

First Five Months of Priesthood Are Best Five Months in Fr. Szabo's Life

Editor's note: The Following was written by Fr. Phillip Szabo, who was ordained a diocesan priest May 29. Pray for all vocations November 7-13 – Vocations Awareness Week

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

A very big thank you to everyone who has supported me over the years with your prayers, friendship, cards, good food, and many other gifts! I would not be enjoying my life as a priest if it were not for you. It certainly takes a community to raise a priest, and I have been blessed with many communities that have helped me see this journey through to completion!



Now that I am a priest, I can truly say that I understand why so many priests have told me in the past that they love their job. The short five months that I have spent as a priest so far have been the best five months of my life!

First of all, celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is truly out of this world! Rather than an activity limited to time and space, the Mass is our temporal participation in that one Heavenly celebration wherein Jesus eternally offers Himself to the Father. Therefore, when I say the words of consecration as a validly ordained priest, Jesus Christ becomes present in my hands, under the appearances of bread and wine. Then, at the moment of Holy Communion, myself and all of the faithful who are in attendance at the Mass are able to share in the very same grace that Jesus earned for us on the Cross over two-thousand years ago. Words cannot describe

the joy and honor of literally giving people what, or rather, whom they need most: Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Another great joy for me that comes in as a close second after celebrating Mass is the Sacrament of Penance. In the Confessional, I am able to offer people a truly safe place where they can discuss their greatest struggles and receive the forgiveness that their hearts are yearning for. It is frequently the case that people will share things with me that they are not comfortable sharing with anyone else in any other context because they know that it is only a Catholic priest in the context of Confession who can promise them true forgiveness and absolute secrecy. Through this Sacrament, I have already seen hundreds of people find freedom from their heavy burdens of shame and regret, some of which they had been carrying for a long time. As a spiritual father, nothing leaves me feeling better than to witness a person who enters the confessional trembling with fear and shame, but then leaves crying tears of joy and feeling as light as a feather!

Of course, this joy that I have been experiencing would not be true Christian joy except if it was intermingled with great tests of self-sacrifice, and this is the last thing that I would like to mention here. A big part of why I have been able to discover this new joy is because I have been getting a little better at accepting God's invitation to a life of self-sacrifice. All men are called to be fathers, either biological or spiritual, and this call demands that they lay down their life for their spouse and children. My daily work as a spiritual father demands that I often surrender my own needs and desires in order to attend to those of the Church and of the faithful who are entrusted to me. Whether it is as simple as taking an unexpected hospital call or hearing a last-minute confession, or as complex as canceling my weekend plans in



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order to cover for a priest who has fallen ill, I have found that joy is not found in comfort, but rather in the process of becoming comfortable with being uncomfortable! God is always calling us to greater heights of holiness, and He will not stop until we reach the end of our journey here on Earth, so neither should we!

May God bless you all!

Tv. Szabo

THE HANDS THAT HOLD THE PATEN OF LIFE, PEACE Priesthood may be sacrificial life, but it's one of great joy with Jesus

Editor's note: The following was written by Fr. Brian Crenwelge, Pastor That daily, life offering on the paten during Mass is what of St. John University Parish and the Director of Vocations for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston I give my cares over to our Lord. Perhaps I'm thinking

Being a priest, these days is difficult.

Now, you might have been a little shocked at what you just read. Here, the vocation director of the Diocese, is acknowledging the struggles of the priesthood? Where could he be going with this? Well, it might not be what you're thinking.



Each day I arise, and I really have no idea what the Lord is going to ask of me. Sure, I might have a planned schedule, but that does not mean that the Lord is going to respect that schedule. In fact, He normally doesn't. He normally takes a look at the events planned for that day and probably laughs to the Blessed Mother about my plans. He then mixes the plans up and sends new ones my way. Nonetheless, the one plan He does not mess with is the daily offering of the Holy Sacrifice—the Mass. He respects that. He desires that for His priests. That is, after all—or I guess, should be—the one constant in a priest's day.

The day's events come. Meetings with students, meetings with parishioners, Confessions, perhaps Adoration, and a hospital call too if the Lord is feeling extra generous. Yet, the thirty or so minutes of the day where time stops is the Mass. Whatever stresses a priest might be going through can either be put on hold (which I don't actually recommend), or can be given to our Lord on the paten alongside the host. In other words, the Mass is the opportunity for the priest to offer himself to our Lord with the Eucharist—to be not only a priest but a victim as well in the Sacrifice. To be Christ.

That daily, life offering on the paten during Mass is what motivates me to keep going when I'm tired or discouraged. I give my cares over to our Lord. Perhaps I'm thinking about a tough pastoral situation I'm dealing with. Perhaps I'm praying that the counsel I gave in the Sacrament of Confession was useful. Perhaps I'm stressed over the parish finances. That paten sure can hold a lot. Once I reach the Eucharistic Prayer, however, it is all transformed—my works, my prayers, my sufferings are all united with Christ and He offers them to our Heavenly Father. I can then rest assured that even though I am a sinful human being, the Lord will take care of what is lacking in myself and my actions. It's as if He is saying, "It's okay, Father. I've got this. Now keep going."

Having been nourished by the Eucharist, I then continue on my day, knowing that there but by the grace of God go I. And I am encouraged.

So is the priesthood difficult? Yes, it is. It requires a lot of a man. Actually, it requires his whole self. The same goes with being a mother or father. Yet no matter the difficulty that arises, Christ takes that difficulty and offers it to His Heavenly Father in each Mass. He picks up our Cross and carries it for us, with us.

The priesthood is a life that I wish more young men would consider. Perhaps they only see the tiredness of their priests. I wish they could see what was on the priest's paten each day, though. If they could see the priest's cares and worries, transformed and offered to our Heavenly Father, I think we'd have a lot more priests in our Diocese. Why? Because they'd then see what St. John Vianney saw—"The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus."



Sixth in a six-part series: Most Rev. Mark E. Brennan, Bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, reestablished the Diocesan Pastoral Council originally set up by Bishop Joseph H. Hodges in 1968. We bring to you the final profiles of the lay members of this commission. The membership is representative of all six vicariates in the state with three members per. Each series has highlighted a single vicariate.

BRITT, BUCK, WILSON SERVE AS NORTHERN PANHANDLE DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

WHEELING – Having an honest and open forum of in a family of 13 children. All 13 of us went to Catholic grade dialogue to strengthen and unify the Church in the School and Catholic high school. Several of us attended Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is the shared goal for the Catholic colleges or universities. Collectively, the 13 of us Wheeling Vicariate representatives for the reestablished Diocesan Pastoral Council.



Kevin Britt, of Moundsville; Jerod Buck, of Warwood; and Denis Wilson, of Wheeling are proud to serve Bishop Mark Brennan and their fellow faithful not only as an authentic and reflective voice, but also motivators to get others to be active and involved at the local

level.

Britt lives by the adage his grandmother preached, "Talk is cheap; it is good deeds that get you to heaven!"

Britt is a member of St. Francis Xavier parish in Marshall County where he serves on parish council and the finance committee. Additionally, he is a volunteer and Board member for Feeding Body and Soul, a community kitchen ministry in Moundsville that serves 1000 meals a week.

"By all objective measures, I have been abundantly blessed," Britt said, quoting Luke 12:48, "The gospel calls us to service. It is that simple - "To whom much is given, much is expected.""

Retired now, he made a 40-year career around his compassion for others as a hospital administrator. He will serve the DPC for three years and directly serve on the Pastoral Concerns Committee.

"My bride and I have lived in seven different cities, states, parishes, and dioceses over the past 40 years," he said. "I've attempted to be as active as possible in each one of those parishes."

He grew up in a strong Catholic family and attended St. Albert the Great in Kettering, Ohio, but notes the comparison of Catholic statistics from 50 years ago until now is a distressing and drastic contrast.

"I have great confidence in Bishop Brennan and share his great sense of urgency that we need to focus our energies on getting baptized Catholics back to active practice of their faith," he said. "For me, this struggle is personal. I grew up

in a family of 13 children. All 13 of us went to Catholic grade school and Catholic high school. Several of us attended Catholic colleges or universities. Collectively, the 13 of us produced 39 grandchildren. Sadly, I can count on one hand the number of those in my family that are still active in their faith. Unfortunately, my family is but a microcosm of the American experience. Specifically, in 1970, seven out of 10 baptized Catholics actively practiced their faith by attending Mass and receiving the sacraments. Fast forward 50 years to 2020, and research confirms that only two of 10 baptized Catholics are still active. And I am sad to report that those 2020 numbers are pre-COVID. Realistically, there may be as few as 10% of baptized Catholics that are still practicing following the pandemic."

Hope is not lost, according to Britt. The foundations of our faith our ancestors gave us and fought for need revived and it is up the Church family to do so, he said.

"As Catholics, we have been given the greatest gift imaginable: a clear path to eternal salvation and unspeakable joy, and yet 90% of those who have received this gift through baptism have turned their back on it? This is a tragedy," he exclaimed. "So, it is imperative that we focus aggressively on evangelization, catechesis and outreach. We need to target both fallen away adults as well as young Catholics. Let's be clear that this effort must be led by the laity. Our priests and deacons are already taxed and stretched beyond reason. Please know I am not blind to the reality that this is an up-hill battle, but I am simply not willing to give up the crusade. Catholicism is worth fighting for! We ride at dawn..."

Britt's focus is to encourage younger generation Catholics to be involved like fellow vicariate and DPC rep, Jerod Buck of Northern Ohio County.



Buck, who is 20 years old, is a one-year member of the DPC and serves on the Lay Life and Ministry Committee.

"I and all the young faithful members of the Church are poised to play a very crucial role in the future of our diocese, and the Church as a whole," Buck

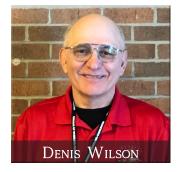
said. "There are not very many young people that take their

faith seriously, which casts a much greater burden for the young who do take their faith seriously to bear because we will inherit the Church. When we inherit the Church, we also inherit the problems of the Church; Bishop Brennan seems to recognize this reality because he started the DPC which gives the opportunity for us laypeople to voice our problems to the higher-ups in the Church."

Buck has been a lifelong member of Corpus Christi Parish, where he served as an altar server for weekday and weekend Masses. He is now a lector and greeter at Mass and helps prepare the church and sanctuary for holy days and seasons.

"What I receive from this involvement in the Mass is the potential to help my fellow brothers and sisters participate more fully in the Mass," he said.

That same thinking is how he is approaching his role on the DPC and beyond – accepting the responsibility to encourage the faithful to cling to its Catechism and truths of the Church that Jesus Christ established through the apostles; and further working to dispel weak philosophies and override the memory of misguided faith leaders that have hurt our parishes and schools.



Serving to strengthen parish and parish school life has been a passion for fellow DPC member Denis Wilson of St. Michael Parish in Wheeling. Wilson's seat on the DPC is for two years.

"I accepted this role on the DPC out of a love for our Church

and in hopes to bring help and healing to our Wheeling-Charleston Diocese," Wilson said. "I pray that the DPC becomes a powerful voice for the laity to feel that they have 'Skin in the game.' The church is not a Democracy; this

is true. But even Jesus asked Peter, 'Who do you say that I am?' He also asked others for their ideas and help."

Wilson is on the Justice and Peace Committee for the group.

"Our world and diocese need more of both (justice and peace)," Wilson said. "Many in our diocese do not feel justice was completely served under the Bransfield rule. I think that the diocese under the leadership of Bishop Mark Brennan is moving in a positive direction. I know he wasn't here at the time, but many, including myself were. We failed as an institution to defend God's people."

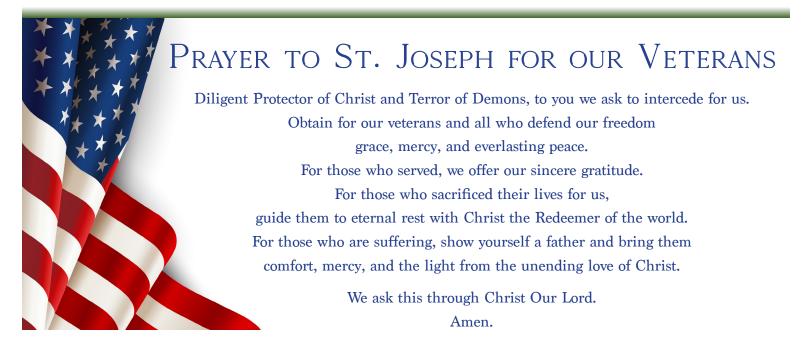
Wilson like many others want to "speed up" the healing of our diocese, and he sincerely prays that Bishop Brennan will not tire to do everything in his power to do so, because people still feel justice has not been served to the former bishop.

Two lines in scripture Wilson relies on for guidance are Micah 6:8 (He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God) and Joshua 24:15 (As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord).

He chooses to live and act out those teachings.

"We are all called to be part of the kingdom of God here on earth," he said. "We are the Eucharist, not just recipients of the Eucharist. In Mark's Gospel Chapter 16:15, we are told to 'Go into the world and preach the Good News to all creation.' However, I do better working rather than preaching in my little part of the kingdom. I receive grace and hopefully humility knowing my God, I pray, is pleased with my effort."

Wilson is currently a lector, chair of St. Michael's Building and Grounds Committee, and facilitator of a Saturday morning bible study. Previously he served as president of the school board, member of Parish Council and Finance committees, chair of the parish festival's physical arrangements committee, and lay director of Christ Renews His Parish.



Compassion and Faith Lead Marshall County Teen to Establish Confraternity to Protect Children

Never underestimate the power of prayer.

That is exactly the underlying lesson Adam Marquart learned from his parents Greg and Lisa Marquart, and was echoed by his Catholic school teachers and several significant priests in his life. It is the lesson that motivated Marquart's idea for the Confraternity of St. Nicholas – a movement to seek the saint's intercession to protect all children morally, physically, and spiritually from sexual abuse, human trafficking, and other harmful circumstances.

Marquart, a member of Our Lady of Peace Parish, in the Marshall County section of Wheeling, grew up with his sister Natalie in a loving home.



"We always had dinner as a family, and my parents would always ask me questions about my day and how school was," he said. "(My parents) gave me a solid foundation of faith, reason, and

compassion for others. In this ever-changing world, having this foundation has been crucial to the progression of my studies, friendships, and relationship with God. I love my family, for my family is where I first learned how to love."

It was when he was a high school student at Wheeling Park, when Marquart became keenly aware of child abuse.

"I became so concerned," he said. "I emersed myself into becoming more aware of the issues and out of that came this growing need to do something. What I learned about was so far from my own reality, but it is the reality of so many – horrible realities that our world has accepted and tolerated. It's unbelievable. What on earth could I do? We've become numb to it as a society.

"Saint Maximilian Kolbe said, 'The most deadly poison of our times is indifference.' Our lack of concern is sickening," Marquart said. "I knew in my heart I needed to do something, but what? I do a pretty good job at being prolife, but I hadn't considered this pro-life, yet it is. I wasn't doing enough. We are not doing enough. Then I thought who better to turn to than St. Nicholas."

Marquart became consumed with his good intention, which led him to the idea of a prayer group specifically dedicated to praying for children. With the help of Fr. Brian Crenwelge of St. John University Parish, where Marquart attends as a student at West Virginia University, he was

able to design the Confraternity of St. Nicholas. Soon after he met with Bishop Mark Brennan at the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston's Chancery to propose the program.

"Bishop Brennan shared a time as a pastor, when he encountered a young woman who had been abused, and after sharing the story, he said something I'll never forget: 'Everyday our world



shows more and more that it needs a Savior," Marquart said. "(Bishop Brennan) went on to say that child abuse and associated issues are ultimately a spiritual problem which requires a spiritual solution."

A few weeks later Bishop Brennan approved the confraternity. In a letter the bishop sent to pastors and the faithful he said, "As Bishop St. Nicholas defended Christ's divinity against those who denied it, we implore his prayers to defend children and young people from all attacks on their moral and spiritual well-being. Joining the Confraternity of St. Nicholas is a providential way to participate in the prayers offered to this saint for that purpose."

Since it was established less than a month ago there are already more than 90 members. While the majority are from the diocese in West Virginia, there are also members from the dioceses of Steubenville, Youngstown, and Pittsburgh, St. Mary's Seminary, and Eastern Catholic churches in the tri-state.

Bishop Brennan was not only impressed with the confraternity, but also the resolve of Marquart who is still a teenager.



and my urge to learn more," he said.

If you are lucky enough to spend time with Marquart you will most likely walk away with the sense that he is mature beyond his years - an old soul some may say.

"God gifted me with so many wonderful people in my life and all have entertained my strong curiosity about my faith said In grade school at Our Lady of Peace, Marquart said it was Fr. Dennis Schuelkens, "who patiently would answer all of my spiritual questions and natural doubts in a thoughtful and substantial way."

He considers Fr. Martin Smay his spiritual director.

"Fr. Smay introduced me to the writings of St. Alphonsus Liguori, who has motivated me to intensify my spiritual life. When you read some of his sermons about getting to heaven you realize it isn't easy to get there. We all can do a better job to save our soul and the souls of others."

He said he has an affirmation go-to prayer he learned from Fr. Jason Charron of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Wheeling that keeps him grounded in times of anxiety or concern. It is the Jesus Prayer or the prayer of the heart, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner."

"I'm certain there won't be a point in my life I won't need His mercy," he said.

Marquart said we all need to be committed to prayer and learning about our faith, and when we do, we can be part of a spiritual solution to the issues around us.

"For me I know that whatever is going on, whatever problem I have or problem the people I care about are burdened with, I know I can rest in Christ, and He will take care of it," the sophomore finance major said. "The world and society try to tell us or sell us that they have the answers, but God is truly the answer."

Resources to stay focused on Christ and grow in faith are all round, Marquart said, "many are in the palm of your hand" through apps, podcasts, and blogs. A favorite app of his is CatenaBible, it connects scripture verses with commentaries from saints. A podcast/blog he likes is Pints with Aquinas, which invites Catholic influencers (religious, authors, priests, etc.) to talk about various topics in the Church.

Whether your Catholic mindset is traditional or contemporary or something in between our Church is so large it is our own fault if we cannot enrich our spirit, he said. "We need to learn more. We need to pray more so we don't become insensitive to the evils in society."

To learn more about the Confraternity and become a member visit the Confraternity's website: DWC.ORG/EVANGELIZATION-AND-CATECHESIS/CONFRATERNITY-OF-ST-NICHOLAS

In the season of gratitude, we pause to say

Thank You

to all those who shine light on parishes, ministries, and outreach efforts across the Diocese through their gifts to the Catholic Sharing Appeal.

> Join us for the Cass of Gratitude

Monday, November 22nd at the Cathedral of St. Joseph, Wheeling Livestreamed at dwc.org/csa



GI VINGTUESDAY NOVEMBER 30, 2021

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Visit dwc.org/CSA to make a secure gift online.

THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

First Reading 1 Kings 17:10-16

In those days, Elijah the prophet went to Zarephath. As he arrived at the entrance of the city, a widow was gathering sticks there; he called out to her, "Please bring me a small cupful of water to drink." She left to get it, and he called out after her, "Please bring along a bit of bread." She answered, "As the LORD, your God, lives, I have nothing baked; there is only a handful of flour in my jar and a little oil in my jug. Just now I was collecting a couple of sticks, to go in and prepare something for myself and my son; when we have eaten it, we shall die." Elijah said to her, "Do not be afraid. Go and do as you propose. But first make me a little cake and bring it to me. Then you can prepare something for yourself and your son. For the LORD, the God of Israel, says, 'The jar of flour shall not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, until the day when the LORD sends rain upon the earth." She left and did as Elijah had said. She was able to eat for a year, and he and her son as well; the jar of flour did not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, as the LORD had foretold through Elijah.

Responsorial PSALMS 146:7, 8-9, 9-10

R. (1b) Praise the Lord, my soul!

The LORD keeps faith forever, secures justice for the oppressed, gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets captives free.

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!

The LORD gives sight to the blind. The LORD raises up those who were bowed down; the LORD loves the just. The LORD

protects strangers.

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!

The fatherless and the widow he sustains, but the way of the wicked he thwarts. The LORD shall reign forever; your God, O Zion, through all generations. Alleluia.

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!

Second Reading HEBREWS 9:24-28

Christ did not enter into a sanctuary made by hands, a copy of the true one, but heaven itself, that he might now appear before God on our behalf. Not that he might offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters each year into the sanctuary with blood that is not his own; if that were so, he would have had to suffer repeatedly from the foundation of the world. But now once for all he has appeared at the end of the ages to take away sin by his sacrifice. Just as it is appointed that human beings die once, and after this the judgment, so also Christ, offered once to take away the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to take away sin but to bring salvation to those who eagerly await him.

Alleluia MATTHEW 5:3

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel MARK 12:38-44 (or 12:41-44)

In the course of his teaching Jesus said to the crowds, "Beware of the scribes, who like to go around in long robes and accept greetings in the marketplaces, seats of honor in synagogues,

and places of honor at banquets. They devour the houses of widows and, as a pretext recite lengthy prayers. They will receive a very severe condemnation." He sat down opposite the treasury and observed how the crowd put money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents. Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them, "Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood."

PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, that we may reach out to the poor and destitute with the generosity of the widows in today's readings, the generosity of generations of faithful people eager to help our brothers and sisters, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For widows and widowers, that they may be comforted in their loss and supported in their hardship, let us pray to the Lord. . .

That we commit ourselves to pray for vocations to religious life, may we always be open to the Lord's call to service and respond willingly and generously to that call, let us pray to the Lord...

That our commitment to stewardship may grow, cheerfully giving back to God from the many gifts we have received, let us pray to the Lord...

Lord hear our prayer



MASS ONLINE

Saturday 6pm Masses will continue to be livestreamed from the Cathedral of St. Joseph, and will be available on our website each Sunday at <u>DWC.ORG</u>.

Below are four options for enriching your spirit through daily Mass online.

- EWTN airs daily Mass from Our Lady of Angels Chapel, in Irondale, Alabama, at 8am, noon, and 7pm: <u>HTTPS://WWW.EWTN.COM/TV/WATCH-LIVE</u>
- St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York has daily Mass live streamed at 7am: <u>HTTPS://SAINTPATRICKSCATHEDRAL.ORG/LIVE</u>
- Catholic TV also streams its daily Mass: <u>HTTP://CATHOLICTV.ORG/MASSES/CATHOLICTV-MASS</u>
- Daily Mass Online at Notre Dame' Basillica of the Sacred Heart is live at 11:30 am Monday-Friday: https://campusministry.nd.edu/mass-worship/basilica-of-the-sacred-heart/watch-mass/special-masses/