and charity, is put on with the following prayer: “O Lord, Who said, “My yoke is easy and My burden light”: grant that I may bear it well and follow after Thee with thanksgiving. Amen”.

(Continues on page 9)

RENEWAL OF CONSECRATION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY



Following a thirty-day novena of preparation, on February 11, 2026, all of the members of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter renewed the Consecration of the Fraternity to the Immaculate Heart of Mary surrounded by the faithful in all their apostolates throughout the world. The Superior General and fellow priests of the Fraternity from the United States, Mexico, France, Switzerland, Germany, and Portugal renewed the Consecration at the Shrine in Fatima, Portugal. We thank the Rector of the Shrine for allowing us to perform this act in an official manner, at the very site of the apparitions. ✝





What Happens Before Mass: The Priest's Hidden Preparation

(Continues from page 7)

It is worth noting that a bishop, at a Solemn Pontifical Mass, prepares for Mass in a very public way. On entering the church—before he is vested—he prays before the Blessed Sacrament. After this he is vested in front of the people and by other people. The bishop—the *Sacerdos Magnus*—who entered the church wearing the *cappa magna* depends entirely on others to get him ready to offer the Holy Sacrifice. He must remain still while others approach him and dress him. This symbolizes the necessity of humility and obedience to the office—his authority is not self-generated, but comes from God through the Church.

Apart from knowing what a priest does to get ready for Mass, what use is all of this to the faithful? Very simply: practically all of the priest's preparations for offering the Sacrifice of the Mass can—and should—be adopted by the faithful. Most people know of the necessity of fasting before the reception of Holy Communion and of the importance of only receiving the Eucharist in the state of grace. However, it is also important

to unite oneself to the Mass in a recollected state. This would include ensuring that you come to the church at least a few minutes before the Mass begins. It is entirely praiseworthy, for example, to pray the psalms mentioned above and, as the priest does, to gather together your intentions for the Mass. Of course the faithful are not donning vestments, but it is worth examining one's own choice of "vestments" for Mass—are my clothes appropriate for the Sacrifice of the Mass, are they—even if very simple—the best I can wear for Sunday Mass? The general sentiments of the vesting prayers can provide, nonetheless, useful meditation for the faithful, as can those beautiful aforementioned prayers before Mass by St Ambrose and St Thomas Aquinas. Apart from this, the degree of preparation required by the priest before he even pronounces those immortal words, *Introibo ad altare Dei*, should be a reminder of the dignity and duties of the priest, and therefore a reminder to frequently pray to the Lord to sanctify your priests! ✝

NEWS NOTES

12 Subdeacons Ordained at Wigratzbad



On February 16, 2026, 12 men at our Wigratzbad seminary were ordained to the subdiaconate in nearby Gestratz, by Mgr. Wolfgang Haas, archbishop emeritus of Vaduz.

Visits by the Provincial

Fr. Lawrence visited the FSSP apostolates in Richmond and Chesapeake in early March and met with the faithful.

*Worried about bad social media habits returning after Lent?
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FSSP Legacy Society First Annual Public Mass!

*Please join us on Saturday, May 16 at 2pm
at the beautiful St. Mary Church in Conshohocken, PA.*

The Priestly Fraternity is pleased to offer this Mass in gratitude for all those who have made legacy gift pledges to support and ensure the future work of the FSSP.

Are you receiving the graces of the Mass offered privately each month for all Legacy Society members? Make your pledge and enroll now!

To receive Legacy Society information or an enrollment form, contact Joe Gardner, Director of Planned Giving: (570) 319-5271, jgardner@fssp.com, or via mail at Provincial Headquarters.

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**PRIESTLY FRATERNITY
OF ST. PETER**



**NORTH AMERICAN
PROVINCE**

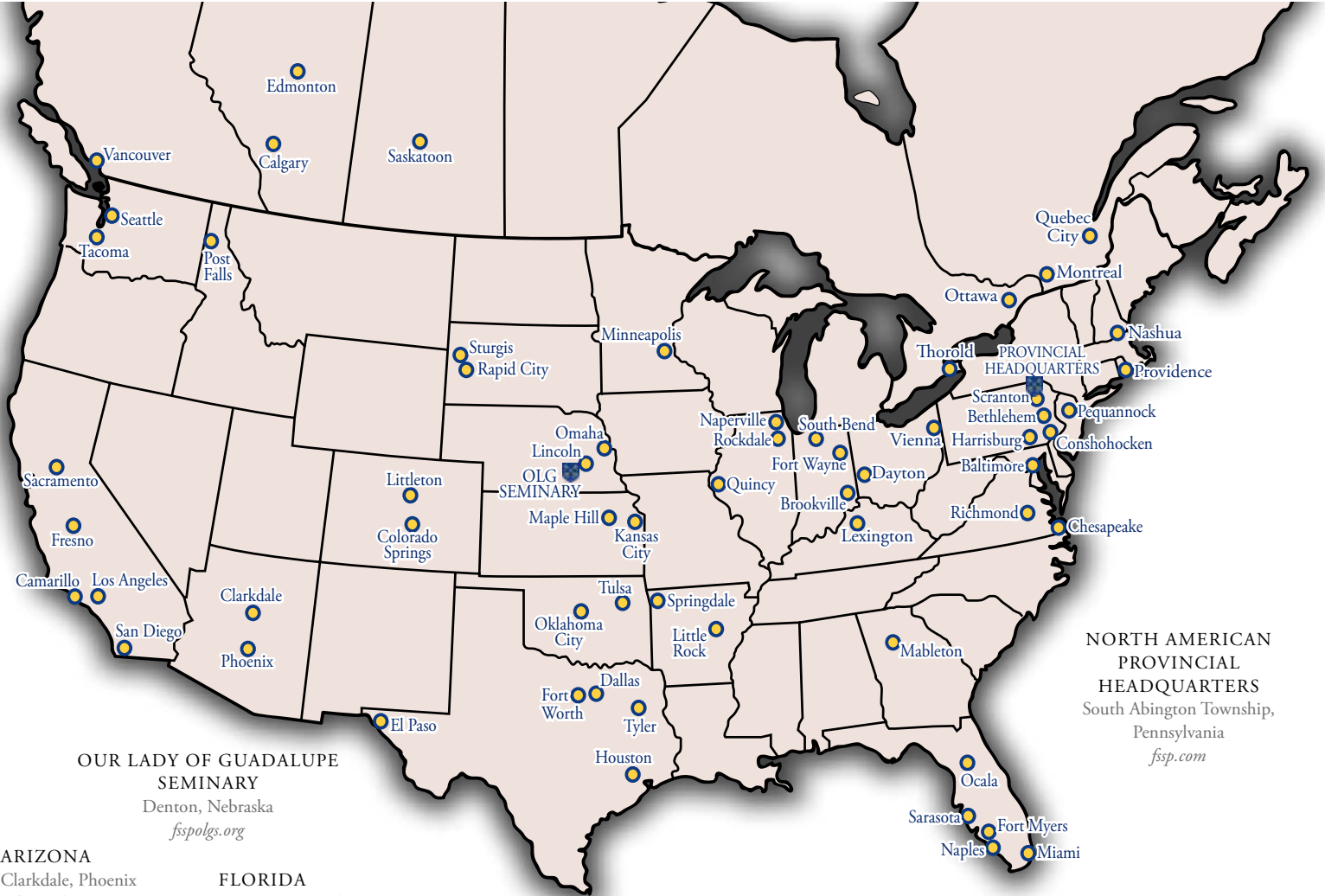
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tram · moriendo · destruxit



As a Society of Apostolic Life of Pontifical Right established by Pope St. John Paul II, our mission is to use the ancient liturgy as a wellspring to form our priests in the traditions of the Church to serve at the altar and in the parish to bring the fullness of Christ into the emptiness of the world.



Over the past 38 years, The Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter (FSSP) has ordained over 350 priests to bring the traditional Latin Mass and Sacraments to people around the world. In more than 50 cities across North America, we preach, teach, and sanctify faithful Catholics. And at Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary, we form over eighty seminarians to become the priests of tomorrow.

