

# Holy Cross deacon assists at papal Mass in Silao

GUADALUPE, Nuevo León, Mexico — Holy Cross Deacon Matthew Kuczora had an opportunity of a lifetime when he attended the papal Mass at Silao, Mexico, during Pope Benedict XVI's visit last week. This was the first time Deacon Kuczora had seen the pope and, as a deacon, he assisted at the Mass.

A native of Marion, Deacon Kuczora, who graduated from the University of Notre Dame's Master of Divinity program in May 2011, is serving his diaconate at the Holy Cross parish of Nuestra Madre Santísima de La Luz in Guadalupe, Nuevo León, Mexico, and serves as the director of the Holy Cross Candidate Program for first-year seminarians and is director of vocation promotion for Holy Cross in Mexico.

Guadalupe, Nuevo León is an industrial suburb of Monterrey.

Deacon Kuczora said, "We took a 10-hour bus ride from Monterrey to Silao on one of 18 buses that traveled there from the Archdiocese's Youth Ministry Office."

Unfortunately, he did not get very close to the pope. At the Mass, the deacon was in one of the front sections, but off to the side. A big hill separated the altar from the crowds.

"The Mass had a solemn, yet excited atmosphere," he told *Today's Catholic*. "People had waited all night to be at the Mass. They sang and cheered as the pope arrived. There was a lot of energy in the air."

"Still, people were very quiet

when the pope spoke," the deacon added. "They strained to hear everything he said. Nobody wanted to miss a thing."

Deacon Kuczora said that before he left Monterrey on the bus in the afternoon, he did his normal morning visits with the sick at his parish.

"Many of our homebound parishioners lit up when I told them where I was going later that day," Deacon Kuczora said. "They asked me to carry them with me in my heart and to pray for them at the Mass with the pope."

"The whole Mass, I was praying for them, for my family and for all my friends," he said. "It was a beautiful connection between all the people who love and support me, together with our Holy Father."

He added, "Since I've been back, I've been able to share the pope's message of hope, to take comfort in Our Blessed Mother and to cling to Christ in these difficult times of violence, poverty and corruption in Mexico."

Deacon Kuczora said there were many people receiving Reconciliation before the papal Mass.

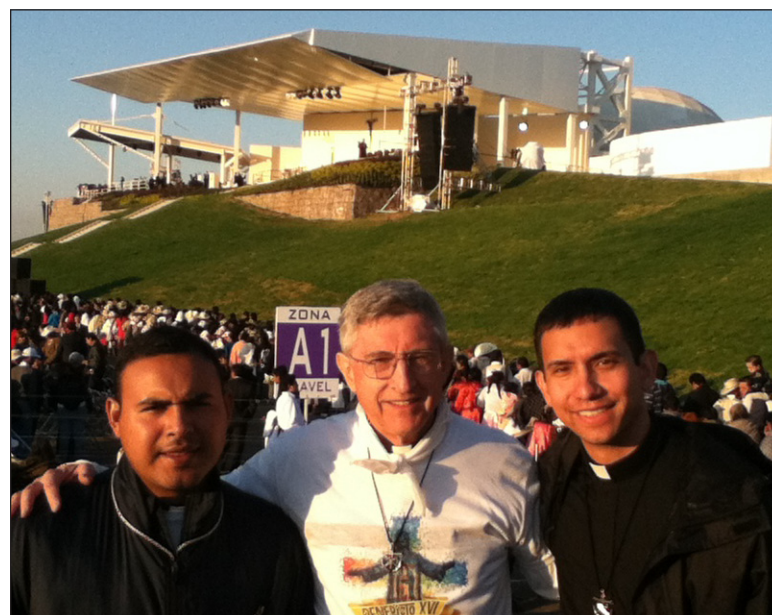
"Priests stood in the hot sun as long, spontaneous lines formed and to receive God's forgiveness," he said. "I wanted to jump in and help, but I knew I still had a few days to wait." Deacon Kuczora will be ordained to the priesthood at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the University of Notre Dame by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades on April 14.



PROVIDED BY HOLY CROSS DEACON MATTHEW KUCZORA

Holy Cross Deacon Matthew Kuczora is shown near the altar before the Papal Mass.

"In all those people and in the thousands gathered for Mass, I saw what a tremendous need there is for priests and what a beautiful role it is," Deacon Kuczora said. "I feel very blessed to be so close to fulfilling such an opportunity."



Holy Cross Father Alfredo Olvera Ladesma, Holy Cross Father Tom Zurcher and Holy Cross Deacon Matthew Kuczora, are shown just before they celebrated and assisted the Mass on March 25 with Pope Benedict XVI.



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## Holy Cross & St. Stanislaus Parish

*Come join us in celebrating the Paschal Mystery of Christ's passion, death and resurrection.*

Holy Thursday, Mass of the Lord's Supper  
**7:00 p.m. April 5, St. Stanislaus Church**  
 415 North Brookfield Street, South Bend

Good Friday, the Lord's Passion  
**1:00 p.m. April 6, Holy Cross Church**  
 1050 Wilber Street, South Bend

Taizé Prayer Service  
**7:00 p.m. April 6, Holy Cross Church**

Holy Saturday Easter Vigil  
**8:30 p.m. April 7, St. Stanislaus Church**

Easter Sunday, April 8  
**8:00 & 11:00 a.m. Holy Cross Church**  
**9:30 a.m. St. Stanislaus Church**