

CHOICES

FROM THE CONGREGATION OF HOLY CROSS OFFICE OF VOCATIONS

VOLUME 36, ISSUE 2



IN THIS ISSUE:

Ordination 2015



The Vocations Team: (left) Fr. Jim Gallagher, C.S.C., and Fr. Jarrod Waugh, C.S.C.

Each year, around the world, new priests and brothers are joined to the ranks of the Congregation of Holy Cross. They enter into the brotherhood formed by Blessed Basil Moreau so that they might grow in holiness as they strive to serve the Lord and His people. It is a joy to see them emerge from their time in initial formation ready to be about the daily work of growing in faith and proclaiming the Gospel.

This past September, six men took their Final Vows with Holy Cross, and in doing so, they consecrated themselves forever to Christ for the sake of the Church and the world. On April 11, 2015, Matthew Fase, C.S.C., David Halm, C.S.C., Timothy Mouton, C.S.C., Stephen Chase Pepper, C.S.C., Daniel Ponisciak, C.S.C., and Christopher Rehagen, C.S.C., were ordained priests.

For several years now, they have walked together in their preparation for this commitment and consecration. They have formed bonds as brothers with one another and with the Holy Cross community. They have gained confidence in the fact that Christ was indeed calling them to the priesthood. They matured in their ability to serve and to be images of God's love for His people.

These six men came from a range of backgrounds, but were brought together by a common desire to hear and answer God's call. Since then, they have been bound more closely together by their consecration to Christ and their Ordination. They did not know where their desire to follow Christ would lead them, but they were willing to trust that it was indeed Christ who was leading them. Because they were willing to act on this trust, they found what they went looking for – the opportunity to know and answer Christ's call.

In this issue of CHOICES we share a bit about their story and about what they learned along the way. If you have the sense that Christ may be calling you to join us, please do not hesitate to get in touch. It is only by placing your trust in the Lord and taking that next step that you will come to a deeper understanding of Christ's call.

In Christ,
Fr. James Gallagher, C.S.C.
Director, Office of Vocations
(574) 631-6385
vocation@holycrossusa.org

Forever Seeking and Carrying Out God's Will

Fr. Matthew E. Fase, C.S.C.



“‘Come, Follow me.’ It was the Lord Jesus calling us. We were already his, for we bore the name of Christians ... But there seemed to come a time when the Lord was calling us to take some further step.” – Constitution 1:1-2

For Fr. Matthew Fase, C. S. C., the support, encouragement and devotion he received from his own family shaped his decision to discern a vocation with the Congregation of Holy Cross.

“My parents talked to all five of us kids about being a priest, or a brother or a sister. Growing up, the priesthood, or religious life, was always something that was talked about as a legitimate vocation. I was drawn to Holy Cross specifically because the way they lived and interacted in community had the feel of an authentic family.”

Fr. Matt felt the call most strongly in high school, when he thought God might be calling him to the priesthood, but he didn't know how to figure out if he was being called or not - he needed a program that would teach him *how* to discern. He heard about Old College and found it to be exactly what was needed to help him figure out if God was calling him to religious life. Yet, when asked when he knew he wanted to be a priest, his honest answer often surprises many. “I knew I wanted to be a priest in my *fifth* year of seminary. I thought God might be calling me to the priesthood before

that and I thought I might like being a priest. However, it wasn't until I was at the Novitiate that I knew that I wanted to be a priest in Holy Cross. That was a pivotal moment. I discovered through the good work of discernment that this was a life I wanted to live - this was a life I wanted to give to God."

Fr. Matt first thought of Holy Cross as a group of guys working together, doing their best to serve the Lord. While his understanding of the Holy Cross mission has deepened, he's happy to say that this simple statement still describes how he fundamentally views Holy Cross. "We are family. A community that supports one another through sorrows and joys. We laugh a lot."

Looking into the future, Fr. Matt is most excited to serve in our parishes, working with people at all different stages of their life and in their faith, while humbly anticipating challenges in ministry, as well as great joys. "My year as a deacon was filled with many wonderful moments of prayer and service with those at Holy Redeemer Parish - but I am excited to be able to



After celebrating his first Baptism, Deacon Matt Fase, C.S.C., poses with the family outside Holy Redeemer Parish in Portland, Oregon.



"My child, there is still one place available among the apostles. Do you want it? I am here to offer it to you."

*Blessed Basil
Moreau, Spiritual
Exercises*

celebrate the Mass and the Sacrament of Confession now, when before, I could only lead a Communion service or lend a listening ear. I expect the greatest joys and challenges in ministry to be the same thing - seeking God's will and then doing it. It is a wonderful life filled with love and joy."

As for hopes in his life as a Holy Cross priest, his words are eloquent, powerful and healing: "I hope to strive to be always in the center of God's will, and serve the people of God. We are men with Hope to bring. As a member of Holy Cross I am reminded of our motto, *Ave Crux, Spes Unica*, and our symbol, the Cross and Anchors. I am to bring hope to all those I meet, and not merely a wishful thinking kind of hope - but, rather, Christian hope, founded on the love and sacrifice of Christ. A hope rooted in the Cross. A hope that endures pain and suffering because it rests in the sure hope of the Resurrection."

"As Christ suffered and died on the Cross and then rose again from the dead, so too will we who have been baptized into the body of Christ rise again from our suffering and sorrow. It is a hope that loves, a hope that endures." — Fr. Matthew Fase, C.S.C.

FR. MATTHEW FASE, C.S.C.

Born: June 25, 1987, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Parents: Steve and Patty Fase, Rockford, Mich.

College: University of Notre Dame, B.A., 2010

Graduate Study: Notre Dame, M.Div., 2014

Entered Formation: 2006, Old College

First Vows: July 30, 2011

Final Vows: Sept. 13, 2014

Deacon Placement: Holy Redeemer Parish, Portland, Ore.

Offering Abiding Hope in Parish Ministry

Fr. David J. Halm, C.S.C.



"The footsteps of those men who called us to walk in their company left deep prints, as of men carrying heavy burdens. But they did not trudge; they strode. For they had the hope." — Blessed Basil Moreau (CL 8)

One might wonder how our religious avoid becoming exhausted and worn out. Yet, it always seems the harder a religious works, the more joyful he becomes. Fr. David says it's because he and his confreres have the hope. "We all seem to be men hard-wired to work hard and sometimes beyond what seems possible. Not every group is like that. Holy Cross has a special place in Church history for how much it has accomplished given its size and young age. I was drawn to Holy Cross by the zeal for the Gospel I saw in the priests and brothers I met. These men worked harder and with greater devotion than other priests I met and yet had a deep joy. Community life was also very attractive. I liked the idea of working side by side to accomplish the mission."

For Fr. David, hope won out over his winding route to Final Vows and Ordination. "After I left formation in 2006, I worked for a few years at a bank, and it was during those years I met really extraordinary people who encouraged me to reconsider a calling. One late night at the office, it struck me that while I enjoyed that work and had great friendships as a bachelor, I wasn't passionate about it. As I considered when I felt most alive, it always seemed like it was when I was volunteering in my parish or discussing the faith with my friends."



"Henceforth, my king is everything for me. He seeks out souls, sacrificing himself for them, and I will do the same."

Blessed Basil Moreau, Spiritual Exercises

As with many on the road to becoming a Holy Cross priest, some of the most influential moments Fr. David experienced took place while working in the apostolate. "My second year in temporary vows, I worked with over a dozen couples in marriage preparation at St. Pius X Parish and saw what an incredible entrée religious life and priesthood is into people's lives. I had a great mentor pastor there, and he guided me to help them not only be formed for holy marriages, but also to grow closer to Jesus Christ. In the process, I think I was formed profoundly in my own intimacy with the Lord and zeal for His people."

Fr. David also realized that Holy Cross is really all about apostolic service to the Church. "We do not exist for our own end, but always for others. People at the parish comment that I seem to be champing at the bit. They're right. I love baptizing and preaching, though what surprised me was the amount of prayer time required to prepare a homily. Since one must reflect deeply on the Scriptures this really pushes me to spend time reading the Word of God. Some days I don't get as much time to reflect on it, but it's certainly a cornerstone of my prayer."

Though he misses being near close friends in Columbus, Ohio, and knows it's unlikely he'll ever live in proximity to them, formation taught him that the Lord is exactly right, that whatever we seem to give up for Him is returned to us a hundredfold. (Matthew 19:29) "The people I have met in parishes and our schools are incredible and kind and I met them only because the Lord Jesus drew me out of one life into a new one."

As to what that new life looks like on a daily basis in this work, and how the Lord drew him close to others in a powerful way, "when I have a tough day and need to vent or get some support, the guys I turn to are fellow C.S.C.s. When I have a big victory and want to celebrate, the guys I do this with are fellow C.S.C.s. When I just want to relax and watch a football game, I want



Deacon David Halm, C.S.C., with students from St. John Vianney School in Goodyear, Arizona.

to do this with my brothers in Holy Cross. I want to spend my time in service of the Lord and His Church.”

“Without a doubt, the greatest joy in ministry will be seeing people accept Christ into their lives. The challenge in ministry will always be how to move past our human limitations and bring Christ to a world desperate for Him. Take the leap and trust that God won’t waste your time. If He has put into your heart a serious thought about religious life or priesthood – even if it’s not where you will finally end up – He has done so for a reason. The only way to really know if you’re called to this life is to actually try it out.”
— Fr. David Halm, C.S.C.

FR. DAVID HALM, C.S.C.

Born: August 2, 1981, Fremont, Ohio

Parents: Deborah Kuns and John Halm, Clyde, Ohio

College: University of Notre Dame, B.B.A., 2004

Graduate Study: Notre Dame, M.Div., 2013

Entered Formation: 2000, Old College

First Vows: July 30, 2005

Final Vows: Sept. 13, 2014

Deacon Placement: St. John Vianney Parish, Goodyear, Ariz.



“Command - here I am ready to do anything to obey you! Call, and I will answer; inspire, and I will act; reveal your divine will to me, and I will do it...”

Blessed Basil Moreau, Directory of Devotional Prayer

Called to Bring Hope and Healing

Fr. Timothy N. Mouton, C.S.C.



“We pronounce our vows in a moment, but living them for the sake of the kingdom is the work of a lifetime.” — Constitution 6:57

When it came to discerning the priesthood, the Congregation of

Holy Cross was naturally where Fr. Timothy Mouton, C.S.C., looked first - and it had a lot to do with family. “I had a tremendous experience on my Confirmation retreat as a junior in high school that really helped me to deepen my faith and start asking more questions about God’s plan for me.” Before senior year, a conversation with his mom about what to do with his life prompted him to consider the same path his uncle and great uncle, Holy Cross priests Jeffrey Allison and Daniel Panchot, had followed. “I grew up knowing them as priests who lived joy-filled lives and I wanted to be like them, but I didn’t decide priesthood was in my future that day. It was the first time I started thinking in that direction, however.” When Fr. Tim *did* feel God calling, his first turn was to his uncles. “They helped me enter Holy Cross and embrace our community and the good work that we are able to do together.”

That’s not to say leaving his parents and siblings for his family in Holy Cross was without proper prayer and reflection. “Coming back from summer after my freshman year, I went abroad to Belgium to expand my horizons, meeting all sorts of great diocesan seminarians and reaffirming my call to Holy Cross. I was really embracing this religious life and all that it entails - and this was a big turning point for me. I had a conversation with

my mom again about giving up my family for Holy Cross; but, after talking with her, I saw that I wasn't losing my family - instead *we* were *all* joining the family of Holy Cross. I saw this moment as the end of my initial discernment and the start of my formation."

Fr. Tim's adventures in Holy Cross formation had officially begun. "Going to the Novitiate, I grew tremendously in prayer and learned how to live in *intentional community* (a community which holds common views and a common lifestyle, plus shares responsibilities and resources). Once I returned to Moreau Seminary, I was able to serve in many and varied apostolates, particularly My Brother's Keeper, a Christian ministry in Easton and Dartmouth, Mass., which delivers furniture and food to local families in need. I was also an assistant teacher at Saint Joseph High School, and served as house sacristan. Each helped me grow in very necessary ways for the work I do now."

Fr. Tim's deepened understanding of Holy Cross and our identity as men with hope to bring is not only a result of growth in formation and his assignments, but some influential mentors - namely his uncle, Fr. Jeffrey Allison, C.S.C.; rector, Fr. Peter Jarret, C.S.C.; current superior, Fr. Tony Szakaly, C.S.C.; and Old College director and Novice Master, Fr. Kevin Rousseau, C.S.C. "When we begin to be drained by the sufferings of those around us, the community that we share with one another allows us to rely upon each other and to be strengthened by one another. All these men have helped me to grow in my identity as a religious, as a community member, and practically as a professional minister." It is this beautiful spiritual identity that allows our religious to truly look upon their lives before Holy Cross and fully realize what has been gained. "There is nothing that I really miss about my life before Holy Cross. Of course my family commitments have changed and grown, but that is true of everyone, regardless of their path. The vows are freeing. My poverty allows me to not



"We are anointed down to our very bones ... and our joy, which wells up from deep within, is the echo of this anointing."

*Pope Francis, Homily,
April 17, 2014*

worry about money (something that, before, I often did worry about), my chastity allows me to love everyone equally as Christ did, and my obedience frees me from worry about what do I do next," said Fr. Tim.

"We make our profession of vows at the ceremony in a moment, but that doesn't make us perfect at living them just because we say so. The work of living them - of living as Christ - takes a lifetime. This quote reminds me that I am not perfect, but that I always have to keep growing in faith, in the vows, and in my relationship to God."
— Fr. Timothy Mouton, C.S.C.



Soon after his Diaconate Ordination, Deacon Tim Mouton, C.S.C., baptized his niece at the Log Chapel on the campus of Notre Dame.

FR. TIMOTHY MOUTON, C.S.C.

Born: Dec. 23, 1987, Houston, Texas

Parents: Martin and Paula Mouton,
Houston, Texas

College: University of Notre Dame, B.A., 2010

Graduate Study: Notre Dame, M.Div., 2014

Entered Formation: 2006, Old College

First Vows: July 30, 2011

Final Vows: Sept. 13, 2014

Deacon Placement: Campus Minister,
Stonehill College, Easton, Mass.

Making God's Presence Known Each Moment

Fr. Stephen Chase Pepper, C.S.C.



"We pronounce our vows in a moment, but living them for the sake of the kingdom is the work of a lifetime. That fulfillment demands of us more than the mere wish, more even than the firm decision. It demands the

conversion of our habits, our character, our attitudes, our desires." — Constitution 6:57

When making major life decisions, some homework, studying and thoughtful weighing of options is expected, encouraged and necessary. For Fr. Stephen Chase Pepper, C.S.C., the path to choosing to discern God's call with the Congregation of Holy Cross was paved with exploring not just the Holy Cross community, but that of other orders. "I spent a weekend with the Dominicans in Washington, D.C., during my senior year of college, and a weekend with the Jesuits at Fordham University in the Bronx. I loved both communities, but there was never that extra little something that pushed me over the edge into deciding to ask for an application. I was afraid of making 'the wrong choice,' said Fr. Chase. "What drew me to Holy Cross were the Congregation's apostolates in higher education and also its spirituality of finding hope in the Cross under the patronage of Our Lady of Sorrows. That 'push' only came when I started looking into Holy Cross. I felt it while I was reading through a packet of information from the Vocations Office. From there on out, I knew that I would at least apply to the Postulant Program."



"I ask the Lord Jesus to preserve the joy sparkling in the eyes of the recently ordained who go forth to devour the world, to spend themselves fully in the midst of God's faithful people"

*Pope Francis, Homily,
April 17, 2014*

As with any relationship, love often takes time. "I remember when I first realized that I had fallen in love with Holy Cross. I was sitting in the community room at the University of Portland, and I took a moment to look around at the faces of the men I was there with. I realized in that moment that I was happy in this community and that I could commit myself to them through the profession of vows. That was one of the most influential moments of my early formation."

It is also fairly easy to draw a comparison between the "sacrifices" of the priesthood to the vows of marriage and dynamic of becoming a parent - especially when it comes to freedom of self-determination - that is, going where one wants and with whom they want. "Formation has challenged me to see myself more and more as a man for others, not as a man who is out primarily to cater to his own needs. I think less and less about the sacrifices that the priesthood entails and more and more about the ways that I am being freed to become the fullest version of myself in Christ," said Fr. Chase.

When it comes to fully understanding and internalizing the vow of poverty and the simplicity of life it entails, one helpful experience for Fr. Chase was finding himself in the company of those who were living in poverty - not unlike how a "method actor" prepares for that Oscar-worthy role that ends up defining their acting career. "I spent my first year of temporary vows volunteering on Friday mornings at the local Catholic Worker drop-in center. I showed up one morning feeling pretty lousy, and one of the other volunteers, a Holy Cross sister, saw me and said, 'Oh Chase, why don't you just sit down and have a cup of coffee?' Which is what I did - and it was great because I wound up just sitting there and having coffee with the guests for *three hours*. I do not even think they knew I wasn't homeless myself. This experience was key for helping me understand what our Constitutions mean when they say that we are called to 'move *without awkwardness* among others who suffer.' (118)

Fr. Chase also reminds us that for whatever “defining moments” we have experienced in life thus far, there is much life and excitement which lies ahead, and always an opportunity to make the moments that lie ahead even more potent than those which have already transpired. “To be a priest has been the single greatest desire of my adult life, and I feel amazed when I stop to think that I am now at the end of a discernment that began more than 12 years ago. A lot of life happens in 12 years!” marveled Fr. Chase. “I hope to make a good and holy priest, and I hope also to make a transformative teacher and preacher. At the end of my life, I hope people will say about me that I spoke well, I spoke truthfully, and I spoke beautifully.”

“I remember praying the Holy Cross Stations of the Cross for the first time in San Luis, Colo., during my Novitiate. The prayers confused me at first because they seemed less about Jesus’s own experience of the Cross and more about the mystery of the Cross as it has played out in the lives of real people among whom Holy Cross religious live and serve. It soon struck me, however, that this is what it means to be men with hope to bring. Our calling is not to ‘inject’ hope into peoples’ lives, as if it were a foreign element, but rather to discern the mystery of the Cross already at work with them and to assure them that even here, precisely here, God is present and has not abandoned us.”
— Fr. Stephen Chase Pepper, C.S.C.



Deacon Stephen Chase Pepper, C.S.C., shares a laugh with his fellow deacons during the filming of the Final Vows Special Feature.



“Preserve, Lord, in your young priests the joy of going forth, of doing everything as if for the first time, the joy of spending their lives fully for you.”

*Pope Francis, Homily,
April 17, 2014*

FR. STEPHEN CHASE PEPPER, C.S.C.

Born: Jan. 19, 1985, Ft. Belvoir, Va.

Parents: Barry and Lorrie Pepper,
Huntsville, Ala.

College: Seton Hall University, B.A., 2007

Graduate Study: Notre Dame, M.Div., 2014

Entered Formation: 2009, Postulant

First Vows: July 30, 2011

Final Vows: Sept. 13, 2014

Deacon Placement: King’s College,
Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

Humbly Heeding God’s Invitation

Fr. Daniel M. Ponisciak, C.S.C.



“We asked how we might follow, and we found many footprints on the road. A great band of men had passed this way, men who had made and lived by their vows, men who had walked side by side in their following of the Lord.

They beckoned us to fall in step with them. We wanted to be part of the family they formed in order to share in their life and work.”

— Constitution 1:5

How do you know God is calling you to serve the Church as a religious priest or brother? Sometimes, you aren’t sure – that’s exactly what the discernment process is meant to help you discover! For Fr. Daniel Ponisciak, C.S.C., entering the seminary was a challenging decision, but a conversation with his parents helped him decide to give the seminary a try. “I had a great job and a

good situation, and couldn't help but question how God could be calling me away from the life I was living - but, it's worth giving the seminary a shot, especially if you think God might be calling you to this life."

Six years later, Fr. Dan says it was well worth walking away from his former job and situation. "I take great stock of the small moments in which I can see God's presence. I found my ministry experiences to be incredibly humbling and influential in my ability to discern my vocation in Holy Cross. Whether it was ministering to families at the hospital as a chaplain or simply sitting with couples helping to prepare them for marriage, I found great consolation in my vocational discernment through the many ministry opportunities I had while in formation."

As for what else guided Fr. Dan through the formation process and solidified his decision - a strong prayer life, reading the many documents and writings of Basil Moreau, as well as his own ministry experiences all played a crucial role. "I have come to see the many faces of Holy Cross. My ministry experiences were very diverse and so I was able to be involved in ministering to children as well as adults, young couples, college students and those in hospitals. I have been able to witness a great number of people who we minister to. My prayer life has also developed over my time in formation as well as through my retreat experiences. I pray in various ways including Ignatian prayer, praying with music, praying through meditation as well as the Liturgy of the Hours. One of the most helpful images for my prayer has been by meditating on the face of Jesus."

As a Holy Cross priest, Fr. Dan now knows there's much more to contemplate, ponder and pray over concerning the future, than there ever was in any of our individual pasts. "I am excited to celebrate the Sacraments with the community and to attempt to bring Jesus Christ to all those whom I meet. Serving at the altar as a priest, celebrating Mass will be unreal and a great joy to share with the People of God."



"May [elderly priests] know, Lord, the joy of handing on the torch, the joy of seeing new generations of their spiritual children, and of hailing the promises from afar, smiling and at peace, in that hope which does not disappoint."

*Pope Francis, Homily,
April 17, 2014*



Deacon Daniel Ponsiacik, C.S.C., proclaims the Gospel at St. Ignatius Martyr Parish in Austin, Texas.

As to the vows Fr. Dan upholds as a Holy Cross priest, he has never seen them as anything but liberating in the way he lives his life. "The vows of poverty, chastity and obedience provide me a great sense of freedom in how I live my life. The vow of poverty enables me to live in solidarity with all those I meet as well as to live in community with my brothers in Holy Cross. The vow of chastity frees me to love the God who created me, to love the person God created me to be and to love all those whom I encounter. The vow of obedience is crucial to my religious life. In living out this vow, I am committed to the community in which I serve - the day-to-day obligations of community life as well as going where God calls me to go."

Following obediently the footprints on the road, Fr. Dan sees himself as one who is willing and eager to serve the Lord in any Holy Cross ministry that needs him most - yet, no matter what assignments lie ahead, he'll always approach it "with Hope to Bring."

"Identifying hope in the midst of great suffering and being able to offer that to people is something I will take with me into ministry. Being able to identify hope through the Cross, through an instrument of death, that was used to crucify our Savior, but which through His death, became an instrument of our salvation – an instrument that provides hope for all who believe that suffering and death are conquered through it."

— Fr. Daniel Ponisiak, C.S.C.

FR. DANIEL PONISCIAK, C.S.C.

Born: Nov. 23, 1979, Philadelphia, Pa.

Parents: Dorothy and Michael Ponisiak,
Fox Chase Manor, Pa.

College: University of Richmond, B.A., 2002

Graduate Study: College of William &
Mary, M.Ed., 2005; Notre Dame,
M.Div., 2014

Entered Formation: 2009, Postulant

First Vows: July 30, 2011

Final Vows: Sept. 13, 2014

Deacon Placement: St. Ignatius Martyr
Parish, Austin, Texas

Learning to Trust in God's Providence

Fr. Christopher M. Rehagen, C.S.C.



"We heard a summons to give over our lives in a more explicit way. It was a call to serve all people, believers and unbelievers alike. We would serve them out of our own faith that the Lord had loved us and died for us



"We found our community waiting with the open arms of disinterested charity waiting to receive us among its children."

*Blessed Basil
Moreau, Sermons*

and risen for us and that He offers us a share in His life, a life more powerful and enduring than any sin or death." — Constitution 1:3

For Fr. Christopher Rehagen, C.S.C., giving his life over to Jesus Christ was a very gradual process, a process he offers advice on to others who are discerning. "Two pieces of advice: 1) Make sure to take time to pray, to take time to grow closer to Jesus Christ. There is no discernment without this relationship; and 2) when I first started discerning entering the seminary, I spent a lot of time praying for certainty. I wanted to be absolutely certain that God was calling me to be a priest before I joined the seminary. So, it was frustrating when God didn't grant me that certainty. I've come to realize that no one has that certainty when they enter the seminary or religious life. Instead, we enter religious life because we feel we might be called to this life, and need the experience of living this life to figure it out. We have to be willing to trust in God's Providence and take the next step. It is only then that our questions and concerns will be answered."

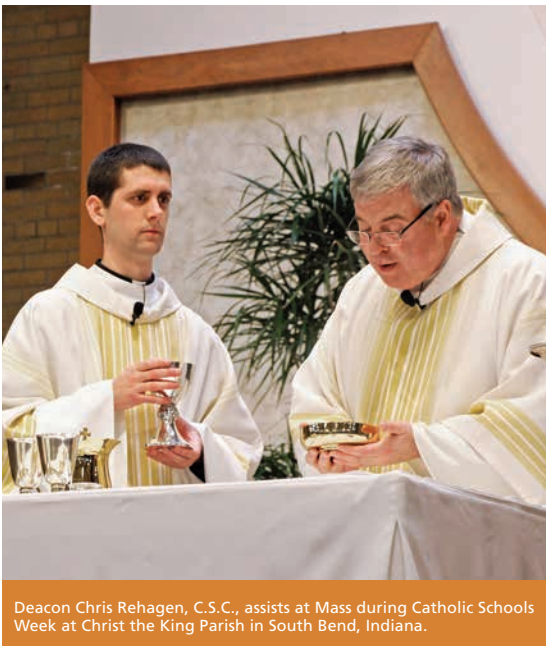
The next step for Fr. Chris, once he realized he was never going to be "certain" until he pursued the possibility of a vocation, was to visit. "It wasn't until my freshman year of college, when I attended a Corby Night at the request of Fr. George Rozum, C.S.C., my rector, that I began thinking more seriously about a vocation. I then began to strengthen my relationship with Jesus Christ by praying more often and attending daily Mass. I decided that I would wait to enter the seminary until after I graduated college; if I still felt a call during my senior year, then I would apply. I still felt the call senior year, so I met with the vocation office and began discerning even more seriously."

As Fr. Chris came to trust God's Providence and discern with the Congregation of Holy Cross, he found a great deal of support and ultimately joined because of the people and the ministry. "Holy Cross is a great group of men. I love being around them and have found a great deal of support in community

as well. In thinking about my discernment, I would say that the many priests I met at Notre Dame during my time as a student were very important in my discerning a vocation to Holy Cross. They were very joy-filled men. I wanted to be like them. I also love the ministry options, especially the chance to minister in a variety of different settings - parish, university, direct service to the poor. This is something you do not find everywhere."

You also don't find the same community life elsewhere. The College Vocation Retreat put on by Holy Cross was an important moment for Fr. Chris, as he was able to spend time with other guys discerning the same calling. "I felt at home there and felt like I fit in. Community life is very important for me. I grew up in a tight-knit family, and one of the hardest parts about discerning the priesthood was discerning the idea of giving up a family of my own. But I found another family in Holy Cross. We helped each other see how God was working in each of our lives and that is so important in discernment."

While there's no single approach to formation, or one story that is universal of every candidate, what you do hear often is how helpful it is for one to gain experience in a broad range of ministries. Fr. Chris had many



Deacon Chris Rehagen, C.S.C., assists at Mass during Catholic Schools Week at Christ the King Parish in South Bend, Indiana.



"The virtues that you reproduce in yourself will be the colors of the painting, and Jesus Christ will be the model whom you copy."

*Blessed Basil
Moreau, Spiritual
Exercises*

ministry experiences and credits those to his love of parish life. "I spent time in parishes, spent time working in campus ministry in a university, went to Mexico and also spent time working directly with the poor. All these experiences helped form me into a fairly well-rounded minister who can minister in a variety of settings and situations."

"It will be wonderful to help out in so many ways in the parish that I am now unable to help with, especially things like hearing Confessions, Anointing the Sick and celebrating Mass. To go along with this, the aspect of priesthood that is most attractive to me is celebrating the Sacraments. I look forward to making Christ present in the world in that way." — Fr. Christopher Rehagen, C.S.C.

FR. CHRISTOPHER REHAGEN, C.S.C.

Born: May 5, 1987, Jefferson City, Mo.

Parents: Mark and Susan Rehagen,
Jefferson City, Mo.

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

Graduate Study: Notre Dame, M.Div., 2014

Entered Formation: 2009, Postulant

First Vows: July 30, 2011

Final Vows: Sept. 13, 2014

Deacon Placement: Christ the King Parish,
South Bend, Ind.

Watch the Ordination Mass of the men featured in this issue of CHOICES on the Holy Cross Vocations YouTube Channel:

youtube.com/cscvocations

STAY CONNECTED.

Visit Subscribe.HolyCrossVocations.org and follow us:



HolyCrossBlog.org



CSCVocations



[Facebook.com/
HolyCrossVocations](http://Facebook.com/HolyCrossVocations)



@CSCVocations



CONGREGATION OF
HOLY CROSS
EDUCATION • PARISH • MISSION