



THE HARVEST *is* HERE!

*"The harvest is plentiful, but
the laborers are few..."*
(Matt. 9:37)

What first-fruits can you
offer the Lord?



SCAN TO
DONATE
NOW





When my beloved parish priest first told me to consider seminary, I wondered if he was mocking me. “You’ve heard my confessions, Father,” I thought, “and you’ve seen me serve in the altar.” But by the time I’d moved my wife, four daughters, and dog to St. Tikhon’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in South Canaan, Pennsylvania from the Great State of Texas, I’d more or less convinced myself that seminary would probably be kind of groovy because I’d be in Church a lot and hanging out with other Orthodox Christians every day. Of course, no one told me those two blessings would top the list of reasons seminary proved so difficult. Even if anyone had told me, it would have made no difference—such truths

are only properly learned through experience. Just as the fullness of theology is realized only in union with Christ, the ascetic discipline of seminary is only possible at seminary. Distance learning may work for engineers, historians, and artists, but it will never work for seminarians, because you have to physically (and spiritually and emotionally) be there.

Seminary is not just about writing papers, going to lectures, and gaining knowledge. Those things are important, to be sure, and vital to the shaping of those who will lead Christ’s Church, maybe more so now than ever with the flood of inquirers pouring into our parishes. But seminary is primarily about formation. Those called to seminary, and to serve the Church as priests and deacons, are flawed human beings who each arrive with their own baggage—their own sin, their own preconceived notions, and their own inflated sense of self (speaking entirely from personal experience). The object is not to cover up one’s insufficiencies, but to reveal them; not to feed one’s self-delusion, but to efface it; not to coddle one’s ego, but to topple it. The relentless schedule of classes, diakonia, church services, study, and extracurricular activities (all while earning no income and trying to care for a family) can go either way toward abetting or impeding this intended purpose. If you try to succeed entirely by your own human efforts (as I did far too often), you will be blinded to your sin, excel in delusion, and feed your ego like Pac-Man eating Power Pellets. But if you rely on Christ God to guide you through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, He will surely remain faithful, even when your own faith is shaken.

Either way, the process is painful. And Christ’s faithfulness is so great that, even when your sin and pride are ascendent, He is able to use these to bring about the humiliation and suffering necessary to submit to His will in all things. We Orthodox Christians often pride ourselves on our understanding of suffering—the Faith once for all delivered to the Saints alone holds the key to accepting it, and in it finding our salvation. How, then, could the factory in which clergy are made not be a place of suffering? If it is not, it is surely not serving its purpose. This is by no means to suggest there aren’t lovely moments, moments when God makes Himself really and truly known to the individual. But many of those moments (if not most, or even all) come at a great price. They come by embracing the Cross, not as a triumphalist symbol of the superiority of our Faith, but as the bloody sign of our own salvation. Christ was without sin and still sweated blood in the Garden; how can we expect to live in that Garden and not bleed?

The Church needs priests who can carry the burdens of their people alongside them while encouraging them not to forsake the path to Eternity. It is an impossible task for a man, but with Christ, all things are possible. St. Tikhon’s Seminary is not a fairytale kingdom where everyone is a saint, but it is a place where men called to minister to Christ’s Church can find their salvation, and by doing so, be equipped to shine the light of the Gospel in a dark and weary world. I thank God every day that He led me to it.

Father Seraphim Crossman, Class of 2026
St. Nektarios Orthodox Mission (OCA), Waxahachie, Texas.



Glory to Jesus Christ!

St. Tikhon’s Seminary wishes you a blessed harvest season! In the ancient world (and in many places around the world today), the harvest season is a time to reap the fruits of our labors and give thanks to God for the blessings of the past year. It is also a time of preparation, looking to the seasons ahead with prayerful attention to all needful things.

In this spirit, we invite you to support our Fall Appeal with gratitude for this year’s fruits—among them our recent valedictorian, Priest Seraphim Crossman—and a desire to enter the next academic year prepared to form excellent clergy and glorify Our Heavenly King.

Scan the QR code below or visit us at www.stots.edu/appeal to share the blessings of your harvest through timeless theological education and pastoral training. All fruits, great and small, multiply the feast we share throughout the Holy Orthodox Church!

“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few...” (Matt. 9:37)

