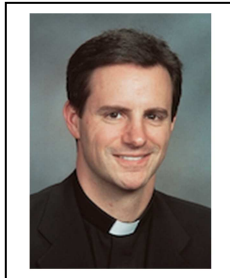


Msgr. Todd Lajiness Named Rector/President of Sacred Heart Major Seminary



Detroit Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron today announced the appointment of Msgr. Todd J. Lajiness as the new rector/president of Detroit's Sacred Heart Major Seminary. Msgr. Lajiness has been serving as dean of studies at the seminary since 2003. He also is a weekend assistant at Holy Family Parish in Novi. His appointment as rector is effective May 5. Msgr. Lajiness, 43, succeeds Msgr. Jeffrey Monforton, who in December was named pastor of St. Andrew Parish in Rochester, Michigan's largest Catholic parish, also effective May 5.

"Msgr. Lajiness brings a rich set of talents, skills and priestly virtues to the leadership of Sacred Heart Major Seminary," said Archbishop Vigneron. "These gifts, along with his rich experience in the ministry of priestly formation, give me great confidence that he will be an outstanding rector/president. Building upon the notable achievements of his predecessor, Msgr. Monforton, Msgr. Lajiness will further advance the seminary's work of forming priests and other workers needed for the New Evangelization."

Concurrent with his being announced as the new rector/president of the seminary, Archbishop Vigneron announced that then-Father Lajiness was made a "Chaplain to His Holiness" by Pope Benedict XVI and thus now has the honorary title "Monsignor."

Msgr. Lajiness was ordained to the priesthood in 1995. After having served in parish ministry and as an assistant professor at Sacred Heart from 1995-97, he was assigned to Rome to be secretary to Cardinal Edmund C. Szoka, then-president of the Pontifical Commission of Vatican City State, from 1997-2002. During that time, he completed a licentiate in philosophy at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum) in 2002, and a doctorate in philosophy from the Angelicum in 2002. He returned to Detroit in 2002 to serve as director of undergraduate formation at the seminary, and also taught courses in philosophy. In addition to his current post as dean of studies at the seminary, he serves on the board of trustees for the Catholic Youth Organization, on the CYO Priest Task Force, and as archdiocesan chaplain to the Knights of Columbus. He also serves on the executive committee of the Mid-West Association of Theological Schools.

"It is with deep sense of humility and excitement that I accept this new assignment from Archbishop Vigneron," Msgr. Lajiness said. "The Archbishop's support of the seminary, as well as the support provided by his predecessors Cardinal (Adam) Maida and Cardinal Szoka, is inspiring. And in recent years, Msgr. Monforton has provided exceptional leadership as rector, and the state of the formation program is reflective of his unwavering commitment. The prayerful support of the presbyterate and the

people of the archdiocese will be essential as we continue to respond effectively to the needs of the Church today.”

Sacred Heart Seminary was founded in 1919 and is located on a 22-acre campus near the Boston-Edison Historic District. It was refounded as a major seminary in 1988, when a Graduate School of Theology was added to the College of Liberal Arts. The Institute of Ministry was established in 1988 to educate and train individuals for the permanent diaconate and professional lay ecclesial ministry.

Presently, 115 seminarians are enrolled at Sacred Heart Major Seminary – the largest seminarian population since 1973. Thirty-nine of these students are studying to become priests for the Archdiocese of Detroit. Last September, the seminary also offered its first exclusively online courses, and its first Spanish-language courses. In 2010, it began using local parish grounds as satellite courses. For the 2012 winter term, 351 lay students are enrolled through the Institute for Ministry.

Raised in St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Newport, Msgr. Lajiness is the youngest of three boys born to John and Gail Lajiness, who currently still reside in Newport. An avid athlete, Msgr. Lajiness enjoys participating in triathlons and marathons, and has taken part in the Half Ironman Triathlon in Benton Harbor and the Detroit Free Press Marathon.