

## Pastor's Notes

*July 28, 2024*

I mentioned that Fr. Ben and I have known each other for years. But unlike Fr. Ben, I didn't live here in my youth. I was born in Indiana, the youngest of four children. I've lived the majority of my adult life, here in the Pacific Northwest.

Another thing that's different is that I'm a convert to the Catholic faith. In my family, we would have identified as Christian, but honestly, we didn't go to church often, and prayer was not regularly part of our family life. I always believed in God, but it was a faith that I didn't understand—a dormant and unexamined faith. Still, I knew that one day, I needed to understand it better. As a young man, I was blessed to have a friend, an Evangelical Christian, who got me started reading the Scriptures and learning to pray. It was like igniting a fire. For a few years, I just kept reading and reading and reading, beginning to know Jesus. But still believing that church and religion were not necessary to being Christian.

Then one day, I good friend (a Catholic) asked me to go with her to Catholic Mass. I had always been confused by Mass, but after those few years of awakening in faith, suddenly I could see something beautiful in it, even if I didn't understand it well. I returned for Mass the next Sunday, and the Sunday after that, and after not so many Sundays, I realized that this is where God has called me to be. In the fall, I joined RCIA at St. James Cathedral in Seattle. Even during those months of RCIA, a stirring in my heart had begun, wondering if God was calling me to be a priest. More to be said on this too, also for another letter.

I'll also fill in the gaps a bit on how I got started in seminary and what that experience was like, but for now, I'll limit it to say that I was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Seattle by Archbishop Alexander Brunette.

For the past thirteen years, I had been assigned to St. Joseph parish in Issaquah. It's easy to get comfortable after that amount of time, but I believe God has a way of giving us new opportunities to grow, to be stretched. St. Joseph did not formally have Hispanic ministry, so coming to St. Philomena and St. Thomas, is re-introducing me to this (at the speed of light!). Additionally, now serving as pastor and being present to two communities, it's all new. I'm being stretched and that's good. Finally, I have a 3-year-old black Labrador Retriever, Cosmas, who I trust you'll meet at some point. I thank you for your kind welcome so far.