VOCATION NEWS:

Dear St. Joseph Parish in Olney, St. Joseph Parish in Stringtown, and Holy Cross Parish in Wendelin,

I hope you are all having a happy and blessed Easter season! As my third year of major seminary is coming to a close, I've been thinking back to all of the parishes that I've been able to spend time with since I've started seminary formation. I remember being able to spend the summer after my first year at Kenrick-Glennon seminary with you. It was great to be with you all, even if it was only for a short time. I enjoyed the adult formation meetings, the softball and kayaking with the high schoolers, the parish picnics, and all the other little ways that I was able to be with and serve your parishes. I especially appreciated being able to worship with all of you at Mass. It was incredible how welcoming and supportive all of you were, and it was great to get to know you. That summer really was such a joy! The experiences I was able to have with you at your parish, as well as the fantastic leadership and example of Fr. Mark, were essential for my discernment and for my formation. I know that many of you have been praying for me since then, and I'm definitely praying for you, too!

As some of you may know, I am preparing to be ordained a deacon on May 22 at the Cathedral in Belleville. Unfortunately, due to Covid regulations, the number will be pretty limited, or I would invite anyone who was interested to come pray with me (hopefully it will be more open next year). Fortunately, the Ordination Mass will be livestreamed. The link will be available on Cathedral's website (https://cathedralbelle.org). Whether or not you get a chance to join in the livestream, I ask that all of you take a moment that day to say a prayer for me.

While a transitional diaconate ordination can often be overshadowed by the coming ordination to the priesthood, this day will still be an incredible moment for me. This is the moment when I will first receive the character and grace of Holy Orders: a configuration to Jesus in his love and service. This is also the moment when I will first make the promises to God that priests make. I'll promise obedience to the bishop and his successors. I'll promise to pray the Liturgy of the Hours for the parish to which I am assigned, for the Diocese, for the Church, and for the whole world. Finally, I will make the promise to give myself in love and joy fully to Jesus by living out a life of celibacy for the Kingdom of God.

This day will be such a joy for me, and it will be even more grace-filled knowing that you are all united with me in the Holy Spirit through prayer. Again, thank you all again for being so wonderful and instrumental in my discernment and formation. Thank you especially for all of your prayers and support and know that I'll be praying for all of you as well!

In the love of Christ,

Thomas Lugge

Diocese of Belleville
Office of the Bishop

Official Appointments

Most Reverend Michael McGovern, Bishop of Belleville, is pleased to announce the following Seminarian summer appointments, effective June 1, 2021 to August 2021.

Mr. Ben Baker is appointed to summer ministry at St. Joseph Parish in Olney, under the direction of Very Reverend Mark Stec, V.F., Pastor.

Given from the Diocesan Curia on this 5th day of May, in the Year of Our Lord 2021.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Gracious God,

You have called us through Baptism to discipleship,
believing in your Son, Jesus Christ,
who has sent us to bring the Good News of salvation to the world.

We pray to you, asking that you grant us more priests and religious
who will help us build up your Church in the Diocese of Belleville and the world.

Stir up the grace of a religious vocation in the hearts of many of our youth.
Grant to them the willingness and generosity to give of themselves
in service to our Lord Jesus and his people.

May a new generation of priests, deacons, sisters and brothers
be a sign of your presence among us.

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.
Amen.