

TOGETHER

a monthly bulletin insert from the archdiocese



Comments regarding this insert may be sent to communications staff by emailing contactus@dbqarch.org or by calling (800) 876-3546 and asking for the director of communications.

Ordination Special Edition Vol. 3 | No. 5

This document is available as a PDF at www.dbqarch.org/together



PREPARING FOR ORDINATION WITH JEFF FRIEDEN

By Cassie Bird

Deacon Jeff Frieden is one of two seminarians from the Archdiocese of Dubuque currently at Mundelein Seminary who will be ordained this spring at the Cathedral of St. Raphael in Dubuque. Deacon Casey Flack will also be ordained this spring.

Thanks to generous support from donors in the Archdiocese of Dubuque, Deacon Jeff and Deacon Casey will not be entering into the priesthood with student loans from their time in formation.



Entering Formation

My name is Dcn. Jeff Frieden, and in two months I will be ordained a priest for our great archdiocese, thanks be to God! This means that I am quickly approaching the end of seminary, a journey that has lasted the better part of eight years. Seminary has been an incredibly blessed time, filled with growth but not without its challenges. I started discerning the priesthood all the way back in the eighth grade. I even remember when I was either a freshman or a sophomore in high school and asked the vocation director about applying to seminary at a men's conference. He appreciated the enthusiasm, but he also told me to wait until I was a little older. So, that's what I did.

After growing up at St. Pius X Parish in Cedar Rapids, I graduated from Xavier High School in Dubuque that fall. Of course, I was only in seminary for about six months before I

discerned out. (That's the nice way to say that I quit seminary.) After about a year, I returned to seminary and picked up right where I left off. During that year away, I remained at Loras College and studied English and business analytics. I grew a lot that year, and I learned about myself and about the world.

Totus Tuus

While I was at Loras, I served as a Totus Tuus missionary in the Archdiocese of Dubuque for three summers: 2017, 2018, and 2019. Those summers were incredibly formative. It was the first time that I engaged in full-time ministry, and it was far more than just full time. It was the first time that I poured myself out in the ministry, and it was the first time that I taught people to love and be loved by God. It was also the first time that I met many people in the archdiocese and spent time at many of our parishes. I graduated from Loras in 2019 and began attending Mundelein Seminary that fall.

Mundelein Seminary & Pastoral Internship

Then COVID happened and I went back to the seminary at Loras when Mundelein shut down. I spent that summer in residence at Resurrection parish in Dubuque before returning to Mundelein to begin my second year of classes. The academics that semester challenged me, but I learned valuable information that has already helped me in the parish. That semester, I took Christology, medical ethics, sexual ethics, synoptic gospels, and a couple of other classes. Freshly equipped with this knowledge, I went to St. Athanasius parish in Jesup and St. Francis Xavier in Barclay for the spring for pastoral internship. I learned even more about parish life from the people and the priest there, Fr. Dole. They were all incredibly welcoming, and God confirmed me in my vocation during pastoral internship.

I had the chance to engage in all kinds of ministries, training altar servers, speaking at the school, visiting the homebound, putting buckets under leaks in the roof, etc. We were still coming out of COVID during that time, and one of the parishes didn't have enough cantors, so I was the cantor for one of the Easter Sunday Masses. Keep in mind that it was the first time that I'd ever been the cantor for Mass and that I hadn't sang in front

of people since I was held back in choir my sophomore year in high school. After Mass, one of the kids from the school asked me if I was nervous and I said that yes, I was a little nervous. She responded, "I could tell," and walked away! Nothing boosts your confidence quite like working with kids, or so I've been told.

After spending the spring with the good people of Jesup and Barclay, I went to Cedar Rapids for the summer and did my clinical pastoral experience (the technical name for being an intern hospital chaplain) at Mercy Hospital and assisted at St. Jude Parish in Cedar Rapids. I engaged some really good experiences at both places and continued growing, especially through hospital ministry. The chaplains there were very welcoming and gave me pointers along the way. The people of Saint Jude were also very welcoming and were more than happy to invite me into their Sweet Corn Festival preparations, at least in part for manual labor.

The Holy Land

I returned to seminary to begin classes again that fall (2021) and left for the Holy Land that winter. Every year, the third-year men at Mundelein Seminary are able to spend about seven weeks in the Holy Land. It is a grace and a gift to be able to prepare to be ordained a deacon in the land where Jesus lived and died. There's a church built on most of the significant sites from Jesus' life, including the house of St. Joseph where he grew up. If you go down into the crypt of the church, you can actually see the ruins of what they think was the home of the Holy Family. There's a Latin inscription there that translated means, "HERE he was made obedient to them" (cf. Luke 2:51). That was a powerful thing to pray with as I prepared to make the promise of obedience.

Ordination into the Transitional Diaconate

That May, I was ordained a deacon at St. Raphael Cathedral in Dubuque. I preached my first weekend Masses at my home parish, St. Pius X, and shortly thereafter began ministering at Blessed Sacrament in Waterloo. I once again had the opportunity to meet many great people and serve.

This fall, I returned to Mundelein Seminary to begin my last year of studies. The classes this year have mostly focused on preparing us to do the things of priestly ministry: Mass practicum, confession practicum, spiritual direction practicum, etc. We are also taking our final scripture classes (Prophets and Psalms & Wisdom literature) and wrapping up our church history education with US Church History.

Today - Preparing for Ordination to the Priesthood

That brings us to today, less than two months away from priestly ordination. Honestly, it's kind of surreal. I've been in seminary for over a quarter of my life at this point, and it can be hard to imagine anything else. Yes, I've worked alongside priests. I know what their life is like. But to imagine that the bread and wine will become the Body and Blood of Christ in my hands by the grace of the Holy Spirit communicated through my voice? That God the Father will receive his prodigal children with open arms through my ministry and forgive them through my words? It's only two months away, but I still find that hard to believe. I can't help but feel overwhelmed, and no amount of seminary could make me feel adequately prepared. But that's very different from being afraid. However I may feel about it, no matter how unbelievable it is that I'm this close, I am confident that this is what God wants for my life and that he will give me the grace to carry it out.

Thank You

As you can see, forming even one priest is a long, complex process—it's also an expensive one. The support I have received from the people in the Archdiocese of Dubuque over the past eight years has been an investment not just in me, but in every Catholic who will receive Holy Communion from my hands, in every child I will baptize, in everyone who will hear me preach. I hate to introduce myself and immediately ask for money, but a donation to priestly formation is not fundamentally an investment in the priesthood—it is an investment in the Church which your children and grandchildren will inherit. It's why I've already given to Archdiocese One, and why I'm encouraging you to prayerfully consider giving it your support, too. While you're praying about that, please also pray for me and Dcn. Casey Flack as we prepare to be ordained, and for all our seminarians.

Thank you. May God bless you all.

In his service,

**Dcn. Jeffrey Frieden Seminarian,
Archdiocese of Dubuque**

Deacon Casey Flack is the other Archdiocese of Dubuque seminarian set to be ordained this spring. He was interviewed last July for the ArchdioceseOne newsletter. You can read Deacon Casey's interview on the newsletter archive on the ArchdioceseOne website, at www.archdioceseone.org/archdioceseone-newsletter-archive. The ordinations taking place in May and June will be livestreamed at <https://dbqarch.org/live-broadcasts>

ARCHDIOCESE ONE UPDATE: ACTIVE FUNDRAISING WILL END DECEMBER 31

Active fundraising for ArchdioceseOne will officially end on December 31, 2023. This means that we'll continue accepting NEW gifts and pledges for ArchdioceseOne until that date. After December 31st, new gifts can still be made directly to the beneficiaries of ArchdioceseOne, but will no longer be counted towards the total amount fundraised for ArchdioceseOne. With that said, we will continue to collect payments on existing pledges for the next several years. Sometime in 2024, we'll publish a final report detailing the funds raised and money spent to raise these funds.

To date, over \$15 million has been contributed or pledged for the beneficiaries of ArchdioceseOne via the generosity of **5961** donors, out of **68,041** households, for a participation rate of **8.8%**. We are extremely grateful for those who have made a sacrificial gift, have offered prayers, or both, to ArchdioceseOne and the many Catholic ministries impacted by its beneficiaries.

While we are thankful for what we have received, the overall participation rate for Catholic households in the Archdiocese of Dubuque hasn't been as high as we had hoped it would be. We hoped Catholics would participate at the same rate as they did for the last archdiocese-wide appeal (*A Time to Remember, 1997-98*), which saw approximately **35%** of Catholic households in the Archdiocese make a financial contribution.

ArchdioceseOne: A Call to Share in the Future of the Church

While ArchdioceseOne hasn't gotten the participation we had hoped to this point, we still have faith that more Catholics will answer the call to support these beneficiaries, which impact so many different ministries in our local Church, and impact so many people's lives across the Archdiocese of Dubuque.

We also recognize that many are facing financial and economic challenges, and some may feel burdened by the many ongoing appeals for the varying needs of the Church, both local and regional.

Of course, not everyone has been blessed with the resources needed to make a large financial gift, or in some cases, any gift at all to ArchdioceseOne. While large gifts are helpful and appreciated, it isn't the size of the gift that is important spiritually. Our faith teaches us that it isn't what we give that matters, but that the gift is given freely and cheerfully, and whether it was sacrificial to the giver. As Catholics, no matter if we're offering a financial gift or our prayers, we give it in thanksgiving for the gifts that we've been given by God, and give them for the good of His Church, through which the mission of Jesus is continued in its ministries.

So, we ask only that you consider a gift that is sacrificial and meaningful to you.

We also recognize that there are a lot of needs in our Church, and that results in a lot of "asks" for gifts, from all levels of the Church. Being asked for gifts by the Church is part of being a disciple of Christ. Discipleship isn't supposed to be easy or convenient, but a constant challenge from Jesus to put the needs of others before our own wants. All of the appeals that come from the Church, whether they're from your local parish or school, from the Archdiocese of Dubuque or one of its ministries, or from the Vatican to support the ministries of Pope Francis, are simply opportunities to live our discipleship through our support of the ministries of the Church both now and into the future. So, it is critical that we appeal to our Catholic community to address these needs in hopes of securing the future of the Church for the disciples of Christ who will follow in our footsteps, just as generations of Catholic have done for us.

These things are being communicated in this way not to induce guilt or invoke shame, but to provoke thought about stewardship and ArchdioceseOne, as well as the very important role stewardship plays in the life of the Church, and in our own discipleship.

In summary, it is our prayer that the ArchdioceseOne Special Appeal is looked at for what it is, an opportunity for all to live out their discipleship to Christ through stewardship. That many say "YES" to supporting ArchdioceseOne in a way that is meaningful to them, even if all a person can offer is their prayers for its success, and join the thousands of other Catholics in the Archdiocese of Dubuque who've already offered their support. That is all we can and should ask for.

Regardless of how this appeal concludes, we believe that what happens is God's will and we show our faith in God and His plan, by praying: **God, come to our assistance. Lord, make haste to help us. Amen.**

If you would like to make a pledge or gift, or make a payment on an existing pledge, it can be sent to ArchdioceseOne, 1229 Mt. Loretta Ave., Dubuque, IA 52003, or you can support ArchdioceseOne online here: <https://www.archdioceseone.org/support>

We encourage you to stay up to date on progress of ArchdioceseOne at www.archdioceseone.org. If you have any questions on ArchdioceseOne, or any of its beneficiaries, please contact Jeff Schneider at jeff.schneider@dbqarch.org or at 563-556-2580 x219, or Cassie Bird at c.bird@dbqarch.org or 563-556-2580 x211.