

“CHAPUT EFFECT” EXPLAINS SPIKE IN SEMINARIANS



Bill Donohue comments on a news story in today's *Philadelphia Inquirer* on the surge in seminarians in the Philadelphia Archdiocese:

Finally, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* writes a positive piece on the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Unfortunately, reporter David O'Reilly does not give Archbishop Charles Chaput his due in accounting for the spike in ordinations under his tenure. It is not “the Francis effect” that explains the surge in seminarians; it is “the Chaput effect.”

How do I know this? Because if it were “the Francis effect,” there would be an increase in men studying for the priesthood throughout much of the nation. This hasn't happened. To be sure, there has been an increase, but it is not widespread: a small number of dioceses disproportionately account for the uptick.

If “the Chaput effect” explains the increase, then there should be evidence from the Archdiocese of Denver, Chaput's previous assignment, that seminarians increased under his tenure. There is. In 1997, Chaput took over the Denver archdiocese, and by 2006 it ranked third among all the dioceses in ordination. Under his leadership, the Denver archdiocese was typically in the top ten in the nation in attracting men to the priesthood. That he has brought his

special gifts to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia is evident in the latest data.

O'Reilly errs—there is no reason to believe it was intentional—when he says there are 28,215 priests in the U.S. The correct figure is over 38,000.