

Welcome Our Visiting Seminarian, Alvaro Santamaria

My name is Alvaro Santamaria. I was born and raised in El Salvador. I am one of the seminarians for the Diocese of Oakland. This is my first year in St. Patrick's Seminary and University in Menlo Park and my third year in formation because I studied 2 years back in my country. After studying English during 2 semesters, I was accepted to St. Patrick's.



I strongly believe that my vocation was born from an intimate and deep relationship with God. Since I was a child, I was involved in different groups in my home parish, but I never thought that the priesthood would be a way of life for me, or that I would end up entering the seminary. I was so focused on my career as a civil engineer, working and trying to be successful in that area. I had achieved many goals in my life in a short period of time. However, I was feeling that something was lacking. My heart was yearning for a deeper consecration to God. He was requesting my whole life.

At the beginning, I got scared and I thought that my mind was trying to deceive me, but then I realized that it was God's voice calling me to the priesthood. I can still hear those words resounding in my heart: "Come and follow me." After some time of discernment, I responded openly and generously to God with a "yes." This answer continues until now and is even stronger and with more determination. When doubts come to my mind about this call which I have received from God, I say: "God, I will follow you even when I do not feel your presence, even in times of difficulties or when things become harder. Just give me the grace to be faithful until the end." I want to become a priest to serve the people of God through the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation. I believe that the way I am as a seminarian, is the way I will be as a priest. My ministry does not start on the day of my ordination; it has already started. I recognize that the priesthood is a gift from God and that I will be an instrument in His hands.

Currently, I am blessed to be welcomed by St. Bonaventure's community in these times of difficulty that we are facing with the coronavirus. I appreciate the warm welcome Fr. Oscar has given me and I look forward to meeting all of you when the parish reopens. Please keep me in your prayers and rest assured of mine. God bless you all.