

The GIFT PLANNER

INVESTING IN TOMORROW'S CHURCH

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Dr. Michael Seretny: Faith relationships lead to faithful gifts



Dr. Michael Seretny

Dr. Michael Seretny's relationship with Saint Meinrad began in 1964 when he was a 12-year-old boy scout on retreat. Over the next six decades, the people he would meet at Saint Meinrad—monks, professors, and oblates—would impact his spirituality and ultimately inspire him to establish two endowments and purchase two annuities.

"To me, Saint Meinrad means faith relationships; it means the growth of my faith," he says.

On that first trip to Saint Meinrad, he fell in love with the liturgy. He volunteered to be an altar server in the Archabbey Church, and at 4:30 on a Saturday morning, he and

three other scouts marched up the Hill where monks were saying Mass at side altars.

Dr. Seretny's family thought he would grow up to be either a caregiver or a priest; he went on to discern both vocations along with being a teacher.

He attended Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School in Indianapolis for high school and after graduation, he studied education at Purdue University. He earned his degree and taught science for four years, but he was still considering the priesthood.

He entered seminary at Saint Meinrad in 1978 and was in

formation for two semesters. During that time, he made some connections with monks and professors that have lasted a lifetime, including Nathan Mitchell, who served as his spiritual advisor, and Fr. Colman Grabert, OSB, who was his academic advisor.

"It was not only my privilege to work with both of them spiritually and academically, but they became lifelong friends," says Dr. Seretny. "The connections and spiritual ties are what's so important about the Hill."

After discerning out of seminary, he went to graduate school for teaching and medicine. He became a healthcare practitioner, specializing in head injuries in children and adults. Throughout his career, he worked in group practice and hospital consultation. He also taught in two departments at Purdue University. Currently he does hospice care at several residential health centers in West Lafayette, IN.

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Saint Meinrad
Archabbey and
Seminary & School of Theology





**Rt. Rev. Kurt Stasiak, OSB
Archabbot of Saint Meinrad**

My Dear Friends,

As I often reflect on the tremendous blessings Saint Meinrad receives from our generous donors, I am reminded of the importance of gift discernment and the stewarding of gifts in our lives. The *Rule of St. Benedict* continues to serve as a guide of Christian stewardship for daily living, offering the practical application of receiving and sharing our gifts while responsibly stewarding those gifts within the context of our daily prayer, work, and communal life.

The discernment of gifts is a daily activity for each of us as we choose to follow Christ, to receive his mercy, and to share the bountiful harvest offered to us for the benefit of others. I remain ever grateful for the example and witness of your own sharing of gifts so that the mission and ministries of Saint Meinrad continue to flourish. As this newsletter demonstrates, there are many ways in which to share all that we are and have.

May God continue to bless each of you and yours, now and forever.

+ Kurt Stasiak, OSB

The formation he received at Saint Meinrad has been important to his work as a caregiver. He says that he has always strived to bring a Christian character to his work, even when he worked in a large group practice where it's not as easy to do.

Around 2014, Dr. Seretny took a sabbatical from work to care for his aging parents. At that time, he was communicating with Fr. Meinrad Brune, OSB, who was the oblate director at Saint Meinrad. When Dr. Seretny's mother passed away in 2015, Fr. Meinrad said, "You need to be an oblate."

An oblate is a lay man or woman who wants to live according to the *Rule of St. Benedict*. Dr. Seretny was invested as a novice and spent a year discerning a vocation as an oblate. The monthly lessons he received as a novice reminded him of when he was still in seminary, working with Nathan and Fr. Colman.

"The fiber and substance of Saint Meinrad came through the whole experience. Fr. Meinrad hand-wrote reflections to all 12 of my lessons, sent me encouragement every month," he explains. "Their degree of care, their degree of formation, it shines. That can't help but have a positive effect on you."

These connections and their impact on his spirituality, have led Dr. Seretny to establish two

endowments at Saint Meinrad and purchase two charitable gift annuities. A charitable gift annuity is a gift to Saint Meinrad that provides a lifetime income stream to the donor with tax benefits. The endowments allow him to specifically designate permanently invested funds to the areas he wants to support.

The first endowment, established in 2020, supports spiritual formation for oblates. The second endowment was established in memory of Dr. Seretny's parents, Stan and Lois, to support the Archives and History Museum.

"Both of the endowments that I have are directly related to my passions and to the ministerial work at Saint Meinrad," says Dr. Seretny. "The endowment fulfills two purposes: it gives some kind of assurance for the continuation of a ministry into the future, and it is a lasting way to have an impact on the monastery."

Dr. Seretny says that his sense of giving comes directly from his Catholic faith.

"Given the blessings of my faith, my life, and my education, I wanted to support as best I could some Catholic structure," he says. "It is a very simple decision that I can have an impact in this world, particularly in faith, by supporting Saint Meinrad's wider ministry and mission." ♦

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Gift Discernment, Gift Planning is Good Stewardship

We live in a world of options. Each day we are confronted with choices: where to eat, what to read, who to listen to (or not listen to), and how to spend our time and money. The gifts of faith and love we have received in our lives enable us to make good choices and guide how we can best serve God and neighbor.

The discernment of gifts is a holy endeavor. Recognizing that we have been given all, and that we merit nothing, leads us to invite God to be a part of the process of our decision making.

With discernment comes planning: planning for our families, for the future, for the building up of the Kingdom of God. How we are to spend our time and our money is an important part of gift discernment, and having options to develop a good plan assists us greatly in making good decisions for ourselves and for others.

Planning to give and giving to a plan is good stewardship. Saint Meinrad has been supported in its work and prayer over its 170-year history with tremendous charitable gift planning by so many faithful and generous benefactors. Their participation in the mission and ministry of Saint Meinrad through a planned gift has enabled the Good News of Jesus Christ to spread locally and throughout the world.

There are many ways to make a planned gift to Saint Meinrad. No matter one's circumstance, situation, or state of life, a planned gift is a doable and accessible investment in the work of Saint Meinrad. Whether it's remembering Saint Meinrad in one's will, growing or establishing an endowment, funding a charitable gift annuity, naming Saint Meinrad in a trust, or giving a gift of real estate or property, a gift to Saint Meinrad is a gift of love and good stewardship for future generations. ♦



"Transformational gifts transform lives. May the grace and peace of Christ continue to transform our lives as we seek to transform the lives of others. A planned gift to Saint Meinrad will help transform the lives of future generations."

Brian Doyle
Director of Planned Giving and
Foundation Relations

Discerning a planned gift to Saint Meinrad?

Check out these many options for gift planning (that also come with tax benefits). To discuss what method of giving may be the best to achieve your philanthropic goals, contact Brian Doyle at 812-357-6539 or bdoyle@saintmeinrad.edu.

- Leave a ***Bequest***: Name Saint Meinrad in your will.
- Gift a ***Life Insurance Policy*** or ***Retirement Account***.
- Establish a named ***Endowment***: a permanently designated and invested fund that lasts forever.
- Create a ***Charitable Gift Annuity***: receive a fixed income with the remaining portion gifted to Saint Meinrad at the time of death.
- Make a ***Life Estate Agreement***: transfer a title of a residence or farm as your gift while still being able to use or live on the property.
- Set up a ***Revocable Living Trust***: gifts of real estate, cash, or other property to be made upon death or some other event, while assets are still available to the donor during one's lifetime.
- Consider a ***Charitable Remainder Annuity Trust***: an irrevocable trust that pays a fixed income to the donor or a ***Charitable Remainder Unitrust***, which provides a fluctuating income based on a fixed percentage of the trust's annual value.

For more info, go to: saintmeinrad.edu/support-us/planned-giving/



For Personal Reading & Reflection

Stewardship: A Disciple's Response, A Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003

What Do I Own and What Owns Me?: A Spirituality of Stewardship, Daniel Conway, 2005, Riverwood Press (Saint Meinrad Alumnus)

More Than Silver or Gold, Homilies of a Stewardship Priest, Daniel J. Mahan, 2005 (Saint Meinrad Alumnus)

Stewardship: Living a Biblical Call, Bernard F. Evans, 2014

Everyday Stewardship: Reflections for the Journey, Tracy Earl Welliver, 2015

30 Days on Stewardship: Reflections and Inspiration on Sharing God's Gifts, Leisa Anslinger, 2018

For the Future of the Church



Your last will and testament can be an eloquent statement of what was most important to you in life. A bequest to help educate priests, permanent deacons and lay ministers at Saint Meinrad is a good way to thank God for your faith and to pass it on to those who follow you.



Saint Meinrad

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