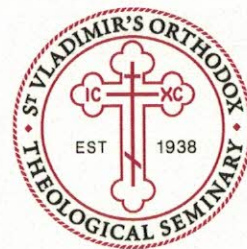


Engaging the world with Orthodox Christianity since 1938



# INVESTED

TO TRUSTEES &  
CLOSE FRIENDS  
of ST. VLADIMIR'S  
ORTHODOX  
THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY

**INVESTED** – November 2020

Dear Friends of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary,

I am writing this INVESTED letter as we draw near to American Thanksgiving. Even with the difficulties and tensions of 2020 there is still much to be thankful for. I pray that you will join me in thanking God that St. Vladimir's Seminary has been able to open as a residential seminary. There is no doubt that our pedagogy is delivered best in the residential format. Future Orthodox priests cannot be properly prepared only in front of a computer screen.

You are receiving this letter because you have already made a significant investment in the mission of our seminary and you know the importance of having well-educated and spiritually grounded priests for our parishes and missions. It was said at the founding of St. Vladimir's Seminary in 1938, that the bishops already saw that America would be a highly educated society and we would need an educated clergy to plant Orthodoxy in this land.

Recently there has been an awakening in America that we now have a severe clergy shortage. Too many priests are working beyond normal retirement age and a ground swell is now on the horizon for the baby boomers who have begun to retire. We don't have, in any Orthodox jurisdiction, nearly enough seminarians in the pipeline to fill vacancies created by deaths and retirements. We need to attract many more vocations to the priesthood.

One of the many hurdles for potential vocations is the fact that we are now dealing with a younger generation of college graduates who are more deeply in debt than any previous generations. How can they take on more debt by entering a three-year Master of Divinity degree program?

As someone who has been a seminary administrator for 19 years, I have long advocated that our Orthodox dioceses and bishops need to fully support their seminarians financially. The Antiochian Archdiocese is the most generous in their support but they cover only about 18% of what it actually costs to educate a seminarian per year. We have to raise the rest each year largely through charitable gifts from Orthodox Faithful.



This year the cost is \$62,688 per seminarian. If you think that this is high please note that SVOTS is the less costly and most cost effective of the three accredited Orthodox Seminaries.

In 2012 we made an internal decision to do something (and someone *did need* to do something) about seminarians and debt. We decided, using our own limited resources, to guarantee a tuition debt free experience at our seminary. We provide 50% of the tuition if the seminarian then raises 25% through their diocese, parish or other church related organization, our seminary awards the final 25% needed to graduate with no tuition debt.

In FY 2020 we awarded \$136,544 in tuition scholarship. This funding comes from our general scholarship fund (there is no endowment fund) which must be replenished every year.

I have never made an ask for support through the INVESTED letter. However, I am asking now. COVID-19 has taken such a deep toll on our revenues and the dollars available to keep our seminarians tuition debt free. I need your help before the end of the calendar year.

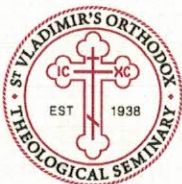
When I was first ordained over 43 years ago, I was told by a wonderful parish priest to never ask the faithful for anything that I was not prepared to do myself. I am asking you, to join me, in putting an extra \$1,000 towards seminary support to replenish the scholarship fund before the end of this calendar year.

Thanking you in advance for joining me in keep our future priests as debt free as possible upon their graduation from seminary and into the "mission field" of America. Be assured of a remembrance in the SVOTS Community intercessions as we ask God's blessing on our benefactors.

Yours faithfully in Christ,



The Very Rev Dr Chad Hatfield,  
President & Professor of Pastoral Theology.



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