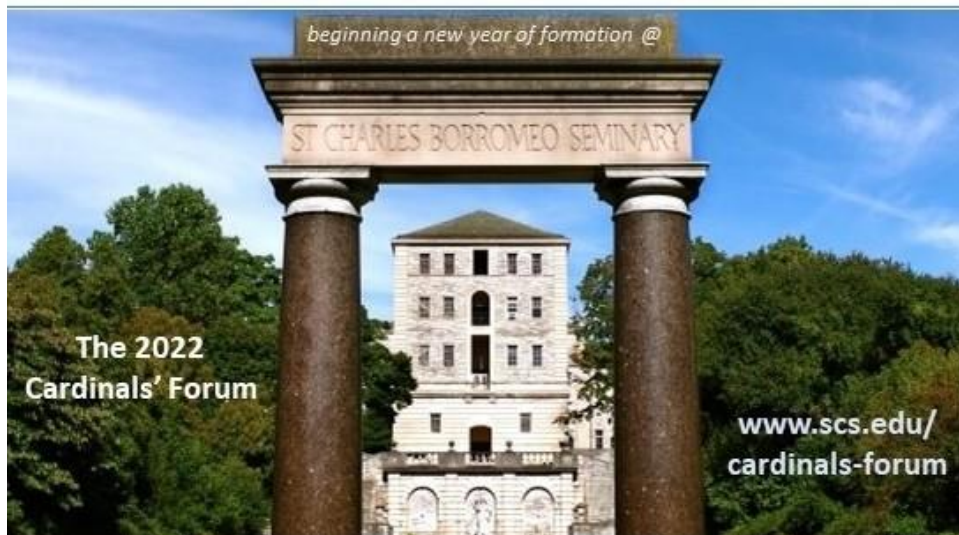


**“From Sunday to Sunday”**  
*the liturgical formation of the People of God*



*introduction by*

**Rev. David Friel**

**Director of Vocations, Archdiocese of Philadelphia**

---

Good evening, and welcome to the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Cardinals' Forum at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary! I'm pleased to welcome all of you here, both those who are attending in-person and those who are joining us online. My name is Fr. David Friel, and I serve as the Vocation Director for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and as an adjunct faculty member here at Overbrook.

The title of this series—the Cardinals' Forum—began in reference to the first two endowed faculty chairs here at the seminary, which were named in honor of two distinguished prelates in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia: John Cardinal Krol and John Cardinal Foley. Since then, another professorship has been endowed that, though not named for a cardinal, is equally distinguished: the Francesco Chair in Sacred Music.

I'm joined on stage this evening by the professors who presently hold these three chairs. Dr. John Haas, who holds the John Cardinal Krol Chair of Moral Theology,

inaugurated the position back in 1990. After many years serving as President of the National Catholic Bioethics Center, Dr. Haas has returned to the Chair to teach a new generation. Our second panelist is Fr. Thomas Dailey, holder of the John Cardinal Foley Chair of Homiletics and Social Communications. A priest in the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, Fr. Dailey inaugurated this position in 2013 and joined the seminary faculty full-time in 2017. Our third panelist, Dr. Nathan Knutson, is the first holder of the Lucille M. Francesco Chair in Sacred Music, a position he has held since 2019 while serving as the seminary's Director of Sacred Music.

With regard to format, following my introduction, each of the three panelists will offer a five-minute commentary on our subject, through the lens of their respective disciplines. Thereafter, we've allotted 45 minutes for our in-person audience to pose more ideas or raise questions that will advance the discussion with the panelists.

Our subject this evening is "From Sunday to Sunday: The Liturgical Formation of the People of God." This topic is drawn from the Holy Father's recent Apostolic Letter, *Desiderio desideravi*. Much of the initial conversation tonight will center on a brief section of that document that discusses liturgical formation in seminary formation (paragraphs 37-39). In this respect, I would like to offer two brief, introductory points.

The first is this: although we are focusing on a section of the document that deals with seminary formation, this is not a document *on* seminary formation. When reading Church documents—just as in reading Sacred Scripture—it's important to remember the genre and context of what one is reading. In this case, *Desiderio desideravi* is 1) an Apostolic Letter, 2) written to all the faithful, 3) on the topic of the liturgical formation of the people of God. That's what it is by genre. In context, the Holy Father begins by explaining that this Apostolic Letter is a complement to his earlier document, *Traditiones custodes*, which had been addressed only to the bishops of the world. He describes the text as "some reflections on the liturgy" (#1) and "some prompts or cues for reflection" (#1). And he expresses the hope that these reflections, addressed broadly to all the faithful, might help the whole Church to accept and implement *Traditiones custodes* (#61).

My second point relates to this statement from the text of *Desiderio desideravi*: “A liturgical-sapiential plan of studies in the theological formation of seminaries would certainly have positive effects in pastoral action” (#37). With this statement, I wholeheartedly agree. The field of liturgical theology has really come into its own over the last century, and yet it is still not widely acknowledged, sometimes even by other theologians, that the liturgy, itself, is a valid source for doing the work of theology. It is, as the Holy Father puts it, “the first wellspring of Christian spirituality” (#61). For this reason, it is important that seminary courses in pastoral and sacramental theology not be reduced merely to historical surveys or practica; they should study the texts and gestures of the liturgy, itself, from a theological perspective. There are opportunities to do the same in other areas of theological inquiry, as well. It is quite possible, for example, to incorporate the liturgy as source material in the study of dogmatic theology, moral theology, spiritual theology, and ecumenism. The “liturgical-sapiential plan of studies” recommended by the Holy Father in this document is essential if seminaries are to offer the well-rounded and deeply rooted theological formation that seminarians deserve (and from which their future parishioners will later benefit).

Friends, again, it is a joy to have you with us tonight. Let us now welcome our panelists to present their thoughts.

\* \* \* \* \*