

especially with four and five year-olds, so I was grateful that they made the trek out. Even though they had never been in our college chapel before, to see the little guys bless themselves with Holy Water, try not to fall over while genuflecting before our coal altar and the tabernacle, and letting them tell me which saints are depicted in our statues and icons around campus, these speak to the universals of our Catholic faith and why we can feel right at home before the Blessed Sacrament anywhere in the world, even in a place we have never been before. That faith my family learned growing up in rural Kansas, which for me was refined and strengthened at Notre Dame, and which I now try to nourish and build up in our students here at King's ... it's the same faith no matter where the Spirit takes us, and we are still part of the same Body of Christ even if we, for a time, need to live and work away from some of its members who we love and miss the most. I deeply hope that my work in Campus Ministry here is setting up our students to have experiences like these themselves one day, of bringing their nieces or nephews or their own children into a new or well-loved chapel, to let them experience the traditions of our ancient faith as we face modern challenges and opportunities.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve at King's College and to assist at various local parishes when my schedule

allows, because it gives me the chance to give back at least a piece of the great inheritance I know I have been entrusted with, and which I too-often take for granted. I probably would never have moved to Pennsylvania if I were not in Holy Cross, but I also would not have the opportunity to have met and prayed with the amazing people here, to learn about the rich history of this corner of Coal Country, to hear stories about the many different groups of immigrants who built up the church here over the years, and to lend my hands and words to the mission of protecting and passing down the Catholic faith here. I couldn't ask for a better band of brothers to work alongside than this world-wide order, this coast-to-coast family, and this local house of friends and mentors, all given to me in the Congregation of Holy Cross.

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MONTHLY REFLECTION SERIES

Separated but Not Divided

Fr. Jarrod Waugh, C.S.C.

Sometimes I almost forget how huge the United States Province of Holy Cross is. My experience of these first five years of priesthood and thirteen years in Holy Cross has been marked by working alongside passionate and focused confreres and lay colleagues who are totally dedicated to our ministries: first at Christ the King parish in South Bend, Indiana, then in the Vocations Office, and now at the end of my second academic year at King's College here in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Each of these ministries has provided more than enough work, laughs, worries and tears to take up all of my time and energy, and I hope that the occasional sleepless night in any of those places is a testament to my falling in love with those communities and not an indication of any lack of trust in God's plans.

In the two years I have been "in the valley" here at King's, I have to admit, I have felt more deeply the challenge of belonging to a brotherhood which spans from coast to coast, and which often separates us from our closest friends and old seminary classmates by hundreds of miles and multiple time zones, if not in affection. It takes discipline to keep up with family back in the Midwest and with brothers in community back at Notre Dame (and elsewhere). The demands of the work right in front of me easily lets weeks turn to months before I think,

“ ... it's the same faith no matter where the Spirit takes us ... ”

“Man, I haven't talked to so-and-so in ages!” At the same time, however, I know I am not alone in being blessed with a deep sense of meaning and purpose in my life knowing that the Spirit has called me here, to this place, to this ministry, to this local community via obedience and our Holy Cross superiors. The Wyoming Valley of Pennsylvania, is a very fertile corner of the Lord's Vineyard in which to be assigned, even if it (like everywhere else, and also my own heart!) is in need of some gentle pruning and watering here and there.

A case-in-point in appreciating this distance was just a few weeks ago, on Divine Mercy Sunday weekend, when back at Notre Dame five of our brothers were ordained to the priesthood in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart – where, of course, my classmates and I were also ordained. I was not able to be present at that liturgy this year because I had the unspeakable privilege and joy of celebrating a different Sacrament for

my first time here at King's. Three young women, students at the college, received the Sacrament of Confirmation, and the Bishop of Scranton, Joseph Bambera, granted delegation (as bishops do for parish pastors for Easter Vigil) for me, as RCIA Director, to perform the Sacrament for them. It is pretty exceptional for a priest who isn't a pastor of a parish to have that opportunity. To be able to anoint these amazing young women with the Sacred Chrism, to receive on behalf of the Church two of their Professions of Faith as they became fully-initiated Catholics, and to give First Communion, it is one of the most precious experiences of ministry I have been a part of yet in my life as a Christian, a Catholic, and a priest of Jesus Christ.

I still missed being able to be back with the gathered community in South Bend, of course, and I will have to wait a few more months before I can ask for each of their priestly blessings in person; but to me, what a beautiful microcosm, in one weekend this was of the ministry and brotherhood of Holy Cross. I hope they could feel our love and prayers and joy for them from here in Northeastern Pennsylvania all the way back in Indiana.

Just a couple of weeks later I got to welcome my younger sister, Bailey, my brother-in-law, Alex, and their two oldest boys, my nephews Joseph and Andrew, on their first trip to visit me at King's. It takes a lot of work to get from Southeast Kansas to Northeastern Pennsylvania,

