

SOCIETY of OUR LADY
of the Most Holy Trinity

gray robes

FALL 2022





Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst



Matthew 18:20

GRAY ROBES FORMATION PROGRAM

SACRED HEART MAJOR SEMINARY IN DETROIT, MI

Theology IV: Dcn. David Snow (MO)
Theology III: Br. Joseph Spears (KY)
Philosophy II: Br. Gregory Rice (PA)
Philosophy I: Br. Andrew Collart (GA)

PERMANENT BROTHERHOOD IN MISSION

Year IV

Br. Andrew Rowedder (MD) - Detroit, MI

Year III

Br. Adam Schmitzer (OH) - Detroit, MI

NOVIATE IN CORPUS CHRISTI

Fr. Daniel Gallagher (DC)
Nicholas Judge (MD)

ASPIRANCY IN BELIZE:

Nathan Hagon (CA)



Dear Friends and Benefactors of SOLT,

In a culture where the “digital life” takes on ever greater significance, insidiously seeks to dominate our time, and tyrannically shapes mindsets and cultural outlooks, the down-to-earth, concrete, incarnate experiences of the brothers in mission become essential. Ministry, prayer, and relationships in mission act as antidotes to any numbing or distancing effect media and technology might have. The immediacy of encounters in mission life serve to place a brother’s hand on the pulse of the Body of Christ, to feel His life, and to know the symptoms of suffering and pain in His people.

All this renews and deeply forms the brothers because it is real—real contact with real people, gathered seeking Christ, longing to find him in their midst. Such ministerial encounters become catalysts to release and deliver the Good News, which the brothers internalize throughout the year of study and formation in Detroit. Summer apostolates are irreplaceable experiences.

Four brothers—Br. Greg, Br. Joseph, Br. Andrew Rowedder and Br. Uriel—took their “show on the road,” driving out to our mission on the Turtle Mountain Native American Reservation in Belcourt, North Dakota, to assist with the running of four weeks of summer camp along with a cadre of twenty SOLT Missionary Volunteers. The newly ordained Deacon David found plenty of ministry awaiting him at St. Anthony’s Parish in Robstown, Texas, much of which was in Spanish. Br. Adam spent his summer in Benque Viejo, Belize, also serving in Spanish, as pseudo-foreman of the large-scale construction project of phase two of John Paul II Junior College.

The summer was capped with two major celebrations: the first promises of Br. Andrew Collart and the perpetual promises of Br. Uriel Lopez. These took place around our joyful annual Regional Assembly, which was back in full force for the first time since the pandemic hit.

Enjoy the summer tales the brothers share in these pages. And, as always, blessings upon you for your loving support.

In Christ,

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A Brother for the Rest of My Life

BR. URIEL G. LOPEZ LOPEZ

This has been a really blessed year for me. During the summer I was in Belcourt, North Dakota, for three weeks, helping out at the children's summer camp. One of the things that I enjoyed the most was being able to help one of the campers' groups, along with other volunteer counsellors. In our group, I ended up spending two weeks of the camp helping one of the participants by the name of Max. He was about eight years old and had autism. Being able to spend some time with him helped me learn so many things, such as how to calm him down when he is going through a moment of overstimulation. I noticed that children need all the love that they can receive, especially when they are not living with their parents, as in this case Max lives with his grandparents and his other siblings.

Another reason this was a year that I will never forget and that I will always keep in my heart is because on July 14 I made my perpetual promises as a permanent brother. After five years of formation, that big moment finally came, a moment of saying "Yes" to Our Lord. During the Rite of Profession, I was asked by our General Priest Servant, "My dear brother, what do you ask of God and of his Holy Church?" I responded, "I ask for perseverance in God's service and in the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity all the days of my life." When I laid down prostrate and while everyone else knelt to sing the litany of the saints, praying for the saints' intercession for me, I was thinking and praying to God, telling him, "My God, I know I don't have anything to offer you, but I give my whole self to you and I want to serve you for the rest of my life."

After five years of formation, that big moment finally came, a moment of saying "Yes" to Our Lord.



Above: Br. Uriel shares his joy after professing perpetual promises with the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity; Br. Uriel lies prostrate during the Litany of the Saints.



I Have Called You Friends

BR. GREGORY RICE



Left to Right: Br. Andrew, Br. Uriel, Br. Joseph, Fr. Dave, and Br. Gregory at Butte St. Paul, near St. Ann's Mission in North Dakota.

Life with brothers is an extraordinary gift. They give you counterpoints of reference for yourself, are loving siblings who balance and challenge you, and bring a strength which you could never have on your own. I received a new and deeper sense of the gift of my brothers this summer as we served a summer camp at St. Ann's, our beautiful mission in Belcourt, North Dakota.

The mission is on the beautiful Turtle Mountain reservation, home to the small band of Chippewa Native Americans, a tiny place on the edge of North Dakota near the border of Canada. It is a hub of ministry with a parish, a small school, and a missionary volunteer program boasting about 15 year-long volunteers serving alongside our priests and sisters. It is striking to encounter the young people who come from around the country and joyfully give of themselves in order to find Christ in this tucked away place.

My brothers and I got to jump in for just a few months and stretch our legs, running around in the beautiful North Dakota summer and giving the little bit we have to the camp. The days were full, guiding the kids

from station to station, through a Christ-centered programming of prayer, liturgy, and activity. For many of the children it was a first encounter; never before had they been fully immersed in a Christian environment. Their lives outside of camp are difficult, but here the Holy Spirit provides something new. Here they get a glimpse of a more beautiful way to live, a community seeking Jesus together, trying to be good.

To see my brothers in this mission environment was like seeing them in new lighting. Their uniqueness shown out with new contours and their finest points acquired new depths. As I ran into my own limits and weakness, I was able to lean on them in ways that the world of school never called for. In them, I found stability and correction, I was revealed to myself against the backdrop of their gifts. I tend to seek routines which will comfort me, stable sets of effort which will secure me in a sense of self-sufficiency. This summer was a joyful breaking out. I saw the need for my completion in my brothers, and I got a joyful taste of that completion under the benevolent North Dakota sun.

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The Difference of Ordination

DCN. DAVID SNOW

I set up the tripod and camera, focused the lens, and got everything in the shot. I walked across the room to double check my supplies. Was there water in the font? Yes. A shell for pouring? Yes. Towels? Yes. Candles, olive oil, white garment? All present and accounted for. Did I have the right pages marked in my book? What about a baby doll? Both ready to go. I went out to the seminary parking lot and greeted the family who was arriving to play the parts of mom, dad, and godmother, brought them to the liturgy lab, and led them through a recorded practice baptism for my sacramental practicum class. When we were finished after about twenty-five minutes, that baby doll had been “baptized” for probably the thousandth time. More importantly, I was that much more prepared for real sacramental ministry.

About six months later, I was ordained to the sacred diaconate. Words cannot describe the powerful moment when the bishop had his hands on my head. The closest I can come is to say I experienced an overwhelming rush of peace and power pouring over me. It was a moment I will never forget.

In the months leading up to that big day, I had several conversations with Fr. Mark about where I would be going for the summer. I had requested and received confirmation that I would be staying in Detroit. Just four days before my ordination, though, Father said that there had been a change of plans: I would be assigned to St. Anthony's parish in Robstown, Texas. I was surprised at first because that was the last thing I expected. Not long afterwards, however, I realized what an adventure it would be! God was calling me to serve where I had never served before, he was sending me out to preach, teach, and baptize just like the apostles (Matt. 28:18-20).

Not two weeks ordained, I traveled to Robstown. Not two weeks after that, I found myself in the church, checking my supplies. They were all there: font, candle, water, shell, towels, white garments—everything was the same...except two crucial things: no plain olive oil and no baby doll. Instead, there were the blessed Oil of Catechumens, the Sacred Chrism consecrated by the bishop, and real babies, flesh and blood, body and soul, ready to be cleansed of original sin and marked for eternal life in Christ. The time for ministry had begun. Glory to God! That is the difference of ordination.

*Above: Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit, Bishop Gerard Battersby receives the diaconal promises of **Dcn. David**; all the deacon candidates lying prostrate at the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament; **Dcn. David**, a joyful new deacon.*

The Good News at Summer Camp

BR. JOSEPH SPEARS

The sun is shining. Campers are running around and enjoying the simple beauty of being outside while surrounded by young adult mentors who are invested in them. The various activity stations of games, archery, canoeing, and arts and crafts are all set up and ready to be enjoyed as kids begin to move from station to station. Summer camp in Belcourt, North Dakota, has arrived, and the kids could not be more excited for it!

Every summer, St. Ann's mission holds a summer camp for the youth in the surrounding area. The kids look forward to the camp quite literally for the entire year. A few of the kids this year commented to me just as the camp finished, "Br. Joseph, I can't wait for summer camp next year! When will it be here?!"

Summer camp functions as a place for the youth to come away from the typical summer day of often being inside at home to take advantage of God's beauty outdoors. Through fun activities, experiencing God's beauty in creation, and catechesis, the campers have opportunities to encounter the goodness of God the Father and come to a deeper realization of His love for them through His Son. At the end of the first week of camp, I was sitting next to a camper as Mass was about to begin. He looked up at the crucifix and then he looked back at me. This happened successively for a few moments. Finally, he turned to me, pointing to the cross and said, "Who is that?" I said, "That is Jesus." The camper's face lit up with astonishment and a slight sense of incredulity, "You mean, He's real?" I smiled and said, "Yes! He died because He loves you and He is still alive." Smiling, he sat back down with his eyes fixed on the Sanctuary—Mass was beginning, and he was excited.

Sometimes we can get caught up in trying to figure out the perfect way for someone to encounter Jesus and meet him. Other times it can be as simple as a camper sitting in a Church, looking to the crucifix, and someone reminding him that Jesus is real. He died and rose for you and me so that we may be with Him in eternal bliss. That is the beauty and simplicity of the Good News.



Br. Joseph and missionary volunteer Daniel enjoying downtime by the campfire at St. Ann's Mission.



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The Last Shall Be First

BR. ADAM SCHMITZER

Nestled at the base of the Pyrenees Mountains, right alongside a softly flowing river, and surrounded by the antiquity of a little French town, there is no question that Our Lady knows how to pick just the right spot for a Shrine! No wonder millions of people go there every year to enjoy a visit and, more especially, to spend a little time with the Mother of God, whose own visit to St. Bernadette Soubirous 164 years ago is still kept alive by a statue tucked into the niche of the grotto rock where she appeared. What a blessing it was this summer to have joined that crowd on my own pilgrimage to Lourdes!

Lots could be said, but one thing in particular that struck me throughout the week was that St.

Bernadette was last—last in education, last in health, last in money and opportunity. In the eyes of the world, just plain last. But not in the eyes of heaven. Our Lady saw her heart, and this, in fact, put her first. Purity, humility, simplicity, and courage were all traits that would help St. Bernadette carry out a mission and pass on a heavenly message of prayer and penance for the conversion of sinners.

She was also to tell that people should come to Lourdes in procession, a request fulfilled twice daily at the Shrine with the Eucharist and the rosary. Both are very moving, and it was in these processions that I saw others who were 'last' and who were also being made first. Rows and rows of sick persons, disabled persons,

aged persons, in wheelchairs or on stretchers, were being pushed or carried by hundreds of volunteers, not at the back, trailing behind the other thousands of pilgrims, but right up in front, immediately behind the Blessed Sacrament or the statue of Our Lady. These are the St. Bernadettes of today, living out the message of Lourdes in a heroic and quiet way. They bore witness to me to the value of offering up one's daily crosses and to the dignity of the human person that goes beyond what the world often sees and values. As they passed in front of me and I started to follow, I found it an honor and consolation to be walking behind them, a moment to 'tip my hat' in respect and adjust my vision to be more in accord with above.

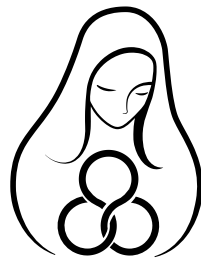


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Above: The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes; Br. Adam meets up with Javier, a friend and seminarian from Corpus Christi, Texas.



Dcn. David baptizes baby Emma Grace in Robstown, Texas earlier this summer.



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Left to right: Dcn. David, Br. Joseph, Br. Andrew, Br. Adam, Br. Gregory, and Br. Andrew at Most Holy Redeemer Parish in Detroit.

*On the front cover:
Br. Joseph and Br. Gregory after
serving at Mass during the Regional
SOLT Assembly in July.*



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