

# CHOICES

FROM THE CONGREGATION OF HOLY CROSS OFFICE OF VOCATIONS

VOLUME 33, ISSUE 2



**IN THIS ISSUE:**

Ordinations 2012



The Holy Cross Vocations Team: Fr. Jim Gallagher, C.S.C., and Fr. Drew Gawrych, C.S.C.

For many years now, we in Holy Cross have celebrated the Ordinations of many of our priests on Easter Saturday, placing this special event in the life of our community right in the midst of the Church's celebration of the resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Our celebration, then, is not merely about men receiving the Sacrament of Holy Orders (a reason for rejoicing in its own right); it becomes a part of the Church's greater celebration of the saving mystery of Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

For the one receiving the Sacrament of Holy Orders, it is a moment in which he continues the offer made in his Final Vows to place his life in the service of the Lord and is consecrated to serve the Church in *persona Christi*. For the family of the *ordinandi*, it is a moment of pride and joy as well as the realization that their son, grandson, brother, nephew, or cousin is no longer their own. For the other priests present, it is a reminder of their own reception of the Sacrament. For all of the faithful present, the Ordination is a sign of the vibrant life of the Church that continues to bear the Good News of Christ's resurrection and everyone's salvation. In short, it is a wonderful moment in the life of the Church.

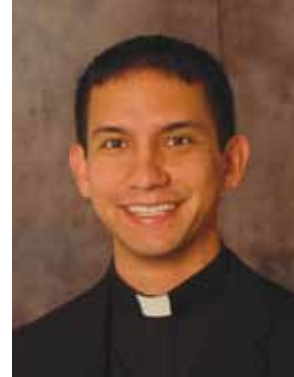
In this issue, we share several articles that revolve around our celebration of this wonderful Sacrament in the life of Holy Cross. Two of our brothers have been ordained: Fr. Matthew Kuczora, C.S.C., on April 14 in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the University of Notre Dame, and Fr. Rodrigo Valenzuela, C.S.C., on April 21 in Santiago, Chile. We also share reflections on past Ordinations from the parents' perspective and from the rector of Moreau Seminary, who is celebrating his 20th anniversary of Ordination this year.

As we celebrate one of our more joyous occasions in the Community, we also mark the 175th anniversary of the Congregation of Holy Cross. And as part of the yearlong tribute to the contributions of our brothers, we share a bit of the story about the priest who was instrumental in drawing together the men who would become the first Holy Cross brothers.

We hope that these reflections may assist you in your discernment of God's will. If there are other ways that we may be of assistance, do not hesitate to contact us.

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## Putting the Work of Building God's Kingdom First



*Fr. Matthew C. Kuczora, C.S.C.*

Ever since he became a deacon, and now a priest, Fr. Matthew Kuczora's fantasy football team has taken a serious dive.

He is on the staff of a parish in México, so Sunday has become a busy day for him. His work with seminarians in México also means that he gets up early and goes to bed late. He just does not have the time and energy to follow the NFL like he once did.

And it is not only Ray Lewis that he misses from his life as a college student. "Second sleep"—what college students call their beloved mid-morning nap—and a relaxing weekend off are now things of the past.

"The greatest lesson on religious life I have ever learned is that the vows include some sacrifice or exclusion from a part of life," Fr. Matt said, "yet they also free us for something else: community, generosity, ministry, and much more."

Fr. Matt dispels nostalgia for the easy-going life of a college student by following a desire to serve those who are suffering. He recalls spending one summer at an orphanage in Honduras, an experience that continues to speak to him. He witnessed overwhelming poverty there, and even shared feelings of instability with locals when they witnessed the Honduran army remove the sitting president.

Through it all, he could see that faith was a bed-rock for people's lives. Hondurans turned to the

### AT A GLANCE ...

**FR. MATTHEW C. KUCZORA, C.S.C.**

**Born:** 1983, Marion, Ind.

**College:** B.B.A. in Accountancy 2001-2005  
University of Notre Dame

**Graduate Study:** M.Div. 2008-2011  
University of Notre Dame

**Entered Formation:** August 2006

**First Vows:** August 2, 2008

**Final Vows:** August 27, 2011

**Date of Ordination:** April 14, 2012

Church for education and material needs. They were seeking hope, Fr. Matt realized.

"I often think of my friends in Honduras and my experiences there," he said. "It helps me remember what good priests and religious can do in our world. People need someone to tell them God loves them, to make God present in the Eucharist, to share God's forgiveness with them, to help them understand life and death and the promise of a life without death."

In Holy Cross, Fr. Matt found a way to respond to those suffering from poverty and instability. Blessed Basil Moreau, the founder of Holy Cross, was marked by zeal to make God known, loved, and served, especially among those most in need of God's love. "Many of these things I probably will never have to endure myself," he said, "and yet I'm called to bring the light of Christ into these situations."

Fr. Matt says he wants to help people feel God's love more deeply, "For me, I am filled with zeal to make God loved. I work to make God served in the poorest of our brothers and sisters, ministering to them in their needs."

By his own admission, Fr. Matt has come a long way in his understanding of religious life from where he was before meeting the Holy Cross community. "I thought all priests lived as diocesan priests did," he said.

It was sharing life with Holy Cross priests at the University of Notre Dame, having them as rectors and professors and living with them in the residence halls, that "showed me a different side of religious life and priesthood that was very intriguing," he said. Fr. Matt could feel a sense of brotherhood among the men of Holy Cross, and that joy of sharing a life together was attractive to him. "My experience in Holy Cross has brought me to dinner tables where I'm invited to call pastors and university presidents by their first names, where I can just as easily go fishing, pray morning prayer, or watch a football game with the oldest or youngest member of the community," he said. "Community life has been most enriching during times when we have celebrated, and even shared times of struggle or mourning. That brotherhood has been very powerful and supportive. I hope that I will be a good brother in the community," he said.

Just as he found allies in the Holy Cross priests who shared life with him as an undergraduate, Fr. Matt hopes that the life he shares with others is a sign of hope. "In all our apostolates, we witness lives of faith in our community and in our devotion to the people we serve," he said. "We teach inside the classroom and out, from the pulpit and from sidelines of football games and the lines of soup kitchens.

"I hope that my life as a vowed religious will inspire people to see beyond the passing things of our world—prestige, power, and wealth—and remember that our time doesn't end at our death and that God is constantly at work," he said.



**"We live in expectation of his coming! In priestly spirituality, this expectation must be lived out through pastoral charity, which impels us to live in the midst of God's People, so as to direct their path and to nourish their hope."**

Blessed John Paul II



Fr. Matt Kuczora, C.S.C., walking with Fr. Alfredo Olvera Ledezma, C.S.C., and Deacon Carlos Jacobo de los Santos, C.S.C., in a procession to celebrate Mass for the anniversary of St. André's Canonization.

To accomplish this task of bringing hope and revealing God to others, Fr. Matt relies on the vows of religious life—those very same vows that stole his mid-morning naps and sunk his fantasy football team. Yet he is not plagued by regret—just the opposite, in fact.

"Our vows make us more available to the people of God and make our first priority whoever is in need, close-by or far way," he said. "They allow us to be open and trusted by people in need and challenge us to live them well in order to honor that trust. While I still feel the sting of renunciation, I more often find the vows a great source of strength and opportunity for building up the Kingdom of God."

## *In his own words ...*

*Fr. Matt offers advice on discernment*

Think about what gives you life and what makes you happy. What books to keep at the end of the semester, and which do you sell back? What are some of your best memories? If you feel alive and confident helping people, serving people—then maybe this life is for you. If you have a wide range of interests, feel like you'd like to share your work with other people, if people see those things in you or are always coming to you to help them through times when they need to make a decision or want to talk—then this might be for you.

It never hurts to start a program of discernment. It's just that: discernment. I think a great loss to our society is that more men are not open to a religious vocation or spend any time in religious formation. No matter what you end up doing or whatever vocation God calls you to, time in formation is never wasted. It helps you better understand yourself, your gifts, and your relationship with God. Taking a year or two to really think and pray about those thoughts of religious life and priesthood that keep coming up, is really a great thing. Sometimes you just have to dive in.

## Discovering Identity Through Service

*Fr. Rodrigo Valenzuela Rios, C.S.C.*

In the year before being ordained a priest, Fr. Rodrigo Valenzuela Rios spent 10 days on a mission trip to a village in Chile called Quilacahuín. It was among the people of this small, rural village that Fr. Rodrigo discovered just what kind of priest he was called to be.

Quilacahuín sits among winding and unpaved roads in rural southern Chile, and people there live in wooden houses that often do not outlast the winter winds and rain. Villagers suffer from the lack of a steady supply of drinking water and extremely hot weather in the summer.

During his mission trip, Fr. Rodrigo blessed houses and helped to celebrate the Mass. He even walked for many miles to bring the Eucharist to the sick and elderly who were unable to travel to the village chapel.

"For the people we visited, ... and for me personally, it was unforgettable," Fr. Rodrigo said. "There, fatigue did not bother me, nor did having few hours of sleep. The main thing was to share this immense joy of proclaiming a Christ who is alive.

"I believe this was one of the experiences that ... helped me decide the type of Holy Cross priest I have been called to be." Fr. Rodrigo said his work as a missionary showed him the true meaning of service, giving of oneself freely, and gratefulness.

Serving the people of Quilacahuín changed Fr. Rodrigo, and set a course for his priesthood. He went from "being a missionary to being missioned to," he said. "Without a doubt, it has been a time of grace, in which God has used our hands and our voices to proclaim his Gospel, and to proclaim his Good News."



Fr. Rodrigo is a Holy Cross priest in the District of Chile and was ordained April 21 by Archbishop Ricardo Ezzati of Santiago, Chile. Fr. Rodrigo teaches theology at Saint George's College in Santiago, and serves as a campus minister there. He also assists at Nuestra Señora de la Merced, a parish in Calle Larga, near Santiago.



**"The world looks to the priest, because it looks to Jesus! No one can see Christ; but everyone sees the priest, and through him they wish to catch a glimpse of the Lord!"**

Blessed John Paul II

## In Awe of God's Omnipresent and Unconditional Love

*Fr. Peter Jarret, C.S.C.*

**Rector/Superior  
Moreau Seminary**



It is hard not to feel a deep sense of gratitude to God as we celebrate the Ordination of Fr. Matthew Kuczora, C.S.C., to the

priesthood. For those of us who have the immense privilege of working in formation with our seminarians, it is always with a sense of wonder and awe that we marvel at God's call and how God's grace moves in the lives of these young men during their time in the seminary.

Earlier this month someone asked me how it felt to be celebrating 20 years of priesthood. At first I thought they were mistaken—surely it can't be 20 years! Amazingly, it has been that long, and as I reflect back on my own Ordination I remain in awe of the ways God has continued to call and shape me.

Since my Ordination I have served as an Associate Pastor, Pastor, Dorm Rector, Counselor to the President of the University of Notre Dame, Religious Superior at Notre Dame, and now as Superior and Rector of Moreau Seminary. When I was ordained, all I knew was that I was returning to the parish I had served as a deacon—since then, the rest of my ordained ministry has been unplanned. While I did not specifically choose any of my assignments, I have found each of them to be both challenging and rewarding in ways I had not expected. But the biggest lesson that these 20 years have taught me is that being a priest is first and foremost about a relationship with the Lord, in whom "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28), and less about doing any particular ministry.

One of the essential and foundational parts of seminary formation today is making sure these young men have a deep and abiding awareness of God's love for them. If they don't see their lives as a response to the unconditional love of God, then they won't persevere and won't make very good ministers. Living into an awareness that one is truly beloved by God can be a challenge in our culture, which places so much emphasis on achievement and on earning things. This is true not only for seminarians, but for all of us who strive to live our Christian faith. Coming to accept

God's unconditional love as the foundation of our lives independent of what we do, how we look, what grades or salary we earn, can be tricky. Many people try to find love and meaning through these things, and when they inevitably fail, they get disappointed with themselves and with life.

In formation we hope the seminarians discover the truth about who they are in God's eyes and that they live into it. We want them to believe and trust in God's love in the core of their being, so that they can be set free to embrace all of life with an inexhaustible zeal and joy. This is true even in how they are to approach their own weaknesses and failures, not as things to get angry about or be ashamed of, but as a means to connect more deeply with the people God brings into their lives. These flaws are tools to help them love even more truly, as Christ did.

That priesthood is about "being" before "doing" came home to me a few months ago when I had the great privilege of celebrating three important events in the lives of some former students of mine, all recent graduates of Notre Dame. Two were events marked by great happiness and joy, one filled with sadness and grief—all of them testaments to people's great faith. On a Sunday afternoon, I gathered with a young family in the Log Chapel at Notre Dame to celebrate the Baptism of their first child. It was an occasion of much joy and laughter as they marveled at the gift of eternal life that was bestowed on their child through the grace of Baptism. The very next day, in the same Log Chapel, I gathered for a funeral Mass with another young couple who had just suffered a miscarriage during their first pregnancy. Present in loving support at that somber and tear-filled liturgy were their friends and family, including another young couple who had just arrived in town for their own wedding, which was to take place just five days later. When we all gathered together again on Saturday in the Basilica, not far from the Log Chapel, the tears from the previous Monday had dried; and yet the witness of the grieving couple's love for one another made the marriage vows of this newly married couple resonate with a deeper sense of meaning and reverence.

While in some ways it was an odd juxtaposition of events involving three young couples, it also served as a powerful reminder that life is a journey filled with joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments, good times and bad. All of these moments are steeped in God's presence, and more than anything else, this is what I am called to bear witness to. Regardless of the places I served or the ministries I have done, the opportunity to walk with people as they journey toward eternal life is for me the great treasure of my vocation. As I begin my next 20 years, I pray that Fr. Matt and those who follow him know the same joy and sense of awe at the call they have received.



**"If the whole Church draws life from the Eucharist, all the more then must the life of a priest be 'shaped' by the Eucharist. So for us, the words of institution must be more than a formula of consecration: they must be a 'formula of life.'"**

Blessed John Paul II

## 175 Years of Making God Known, Loved, and Served

On March 1, 1837, Blessed Basil Moreau united Fr. Jacques Dujarié's Brothers of St. Joseph and his auxiliary priests through the Fundamental Act, thus forming a single association of priests and brothers to serve the pastoral and educational needs of the French people. Blessed Moreau named his new group *Congregatio a Sancta Cruce* (C.S.C.), which literally means "Congregation of Holy Cross." We are named for Sainte-Croix, the small town outside Le Mans, France. Later, Moreau would add a group of sisters, the Marianites of Holy Cross. The model for our founder's new family was the Holy Family, a revolutionary concept during this time period for the Church. Following the example of the apostles and while his community was still young, Blessed Moreau sent missions to other parts of Europe, Algeria, Canada, the United States, and Eastern Bengal to spread the Gospel and build God's Kingdom. While this missionary zeal led to Pope Pius IX granting Holy Cross priests and brothers official ecclesiastical recognition in one united congregation in 1857, the Marianites had to become their own independent congregation.

The Holy Cross community is really no different today than it was 175 years ago, except there are more of us! Every day we make Blessed Moreau's vision a reality, teaching and serving God's people with zeal in our education, parish, and mission settings around the world. We live by example, teaching those around us how the Cross can be borne as a gift, *Ave Crux, Spes Unica* (Hail the Cross our Only Hope)!

**The Congregation of Holy Cross has 1,200 religious worldwide, in 16 countries, on five continents. The United States Province has 400 priests and brothers, and an additional 100 in formation in the United States, México, Chile, Perú, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania.**



## Ordination Through a Family's Eyes

Even now, two years later, Margie Olinger still gets teary-eyed when she recalls what her son gave her the day after his Ordination to the priesthood.

"He came into my room and brought the cloth with chrism on it that was used to wipe the oil from his hands," she explained. "It is traditionally given to the mother of the ordained. He told me that when I'm buried some day, this would be buried with me."

In retelling the story, she has to pause to collect herself, "it's just very touching."

For Margie and Gerry Olinger Sr., the custom of the chrism cloth is just one example of how the Ordination Liturgy tangibly connects the ordained and their families to the larger religious community. Their son, Fr. Gerry Olinger, C.S.C., was ordained on April 10, 2010, with Fr. Kevin Grove, C.S.C., at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. Fr. Gerry now serves as Vice President for Student Affairs and Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Portland in Oregon.

The Olingers now feel they, too, have strong family bonds with Holy Cross. "When my daughters got married, I gained more family with sons-in-law and grandchildren," Margie said. "I felt the same when Ger was ordained. We have met so many wonderful people in Holy Cross. It felt like we were extending our family, and they made us feel like we've become a part of their family."

During the Ordination Liturgy, Margie and Gerry Sr. felt connected to the Holy Cross community in a way that transcended time and space. Both of them felt moved when the candidates lay prostrate, facedown, in the main aisle before the altar. During this time, the church assembly sings the Litany of Supplication,



Fr. Gerry Olinger, C.S.C., receiving the chrism oil.



Fr. Gerry with his family and Bishop Daniel Jenky, C.S.C., after his Ordination in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on April 10, 2010.

**"We priests are the *celebrants*, but also the *guardians* of this most sacred mystery. It is our relationship to the Eucharist that most clearly challenges us to lead a 'sacred' life. This must shine forth from our whole way of being, but above all from the way we celebrate."**

Blessed John Paul II



calling on a litany of saints for prayers of intercession to prepare and assist the men in their lives ahead as priests.

"It was just magnificent—the submission, giving all they possess to almighty God," said Gerry Sr. "You see them give everything. At that moment, they are so fully dedicated to their vocation."

"When they prostrated themselves, it was so beautiful and touching, and there was such reverence," Margie said. "I had never seen anything like that before in my life. I felt very humbled. I really felt a part of something bigger."

In addition to Fr. Gerry, the Olingers have three daughters, two of whom are married. They said their Ordination experience was similar, yet at the same time very different, from other momentous family events.

The Ordination itself carries many feelings. "There were a lot of emotions, just like when our daughters got married," Margie said. "The whole day is so exhilarating, like the birth of a child."

For most families, an Ordination is not as common as other rituals, such as weddings. The richness of the Liturgy is a lot to digest, Gerry Sr. said. They both attended the Ordination Liturgy the year prior, just to observe and take it all in. "We had never been to an Ordination and it is so overwhelming because of its beauty."

"I would recommend that to any parent," Margie said. "I was so glad to have had the opportunity to see it beforehand. Everyone has been to weddings before, but not many people have attended an Ordination."

To view pictures or watch videos of past Ordinations, please visit our website:

**[Ordination.Holycrossvocations.org](http://Ordination.Holycrossvocations.org)**

# He Went About Doing Good

*Fr. David Guffey, C.S.C.*

Director, Film, Television and Video Dept.,  
Family Theater Productions

*This year, 2012, is the "Year of the Brother," a time set aside to honor the Holy Cross brothers. Father Jacques-François Dujarié founded the brothers in France in 1820 to serve the needs of the Church suffering the effects of the French Revolution, which had decimated Catholic institutions there. Fr. Dujarié's commitment to serve the Church, even at his own peril, is an example of the service provided by the Holy Cross brothers today.*

Fr. Dujarié's story begins with the start of the French Revolution in 1789. Parishes, convents and monasteries, which had provided most of France's education and health care, were being closed and assets seized. During the first waves of the revolution, priests and religious who did not desert the Church were imprisoned, deported, executed or forced into hiding.

Despite what was going on around him, young Jacques Dujarié remained determined to continue on his path to priesthood, and was ordained in a secret chapel in Paris on December 26, 1795, amid the worst of the Revolution's fury. He celebrated his first Mass in a barn in the deep of night at a family's farm outside of Ruillé-sur-Loir.

From that place of hiding, Fr. Dujarié zealously served Catholics by visiting them underground at night, or by posing as a peddler to go out through the countryside.

There was great risk in doing this, both for him and for the faithful to whom he ministered. Severe punishment awaited the person caught hiding a priest or receiving the Sacraments.

An agreement between Napoleon and Rome in 1801 began a slow process of opening the country to the reemergence of religious institutions. Still, gusts of anti-clerical sentiment flared, poverty and disease abounded, and the impoverished Church in France struggled.

Dujarié worked tirelessly from his parish in Ruillé-sur-Loir. He began to gather around him young men and women who were also inspired to serve the people's needs. The women educated

girls and became the Sisters of Providence in 1806; the men instructed boys and became the Brothers of St. Joseph in 1820. The sisters and brothers soon received invitations to expand their presence to villages throughout the region.

With heavy demands and scarce resources, conflicts arose from within these communities as they expanded. The Sisters of Providence were established as their own order in 1831. As Fr. Dujarié aged with severe rheumatoid arthritis and strokes, he saw that new leadership was needed for the brothers. Talks began with the local bishop, the brothers, Fr. Dujarié and young Blessed Basil Moreau.

Fr. Moreau was already fondly known by Fr. Dujarié and the brothers. He had given retreats for the brothers as early as 1823, and served as spiritual director to some, including Brother André Mottais, one of their key leaders. Fr. Dujarié, Br. Mottais, and Fr. Moreau shared a vision of service to the Church. In 1835, in the presence of the entire community and the local bishop, Bishop Jean-Baptiste Bouvier, Dujarié turned over administration of the Brothers of St. Joseph to Moreau.

As previously agreed, Moreau moved the brothers' headquarters and Dujarié to Le Mans. The brothers thrived under Moreau's leadership and became the Brothers of Holy Cross, joined by the Priests and Sisters of Holy Cross. Moreau visited Dujarié every evening and was at his elder's side, praying, when Fr. Dujarié died on February 17, 1838.

They initially buried Fr. Dujarié on Holy Cross land in Le Mans, but some time later the Sisters of Providence requested that his remains be transferred to their motherhouse chapel in Ruillé-sur-Loir. A plaque commemorates Fr. Dujarié in the parish church and simply reads, "He went about doing good."

Tenacious trust in God's Divine Providence, commitment to the Church, and confidence in the possibilities for service when people gather together were hallmarks of Fr. Dujarié's life and flow through the DNA of Holy Cross men and women to this day.



Stained glass window of Fr. Dujarié (left), Bishop Bouvier (center), and Blessed Basil Moreau (right).



*I will give you shepherds  
after my own heart.*

**JEREMIAH 3:15**



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to the religious life or the priesthood, please visit us at

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