



SSS Grapevine

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Brother Gary LaVerdière SSS Celebrates 60 Years of Religious Profession

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On Sunday, February 11, 2024, the Provincialate, Northeastern Ohio SSS communities and Saint Paschal Baylon parish, Highland Heights, honored and celebrated the sixty years Brother Gary LaVerdière SSS has been a religious brother of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament.

Growing up in Winslow/Waterville, Maine, Brother Gary was “raised” in the SSS family with a father, brother, and uncle studying for the Blessed Sacrament Community. His father chose a different vocation, but Gary’s older brother Eugene decided to enter our religious life in the Congregation. *(Father Gene died in 2008)*. Brother Gary’s sister, Claudette, pursued her vocation as a religious sister with Maryknoll. His brother Peter and his wife live in South Carolina.





Brother Gary went to Hyde Park High School seminary and served the Congregation there, in Maine and Uganda. After doing coursework in liturgy at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, he came to Saint Paschal Baylon in 1975. Brother Gary then became the liturgy coordinator and arts and environment leader, who is very much known for sharing his artistic talents. He jokes about how he took the fourth vow

of stability, having lived in this community of religious since then.

Brother Gary also served as art director of *Emmanuel Magazine* and managing director of Emmanuel Publications, now Emmanuel Media, for decades. We also enjoy his landscaping and gardening talents, his Christmas manager each year on Wilson Mills Road, and he continues as House Manager of our community building and members. We are grateful for his witness of the vows and faithful, dedicated service, going where the LORD and community needed to serve! Continued good health and good wishes, Brother Gary! Thank you so much for being a religious of the Blessed Sacrament.



Celebrating Lunar New Year Across the SSS Province

SSS Vietnamese gather at Saint Vincent de Paul Parish in Holiday, Florida, to Celebrate Lunar New Year Festival

The annual tradition continued at Saint Vincent de Paul Parish. Our SSS Vietnamese religious members joined through the pastor's invitation, Father Dominic Long SSS, to have a wonderful parish celebration of the Lunar New Year on January 27, 2024. Fathers Anthony

Pham (*Connecticut*), Joseph Doan (*Houston*), Joseph Kiet Nguyen (*Highland Heights*), Martin Tran (*Connecticut*) and Brother Joseph Tuan Vu (*Highland Heights*).

The booths lined the parking lots, and the food, prepared by the parishioners, was plentiful and fabulous.

Many photos from this lively celebration follow, thanks to Laura Worhacz of Saint Vincent de Paul Parish.



SSS Vietnamese Priests in Connecticut Share Their Seminary Experience

Two SSS Vietnamese Priests are continuing their studies, receiving another Master's degree at the Holy Apostles Seminary, Cromwell, Connecticut. Many of the students are from Vietnam. Anthony Trang Pham, SSS, shares this information:



Joining the joy of welcoming the Lunar New Year 2024 in Vietnam, Holy Apostles and Seminary, Connecticut, where fathers Anthony and Martin are studying, held a Mass and party to welcome the new year on February 9, 2024. During the Mass, there was a significant presence of priests, deacons, brothers, sisters, and Vietnamese parishioners around the school. According to Vietnamese tradition, this year is the year of the dragon. The dragon symbolizes intelligence, authority, and strength. Everyone wishes that every family will always cling to God's Word this year and courageously announce the Good News to the world.

Lunar New Year is like Thanksgiving in America, a sacred and cozy time for all family members to return home to have delicious and cozy meals to share difficulties and joy in the family. The mood of people far from home is always to their family. Through the

celebration of the Lunar New Year at school, the Vietnamese students, especially our two SSS priests, have gained much joy, peace, and enthusiasm to fulfill the eucharistic mission given to them by our Congregation.

After the Mass, there was a hearty party with traditional Vietnamese dishes, especially Banh Chung, which are dishes eaten on the first days of the New Year, along with traditional musical performances by the priests, brothers, and sisters. Everyone



attending the party had many fun and exciting moments with the Vietnamese students. At the end of the party, everyone received lucky money. Lucky money is a Vietnamese tradition at the beginning of the New Year when grandparents congratulate their children and grandchildren on reaching a new age. They give them lucky money to bring them good luck and hope they will help a blessed year. After the party, everyone was thrilled and imbued with the traditional beauty of Vietnam. We wish everyone, especially our Vietnamese brothers who are doing ministry in America, a happy, prosperous, healthy, peaceful New



Lunar New Year and always full of grace from the Eucharistic Lord Jesus Christ. Happy Lunar New Year 2024!

The Formation & University Heights Communities Celebrate the Lunar New Year

