



## Well Prepared And Eager To Serve God's People

Cardinal Dolan to Ordain  
11 Priests at Cathedral May 27

Graduates of the class of 2017 at St. Joseph's Seminary in Dunwoodie reflect on the work behind them and anticipate the ministry ahead as they await their ordination to the priesthood. Cardinal Dolan will ordain 11 men at a Mass in St. Patrick's Cathedral on Saturday, May 27, at 9 a.m. Five of the men will serve as priests of the Archdiocese of New York and six are Franciscan Friars of the Renewal. The ordination class includes Father Diego Hernández, who for the past year has served as a transitional deacon at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan, and Father Reynor Santiago, who has studied at the Pontifical North American College in Rome. Back row, from left: Father Roch Greiner, C.F.R., Father Tansi Ibisi, C.F.R., Father Stephen Dufrene, C.F.R., and Father Giles Maria Barrie, C.F.R. Front row: Father Justin Alarcon, C.F.R., Father Anthony Giacona, Father Rufus Kenny, Father Edwin Bonifacio and Father John-Mary Johannssen, C.F.R.

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# Father Edwin Bonifacio



He Followed God's  
Call From  
El Salvador to  
New York

Father Edwin Bonifacio attended Mass each Sunday with his family in his native El Salvador when the thought of being a priest first came to mind.

"I grew up in a very faithful Catholic family. We went to Mass every Sunday, and I enjoyed going to Mass," Father Bonifacio said. "When I saw the priest, I said in my mind I want to be like him one day. When I saw the children serving the priest, I said I want to be a 'little priest.' I called the altar servers little priests."

"I memorized everything the priest said in the Eucharistic prayer. I made my cousins hear me say Mass and I'd cut up a banana to be the Eucharist for them."

Father Bonifacio was in elementary school at the time, and in the years following through high school, he wrestled with the thought of being a priest or pursuing another professional calling.

"Part of me would say I don't want this, but it was always there. The calling was there," he said.

Father Bonifacio was living in New

Jersey when he visited the Archdiocese of Newark's website, clicked on a link for the Archdiocese of New York and realized there might be someone there who spoke Spanish to guide him. He visited St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie, took the psychological test, and soon was doing well in English classes at the seminary and was ready to take priestly formation classes.

"It was very fast for me," Father Boni-

**FATHER BONIFACIO** will celebrate his first Mass in Spanish at St. Mary's Church in North Plainfield, N.J., on Sunday, May 28, at 1:30 p.m. Father Daniel Rivera, a priest of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, will be the homilist.

facio said. "God has his plans and my plans were to be here in New York. Sometimes I ask myself what I am doing here, I'm supposed to be in the Archdiocese of Newark, but God brought me here. He was guiding me to here."

At the seminary, Father Bonifacio visited people living in shelters and the elderly at nursing homes.

"When you visit them, you see the need they have in their heart to talk with someone, understand them or

just hear them," he said. "In the nursing home, there were ladies who had no visitors. I remember I visited them on Wednesdays and they said Wednesday was the best day of their life because they knew I was coming to visit them. That was very nice."

Father Bonifacio's ordination and first Mass will mark historic moments in his family's history.

"My family and friends are very excited, and I am very excited, too," Father Bonifacio said. "I'm very happy because, God willing, I become

ordained, I will be the first priest in our whole family. We never had any priests before me."

As a priest, Father Bonifacio is ready to make a difference in bringing people back to the Catholic faith.

"I will follow what Pope Francis said, that we need to go to them and don't wait until they come to us," Father Bonifacio said. "We need to go to the people to see what their situation

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# Father Anthony Giacona



God Has Always  
Been Close By

Father Anthony Giacona always knew where he could find God. When he was a child, all he had to do was walk out the front door.

His childhood home was on the property of the parish church.

"We were very close to the Church, physically and spiritually," said Father Giacona, whose father, Conrad, was custodian of St. Gianna Beretta Molla Church in Northfield, N.J.

"My family is very Catholic," he said regarding his father, his mother, Christina, and his three sisters, Maria, LaNetta and Elisa. "We went to Mass every Sunday. Becoming a priest was always a possibility."

As an active member of the local Catholic youth group, he attended conferences and retreats and also sang in the group's band. Hearing suggestions that he should consider becoming a priest was not an unusual occurrence, but he brushed them aside.

"I didn't like to hear that when I was younger," said Father Giacona, 31. "I get it; I'm Catholic. But aren't these things I'm doing something everyone

should be doing?"

"But, privately, I thought, maybe. I could be happy doing that," he said. As a junior in high school, he read St. Augustine's "Confessions," which had a strong influence on his faith.

"I was a hardcore Catholic guy at 18 years old, but I was still very raw," Father Giacona said. At that time, his faith was very legalistic and moralistic, based on rules and books, he said.

**FATHER GIACONO'S** first Mass will be offered at St. Agnes Church, Manhattan, on Sunday, May 28, at 3 p.m. The homilist will be Father Richard Veras, director of pastoral formation at St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie.

That changed as he earned his bachelor's degree at Fordham University, Lincoln Center. Through the Catholic Culture Club, he was introduced to Communion and Liberation, a Catholic lay organization that he credits with a second conversion. "Communion and Liberation made me grow up in my faith," he said. Through companionship with other believers, he saw a more human side to the faith and the continued presence of God in his life.

"That really changed me. I thought,

maybe I really do want to be a priest," he said. However, he still had trepidations and was unsure about entering the seminary. After graduating, he worked as a teacher at St. Joseph by-the-Sea High School on Staten Island.

That's when he really began discerning his vocation. "I was doing this job. I liked working for the Church. I liked working with the kids. I assisted with the youth group for Communion and Liberation. I knew I didn't want to be a teacher," he said.

After three years of teaching, he applied and entered the seminary. Fa-

ther Giacona never doubted his faith, but that didn't mean he didn't face challenges and hard choices to get to where he is today. "I would have loved to have a wife and children, so it was very scary to give up those things, to give up my own freedom," he said.

"But once I grew closer to God, the more I understood love is bigger and deeper than our own ideas of it," he said. "Once I understood the way Jesus

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# Father Rufus Kenny



Proximity of  
Childhood Parish  
Was Central to  
His Call

Growing up two blocks from his hometown parish, St. Dunstan's Basilica in Charlottetown, on Canada's Prince Edward Island, had a profound effect on the spirituality of a young Rufus Kenny.

"I lived two blocks away from the church, so I walked there all the time," said 28-year-old Father Kenny. He was an altar boy, lector and catechist.

And he frequented the parish's perpetual adoration chapel.

"I was always just drawn to the Eucharist—always," he said, "drawn to the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, and particularly in the monstrance during Exposition."

The rector of St. Dunstan's at the time, Father Daniel Wilson—he will vest Father Kenny at his Ordination Mass—served as his spiritual director and confessor. "Father Danny always gave me pretty much the same penance: 'Go and spend 15 minutes or longer in front of the Blessed Sacrament.'"

"So I'd sit there and pray with the Lord. That same burning I had when

I was in front of (an image of) Our Lady as a little boy was always there when I was sitting with Him," later as a teenager.

During the Church's celebration of the Year the Eucharist, 2004-2005, he further "committed to the call," he said.

He decided to enter St. Philip Neri Seminary in Toronto "right out of

moved to New York and served as parish manager at Sacred Heart parish, the Bronx, before he entered St. Joseph's Seminary in 2013.

Father Kenny said he first sensed a call to the priesthood as a 7-year-old, reciting the Rosary before a portrait of Our Lady of Guadalupe in his family's living room.

"I just remember praying and feeling in my heart this burning desire to be closer to God and our Lord," he said.

**FATHER KENNY** will celebrate his first Mass at St. Patrick's Church in Yorktown Heights Sunday, May 28, at 12:30 p.m. Father Joseph Franco, pastor of Sacred Heart parish, the Bronx, will deliver the homily.

high school," in 2007, two years after the death of Pope John Paul II. After completing his undergraduate work there, he spent a year at a monastery in France and then, in 2012, while visiting seminarian friends in Rome, was introduced to then-seminarian David Rider of New York, who in 2014 was ordained a priest of the archdiocese. Father Rider suggested Father Kenny contact the vocations director of St. Joseph's Seminary in Dunwoodie, which he did. Father Kenny then

Religious material in general was central to his rearing, particularly Catholic videos his maternal grandmother "made" him watch, he said. "I must have watched the cartoon on Fatima 100 times. Her message was so powerful.

"Mary, for me," he said, was "that woman in white, who talked to those little children and told them about prayer and penance."

It is providential to Father Kenny

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# Father Diego Hernández



Cathedral Service  
Helped Him See  
What Priesthood Is  
All About

Father Diego Hernández welcomed the opportunity even if it meant delaying his ordination by a year.

"I feel so honored and so appreciative of the opportunity Cardinal Dolan gave me here," said Father Hernández, a 2016 graduate of St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie, who has served as a seminarian deacon at St. Patrick's Cathedral since September.

"I have learned many things about parish administration, parish duties and really have gotten to better know the archdiocese. When you are at the seminary, you just study, but here in the parish, it's where you really get to know what the priesthood is about. The seminary is great, but I'm getting to know how this works in the parishes."

Father Hernández, 31, was always one to absorb the advice given to him. He knew as a kid he wanted to be a priest. When he finished high school, he was advised to study philosophy in college to prepare for the priesthood, and he earned degrees in philosophy and religious education from Aquinas College in Colombia. He was working

as a teacher in Colombia when someone suggested he apply for the priesthood in the United States.

"I applied to the Archdiocese of New York by writing an email to the vocations office, and they replied right away in Spanish," Father Hernández said. "The first priest I met was Father Luis Saldaña," the vocations director at that time.

**FATHER DIEGO HERNÁNDEZ'S** first Mass will be celebrated at St. Patrick's Cathedral Saturday, May 27, at 5:30 p.m. Msgr. Robert T. Ritchie, rector of St. Patrick's, will serve as homilist.

"I was accepted," he said.

He arrived in the United States in 2012 and studied one year at the Cathedral Seminary House of Formation in Douglaston, Queens, before attending St. Joseph's Seminary. His pastoral assignments included St. Barnabas, the Bronx; Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the Bronx; St. Mary's, Poughkeepsie; Assumption, Peekskill; St. Joseph's, Yonkers; and his current assignment at St. Patrick's.

Father Hernández, who enjoys trav-

eling, walking, swimming and biking, is thrilled knowing his parents, Miguel and Mabel, and sister Laura, are expected to be in New York from Colombia for his ordination and first Mass.

"I'm excited and am praying for God's help for the responsibilities that come afterwards," he said. "Ordination is a beautiful day but responsibilities are coming at the same time. The priesthood is a service and responsibility. It's for the people and with the people. The priesthood is a service, a

duty to the people and towards God. That is what Pope Francis never gets tired of saying."

Father Hernández had a message for his family and friends.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you for your help, for your generosity, for your prayers," he said. "This priesthood of mine is also a priesthood of theirs because the priesthood is not just the one receiving it, it's the entire community. So this is not only mine, it's theirs, too."



# Father Reynor Santiago



Pope's Words  
At Seminary Stirred  
The Priesthood  
Within Him

Pope Benedict XVI's words to youths and seminarians at St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie in April 2008 during his apostolic visit to the United States made a deep impression on Father Reynor Brigino Santiago. They caused him to seriously begin considering a vocation to the priesthood.

"And what of today?" the pontiff said. "Who bears witness to the Good News of Jesus on the streets of New York, in the troubled neighborhoods of large cities, in the places where the young gather, seeking someone in whom they can trust?"

"God is our origin and our destination, and Jesus the way."

Father Santiago, who was serving as a volunteer that day, said the Holy Father's words helped him understand "the inner desire I have in my heart that before I couldn't express, describe and identify."

"I was searching for a set of ideals, a philosophy in life, or a set of rules that I could imitate and count on, something that would strengthen me to reach my goals in life and make me

feel safe," he said. "His words reminded me that my heart's desire and thirst is not for some ideal but truly for an encounter and union with a person, the person of Jesus Christ."

"The desire to know this Person and to encounter Him led me to a more se-

grant from his native Philippines. He came to find work to help support his family back home.

His faithful Catholic family lives in Pandi, Bulacan, Philippines. His father, Reynaldo, is a member of the Knights of Columbus, and his late mother, Norma, was a member of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate. He also has a brother, Raymond, and a sister, Eleanor Raymundo.

**FATHER SANTIAGO** will offer his first Mass at the Basilica of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral in Lower Manhattan Saturday, May 27, at 5:30 p.m.

Msgr. Donald Sakano, the pastor, will be the homilist. The next day, Father Santiago will celebrate Masses at Our Lady Star of the Sea Church on Staten Island at 10:30 a.m. and in Tagalog at Our Lady of Pompei Church in Lower Manhattan at 3 p.m.

rious discernment of vocation. What is His will for me? What does He want me to do?"

Father Santiago had been discerning a call to the priesthood since 2003, when he began to visit the Basilica of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral in Manhattan. He began attending Mass regularly and praying the Rosary daily. He experienced "slow but steady development and growth religiously and spiritually."

He had arrived in New York five years earlier as a 22-year-old immi-

All have supported Reynor's decision to serve as a priest, especially with their prayers.

Father Santiago, 40, was chosen by Cardinal Dolan to undertake theological studies for the priesthood at Pontifical North American College in Rome, where he earned his STB (theology) from Pontifical Gregorian University, a master's degree in Studies and Spirituality of Joseph Ratzinger from Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum and

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# Father Justin Alarcon, C.F.R.



Friar Hopes His  
Ordination Will  
Be Time of Grace  
For All

Father Justin Jesusmaria Alarcon, C.F.R., remembers hearing the call to the priesthood for the first time as a teenager, but it was only after he drifted from the faith in college and taught for two years in a Christian school that he responded.

"In some ways, it wasn't my decision. I responded to the Lord's call on my life," Father Alarcon said. "Eventually I did have to make the decision to follow where he was inviting me to go."

Father Alarcon, a California native and graduate of the University of California-Berkeley with degrees in political science and education, was 15 when he first heard the call during dinner at a cabin in the Sierra Mountains.

"A priest from the Diocese of Oakland was there for dinner one night," he said. "I don't know if he said this to all the young men he came in contact with. For some reason he asked me the question: 'Have you ever thought of the priesthood?' I never had until that point. I always respected what priests did, but I always had my thoughts and plans to have a family.

"When I went away to college, I drifted further away from practicing the faith as I was in high school," Father Alarcon said. Even then, the question the priest had asked would pop into his mind.

Father Alarcon, 37, reached out to an old friend from college, Father Joseph Kim, now director of vocations in the Diocese of San Jose. Father Kim planted the seed of religious commu-

Father Alarcon entered the religious community in September 2005 and served at friaries in Honduras and Nicaragua for three years before he entered St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie.

"Wherever God places us in the mission field, whether it's journalism, mother of a family educating and rearing her children in the faith, or being a priest and Franciscan, we all have a calling to be holy and to follow God's will as best we can discern it," he said.

Father Alarcon now waits with ex-

**FATHER ALARCON'S** first Mass will be celebrated Sunday, May 28, at 1 p.m. at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Manhattan. Father Luke Mary Fletcher, C.F.R., director of priestly studies for the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, will be the homilist.

nity life and recommended a couple of communities for him to check out. Father Alarcon visited the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal during Holy Week in 2005 and returned for a two-week visit that summer.

"I felt this was where the Lord was leading me," he said. "After receiving communion at Easter vigil service, I just was crying tears of joy—the joy in my heart welled up to my eyes. I couldn't wipe the smile off my face for hours.

citement for his ordination day.

"I'm looking forward to having family and friends there and people from different stages of my life," Father Alarcon said. "It's beautiful to see who's responding. Sometimes it's not particularly the devout, so I hope this is a time of grace for them to see the Church at its best, gathering around the Church, praying together and with Cardinal Dolan as he says the prayer of ordination and laying on the hands."

# Father Giles Maria Barrie, C.F.R.



From Fraternity Life  
To Franciscan Friar

As a student at Illinois State University, Father Giles Maria Barrie, C.F.R., was a fraternity member. He had plenty of friends and a lot of fun.

"Looking back on that whole time, I was definitely no angel," Father Barrie said. "When I went to college I threw everything away as far as faith went.

"If you were to ask me about faith or about God, I didn't care about the question," said Father Barrie, 37. "That's what you do on Sunday, but nothing more."

His lack of interest in thinking about matters of faith was pretty ironic—his parents, Ken and Michelle, are youth ministers at his home parish of St. Patrick's in Kankakee, Ill. He has a brother, Brent.

Toward the end of his college studies, he noticed an emptiness in his life and started to ask the big questions: What's life all about? What's the meaning and purpose of life?

He decided to attend a mission trip with his parent's youth group to Juarez, Mexico, building homes for the poor.

"I had a really powerful encounter

with Christ down there that led to having a real prayer life and taking my faith seriously," he said. The experience led him to leave graduate school, move to El Paso, Texas, and continue working with the poor through Casas por Cristo, a home-building ministry.

He saw something in the poor that he couldn't explain. "Here were people with almost nothing—I had so much and was looking for something—and

**FATHER BARRIE** will celebrate his first Mass at his home parish church of St. Patrick's in Kankakee, Ill., on Sunday, June 18, at 10 a.m. The homilist will be Father Joseph Mary, C.F.R.

they were more content," Father Barrie said. "I wanted that."

While in Texas, he attended an Easter Sunday Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in El Paso with his parents. They arrived early and found a pew. "While sitting there, I said a prayer I hadn't prayed in a long time—a Hail Mary—and in the middle of that prayer, everything changed. It was like everything clicked," he said.

"It was the type of powerful encounter

with Christ you maybe only have a few times in your life," he said.

From that moment, he attended Mass on Sundays and, whenever possible, daily as well. Prayer on a regular basis became an integral part of his life. His grandmother and "prayer warrior," Rita Desmarteau, sent him books on the Catholic faith. One was "The Lamb's Supper," by Catholic evangelist Scott Hahn.

"I felt called to be a priest," he said. "I wasn't exactly sure what that meant." After a couple of years of dis-

cernment, he began visiting religious orders. He visited the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal and fell in love with the order. He entered in 2006 and professed final vows in 2011.

"I know what I received from God and I really feel called to help others receive His mercy," he said, especially through the sacrament of reconciliation.

"Honestly, everything about the priesthood is awesome and awe-inspiring," he said.

# Father Stephen Dufrene, C.F.R.



Journey from  
The Bayou to the  
Big Apple

As a young boy, Stephen Dufrene of the Louisiana Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux experienced God's love "very profoundly, but didn't know what to do with it," he said.

His late maternal great-grandmother May Ayo, he explained, was miraculously healed when she was a little girl. "She was rolled over by a horse carriage. The family prayed to Our Lady of Prompt Succor," patroness of Louisiana.

"The doctor said that she was going to die, 'just make her comfortable,' and she makes this full recovery after the family prays a vigil to Our Lady of Prompt Succor."

The family subsequently donated a statue of the Blessed Mother under that title to the local parish, "in gratitude of the miracle," said Father Dufrene, 37.

Some 90 years later, around 1990, that same statue was crowned by Mrs. Ayo herself at a special Mass of thanksgiving "for her life, for her healing, for her family," he said. "I'm 10 years old, sitting in the back, realizing

it's because of Mary, under this title, Our Lady of Prompt Succor, that my great-grandmother was alive, and able to deduce from that the reason I'm alive is because of Our Lady's prayers."

That may have set him on a path to the priesthood. "I did the regular things guys do in high school and college," he said. "I always went to Mass, but wasn't particularly active in the faith. I didn't really fit in with the 'church crowd.'"

At Louisiana State University, he

"Our Lady had really, I think, kind of orchestrated all that, all along," he added. "She's always been the one that has helped me to connect the dots of God's love."

He earned a master's degree in business administration and a bachelor's in agribusiness with a construction management minor from LSU.

While he was successfully working in the construction industry, Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005. The natural disaster voided his construction contracts. "That, I took, as a sure sign from God to pursue what I thought

**FATHER DUFRENE** will celebrate his First Mass Sunday, June 18, at 2 p.m., at St. Joseph Co-Cathedral in Thibodaux, La. Father Pio Hoffman, C.F.R., will deliver the homily.

joined a group of young men who got together on Saturdays at a local pub to read "True Devotion to Mary," by St. Louis de Montfort.

"So I figured, I can at least relate to these guys, drinking beer," he joked. The insightful tome "articulated the experience that I had, just knowing Our Lady's love on a personal level, and Our Lord's love, and the grace I received in my life.

might be a call to the priesthood."

He had met the CFRs while helping at a homeless shelter in his hometown after Katrina.

He entered the Franciscan Friars of the Renewa in 2008 and made final vows in 2014.

Born and raised in Thibodaux, he is one of two sons of Brandt and Mary Margaret Dufrene; his older brother, Brandt Jr., is a husband and father of five.



# Father Roch Greiner, C.F.R.



Work With  
Renewal Friars  
Convinced Him  
Of God's Call

**F**ather Roch Mary Greiner, C.F.R., is brushing up on his Spanish to prepare for his first mission following his ordination as he returns to a region where he found happiness.

Father Greiner is off to Nicaragua Aug. 17 to serve as a prison and hospital chaplain as well as perform other duties there for the next seven to nine years.

"I'm really looking forward to that, but at the same time, I'm recognizing the challenges of the language," he said. "My Spanish is pretty good, but ministering as a priest in pastoral settings is a whole other ballgame."

Father Greiner, 37, is preparing for his upcoming priestly mission by working through St. Joseph's Seminary with a Spanish ministry in adult faith formation at Immaculate Conception and Assumption parish in Tuckahoe.

"I really love it and enjoy it," Father Greiner said. "A serious amount of preparation is required at least for myself to teach in another language."

Father Greiner said he had a major conversion experience in the Catholic faith at the age of 17 and was not confirmed until he was 23.

"I did a pilgrimage and when I came

back, the seed was planted," he said. "I wrestled with that for a number of years. Finally, I said I'd give it a shot and it took me a number of years to find the right place."

Father Greiner found the right place for him in summer 2006 when he went on a mission trip to Honduras with the youth ministry at his local parish of San Antonio de Padua in Anaheim Hills, Calif.

"We worked with the friars every

**FATHER GREINER'S** first Mass will be celebrated on Saturday, July 1, at 5 p.m. at San Antonio de Padua Church in Anaheim Hills, Calif. Father Anthony Baetzold, C.F.R., vicar general for the Friars of the Renewal, will serve as homilist.

day," he said. "I had no clue what we'd be doing. It was the moment when I knew right away God was calling me to this community."

Father Greiner joined the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in September 2007.

"I felt like the CFR way of life does present a greater challenge and I did feel that's what was going to help me fulfill my call to holiness, particularly through the vows of chastity, charity and obedience, the way they are lived out through

the CFR community," he said.

Father Greiner has continued his work in Central America with assignments in Honduras and Nicaragua.

"The first time I went on a mission trip when I was younger, I went there thinking I was going to do all these things and help them build houses and help and serve the poor," Father Greiner said. "I realized I wasn't there to help them; I went there so they can help me."

"It opened my eyes to the meaning of happiness. These people had nothing except their families and had so much

joy. They had something I hadn't experienced before. I wanted that, too."

Father Greiner is excited about his ordination and the opportunity to return to San Antonio de Padua to celebrate his first Mass before leaving for Nicaragua.

"The thing that excites me most is being able to serve those who have walked with me and supported me as a priest—seeing their prayers come to fruition," he said. "They've been praying for me, and supporting me in many different ways."

# Father Tansi Ibisi, C.F.R.



Computer Science  
Professional  
Was Caught in  
God's 'Net'

**T**he life story of Father Tansi Ibisi, C.F.R., is not that different from that of the Prodigal Son.

Father Ibisi, 43, left his home in Nigeria and headed to England in hopes of achieving success. He graduated from the University of Greenwich in London with a degree in computer science and found a job in tech support at the University of London. He found his own apartment and spent his time and money on material goods.

"I kept bad company who influenced me more and more to turn away," he said.

He stopped attending Mass and turned away from the faith in which he was raised. His parents, Francis, who died in 2014, and Edith, were devout Catholics who attended Sunday Mass—and, often, daily Mass—with their children. Father Ibisi has a brother, Francis, and two sisters, Amanda and Asana.

Feeling that something was lacking

in his life, he decided to return to the sacraments and went to confession. He began going to Mass at St. Peter's in London. He began attending Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with other young adults. Around this time, he was also asked to design a parish website by the pastor, Father Michael Scanlon.

**FATHER TANSI IBISI'S** first Mass will be offered at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Manhattan, Sunday, May 28, at 1 p.m. The homilist will be Father Luke Fletcher, C.F.R., director of priestly studies for the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal.

"I heard God in my heart saying to go into networking. He wasn't talking about computer science," he said smiling.

Once a month, members of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal would visit the parish to celebrate Mass and hear confessions. "I asked, who are these guys with the long beards and the gray robes?" he said. Intrigued, he attended a Youth 2000 retreat.

"I never discerned religious life before, but I saw myself when I saw them," he said. He asked to join the order in August 2006, and was told no, but to come back in a year.

"It was the longest year of my life," he said. He entered the order in 2007 and professed final vows in 2012.

"My life with the friars has been a real gift," he said. "Coming to the seminary has been another gift. The Father is continually pouring these

gifts out and making me aware of His love."

He hopes to share God's message of mercy as a priest and to celebrate the sacraments, especially the sacrament of reconciliation. "I desire to enter into this sacrament and to be a symbol of the Father's love, especially to those who have strayed," he said.

"I feel like my journey is just beginning."



# Father John-Mary Johannssen, C.F.R.



# Retired U.S. Air Force Navigator Now Guides Souls

**H**e's soared the skies in service to our country and now, as a priest, he'll valiantly help all souls entrusted to his care get to the highest place of all— heaven.

Father John-Mary Johannnsen, C.F.R., 43, a retired U.S. Air Force captain, spent nine years in the Air Force, including as an aircraft navigator for the C-130 at Yokota Air Base outside Tokyo and as an air navigation instructor for the T-43 at Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio.

He began his service to the Church as an altar server at St. Augustine's parish in Highland. "I was always just sort of drawn to and fascinated by the Mass. I remember asking my mom, 'When do I get to be an altar server?' I had to wait a year or two before I was old enough, but I persevered," he recalled with a laugh.

Coming “face to face with the poverty of the people” during an Air Force mission to Thailand in his 20s “was a wakeup call” for him, he said.

"It just made me realize all the privi-

leges that I had experienced, growing up in the United States,” he said, “with friends and family and all the many gifts that God had given me.”

“The Lord used that encounter to let me realize that I was ‘the rich young man,’ and that I had a certain responsibility to care for those who didn’t have the good things that I had.”

Something told him that donating money or supporting organizations

the background as my Air Force career sort of took off. But it never left me.”

Although he had always practiced his faith—"sometimes more, sometimes less"—he experienced "an adult conversion" through the intercessory prayer of a joyful friend and comrade, a fellow Air Force Academy alum. "I realized, for the first time in my life, really what it is that Christ had done for me in laying down his life for me

**FATHER JOHANNSEN** will celebrate his First Mass Monday, May 29, at 3 p.m., at St. Augustine Church in Highland. Father Richard Veras, director of pastoral formation at St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie, will deliver the homily.

that served the poor “just didn’t cut it, that if I really was concerned about the poor, I had be willing to be ‘poor among the poor.’”

"This," Father Johannssen said, "was the beginning of my Franciscan vocation."

While in the Air Force, “the Lord was also still working on my heart, cultivating that childhood interest in the priesthood that had kind of faded into

on the cross. The love of Christ hit me like a ton of bricks.”

He also came to believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist while praying before the Blessed Sacrament. "If you're here, I need to know, and I don't want to be anywhere else," he told the Lord in front of the tabernacle at the Air Force base Adoration chapel in Japan.

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WITH OUR PRAYERS AND BEST WISHES  
ON YOUR ORDINATIONS, AND WITH  
GRATITUDE FOR YOUR SERVICE TO  
THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE  
ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK.



*His Eminence, Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan  
The Board of Trustees and the Entire St. Joseph's Seminary Community  
Congratulates*

## Edwin Bonifacio

## Anthony Giacona

Diego Hernández

## Rufus Kenny

## Reynor Santiago

*For the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal*

**Br. Justin Alarcon, C.F.R.**

**Br. Roch Greiner, C.F.R.**

**Br. Giles Barrie, C.F.R.**

**Br. Tansi Ibisi, C.F.R.**

**Br. Stephen Dufrene, C.F.R.**

**Br. John Mary Johannssen, C.F.R.**

*on their Ordination to the Priesthood on May 27, 2017*





**CONVOCATION**—Left, members of the class of 2017 from the Archdiocese of New York pose at the convocation of the Cathedral Seminary House of Formation at Immaculate Conception Center in Douglaston, Queens, May 12. From left are Father George Sears, rector; Brandon Miraz; Niall McDonagh; Robert Carolan; Auxiliary Bishop James Massa of Brooklyn; Wesbee Victor; Anthony Gorgia; Savio Paul; Matthew Breslin; and Tegawende Stephane Ovedraogo. Not pictured is graduate Carmine Caruso. Bottom left, Gorgia receives the Master of Arts in Catholic Philosophical Studies degree from Father Richard Veras, left; Bishop James Massa; and Father Sears, right. Fathers Veras and Sears are priests of the archdiocese. Bottom right, from left, Gorgia, McDonagh and Breslin sing the opening hymn, “O God Beyond All Praising.” The evening began with Mass and dinner.



PHOTOS BY MARY DIBIASE BLAICH

**Bonifacio...**  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

is and how their life is in order to have them see the love of God in whatever situation they’re living.

“I will tell them God is with them and God is always ready to forgive them and take them back.”

**Giacona...**  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

loved—a chaste love, a celibate love, a love for everyone—I knew that’s the way I want to love.

“That gave me the courage to say OK,” he said.

**Kenny...**  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

that the centennial of Our Lady of Fatima occurs the same year he is ordained.

Born in Charlottetown, he is the second of Morgan and Rayné’s four children. He has two brothers, Rory and Dana, and a sister, Lorelei.

He has dual citizenship. His father is from Garden City on Long Island.

Father Kenny’s childhood home, in Prince Edward Island’s capital city, was also close by the province’s legislature. So it’s no surprise that he also dabbled in political pursuits before settling on the priesthood.

**Santiago...**  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

is pursuing his STL (spiritual theology) from Pontifical University of St. Thomas. He holds a degree in philosophy from Fordham University.

Father Santiago called it “a gift” to know and study alongside seminarians from the United States, Canada and Australia.

“The encounter of different discernment stories and knowledge of different cultures deepened my faith,” Father Santiago said. “Christ is truly present and the same in all of us and everywhere. His loves toward his people is truly personal and universal.”

**Johannssen...**  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

“In that moment of grace, where things fell into place...to my great surprise, that was also the moment where I felt the Lord ask me to be his priest.”

He entered the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in 2005 and made final vows in 2011.

Born in Poughkeepsie, he is the eldest of Carl and Pamela Johannssen’s three children; he has two sisters.

He received a bachelor’s degree in behavioral science from the U.S. Air Force Academy and a master’s in theology from St. Mary’s University in San Antonio.