

Living the Mystery

by Father Augie Gothman

*"Don't come back without the sheepskin!"*

This good-natured exhortation was given by a priest of the diocese as I was going back to St. John's School of Theology-Seminary for my fourth and final semester last spring. I finished my studies last May, earning a Master of Arts (M.A) in Liturgical Studies from St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn. I received the sheepskin (diploma) at the end of last summer!

This was made possible by the generosity of donors throughout the diocese; my deep gratitude to all who contributed in this way. It was also made possible by Bishop Balke and my brother priests and their support. I would also like to thank the pastors and people of the parishes in Lake Park, Detroit Lakes, Callaway, Frazee and St. Mary of the Lakes who welcomed me while I celebrated weekend liturgies with them; and allowing me to commute to St. John's for classes during the week for two years.

The course of studies for my degree included courses on all the sacraments and rites of the Church, except one: the ordination of a bishop. Having had the privilege and honor of working with so many people in preparing the ordination of Bishop Hoepfner, I no longer feel that's a gap in my education.

It's been a joy to begin working part time in our Pastoral Office of Worship with Sister Marguerite Streifel. As the "new guy," I was given the task of writing a column for the *OND* from the Office.

I've also been able to visit and celebrate Mass in many parishes in the last several months—and I have enjoyed seeing familiar faces and places, as well as getting to see and know new ones. I hope to continue to be out in the parishes serving on behalf of the Office of Worship.

In upcoming months I plan to share some fruits of my studies and my own experiences of living the mystery. I also have some guest authors I may invite to write occasionally. If you have any questions you would like addressed, I will be happy to take suggestions. Contact me by regular mail, or by email: [agothman@crookston.org](mailto:agothman@crookston.org).