

CATHOLIC NEW YORK

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Cardinal Dolan will ordain 10 men to the priesthood—six for the Archdiocese of New York and four for the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal—Saturday, May 29, at St. Patrick's Cathedral. Each of the ordinands is profiled inside the 12-page special section that wraps the regular issue.



CHRIS SHERIDAN

TO BE ORDAINED—Eight members of the Class of 2021 at St. Joseph's Seminary pose on the Dunwoodie campus. From left, they are Father Frantisek Marie Chloupek, C.F.R., Father Ignatius Pio Mariae Doherty, C.F.R., Father Joseph Michael Fino, C.F.R., Father Robert Carolan, Father Kevin Panameño, Father Elijah Marie Perri, C.F.R., Father Steven N. Gonzalez and Father Matthew Breslin. All eight, plus Father Carmine Caruso and Father Wesbee Victor, will be ordained to the priesthood by Cardinal Dolan at St. Patrick's Cathedral Saturday, May 29.

The Priesthood and Publishing

The special section wrapping around the outside of this issue of Catholic New York is close to our hearts. As you can see, it features profiles about the 10 men Cardinal Dolan will ordain to the priesthood at St. Patrick's Cathedral on Saturday morning, May 29.



JOHN WOODS

Editor's Report

A lot of preparatory work and effort goes into producing a section such as this one, especially this year. From our end, all of our reporters and editors get involved in the reporting and writing of the profiles. While we each bring our own personal style to the assignment, we try our best to keep the focus where it

belongs—on the seminarians, now transitional deacons, who in slightly more than a week will be ordained to the priesthood.

We get a lot of help in turning out this particular product, especially from the leadership and staff of St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie, where eight of this year's ordinands completed their formation for the priesthood. Of course, that includes Auxiliary Bishop James Massa of Brooklyn, the rector, and Father William Cleary, the vice rector, who for several years has helped us to coordinate the interview schedule of the seminarians and facilitate the flow of basic background questions to and from them.

In years such as this one, when more men are being ordained, keeping everything running smoothly is no small matter, so the seminarians aren't burdened with too many additional responsibilities as graduation and ordination nears and we are able to get the information and access we need to publish.

From CNY's perspective, ordinations are an important story, in terms of news and in the life of the archdiocese. It goes almost without saying at this point, but bears repeating, that we in the Archdiocese of New York and just about every other diocese in the United States could use more priests. You can likely see the need clearly in your own parish.

This section is one way we personally work to counter that trend. We endeavor to deliver not only the basics about the new priests' edu-

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CHRIS SHERIDAN

SPRING STROLL—The eight members of the Class of 2021 of St. Joseph's Seminary enjoy a walk on the tree-lined Dunwoodie campus last month. In the front row, from left, are Father Kevin Panameño, Father Robert Carolan and Father Steven N. Gonzalez. Cardinal Dolan will ordain all eight to the priesthood at a Mass in St. Patrick's Cathedral May 29.

Cardinal to Ordain 10 Priests at Cathedral Mass May 29

Cardinal Dolan will ordain 10 men to the priesthood at a Mass in St. Patrick's Cathedral at 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 29.

Six are being ordained as priests for the Archdiocese of New York, and four for the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal.

The new archdiocesan priests are Father Matthew Breslin, Father Robert Carolan, Father Carmine Caruso, Father Steven N. Gonzalez, Father Kevin Panameño and Father Wesbee Victor.

Being ordained for the Renewal Friars are Father Frantisek Marie Chloupek, C.F.R., Father Ignatius Pio Mariae Doherty, C.F.R., Father Joseph Michael Fino, C.F.R., and Father Elijah Marie Perri, C.F.R.

Eight of the new priests completed their formation for the priesthood at St. Joseph's Seminary in Dunwoodie. Father Carmine Caruso completed his priestly formation at Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary in Weston, Mass., and Father Wesbee Victor completed his priestly formation at the Theological College of The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

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First Priest From Highland Parish Credits God Working Through Him

Father Matthew Breslin knew at a young age as an altar server at daily Mass he felt an attraction and desire for the priesthood.

His father, Alex, had just lost a 10-year battle with brain cancer and Father Breslin said becoming more involved with his parish at St. Augustine in Highland helped him with his grief and discernment to the priesthood.

“He was diagnosed when my mother (Maureen) was pregnant with me and my sister (Megan, now Sister Mary Strength of Martyrs of the Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matara) was 2 years old. It was inoperable, and they said he wouldn't live to see me born. Miraculously, he lived 10 years after that,” Father Breslin, who will be the first priest from St. Augustine's parish in its 121-year history, told CNY.

“His life was a great lesson to me in many ways. He was a great dad who loved being a dad, loved his children and loved his wife. It was a lesson that I can apply to my priesthood in the fatherly heart he had for my sister and I of wanting to spend every day with us and fighting to stay alive as long as he could.

“My mom in my life is the epitome of self-sacrificial love. She was always the rock of the family despite having this horrible, horrible life scenario. She went from caring for her two children and dying husband and then transitioned to now being a single mother to children who no longer have a father and really didn't miss a beat. I still consider her one of my best friends.”

As a priest, Father Breslin is looking forward to celebrating Mass, hearing confessions, meeting people and being a “vehicle of God's mercy and presence in the world.” He also hopes to remain involved in high school ministries and retreats.

“That age ministry really excites me because they are important years in someone's life, and I didn't lose the faith at that age because I had such great examples of the faith,” he said.

“They are not the future (of the Church). They are the present. They have the same desires and needs as anyone because ultimately our desires all lead to God who is the fulfillment of every desire. He's the one who made our desires and he fulfills all of them.”

Father Breslin, 25, attended the parish school at St. Augustine before graduating from Our Lady of Lourdes High School. He graduated from St. John's University with a bachelor's degree in philosophy and leaves

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CHRIS SHERIDAN

Father Matthew Breslin

Father Breslin will celebrate his first Mass Sunday, May 30, at 2 p.m. at St. Augustine Church in Highland. Father Brian Graebe, pastor of the Basilica of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral in Manhattan, where Father Breslin served as a transitional deacon, will be the homilist.



CHRIS SHERIDAN

Father Robert Carolan

Father Carolan will celebrate his first Mass at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Shrub Oak on Sunday, May 30, at 3 p.m. Father Robert Quarato, pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parish, will be the homilist.

Father Robert Carolan decided in 2015 to continue teaching in a different role. The physical education teacher in the archdiocese entered St. Joseph's Seminary in Dunwoodie and will be ordained a priest by Cardinal Dolan at St. Patrick's Cathedral May 29.

“My first two years at Dunwoodie, I was the book bearer for both ordination Masses,” he told CNY. “I was right up front with the Cardinal as the guys were being ordained.

“Now, I'll be on the other side. I won't be the book bearer, I will be the one getting ordained. Obviously, you're going to be excited, emotional. It'll just hit you. Right now, we're busy with papers and getting things ready for ordination.”

Father Carolan, 37, grew up in Yorktown Heights as one of four children of Robert and Caryn Carolan. He has three sisters—Pam Leone, Christine Benson and Kim Fox—and 11 nephews and nieces.

He attended Sunday Mass with his family at St. Elizabeth

Ann Seton Church in Shrub Oak where he was enrolled in the parish school for a few years before later graduating from Yorktown High School. He earned a bachelor's degree in applied sociology from East Carolina University in North Carolina and a master's in physical education in sports pedagogy from Manhattanville College in Purchase.

Father Carolan said he first heard a calling to the priesthood as a junior in high school, and his faith grew through college and as a physical education teacher for seven years at archdiocesan schools.

“The call was getting stronger and stronger,” said the native of Ridgewood, N.J. “The Lord put some pretty big signs in my way that I knew he was calling me. It wasn't until 2015 that I finally told my parents.”

In the seminary, his apostolic assignments included two years at St. Christopher's Inn, operated by the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement at Graymoor in Garrison.

“St. Christopher has a great reputation of rehabbing people and I think the big reason is the faith aspect, where people realize that we are body, mind and soul, and to have a spiritual light and to lean on an invisible force, and also the simple fact to know you're loved by God, no matter what state in life you are in, could really help with the road to recovery,” he said.

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A Good Listener, He Learned to Trust in the Lord's Plans



Father Carmine Caruso

Father Caruso will celebrate his First Mass at Our Lady Star of the Sea Church on Staten Island Sunday, May 30, at 2 p.m. Father Thomas Devery, the pastor, will deliver the homily.

Background in Engineering, Boxing Will Help Him Build Up Church

The earliest memory Father Carmine Caruso has of being in a church was around age 4, accompanying his late grandmother, Concetta Caruso, to St. Frances Cabrini in Brooklyn. “It was a mystique to me as a little boy,” he said of watching her light candles and pray before various statues of saints after Mass. “I was just in awe” and thought, “this is pretty powerful.”

“It showed me where she was going to the well—that was her source for drawing upon her strength. My grandmother buried five out of six kids before she passed away” at age 78.

Now 43, his vocation to the priesthood is an answer to the call “to love,” he said, “without any prejudice, without any bias.”

To him, “the priesthood is just the only profession out there that can get into the human heart and into the soul and that’s what really needs to be healed if we look out into the world...”

“You see some graces happen,” he said, “and you just know that’s not on human merits; that’s the grace of God at work.”

He credits a missionary trip to Jamaica he made in 2015 with a men’s group from Our Lady of Pity parish on Staten Island as transformative. “It gave me the courage to respond and finally say ‘yes’ to the call I had received but been putting off for quite some time,” he said of their service work with the Missionaries of the Poor. Afterward, he contacted Father Enrique Salvo, then vocations director for

the archdiocese.

Hobbies have included baseball, bowling and amateur boxing. The latter, he explained, “brought great discipline and structure to my life, which is what faith does. You’re training to go out into battle. As a priest, you’re like a boxer.”

He worked in the field of engineering from 2000 until entering the Cathedral Seminary House of Formation in Douglaston, Queens, in 2015, followed by Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary in Weston, Mass., in 2017.

Summer parish assignments were Our Lady of the Assumption and St. Mary Star of the Sea in the Bronx and St. Joseph and St. Mary Immaculate on Staten Island.

Born in Brooklyn, he is the son
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Father Steven N. Gonzalez

Father Gonzalez will celebrate his first Mass Sunday, May 30, at 10:30 a.m., at St. Lucy’s parish in the Bronx. The homilist will be Father Luis Saldana, canonical spiritual director at the seminary.

Father Steven N. Gonzalez, a graduate of Cristo Rey New York High School in Manhattan, likes hiking on Bear Mountain and in the Catskills, and he enjoys playing board games, with Parcheesi a favorite.

His focusing skills help him excel in those pastimes. Soon they will help him as he pays pastoral attention to the spiritual and sacramental needs of the faithful.

“I was 17 years old when the thought came across my mind,” Father Gonzalez, 28, told Catholic New York in a phone interview, as he discussed when he began to think about becoming a priest. He credited Jesuit priests he encountered at Cristo Rey as a positive influence.

“But it wasn’t until later in college that I started getting more involved in my faith,” recalled Father

Gonzalez, adding that he became more active at St. Lucy’s parish in the Bronx, his home parish. Priests there also played an influential role in his interest in the priesthood. As a youngster, his parents instilled the values of the Church.

“I want to ultimately be an instrument of Jesus toward them (the faithful),” he said of his planned approach to being a priest, adding that he will start each morning alone in prayer, in preparation for his pastoral service.

“I want to start with Jesus and be able to introduce people to the Lord. I am fluent in Spanish, so I probably will be working a lot with Hispanic ministry. But I am also passionate about learning about different cultures, and learning how Catholicism is spread within different cultural contexts.”

He is the son of Nestor and

Magaly Gonzalez, both born in the Dominican Republic and residing in the Bronx, where Father Gonzalez was born and raised. He is the middle of three sons, between older brother Nestor, and Jonathan, the youngest. The family parish at the time was Sacred Heart in the South Bronx.

Father Gonzalez holds a bachelor’s degree in International Political Economy and Development from Fordham University, with a minor in Spanish literature. From St. Joseph Seminary and College in Dunwoodie, he holds master’s degrees in Catholic Philosophical Studies, Divinity and Arts and Theology. He also holds a bachelor’s in Angelicum Sacred Theology, a program of the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas administered by St. Joseph’s Semi-

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CHRIS SHERIDAN

Cristo Rey New York High School Alumnus Entering Priesthood

New York-born Seminarist Sensed Path to the Priesthood Early in Life

Father Kevin Panameño first realized he may want to be a priest when he was 13 years old. At age 31, that pursuit will become a reality. A young teen's look into the future has arrived.

"I started to pay more attention to the readings during Mass," Father Panameño told Catholic New York. He added that the virtues of service and bringing hope through the Good News became more appealing as a way to do God's will. He said he was not influenced by a particular priest, but he did like the pastoral works of parish priests.

He was born in Manhattan and raised in Memphis, Tenn., a relocation stemming from his father's work as an airport employee. His childhood church in Memphis was Resurrection parish. Father Panameño's current parish is Our Lady of Angels in the Bronx.

"It was the Gospel of John; it is filled with so much mystery and it's beautiful," Father Panameño said of the Bible book that he often read in his teens and into adulthood. "And my parents were very supportive throughout my journey."

As for his upcoming first few years in the priesthood, he said, "I hope to be a priest who will continue to learn, who will be open to learning, especially taught by the people. I look forward to being there for the people to the best of my ability, be it in a pastoral or academic atmosphere."

His parents are Tomas and Celina Miranda, who live in Memphis; he grew up with a younger sister, Karin Miranda. (Panameño is his mother's maiden name. He said people sometimes think he is from Panama because of that surname. "But both my parents are from El Salvador," he said with a laugh).

He holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy from St. Joseph College Seminary in St. Benedict, La., and a master's in theology from St. Meinrad's Theological Seminary in St. Meinrad, Ind. He attended elementary school and high school in Memphis.

His apostolic assignments included Our Lady of Angels parish in the Bronx, where he helped teach RCIA classes and assisted in preparing youth retreats; St. Joseph in Middletown (youth ministry and giving reflections); Sacred Heart in the Bronx (serving Mass, RCIA classes and giving reflections); the Westchester County Department of Correction in Valhalla (jail ministry, visited the infirmary); and St. Raymond parish in the Bronx (youth group, daily reflections, burial services).

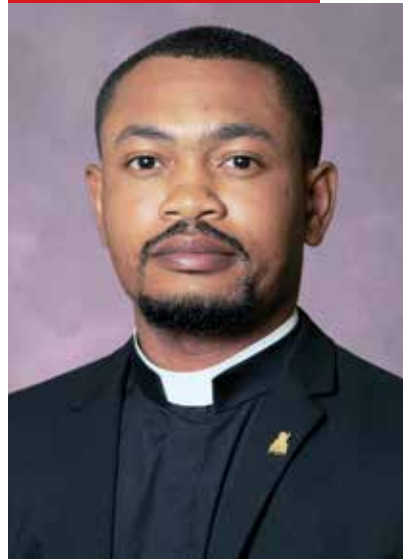
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CHRIS SHERIDAN

Father Kevin Panameño

Father Panameño will celebrate his first Mass Sunday, May 30, at 2 p.m., at St. Raymond Church in the Bronx. The homilist will be Msgr. Javier García de Cárdenas, an Opus Dei priest in Manhattan who is a close friend.



Father Wesbee Victor

Father Victor will celebrate his First Mass Saturday, May 29, at 4:30 p.m. at St. Catherine of Genoa Church in Hamilton Heights. Father Carlos Limongi, a parochial vicar at Assumption parish in Peekskill, and a friend from priestly formation, will deliver the homily.

Following in his trauma surgeon father's footsteps was not the calling for Wesbee Victor, which was apparent to him after he observed and subsequently fainted during a surgery his adoptive father performed.

"I was in there for probably 10 minutes," he recalled of his time in the operating room, and was looking to leave amid "the cutting and the blood...I remember I told them, 'Get me out of here,' and then I just passed out."

Now 31, Victor was 18 at the time. He then confided in his father his attraction to the priesthood since childhood. He was 9 years old and an altar server when he asked his pastor, "What does the priest do? And then when they are at the altar, why they do what they are doing...I was just being a curious kid."

Shadowing his father during surgery "was a wake-up call for me; now, what do I want to do?" The following year, the family moved from Florida to New York. Before the move, Victor spoke to a priest in Tampa, Fla., and later contacted Father Luke Sweeney

(now Msgr. Sweeney) who was then serving as vocations director for the Archdiocese of New York.

He entered the Cathedral Seminary House of Formation in Douglaston, Queens, in 2013 and The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., in 2017.

He received a bachelor's in philosophy with a minor in psychology from St. John's University in Queens. He earned a bachelor's in sacred theology from Catholic University and in fall 2022 is scheduled to complete his licentiate in sacred theology in moral theology with a focus on bioethics.

His interest in bioethics stems from the intersection he sees between faith and science. "The teaching of the Church is very practical. We know the author of life is God. To act in a virtuous way, we have to recognize that life is a gift. We have to cherish it and foster it in a way that respects the dignity of human life."

He wants to be a priest, he said, because "for me, this is the best way that I can lay my life down for others."

His summer parish assignments were Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the Bronx, in 2018 and St. Mary's, Wappingers Falls, 2019 and 2020.

He speaks French, Haitian Creole, Spanish and English. He likes to cook Haitian food, plays soccer and has a blue belt in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.

Born in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti, his home

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Study of Bioethics Will Bolster His Priesthood



CHRIS SHERIDAN

Father Frantisek Marie Chloupek, C.F.R.

Father Frantisek Marie Chloupek, C.F.R., left family and friends in a small midwestern town of 900 people to begin his journey to the priesthood in New York City's population of eight million-plus.

Father Chloupek grew up in Harvard, Neb., where he was an altar server at St. Joseph Church and spent his summers working in cornfields. He attended the University of Nebraska, where he earned a degree in fine and performing arts. While in college, he took a tour of Italy and visited Assisi in 2006. He returned with an interest to learn more about St. Francis of Assisi, eventually traveling to New York to visit the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal.

"I was hesitant to visit New

Father Chloupek's first Mass will be celebrated Sunday, June 20, at 4 p.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Lincoln, Neb. Father Glenn Sudano, C.F.R., will serve as homilist. St. Thomas Aquinas was Father Chloupek's parish when he attended the University of Nebraska and when he discerned his vocation.

York," the friar told CNY. "I made a few visits and I really felt the Lord drawing me there even though it meant moving from the comfort of my home diocese and leaving family and friends.

"I have a great love for Nebraska and it grows while you're away. (Harvard) was a very tight-knit community. The school was a block away. You know everyone in town. My parents were such faithful people taking me to Mass every Sunday. It set a foundation for me."

Father Chloupek, now 35, entered the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in 2010 and professed final vows in 2015.

"I saw the deep prayer life the friars live," he said. "They clearly were committed to prayer, daily Mass,

daily holy hour of Eucharistic adoration—that was something I was looking for. There was devotional prayer and communal prayer. You just saw the deep love of the brothers for the people in their neighborhoods, the poor that we serve, the youth, and saw the work they were doing in the homeless shelter in the youth center in the Bronx.

"I had seen what I had read about St. Francis living a very prayerful life, humble life and working with the poor and evangelizing."

Father Chloupek served in youth ministry while residing at St. Patrick Friary in Ireland, 2012-2015; and Our Lady of the Angels Friary in the Bronx, 2015-2017.

"I thrived in the youth ministry

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College Visit to Assisi Sparked an Interest in St. Francis

Father Ignatius Pio Mariae Doherty, C.F.R.

Father Ignatius Pio will offer his first Mass Sunday, June 13, at 9:30 a.m. at Holy Family Church in Rockford, Ill., his home parish.

Father Ignatius Pio Mariae Doherty, C.F.R., speaks about the three years he spent in Comayagua, Honduras, as the best ones of his life.

"I loved it there. I can't wait to go back," he told Catholic New York in a recent phone interview.

From 2014 to 2017, he served in Comayagua, where he and other friars ran a Montessori-inspired lunch program to feed poor children both physically and spiritually. Volunteers prepared the meals, and the youths handled the rest, from serving the food, to clearing the tables and leading prayer time.

Father Ignatius Pio, 34, described it as a profound experience "into the mystery of human nature—the lives of these kids and their families, their struggles, and the power of the Gospel in their lives."

"They're coming to eat so they

can study and grow," the friar said. "The idea was to create an environment that was morally and spiritually formative."

In Honduras, he became fluent in Spanish, a skill developed during prior immersion trips to Costa Rica and Guatemala and under the tutelage of his mother, Louise, who homeschooled him and his brother and two sisters.

The Doherty family of Rockford, Ill., including husband and father J. Mark Doherty, are devout Catholics. Growing up, they attended Mass and Charismatic prayer meetings on Sundays. His parents belong to the group People of Praise, which captured national headlines during last fall's confirmation hearings of Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett.

That community provided good role models, especially men living

their Catholic faith, loving their families and serving God.

He first encountered the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal during a vocations day sponsored by the Institute of Religious Life in 2004 at Mundelein Seminary outside Chicago.

Upon visiting the friars in New York months later, the 18-year-old was eager to join, but Father Glenn Sudano, C.F.R., told him he should continue his studies first, which turned out to be good advice.

Father Ignatius Pio attended Ave Maria University in southwest Florida, graduating summa cum laude in 2010 with a bachelor's degree in philosophy and a minor in theology and classical languages.

He entered the Renewal Friars that September, serving first in Harlem where he shared food and the

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CHRIS SHERIDAN

Lessons From Poor He Serves and Namesake Saint Prepared Him

God's Blessings and Prayers from
Our Lady of Lourdes High School

CONGRATULATIONS MATTHEW BRESLIN '13

on his Ordination into the
Sacred Priesthood of Jesus Christ
by His Eminence Timothy Cardinal Dolan



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"You are a priest for ever of the order of Melchizedek"

Psalm 110



Ohio Native Accepted the Lord's Invitation to Priesthood

Growing up in Westerville, Ohio, the home parish of Father Joseph Michael Fino, C.F.R., was the Church of the Resurrection in a nearby town called New Albany. The parish and his parents instilled in him the significance of the faith and the importance of Church teachings.

During his college years at Miami University of Ohio in Oxford, Father Fino began to think of pursuing the priesthood. "It was during my sophomore year in college, I started going back to Mass," Father Fino told Catholic New York in a phone interview.

"A year later (at age 21), I received a grace (during Communion) to know with certainty that this is in fact the body and blood, the soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. And after that I went back to Confession, and then from there I started reading the writings of John Paul II—his Letter to Families and his Theology of the Body, and Love and Responsibility. I also started learning a lot more about the Mass and the priesthood."

Father Fino added, "And later it was through reading the Scriptures and praying while reading the Scriptures that I heard the Lord invite me to be a priest and a friar."

As a priest, Father Fino said he hopes "to bring Christ to where people are at."

"I hope to be a priest who is present and available and accessible to people in their everyday lives," he said.

Father Fino grew up the son of Steve and Toni Fino, who reside in Westerville. He has two older sisters, Jamie McClelland and Jessica Roads. He holds a bachelor's degree in English literature from Miami University of Ohio. Born in Columbus and raised in Westerville, he attended local elementary and high schools.

His apostolic assignments from St. Joseph Seminary in Dunwoodie included service at St. Francis Center in the Bronx (in neighborhood family programs); Calvary Hospital and neighborhood evangelization in the Bronx; and the Westchester County Department of Correction in Valhalla. Before the seminary, his work through St. Leopold Friary in Yonkers included serving at St. Anthony Homeless Shelter in the Bronx, and working in prisons and hospitals in Nicaragua. He lived at the friary and studied at the seminary. Earlier, he worked in parish youth ministries in Ohio.

Father Fino, 36, entered the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in 2010 and made final

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CHRIS SHERIDAN

Father Joseph Michael Fino, C.F.R.

He will celebrate his first Mass Sunday, June 6, at 2 p.m., at the Church of the Resurrection in New Albany, his childhood parish.



CHRIS SHERIDAN

Father Elijah Marie Perri, C.F.R.

Father Elijah's first Mass will be offered on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Friday, June 11, at 11 a.m., in St. Mary of the Angels Church in Chicago, which he describes as "a beautiful, old Franciscan church" at which the life of St. Francis is depicted throughout. Father Innocent Montgomery, C.F.R., a friend and spiritual mentor, will be the homilist.

Father Elijah Marie Perri, C.F.R., remembers when he got "zapped."

His conversion experience happened shortly into his freshman year at Illinois State University.

He had grown up Catholic in Arlington Heights, Ill., and attended Mass on Sundays with his family, including parents Jeffrey and Jeanne and sisters Valerie and Amanda, but said his religious faith "wasn't part of my lifestyle."

Despite being a fun-loving jock in high school, he didn't find the typical college scene fulfilling. He was soon invited to Mass, where a charismatic young priest weaved sports into a dynamic homily. "It was pretty compelling," remembers Father Elijah, now 32.

An employee at the college's Newman Center began inviting him to activities and stayed in regular contact. One day Father Elijah accepted his offer to attend a Holy Hour with Eucharistic adoration. He admits he did not know what to do, so he sat in the back. He was told some people stay for 10 minutes, and others remain the whole hour, that this was the place "we go and we pray and rest with Christ."

"By the end of that Holy Hour, I basically was convinced that was Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. It was His True Presence. That I was called to be a priest, and if I didn't spend time every day in front of the Blessed Sacrament I would never be happy."

Within two or three months he was filling out an application for a college seminary at St. Mary's University in Winona, Minn., where he earned a bachelor's in philosophy.

The call to religious life remained constant. He first encountered the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal at a FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) national conference in Texas, where Father Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R., was delivering a keynote address and several other friars were present. "I saw them traipsing across this fancy hotel...and I said, 'What are these guys doing here?'"

When he visited the friars, he was attracted to their contemplative life, at least two hours of silent prayer in adoration each day, especially their fraternal life. "I could definitely see myself spending the rest of my life with this group of people."

"I really want to read the Gospel and live like that—live like Jesus and his band of disciples, wandering around Palestine, relying

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Friar's First Holy Hour Was Life-Changing Experience

Father Breslin...

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St. Joseph's Seminary in Dunwoodie with a bachelor's in sacred theology, master's in divinity and master's in theology.

"Any success I've had or anything I've accomplished has very little to do with me, but has much more to do with my openness to God working through me and this was all God's work," he said.

Father Carolan...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A3

Father Carolan, who said he was inspired by the work of St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio) and Archbishop Fulton Sheen, will be graduating from the seminary with a bachelor's degree in sacred theology, a master's of divinity and a master's in dogmatic theology.

"I learned to always be a good listener," he said. "I learned to fall in love with the mystery of God. I learned to surrender and I learned to trust in the Lord's plans. You do the best you can with all the skills you have and then you leave it up to Lord because we all have limits."

Father Caruso...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A4

of the late Carmine Caruso Sr. and the late Linda Caruso. The brother and brother-in-law of Lauren and Brandon Trifeletti, he has two nephews and a niece.

His home parish since 2015 is Our Lady Star of the Sea on Staten Island. He has also belonged to St. John Neumann parish on Staten Island.

He attended St. Frances Cabrini School in Brooklyn and is a 1995 alumnus of St. Joseph by-the-Sea High School on Staten Island.

He earned a bachelor's degree in engineering technologies from the New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark and an associate's in philosophy from St. John's University in Queens.

Father Gonzalez...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A4

nary and College.

He attended the Luis Lorens Torres Children's Academy Public School 114 in the Bronx.

His seminary apostolic assignments were with the Missionaries of Charity, Calvary Hospital, Catholic Charities and the youth ministry at Holy Cross parish, all in the Bronx.

Summer parish assignments took place at St. Joseph-St. Mary Immaculate on Staten Island, and again at Holy Cross in the Bronx. As for his interests, "I'm a Schola at the seminary (Schola Cantorum), so I'm able to sing tenor," he said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE A10

PROFILES OF THE ORDINANDS IN THIS SECTION WERE WRITTEN BY ARMANDO MACHADO, DAN PIETRAFESA, CHRISTIE L. CHICOINE AND JOHN WOODS.

"You are a priest for ever, in the line of Melchizedek."

—Psalm 110



**The Paulist Fathers Give Praise to God
for the priestly ordinations of**

Rev. Michael Cruickshank, C.S.P.

and

Rev. Richard Whitney, C.S.P.

*Ordained priests on Saturday, May 22, 2021
at the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, New York City*

*Most Rev. Richard Henning
Auxiliary Bishop, Diocese of Rockville Centre, New York
Principal Celebrant & Ordaining Bishop*



Paulist Fr. Michael Cruickshank

is a native of Chelmsford, MA. He earned his undergraduate degree at Washington University in St. Louis, MO. After college, he moved to New York City where he met the Paulist Fathers at the Church of St. Paul the Apostle in Manhattan. In his first priestly assignment, Fr. Mike will serve at the Cathedral of St. Andrew in Grand Rapids, MI.

Paulist Fr. Richard Whitney

grew up in Massachusetts and Washington, D.C. He earned his undergraduate degree at Northeastern University. He met the Paulist Fathers through the Paulist Center in Boston. In his first priestly assignment, Fr. Rich will serve at St. John XXIII University Parish in Knoxville, TN.

Could God be calling you or someone you know to discern a vocation to the priesthood in a missionary society like the Paulist Fathers? If so, please contact our vocation director, Paulist Fr. Dat Tran, at (212) 757-4260 or be@paulist.org. You may also learn more at: paulist.org/vocation.



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Father Panameño...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A5

He did his summer assignments at Our Lady of Angels parish, St. Joseph parish and St. Raymond parish. He is fluent in Spanish and enjoys weightlifting, boxing and Muay Thai, a type of kickboxing. He also likes watching movies, reading, hiking and listening to music.

Father Victor...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A5

parish since 2013 is St. Catherine of Genoa in the Hamilton Heights section of Manhattan. Growing up, he also lived in Gonaives, Haiti; Apollo Beach, Fla., and the Bronx.

Both his biological father, William Victor, and his adoptive father, Edward Glavey, are deceased. His biological mother, Mireille Jean-Baptiste, lives in Gonaives, Haiti; his adoptive mother, Ronha Garcia Glavey, resides in Yonkers. He has two brothers, Emmanuel Victor and Jeorvens J. Victor.

Father Chloupek...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A6

and spending a lot of time with the youth and their families trying to start to evangelize the kids and their families as well," he said. "That was life-giving to me. I learned our need to be

close to our people and help them bury the burdens that are so difficult."

Father Frantisek said his parents, Randy and Shelly; brother, Brett; sister, Emily Howard; and six nieces will be among his family and friends attending his ordination at St. Patrick's Cathedral on Saturday, May 29.

"I've always had a strong devotion to the Mass and saying Mass is something very exciting to me," he said. "You're making present the body and blood of Jesus in the Eucharist for others. That's something that's always been very attractive to me."

Father Doherty...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A6

Word of God with the poor at St. Joseph's Table. He also lived in the South Bronx and managed the kitchen at St. Anthony's Shelter for Renewal.

He enjoys playing guitar and singing, suitable attributes for youth retreats and parish missions, including online versions livestreamed from their chapel at St. Leopold's Friary in Yonkers during the pandemic.

Father Ignatius Pio cited Padre Pio, the Italian Capuchin friar and saint, as a major influence and an appropriate one for these Covid-19 times.

"He was a great pastor of souls from a distance. He took care of people spiritually all over the world, sometimes without even visiting

them or seeing them...He's been teaching me, helping me to grow in the last year, especially with not being able to see people because of the Covid restrictions."

Father Fino...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A8

vows in 2014. He likes learning or improving his fluency of other languages including Spanish, and he enjoys reading literature, writing and gardening.

Father Perri...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A8

on the Father's providence, praying and preaching and setting up tents.

"In a modern context, it seems like these guys are trying to be faithful to that inspiration."

He entered the Renewal Friars in 2011 in Harlem at St. Joseph's Friary, where he did his postulancy. He later assisted with the novices in Paterson, N.J., and also spent two years serving at the friars' soup kitchen and doing lay formation in Albuquerque, N.M., where he fondly recalls the weekly 'desert days' spent hiking, praying and reading Scripture in the mountains just outside the city.

He made his first vows in 2013 and final vows in 2017.

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ON THEIR ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD, MAY 29, 2021

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PHOTOS BY CHRIS SHERIDAN

SEMINARY CONVOCATION— St. Joseph's Seminary and College in Dunwoodie held its academic convocation May 17 with ceremonies for the graduates of 2020 and 2021. Cardinal Dolan presided at the convocation; Auxiliary Bishop James Massa of Brooklyn, the rector of St. Joseph's, also participated. Left, the graduates of the Class of 2021 gather with Cardinal Dolan and Bishop Massa. Above, Bishop Massa presents Father Elijah Marie Perri, C.F.R., with the St. Charles Borromeo Award for Academic Excellence.

Editor's Report...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A2

cational and family backgrounds. We want to tell you a little about how they live their faith, how they first heard the call to priesthood and what their hopes and dreams are for their priestly life.

A couple of years ago, when I was interviewing one of the men who would be ordained that spring, he gave a nice affirmation about the importance of this project. He said that he had been reading the ordination profiles each year for a long time and that they had been a source of encouragement in his priestly journey.

At the time, I remember replying that his email was the best one I had received all week. It actually meant a great deal more to me. We always hope that our work is important and relevant to our readers, and that it helps them to

build their Catholic faith.

I'll leave you with one last thought recently shared by a retired staff member who still does some writing for CNY. She used to write almost all of the ordination profiles for a section like this one. She told me about the first year she took on that task. She wrote 18 such profiles, one for each of the priests being ordained that year.

She always wrote those profiles with care and talent. I remarked about the breadth of that work and seriously asked whether she had been able to do any other assignments during that time.

Considering that number, nearly twice as many ordained as this year, I pray we may again see such a bountiful priestly blessing. I hope you will too.



Read the electronic edition of Catholic New York! Go to cny.org and click the e-edition button in the lower right corner.



The Clergy, Lay Leadership and Congregation of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Shrub Oak congratulate one of their own,

FATHER ROBERT JAMES CAROLAN,

upon his ordination to the Sacred Priesthood of Jesus Christ.

*Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton on her First Communion day:
"At last...at last, God is mine and I am His! Now, let all go its round—
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MAY THEIR MEMORY BE A BLESSING

Venerable Felix Varela (1788-1853)

By **FATHER MICHAEL P. MORRIS**

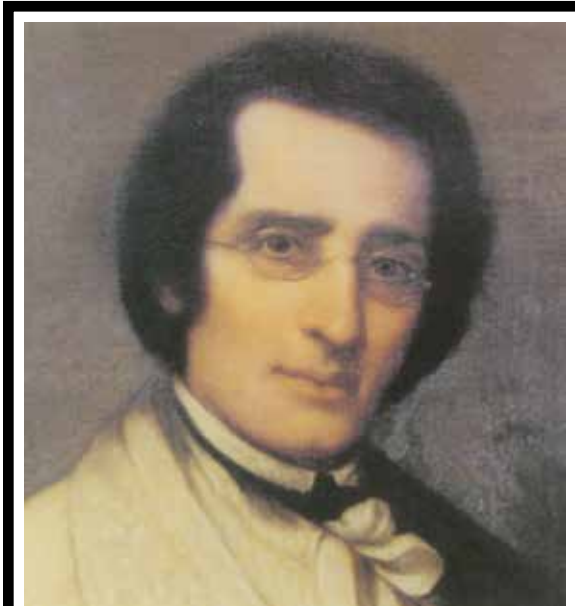
FIFTH IN A SERIES

Since its inception in 1808, the Diocese (later Archdiocese) of New York can count among its priests and bishops spiritual giants, caring and generous pastors, scholars, admirals, social reformers, brick and mortar titans—and Father Felix Varela, the “Benjamin Franklin of Cuba.” Varela was born on Nov. 20, 1788 in Havana, Cuba. Varela’s father, a Spanish subject and his mother, a native of Cuba, both died by the time Felix reached age three. Felix was raised in St. Augustine, Fla., by his grandfather, Lieutenant Bartholome Morales, who in 1796, served briefly as interim governor of East Florida, 13 years after Florida had been returned to Spanish rule after the defeat of the British by the fledgling United States. Destined for a military career, young Felix sensed a calling to the priesthood and, at age 14, returned to Havana to attend San Carlos y San Ambrosio Royal Seminary. Varela was ordained a priest in 1811 for the Diocese of San Cristobal de la Havana and within a year, the academically gifted Father Varela was appointed to the faculty of the seminary in Havana.

Father Varela instituted necessary reforms at the Havana seminary, such as a renewal of the study of Thomistic philosophy in the seminary (two generations before Pope Leo XIII issued his 1879 encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, reviving the study of scholasticism in seminary training). Although a philosophy student and teacher by training, Varela had a keen interest in such varied subjects as politics, economics, history, physics, chemistry and agriculture.

In 1821, Varela was elected as a colonial delegate to the Spanish *Cortes* (parliament) where he labored in Madrid for the abolition of slavery and increased autonomy in the Spanish colonies. Varela and like-minded members of the *Cortes* evoked the ire of King Ferdinand VII, who subsequently dismantled the *Cortes*. Varela fled Spain and, barred from Spanish-ruled Cuba, sought political asylum in the United States. Varela arrived in New York in December 1823 and spent the next two years translating Thomas Jefferson’s *Manual of Parliamentary Practice* into Spanish, and studying chemistry and agriculture.

In 1825, Varela moved to Philadelphia, at that time the intellectual capital of the United States. There, Father Varela founded *El Habanero*, believed to be the first Spanish-Catholic newspaper in the United States. Varela was one of the first Cuban intellectuals to call for independence



Once in New York, Father Varela effortlessly transitioned from academia and politics to parish work, serving among the Irish community at St. Peter’s on Barclay Street. Shortly thereafter, Varela solicited funds from friends to purchase nearby Christ Episcopal Church on Ann Street.

from Spain. A proponent of what he called a “war of reason,” Varela eschewed violence and bloodshed. One year later, Father Varela was welcomed to New York by Father John Power, who had become apostolic administrator of the Diocese of New York upon the death of the second bishop of New York, John Connolly, O.P. Father Power discerned that this Cuban priest-intellectual and patriot would prove a great asset to the fledgling diocese which encompassed all of New York state and northern New Jersey. According to the late Msgr. Florence Cohalan, author of “A Popular History of the Archdiocese of New York,” Varela was the first Spanish-speaking priest to serve in the Diocese of New York.

Once in New York, Father Varela effortlessly transitioned from academia and politics to parish work, serving among the Irish community at St. Peter’s on Barclay Street. Shortly thereafter, Varela solicited funds from friends to purchase nearby Christ Episcopal Church on Ann Street. In 1833, Christ Church was disbanded and the existing congregation became St. James parish on James Street and Transfiguration Church on

Mott Street, the latter served by Father Varela. His pastoral success, particularly with the burgeoning Irish immigrant community in New York, attracted the attention of the third bishop of New York, John Dubois who, in 1829, named Varela vicar general of the Diocese of New York.

On Sept. 20, 1829, Bishop Dubois left New York for Rome, returning to the United States on Nov. 20, 1831. During his two-year absence, Father Varela served as administrator of the diocese, and represented Dubois at the First Provincial Council of Baltimore (1829) and the Third Provincial Council of Baltimore (1837)—the 19th century precursors to the modern-day bi-annual meetings of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

In 1831, Father Varela was asked to participate as a founding member of New York University, an offer he declined. Ever the parish priest, Varela counted as one of his closest friends, Father Alessandro Muppiatti, a Carthusian monk who left Italy in search of political asylum in New York. Believed to be the first Italian priest to serve in New York, Father Muppiatti served as Father Varela’s assistant at Transfiguration from 1842 until the former’s death in 1846.

Exhausted from pastoral and administrative duties, and emotionally spent from his energetic and passionate defense of the Church in the wake of a growing and virulent anti-Catholicism in the United States, Father Varela returned to St. Augustine in 1850. There, Varela took as his residence a small wooden shed adjacent to St. Augustine Cathedral school, living in sickness, obscurity and crushing poverty. A group of Cuban friends heard about Varela’s plight, collected a large sum of money, and sent the gift to Varela, only to find that Father Varela had died on Feb. 25, 1853. The money was used to build a mausoleum in the city’s historic Tolomato Cemetery. Before the outbreak of World War I, Varela’s remains were transferred from St. Augustine and reinterred at the University of Havana.

In 1983, the Congregation for the Cause of Saints charged the Archdiocese of Havana with the investigations into the heroic sanctity of Father Varela. In the late 1990s, Father Varela was declared “Servant of God,” and on April 12, 2012, the Congregation for the Cause of Saints granted Varela the title “Venerable.” Well on the path to beatification and sainthood, this hero of the Cuban people made his mark as the apostle to the Irish immigrants in New York and a beacon of religious, political and intellectual thought and freedom.

ABOUT THIS SERIES The articles in this series on priests who have served in the Archdiocese of New York are planned to run monthly throughout 2021. Father Michael Morris, pastor of Regina Coeli parish in Hyde Park, and Msgr. Thomas J. Shelley, emeritus professor of Church history at Fordham University, will write the profiles.