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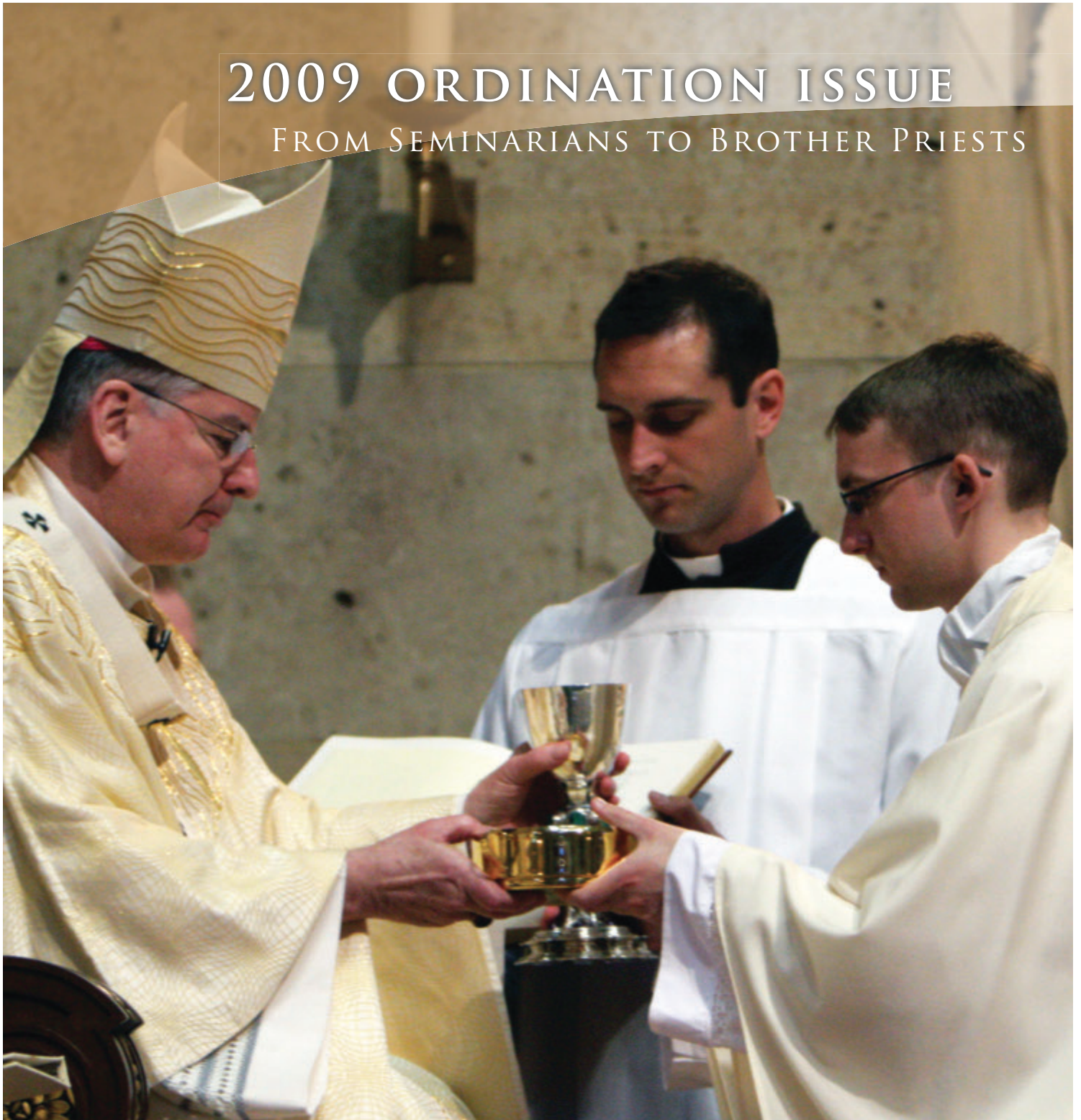


THE SAINT PAUL SEMINARY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

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FROM SEMINARIANS TO BROTHER PRIESTS



ALUMNI HONORED FOR COMMITMENT TO EVANGELIZATION

Retired colonel and army chaplain of 33 years. Founder of Saint Paul's Outreach and father of six children.

The two men who claim these titles were honored April 23 with The Saint Paul Seminary's Distinguished Alumni Award.

The Rev. Colonel Martin Fleming was ordained in 1952 after studying at The Saint Paul Seminary. He served at the Basilica of St. Mary and St. Mary's Parish in Shakopee before joining the Army Reserves as a chaplain in 1959 "for one or two years." Those one or two years turned into 33 when Fleming continued to re-enlist every couple of years with the bishop's permission.



Fr. Fleming and Gordy DeMarais, longtime friends, embrace after receiving the Distinguished Alumni Award.

"I was exempt during the war (World War II) from military service, but I always felt I should do my duty," Fr. Fleming said. "I joined the Reserves to keep out from under the pastor's feet [at St. Mary's]. I liked the army."



Seminary Vice Rector Fr. Peter Laird congratulates Fr. Fleming.

During his time in the Army Fr. Fleming served in Alaska, New York, Georgia, Virginia, Germany, and Vietnam. He received numerous medals including the Bronze Star and the Medal of Honor.

But Fr. Fleming said the most important question of all is, "Do you know Jesus? That's what I've been peddling."

He began bringing that question to others after attending a Cursillo retreat on leave in 1965 that

“dramatically changed my life.” Cursillo is a charismatic movement that holds weekend retreats of prayer and study. It was there this young priest who memorized the Baltimore Catechism learned that an “act of faith is a step in Jesus’ giant footstep.”

“A lot of people sleepwalk into Catholicism,” Fr. Fleming said. “You must have Jesus. That’s what it’s all about.”

Ever since, Fr. Fleming has been on the cutting edge of the charismatic movement, whether flying Cursillo teams abroad for his soldiers, organizing archdiocesan conferences, or acting as the Catholic representative to national evangelical movements.

Fr. Fleming said that when he began the work “people didn’t even know what evangelization was. They thought it was Protestant, but it’s resoundingly Catholic.” Now retired, Fr. Fleming rents out rooms in his family home on Summit Avenue to recovering alcohol and drug addicts.

Fr. Fleming was surprised to receive the Distinguished Alumni Award. “I was charmed because the first to receive this was my brother,” he said. “The things you don’t expect and feel you don’t deserve are always the most fun.”



Gordy DeMarais and his family listen to Msgr. Aloysius Callaghan’s remarks during the award ceremony.

Gordon DeMarais also received the award. Like Fr. Fleming, DeMarais devotes his life to evangelistic work. After graduating from the University of St. Thomas in 1981 with a degree in theology, he worked with high school students at the St. Paul Catholic Youth Center and on the staff of NET Ministries. DeMarais said the Catholic Youth Center asked him to help develop evangelistic outreach on college campuses. The organization he helped to start in 1985 eventually became known as Saint Paul’s

Outreach (SPO). Today, DeMarais is executive director of SPO and a coordinator of the Community of Christ the Redeemer.

DeMarais graduated with a master of arts in theology from The Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity in 2003. He has been married for 23 years to his wife Teresa and has six children.

“DeMarais is a classy guy,” said Fr. Fleming. The two first met while working on an evangelization project for the Archdiocese.

“I was tremendously humbled and honored to receive the Distinguished Alumni Award,” DeMarais said. “I consider myself young with many years left to work. Receiving the award gave me encouragement to continue my work.”