

Ave✠CruX

Congregation of Holy Cross, United States Province of Priests and Brothers | Office of Vocations



Volume 7 Issue 1 | Ordinations to the Priesthood | April 2022



Ave Crux, Spes Unica

HAIL THE CROSS,
OUR ONLY HOPE!

We in the Congregation of Holy Cross profess this truth as the center of our spiritual tradition. We are men with hope to bring because we know the true power of Christ's resurrection. We have witnessed how God can transfigure sin and death into wellsprings of new life. We proclaim this truth as we exercise our charism to be educators in the faith in missions and ministries in 16 countries throughout the world.

Entering formation in Holy Cross was not something we treated lightly or did on our own. Taking the next step in the discernment of God's will often comes with contacting a Vocations Team member. Our role is to help you hear and answer God's call. Reach out to us and we will help you discover where God's call is leading you.

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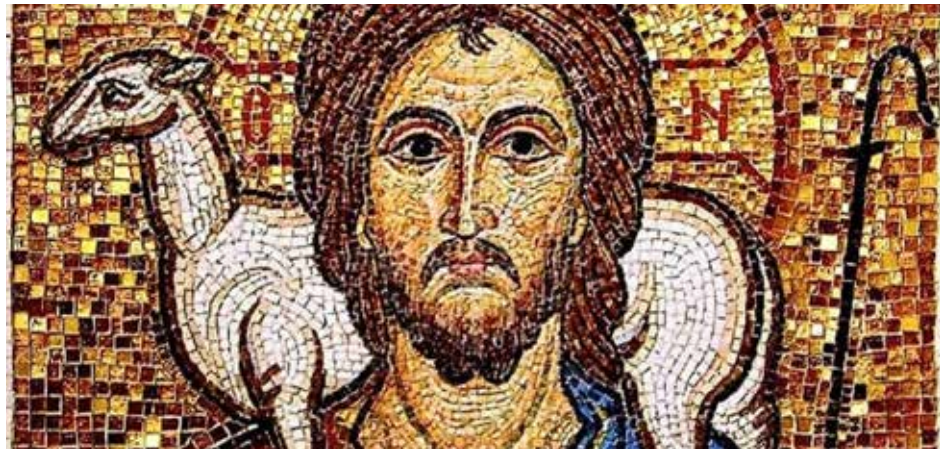
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Rev. Cameron Cortens, C.S.C., Rev. Drew Clary, C.S.C., and Rev. Gabriel Griggs, C.S.C.

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Christ the Good Shepherd, mosaic.



A Desire to Serve

REV. DREW CLARY, C.S.C.

**AFTER HE HAD
FINISHED SPEAKING, HE
SAID TO SIMON, “PUT
OUT INTO DEEP WATER
AND LOWER YOUR NETS
FOR A CATCH.”**

LUKE 5:4

My call to the priesthood came in parts over time. I think I first heard the call to the priesthood as a general desire to serve, but I pursued that call differently right out of college. Through my time teaching in the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE), I fell in love with Catholic schools and teaching. After my time as an ACE teaching fellow, I worked in ACE leadership, and through my association with several Holy Cross priests, I came to know the Congregation very well. My vocation to the priesthood developed from a desire to serve, into a sense of a call to teach, and at last into the feeling of being at home in the Congregation of Holy Cross. The ministry and the fraternity that I experienced through relationships with Holy Cross priests

opened my heart to God’s call, so when it was time to respond, choosing to do so with the community that helped me to hear the call was only natural.

To be an “Alter Christus” (“Another Christ”) is a daunting call, and I do not want to lose sight of it. I strive to keep Christ at the center of everything I do—in prayer, ministry, and relationships with friends and brothers in community. This needs to be my consistent focus, so that my vocation does not get crowded out or drowned out by the day-to-day stresses and demands of my ministry.

PRIESTLY MINISTRY

Although I was fearful of the prospect of preaching when I entered formation,

I have grown into this role well. The prayer I do with Scripture to prepare homilies has become a staple of my prayer life. I listen first to what the Word of God says to me, so that I can pray about what message the Holy Spirit wants the community to hear in the homily. This process has been very nourishing and centering for me.

PLACEMENTS

The summer I spent at St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal was formative. I worked at the Blessing Office and helped receive pilgrims seeking fulfillment of an innumerable diverse number of spiritual and material needs. Seeing how versatile the titles of Saint Joseph are has deepened my devotion to Joseph, and receiving so many different people with different needs prepared me for the unexpected circumstances that people come to the Church with. Furthermore, I can't anticipate all the ways that my deaconate year will have prepared me

for the priesthood; however, there are two that come to mind: I have grown into the identity of being a public minister of the Church, and I have begun to experience what it is like to preside at a liturgical celebration. I am sure both of these will be helpful in the future.

SACRED HEART OF JESUS

The aspect of the Sacred Heart that has been most meaningful to me is that Jesus' heart is depicted outside of his chest, unprotected and vulnerable. Being willing to let my own heart be broken by difficult situations, by the brokenness of the world, or by the lives of the people we minister to—or by my own inability to respond in such a way as to fix everything—is an important lesson that I need to be frequently reminded of.

EDUCATORS IN THE FAITH

My first placement as a religious in final vows has been to serve the

parochial school at St. Adalbert Church (South Bend, Indiana). As a teacher and administrator at St. Adalbert, it has been easy to see myself as an educator in the faith. Education in the Holy Cross tradition has an element of formation in living a flourishing Christian life; while I try to do this in our grade school, this kind of formation is work that can be done in any ministerial setting and will likely be something I try to focus on no matter my future placements.

INSPIRATION

I have heard a reflection on discernment that uses the example of a river and Jesus' command in Luke 5:4 ("Put out into deep water"). The surface of a river has eddies, crosscurrents, and even some places near the shores where it can seem like the current is flowing in the opposite direction. If you go deep, though, the current is unmistakable and strong. Discernment of any call, including mine to the priesthood, requires one to go deep in prayer, in self-examination, and with honesty to be sure that one is not being distracted by the surface-level turbulence that can be more confusing.

The advice I would give anyone discerning a call to serve would be to stay close to the Sacraments—especially the Eucharist and Confession. We have free will, so God can call us as loudly as he wants, but he won't coerce us. That means that the decision is ours to make. If we wait around for "something to happen," we cheat ourselves and God of committing to any vocation, and we will just end up wherever the accident of our circumstance leads.

A native of Castroville, Texas, near San Antonio, Rev. Drew Clary, C.S.C., is the





REV. DREW CLARY, C.S.C.

Born: 09/12/1986

Parents: Pamela and Richard Clary

College: University of Notre Dame, B.A., 2009

Graduate Study: University of Notre Dame, M.Div., 2021

Entered Formation: 2015, Postulant Program

First Vows: 07/29/2017

Final Vows: 08/28/2021

Deacon Placement:

St. Adalbert and St. Casimir Parishes, South Bend, Indiana

oldest of three children of Pamela and Richard Clary. He graduated with a B.A. in economics and political science from the University of Notre Dame in 2009. He earned a master's in education through the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) in 2011. Fr. Drew entered formation with the Congregation of Holy Cross in 2015 and earned his Master of Divinity in 2021.

Fr. Drew taught religious education at St. Adalbert Parish (South Bend, Indiana) from 2015 to 2016 and worked at La Parroquia de Nuestra Santísima Madre de la Luz (Nuevo León, Mexico) during the summer of 2016. While at the Holy Cross Novitiate (Cascade, Colorado) from 2016 to 2017, Fr. Drew served at Penrose Hospital, Catholic Charities, Namasté Alzheimer Center, and Sacred Heart Parish. In addition, he assisted at the Catholic Worker from 2017 to 2018

and completed a language immersion program in Puebla, Mexico, during the summer of 2018. He also led small-group Bible studies for Notre Dame Campus Ministry from 2018 to 2019 and spent the summer of 2019 at the Oratory of St. Joseph in Montreal. Fr. Drew was a pastoral associate at O'Neill Hall (University of Notre Dame) from 2019 to 2020. In the summer of 2020, he began living and ministering at St. Adalbert and St. Casimir parishes (South Bend, Indiana), where Fr. Drew continued as a transitional deacon in preparation for priestly ordination. He will continue to serve at St. Adalbert and St. Casimir parishes.



A Sense of Peace and Belonging

REV. CAMERON CORTENS, C.S.C.

**SIMON PETER
ANSWERED HIM,
“MASTER, TO WHOM
SHALL WE GO? YOU
HAVE THE WORDS OF
ETERNAL LIFE.”**

JOHN 6:68

As a teenager, I thought about the priesthood in the abstract on occasion, but it wasn't until I was 17 that I received a strong sense of being called in that direction. It first came through the words of a confessor-priest at the Idaho Catholic Youth Convention. As soon as I finished

making my confession, he asked, “Have you ever thought about being a priest?” Though it caught me off-guard, I heeded his encouragement to pray about a possible call to the priesthood after I did my penance. I was amazed at an overwhelming peace that filled me and an undeniable sense that God was telling me, “I want you to at least make the first steps. Go to a seminary.” In the weeks and months that followed, that sense of peace only grew stronger the more I resolved to respond to this call. My life was filled with a new sense of purpose and direction. This one memorable experience set me on the path, but it was the Holy Spirit who kept me on that path through the encouragement of family members, close friends, and eventually mentor-priests and spiritual directors, many of them C.S.C.'s whom I met in my adult life.

At ordination, the phrase “Alter Christus” reminds us that as priests, we act as “another Christ.” To me, the phrase has two levels of meaning: The first and foundational meaning is one that applies to all the baptized, now called to live our lives in Christ. It is what Paul is driving at when he writes, “yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20). Through obedience to God's will, holiness of life, and striving to show love and compassion to all I meet, I can make Christ present with the help of His grace. Yet there is another level of meaning that I will begin to live as an ordained priest: I will be someone entrusted with Christ's own power to sanctify, teach, and govern—especially through the sacrifice of the Mass and the absolution of sins in sacramental confession. It is both wondrous and terrifying that God has called me to mediate Christ's

presence in this way for the faithful. Reflecting on this mystery always takes me back to the more fundamental level of meaning. I am called to the ordained priesthood as a service to help others die to self that Christ may live in them.

PRIESTLY MINISTRY

As a deacon serving at a parish, I have loved preaching. I believe that God has blessed me with many good role models and mentors, along with some measure of talent and skill for communicating the meaning of His Word to others. I love the blend of creativity and prayerful openness to the Spirit involved in preparing a good homily. I am also excited to hear confessions because it is such a deeply personal way in which I will be privileged to offer Christ's merciful love to people whose souls are wounded and in need of healing.

When I started discerning priesthood as a teenager, I wasn't aware of any possibility outside of asking my bishop to send me to a seminary to prepare for service in my home diocese. However, I became attracted to Holy Cross because of the wide variety of ministries and cultures in which our congregation serves. I also felt a strong affinity for a charism formed around education in the faith. I ultimately stayed with Holy Cross because I found in it a loving family of brothers united in purpose and mission, which I have come to call my own.

PLACEMENTS

Some of my most formative experiences have been those that place me in close contact with the materially poor—those struggling with joblessness, homelessness, and sometimes a crippling sense of being excluded or ignored by the rest of society. They leave me with the hope that, as I focus

on priesthood's liturgical and spiritual duties, I never lose a deep sense of the connection between the Eucharist and a Christ-like love that reaches out with special attention to those on the margins.

My ministry this year at Holy Redeemer Parish (Portland, Oregon) has me placing a lot of attention on teaching at our parochial school, where I am offering the seventh-grade religion class. My students are wonderfully inquisitive, and many of them quite engaged. But I am seeing that the culture and values that are forming the younger generation are more disconnected than ever from parts of our faith. A basic ethic of love and inclusion is not hard to teach, but an awareness of living in a world troubled by sin yet imbued by grace, a sense of sacramentality that enables one to experience God's closeness to us in our experience of the world, or even habits of prayer are foreign notions to many young people, even in our Catholic schools. This is formative for me in that it makes me cognizant of the call to evangelization that must be an important part of my priesthood.

SACRED HEART OF JESUS

The heart of Jesus aches with sadness and pain at the suffering in our world, most especially the deepest kind of suffering that results from sin and a person's alienation from God. It seems strange to say that I desire to have my heart broken in this manner, but isn't that what the beatitudes teach us?: "Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted." I want my priesthood to be shaped by the long-suffering heart of Jesus because this same heart is the heart that never tires of pouring itself out to heal, comfort, and sanctify those who suffer.

EDUCATORS IN THE FAITH

Our charism as educators in the faith always informs my preaching and efforts to build up faith formation programs in whatever ministry I find myself. I am open to God guiding me towards a long-term ministry in one of our educational institutions—perhaps teaching philosophy, theology, or even music—or maybe in a residence hall. However, even if the Holy Spirit places me in parish ministry for most of my life, I could imagine devoting time and care to helping our lay collaborators in





REV. CAMERON CORTENS, C.S.C.

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Parents: Caroline and Andrew Cortens

College: University of Notre Dame, B.A., 2013

Graduate Study: University of Notre Dame, M.Div., 2021

Entered Formation: 2015, Postulant Program

First Vows: 07/30/2016

Final Vows: 08/28/2021

Deacon Placement: Holy Redeemer Parish, Portland, Oregon

these schools mine the riches of our Holy Cross tradition to enrich the Catholic education offered there.

INSPIRATION

Since my early years of formation with Holy Cross, I have been inspired by St. Peter the Apostle. In particular, I have leaned heavily upon Peter's simple response to Jesus in John 6:68 after many disciples abandoned the Lord. Jesus asks the twelve apostles if they, too, wish to leave, and Peter replies, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." Like Peter, I know that I am far from perfect, and there are aspects of God's ways that I fail to understand. I have made many mistakes in the past and will likely make many more in the future that make me feel unworthy of the incredible call that Jesus has made to me. Yet any time doubt has troubled my heart and tempted me away from trying to give my life fully to Christ, Peter's words remain with me.

I would advise anyone who thinks they have a calling not to be afraid to take the first steps. Conversing with a vocation director or visiting a seminary or religious community are just

preliminary steps that help you discern if this is where God is calling you. Can you imagine if someone refused to go out on a single date, just because they knew they weren't yet ready to get married that moment of their life? If you want the Holy Spirit to help you discern the call, you have to take an initial risk and embrace the uncertainty of how far something will go.

Fr. Cameron is the oldest of four children of Caroline and Andrew Cortens of Boise, Idaho. He graduated with a B.A. from the University of Notre Dame in 2013, where he also received his Master of Divinity in 2021.

During his first year of formation in 2014 to 2015, Fr. Cameron assisted with First Communion preparation at St. Adalbert Parish (South Bend, Indiana). During his novitiate year from 2015 to 2016, he provided spiritual care at Penrose Hospital and at Namasté Alzheimer Center, ministered to the homeless at Marian House, and participated in various Sunday ministries at Sacred Heart Parish in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Fr. Cameron was a life-skills counselor for Stone Soup

Community (South Bend, Indiana) from 2016 to 2017 and a service-learning experience instructor at Holy Cross College (Notre Dame, Indiana) from 2017 to 2018. Fr. Cameron served at La Parroquia Nuestra Madre Santísima de la Luz (Nuevo León, Mexico) from 2018 to 2019 and worked for Catholic Peace Fellowship (South Bend, Indiana) from 2019 to 2020. He served as an assistant rector at Keough Hall (University of Notre Dame) from 2020 to 2021. Fr. Cameron spent his diaconate year at Holy Redeemer Parish (Portland, Oregon), and he continues to serve there to this day.



A Call to the Consecrated Life

REV. GABRIEL GRIGGS, C.S.C.

AND YOU, CHILD, WILL
BE CALLED PROPHET OF
THE MOST HIGH,
FOR YOU WILL GO
BEFORE THE LORD TO
PREPARE HIS WAYS,

LUKE 1:76

For me, the call to priesthood manifested itself as both an unexpected opportunity to serve in a way that I had never considered before and as something that “fit” in a way that everything else in my vocational discernment had not. As an under-

grad at the University of Notre Dame, a priest I got to know asked me to consider the priesthood. When I did, it felt like a real possibility, like something that might actually work. But then I put it off for a little while because I could not see how it squared with other responsibilities in my life or with my desires, such as to have a large family.

A year later, I decided to enter seminary because it felt like a low-risk, high reward proposition: try it out for a year; if it fits, then great — what a wonderful vocation! If not, then I assumed I would be a better man for having gone through formation, and I would be able to give myself more fully as a husband/father/brother/son. I came to this decision during my year of graduate work at Purdue University. I

spent a lot of time praying, asking for advice and direction, and reading about the saints. After reading a book on military heroism and sacrifice, I began to ponder the idea that love, in some vague sense, might be the highest ideal. Then, after reading the biographies and autobiographies of Teresa of Avila, John Paul II, and Mother Teresa, something resonated with me. God spoke through them to illuminate my imagination, to stretch it, and in this way he helped me to see the call to the consecrated life and priesthood.

During ordination, the phrase “Alter Christus” (“another Christ”) means that I conform myself to the suffering Christ. Christ wept for the people he came to save; he labored on their behalf and served them as a shepherd

tending his flock. He was concerned for their physical welfare, emotional welfare, and spiritual welfare. He did this while respecting their freedom to choose for him or against him. The phrase also means that I follow him to dark places and be his presence there. There is no place too dark for Christ, no place where he cannot bring the hope of his resurrection.

PRIESTLY MINISTRY

When I first felt called to this life, the words of the Benedictus were often in my mind: “And you, child, will be called prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins.” These words resonated with me and my sense of vocation. In the sacraments—especially Mass, confession, and the anointing of the sick—the priest makes God’s mercy and love present in a way that can touch the whole soul, the whole person.

I also fell in love with the mission, the spirituality, and the family of Holy Cross.

Our mission is education—to form young hearts, minds, and souls to be leaven for the kingdom of God. I love this ministry; I love learning and the intellectual apostolate. Our spirituality is sitting with Mary at the foot of the cross, anticipating the resurrection that is to come. This spirituality appeals to me because I believe that we are deeply in need of enduring hope—hope that even in the darkest of places, Christ can be found. This hope is only found in embracing suffering and offering it to Christ. And finally, I fell in love with Father Moreau’s vision of the Holy Family. Family is essential to me, and I believe that it is increasingly necessary for the world that we emphasize family as a place where love can work through obstacles, frustrations, and differing visions.

PLACEMENTS

In my vocation as a religious and specifically as a priest, I am called to imitate Christ’s concern for all people and his efforts to comfort them and guide them. In my life as rector of a residence hall, this can mean a lot of things: conversations with students

about the big moral questions in life, conversations about vocational discernment and relational discernment, staying up late with students in need and being available for them in a way that has stretched me. In short, being a priest is a call to love God’s people in a very particular way.

SACRED HEART OF JESUS

As a priest of Holy Cross consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, I think of this consecration as integrating the head and the heart, the intellectual and the affective. To use Aquinas’ virtue language, the highest state of virtue is not just doing the right thing; it is loving to do the right thing. There is also a pastoral dimension to this: namely, that to be effective ministers, we have to sympathize with others and feel correctly. If we stop feeling heartbreak over suffering, that’s an issue. And prudence, while tricky to develop, then guides us to know when and how to act on these feelings.

EDUCATORS IN THE FAITH

There is an explicitly educational and formative aspect of ministry in this community. I’ve always envisioned working with young people as part of my ministry within the Congregation. I also take the intellectual life very seriously, and I think that it should express itself in our preaching, our ability to articulate the faith, and our commitment to being serious about true Christian humanism. This allows us to delight in the best that is offered in the arts, the sciences, and culture—and, as Father Moreau would say, to help us educate in a way that makes God known, loved, and served.

INSPIRATION

My advice to others is not to be intimidated by the process of discernment and to remember that you are taking it one step at a time. Invest fully





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Graduate Study: University of Notre Dame, M.Div., 2021

Entered Formation: 2016, Postulant Program

First Vows: 07/29/2017

Final Vows: 08/28/2021

Deacon Placement: Keough Hall, University of Notre Dame

in the process and you will be rewarded, no matter what you discern.

Formal discernment of a vocation is only one piece of the vocational puzzle: much of our vocation consists in doing things we should already be doing (e.g., obligations of the faith such as Sunday Mass, participating in the Sacraments, caring for friends and family, and developing ourselves at school/work/as human beings). If we do these things well, we will be better equipped to make the bigger decisions about vocation as they present themselves. In some sense, we will realize that we've already made the decision, and it is only a matter of formalizing it.

Once the right fit is found, it will be recognized in the same way as a good running gait. It will feel comfortable but push the pace in a good way. It will be a combination of subjective metrics ("this feels right") and objective ones (e.g., others' observations, actually running at the desired pace).

Develop a personal relationship with Jesus, with Mary, with Joseph, and

with the saints. We participate in the Church in the communion of saints for a reason. The better you get to know them, especially Jesus, the more you will be able to discern where he is calling you.

Fr. Gabe grew up in South Bend, Indiana, and is the oldest of three children of Ann and Gladden Griggs. After receiving his B.A. in liberal studies and applied mathematics from the University of Notre Dame in 2014, Fr. Gabe completed one year of graduate work in statistics at Purdue University. He received his Master of Divinity from Notre Dame in 2021.

Fr. Gabe directed a parish discussion group at Holy Cross Parish (South Bend, Indiana) during 2015 to 2016, his first year of formation. From 2016 to 2017, while at the Holy Cross Novitiate (Cascade, Colorado), he served at the Marian House soup kitchen and Namasté Alzheimer Center. From 2017 to 2018, Fr. Gabe worked at Ryan's Place Children's Grief Support Center (Goshen, Indiana), helping children and

teenagers who lost loved ones. He spent 2018 to 2019 teaching the Common Good Seminar at Holy Cross College (Notre Dame, Indiana) and 2019 to 2020 as a chaplain for the Program of Liberal Studies at the University of Notre Dame. During his final year of formation, Fr. Gabe designed and taught a biblical interpretation course for alumni of the Program of Liberal Studies. He spent his diaconate year in preparation for priestly ordination as the rector of Keough Hall, a men's residence at the University of Notre Dame. He continues in this role as a priest.



CONGREGATION *of* HOLY CROSS

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— **COME TO ME,** —
all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you
— **REST.** —



In proposing the Sacred Heart as patron of the priests of his fledgling community, Blessed Basil Moreau, founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross, was consecrating his priests to the Shepherd of Souls, whose loving heart embraces all of God's children.

For Father Moreau, devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus meant conforming one's own heart to His: "In whatever dispositions we be, in whatever situation in life we be, we must look at our model and set ourselves to imitate Him" (Blessed Basil Moreau, *Sermons*).

AVE CRUX SPES UNICA

