

2013 Friends of the Seminary, Breaks Records

For the first time in St. Vincent's history, the annual Friends of the Seminary benefit was a sell-out success with more than 240 friends and supporters in attendance. Most Rev. Thomas G. Wenski, Archbishop of Miami, presided over solemn vespers and the investiture of Rev. Msgr. David L. Toups, Rector and President. At the close of vespers, the *St. Vincent de Paul Award* was presented to Msgr. James F. Fetscher, an alumnus and member of St. Vincent's first ordination class in 1968. "It is right that we honor one of the seminary's pioneers, one who has persevered in an exemplary way in his priestly vocation from the day the seminary opened until now," said Msgr. Toups. Dr. D. Michael McCarron, Executive Director of the Florida Catholic Conference, was also honored with the *St. Vincent de Paul Award* for his generous witness to Christ, his expertise in the forum of public policy and for faithfully representing the teachings of the Catholic Church, most especially the Gospel of Life.

Following vespers, guests enjoyed a cocktail reception, silent auction and formal dinner. Msgr. Toups expressed gratitude to the sponsors of this year's event; among them, Mrs. Catherine "Sis" Murphy, friend of the seminary for over 30 years. Honorary Chairs, Rita and Ernie Bono, from the mother Diocese of St. Augustine, were recognized for their commitment to the seminary and the success of this year's event. "There is nothing more vital to the future of our Church, than priests to administer the Sacraments. It is a true blessing for Rita and I to be able to give these men, who feel the call to priesthood, the opportunity to discern their calling." said Ernie.

Since 1984, *Friends of the Seminary* has raised in excess of \$1.9 million to support seminarian formation at St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary.