



SSS Grapevine

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Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament
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Vocation Day Highlights God Calls Ordinary People to Serve



The Blessed Sacrament Community Vocation Office and Saint Paschal Baylon Vocation Committee (SPB) held its annual Vocation Day on the feast of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, May 13, 2026. This year’s keynote guest and speaker was the diocesan bishop of Cleveland, Most Reverend Edward C. Malesic. Bishop Malesic is originally from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and highlighted his childhood there as a paperboy and a wannabe scientist who played with Legos (one of the questions a student asked!). While in college, and not really a Mass-goer, Bishop Malesic decided one day to go to church and was then asked by the Newman Center director, **“Have you ever thought of being a priest?”** While an odd question to ask at the end of Mass as he left for a party, it stuck with him and, from that moment on, led him to develop

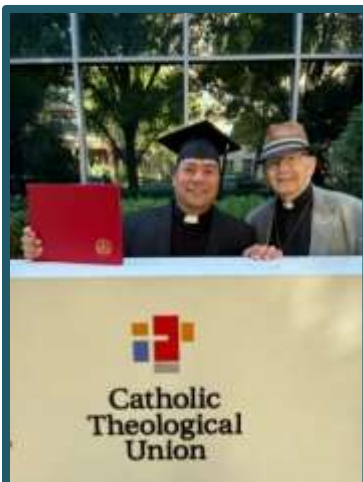
a prayer-friendship relationship with Christ. This ultimately led him to change majors.

Other women religious from the Sisters of Notre Dame (SND sisters who reside on the SPB campus in the convent). They, too, one being Sister Kelley Rush SND, (in photo below in red jacket), the SND Vocation Director, was an avid sports player, and she shared in the tours of the campus, who called to go from sports medicine into the religious life.



While on the tours during the school day of the convent, Blessed Sacrament Community (SSS) headquarters, SPB offices and kitchen and fireside lounge of the SSS, the student met married couples, one being a married deacon, our own SSS religious, Father Eric Garris, the Diocese of Cleveland Vocation Director (*in photo to the right of the bishop, and one of the married couples, a teach in the school – Eileen & Erik Gleixer, seminarian Josh were some of the presenters this day*): each shared how God called them to the vocation. We all encourage our students to stay close to God in a religious order and to **listen carefully to where God is leading them in the future, whether as a single person serving in the church, a consecrated religious, or a married person.** Let us pray for healthy marriages and for others to serve God in the church's service, especially as members of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament or the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament.

Father JK Nguyen SSS Graduates from the Pope's Seminary



On Thursday, May 22, 2026, Father Joseph Kiet Nguyen, SSS (*known as Father JK*), fulfilled his long-term dream of earning his Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree to serve the church. This professional degree is an important step toward serving in the United States and in some other countries, but it is not necessary for ordination. When coming to the USA to serve as a hospital chaplain in the Cleveland Clinic system at Hillcrest Hospital (*near SPB*), he requested that he finish his education and receive the degree of the Province of Saint Ann Provincial Council. Unanimously, the council agreed it was a necessary step.

For two and a half years, Father JK studied online with his classmates via Zoom at the Catholic Theological Union (CTU) in Chicago. Father JK had studied in the Philippines and in Vietnam, but due to several circumstances, was unable actually to complete a degree. Forty-eight percent of his class in Asia were accepted for him to complete the MDiv.

Driving with his Scholastic Director, Father Norman Pelletier, SSS (in the picture above to Fr JK's right at the CTU classroom building – and with Father Steve Bevans SVD, one Fr JK's professor to the right) and Provincial Superior, Father John Thomas Lane SSS, he arrived in Chicago for the very first-time, to be at the school he had only seen through his computer. He met in person the president, vice-president, and other professors, who all told Fathers Norman and Lane how well Father JK did in his classes and in his papers.



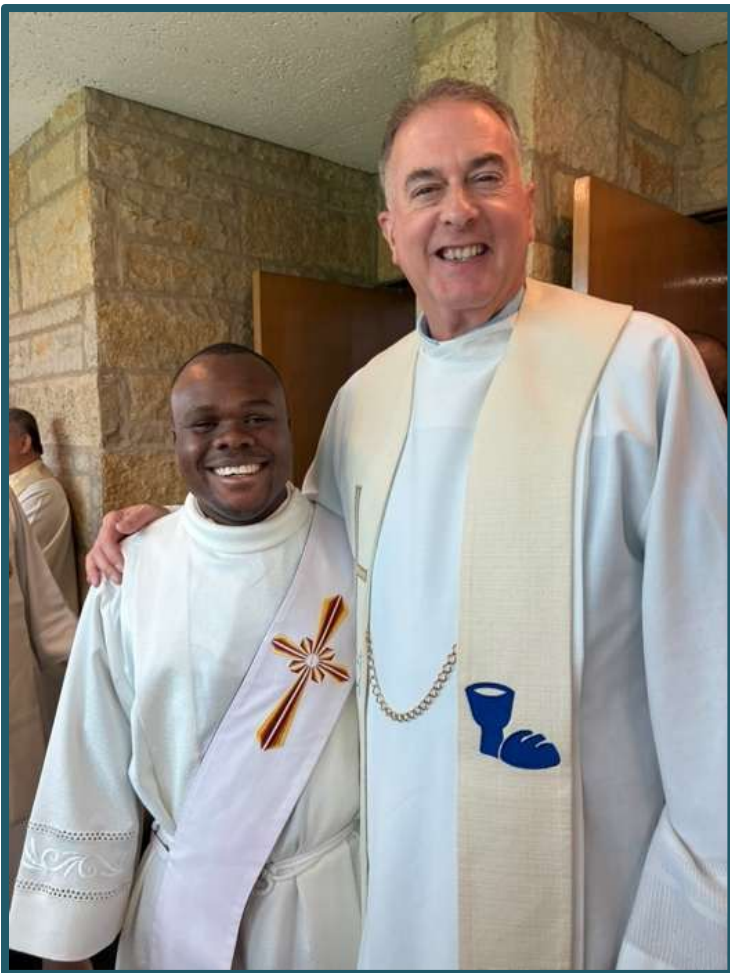
At the graduation, the distinguished Presbyterian Minister and Professor Mary Clark Moschella from Yale Divinity School, receiving an *honoris causa* Doctorate in Theology, gave three suggestions to the graduates, and practical advice for all of us as we move forward in our faith, serving God:

1. Think big dreams – but reach for only one or two stars at a time to get these dreams fulfilled. Don't do too much at once!
2. Don't go it alone – Jesus Christ had a team around him: always ask others to be with you and lean on them together to fulfill the dream(s).
3. Remember to breathe – Mistakes come from not reflecting, breathing, and being open to prayer, listening to God, and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide you.
4. Lastly, always smile, act with kindness, and trust the wisdom that has been given to you from your studies and wisdom figures who have handed down to you their experience.

Pope Leo XIV (*Robert Prevost, CTU Class of 1982*) was a special remembrance throughout the graduation ceremony, reminding us that any graduate can go far and wide in the church with the skills gained through a CTU degree.

SVD Ordination Celebration on May 23

Two Society of Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) have lived with the SSS for many years, doing hospital ministry and other ministry practicum while staying at the Saint Jean Baptiste Community in New York City. We SSS enjoy collaboration efforts with the many religious orders of CTU. To support the newly ordained, we attended their ordination ceremony at the SVD parish in Wheeling, IL. (*Many of us SSS have known their headquarters and Techny, which is now closed.*) We congratulate Fathers Marc Declama SVD and Ryan Agbim SVD, two of the seven ordained this very day by the bishop of Lafayette, Louisiana. Father Marc (*left photo*) will serve in an SVD parish near Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Father Ryan (*right photo*) will be in an SVD parish in Toronto, Canada.



Matthew Vlastelica to Profess vows in the SSS August 2



Our second-year novice, Matthew Vlastelica, is wrapping up his 6-month immersion experience in another SSS country and community in Liverpool, England, and at our shrine there. 2026. (He is in the photo. Father Simon Peter Zikusooka SSS, from Uganda, was in England, invited to speak at a conference on the Catholic Church in Africa, and captured this tour of a football stadium there.) Matthew returns to Houston and Corpus Christi Church on June 9, 2026, to wrap up his novitiate years with a retreat and closing classes. He will profess vows on **Sunday, August 2, 2026**, at this parish at the regular 9:00 AM Mass. After some “holiday” time with his family, wedding, and baptism in Sydney, Australia, he will return (God willing with a student visa) to the Scholastic House, part of the provincialate in Highland Heights, Ohio, with his director Father Norman Pelletier, SSS. (We will share more about Matthew’s story in an August *Grapevine*.) Please continue to keep Matthew in your prayers – and pray for other SSS candidates to learn about their Eucharistic vocation.

For your information and assistance, please note Father Lane’s summer schedule, who kindly requests prayers:

Provincial’s Summer Schedule

- June 1 – 11 **New York** – settling in Saint Jean Baptiste
- June 4-6 **SPB YOUTH GROUP RETREAT** with Saint Jean Baptiste High School
- June 11 – 20 **Highland Heights** – Provincialate work; parents' anniversary celebration
- June 20 – July 3 **Brazil** – Our Lady of Guadalupe Chapter (‘til June 26)
- June 27 – July 2 Vacation
- July 3 – 12 **Seattle** – Vacation
- July 12 – 19 **Highland Heights** – Provincialate work/chapter finalization
- July 19 – 24 **Phoenix** – CMSM Convention for Provincials
- July 24 – 28 **Highland Heights** – Provincialate work/chapter finalization & Saint Ann Triduum
- July 29 – Aug 2 **Houston** – Community Visit, Novitiate Evaluation & Profession
- August 2 – 13 **Highland Heights** – Chapter and post-chapter work
- August 13 – 28 **New York** – Saint Jean Baptiste, starting a new chapter as pastor, August 15, being installed by Bishop Edward Whalen

Texts & Photos by John Thomas Lane, SSS, Simon Peter Zikusooka, and Evamarie Cross, Aggregate.