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ST. MARY'S SEMINARY & UNIVERSITY CONFERS HONORARY DEGREE ON NORWEGIAN BISHOP ERIK VARDEN

Father Phillip Brown, PSS, President-Rector of St. Mary's Seminary & University in Baltimore, Maryland, announces that St. Mary's will confer the degree of Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa* on Bishop Erik Varden of Trondheim, Norway at its graduation ceremony in May. The honorary degree was proposed by St. Mary's faculty and unanimously approved by its Board of Trustees, chaired by Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore. Bishop Varden will also deliver the commencement address,

Bishop Varden is one of the foremost writers and speakers on spirituality today, having a broad international impact. "It is a privilege to confer this degree on Bishop Varden, with whom St. Mary's is developing a special friendship," said Father Brown. "St. Mary's has been working in a concentrated way for several years towards the renewal of the spiritual life of priests, consistent with the longstanding mission of the Society of St. Sulpice, beginning with the spiritual life of its seminarians. It is the conviction of St. Mary's, following that of Fr. Jean-Jacques Olier, Founder of the Society, that renewal of the Church will result from renewal of the priesthood, which will result from a renewal and deepening of the spiritual life of priests beginning in the seminary." St. Mary's is starting where it really counts: in the interior spiritual life of our seminarians, along with dedica building a strong program of human formation in support of the spiritual life and sound, sensitive pastoral sensibilities."

Bishop Varden was ordained in 2011. He holds a doctorate in theology from Cambridge University and STL from the Pontifical Oriental Institute. He taught at the Pontifical Athenaeum in Rome and entered Mount St. Bernard Abbey, a Trappist monastery, in 2002 where he was elected Abbot in 2015, later being appointed bishop of the Territorial Prelature of Trondheim.

Bishop Varden is a prolific author, with works appearing in *Communio*, *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*, *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, *The Tablet*, *Church Life Journal*, and *First Things*. He has published five books on spiritual theology and is considered an authority on the subject. His 2023 book, *Chastity: Reconciliation of the Senses*, was positively reviewed in *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*, *Pastoral Review*, *First Things*, *American Benedictine Review*, and *Teología y Vida*. A reviewer in *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* observed that his book would "benefit every Christian and perhaps every person, Christian or not."