

EDITION - XVII

making the canopy sturdy enough now to handle any storm. My experience of your community this summer was like that concrete block that held the tent down.

You have a community that is solidly held down and firmly in place by Jesus and the Church, and because of that you can handle any storm that comes your way. St. Paul talks about Jesus Christ being the cornerstone. St. Paul writes, "So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone" (Eph 2:19-20). It's been beautiful to be with you these weeks. I am deeply grateful for this experience and I feel more prepared for the priesthood in two years.

Please keep praying for more priests. Thank you.

St. Cloud, pray for us.

In Jesus,

Seminarian Neal Anderson

EDITION - XVII

Greetings!

Father Mitchell here, now. I think you share my sentiments when I say it has been a pleasure and privilege having Neal here with us these few weeks. This has been an opportunity of pastoral enrichment for him and a small taste of home before he heads back to continue his studies in Rome.

Neal has been studying already for 4 years. He has one left until, God willing, he would be ordained a transitional deacon for our diocese, and one year more before he would be ordained a priest. Safe to say, priests are not born, we are made. Built up and formed by the prayers of God's people, your many kindnesses, a catalog of experiences shaping us to become the men God wants us to be to serve those to whom we are sent. These years of formation are crucial for a future priest, and we are glad that some of Neal's time could be shared with us.

Please join me in assuring Neal of our prayers for him, that he grow in grace and virtue, and that he will come to see why it is such wonderful thing it is to be a Melrose Dutchman. Thanks for all the good you're doing, Neal. Study hard, pray harder, and come home soon.

Thank you, all. God bless!

Our Lady of Mount Carmel, pray for us.

In Christ,

Father Mitchell Bechtold

FATHER MITCHELL'S PASTORAL BULLETIN

Sunday, July 18, 2026

To the parishioners of the Church of Saint Mary,
serving the communities of Melrose, Meire Grove, Greenwald & Spring Hill
on the church campuses in Melrose & Meire Grove

Hi everyone,

My name is Neal Anderson and I have been your summer-intern seminarian. If I haven't formally met you yet, I am a seminarian who is studying for the diocesan priesthood here in the St. Cloud Diocese. Being an Albany native, my initial thought was to take this opportunity to write about how glorious and majestic the sports of the Albany Huskies are. Fr. Mitchell politely dissuaded me from that.

During Riverfest, we had an outdoor Mass in the Sauk River Park near the ballpark, and it was windy. There was a canopy tent set up to protect the altar, and it kept trying to blow away. The front stakes of this canopy keep lifting higher and higher off the ground. It was distracting and an inconvenience, and even thoughts of just canceling the Mass were present. Fr. Oswaldo turned to me and said in that moment, "If the canopy tent flies away, at least I won't." And then he points to his "fatherly" belly. And like an unexpected, answered prayer, a lady brings a concrete block and ties it to the canopy,