

May 2020

INTO THE DEPTHS

Office of Priestly Vocations
Catholic Diocese of Peoria

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MEET NATHAN HOPPER



Birthday: August 30

Home Parish: Epiphany Parish, Bloomington

Year Entered Seminary: 2017
Ordination Class: 2023

Studying at: Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD

Why did you enter seminary?

In high school, I began to be very active in developing my faith, and in college, I truly put God and my faith first. At Illinois State, I served as a sacristan at our Newman Center for 3½ years, which gave me a great appreciation for the Sacraments and great joy from bringing The Lord to His people and people to The Lord. This, coupled with a strong, regular prayer life centered around Mass and Adoration, helped me to listen to God's calling and to heed the desire He placed in my heart to give myself to Him and His people in this radical way. Entering the seminary to discern that further was clearly the next step for me.

What did you do before entering seminary?

I worked as accountant, specializing in payroll and sales tax for two years.

What is an interesting fact about you?

I am 6'9", but rather than playing basketball, I enjoy bowling.

Which saint(s) are you closest to and why?

St. Augustine is my Confirmation Saint. I learned about him in second grade when doing a Saint report for school because his feast day was the closest one to my birthday. Since then, I have learned more about him and really appreciate his "all-in" spirit and zeal for learning and teaching the faith. His famous quote: "Our hearts are restless until they rest in You (God)" has resonated deeply with me throughout my life, and is constantly a good reminder to me to check my priorities and consider where I am seeking my joy.

The other Saint that I am closest with, other than Mary, is St. Philip Neri. When I studied abroad in Rome, he kept popping up everywhere and I quickly learned that he is the patron of pilgrims in Rome and also the patron Saint of humor. Since then, he has been a constant presence in my life as I try to follow his example of humility and joy to bring others to Christ.

Our Son, Your Priest

By Rosie & JR Bosse

The walls of our Kansas home are lined with pictures. The kids say too many pictures, but they reflect the things that are important in our life. Faith. Family. Agriculture. All these things were a part of Austin's life, and all were influential in making him what he is today.

On the wall in our hallway is a picture of Jesus knocking on the door. That picture to me is the essence of a vocation—be that vocation marriage as in the case of Austin's three older siblings, or for the priesthood as he has been called to.

When Austin told us that he was going into the seminary, he was so excited that he could barely breathe. That was five years ago. He was living and working in Illinois and had just returned from a retreat there.

As parents, we were surprised but we weren't shocked. Austin had been restless for some time. He loved his job but was talking about changing careers; he was even considering teaching.

The priesthood was a whole new ballgame. Our first reaction was joy for him and then a sense of loss overtook both of us. We would never have any of his children to hold or to play with. There would be no Austin babies with light blue eyes and big smiles.

When I questioned God about this, He was not concerned. "You will have plenty of grandchildren. Don't worry." His assurance was so matter of fact that our sadness vanished. He was correct too. All three of our other children soon had their third child. Our daughter and her husband's fifth child is now one. Our oldest son and his wife have two-year-old twins, bringing their family to four. Son number two is holding at three. (I admit that I did tell the rest of the kids that they all needed to take one for the team since Austin wasn't going to have any kids. We thank them for stepping up to the plate!)

Austin's first two years were pre-seminary, as a degree in Baking Science doesn't translate well to Theology. Those years had a lot of growing pains. Austin peeled back the layers of his life and dug down to see what made him what he was. He didn't always like what he saw and since part of every child is a reflection of his upbringing and environment, that meant he wasn't always happy with us either. Still, during that time, we met some of his friends, or brothers, as he calls them.

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The seminary is kind of like a fraternity with morals. They have comradery and forge deep friendships. In addition, the men all have at least one common interest—their faith. As we met and visited with some of the other seminarians and priests, we knew that Austin truly had found his new home. We have never seen our son more contented or happy than he is right now.

Having a son in the seminary is very humbling. It doesn't mean that we were exceptional parents or that we did a perfect job in our faith life at home. It just means that God called our son. We accepted a child whom He had plans for and raised him as best we could. Through all of Austin's experiences, good and bad, God was constantly working and pulling him in. Austin's formation started long ago, before priesthood was ever a thought in his mind. The Hound of Heaven is persistent!

Because of the Coronavirus, we don't know when his ordination will be, but we are excited for him as he moves down the road toward priesthood. We are proud of Austin and the man that he has grown to be. He will never serve as priest in any of our parishes in the Kansas City Diocese here in northeast Kansas, but we know he has found a new home in central Illinois. Please be kind to him and invite him out for supper!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **MAY 3, 2020 IS World Day of Prayer for Vocations**
- **Transitional Diaconate Ordination has been postponed due to Coronavirus. More details TBA.**

Padre Pio's After Communion Prayer

Stay with me, Lord, for it is necessary to have You present so that I do not forget You. You know how easily I abandon You.

Stay with me Lord, because I am weak, and I need Your strength, so that I may not fall so often.

Stay with me Lord, for You are my life, and without You, I am without fervor.

Stay with me Lord, for You are my light, and without you, I am in darkness.

Stay with me Lord, to show me Your will.

Stay with me Lord, so that I hear Your voice and follow You.

Stay with me Lord, for I desire to love you very much, and always be in Your Company.

Stay with me Lord, if You wish me to be faithful to You.

Stay with me Lord, for as poor as my soul is, I want it to be a place of consolation for You, a nest of Love.

Stay with me, Jesus, for it is getting late, and the day is coming to a close, and life passes, death, judgment, eternity approach. It is necessary to renew my strength, so that I will not stop along the way and for that, I need You. It is getting late and death approaches. I fear the darkness, the temptations, the dryness, the cross, the sorrows. O how I need You, my Jesus, in this night of exile.

Stay with me tonight, Jesus, in life with all its dangers, I need You.

Let me recognize You as Your disciples did at the breaking of bread, so that the Eucharistic Communion be the light which disperses the darkness, the force which sustains me, the unique joy of my heart.

Stay with me Lord, because at the hour of my death, I want to remain united to you, if not by Communion, at least by grace and love.

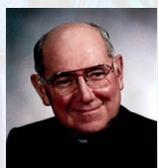
Stay with me Jesus, I do not ask for divine consolation because I do not merit it, but the gift of Your presence, oh yes, I ask this of You.

Stay with me Lord, for it is You alone I look for, Your Love, Your Grace, Your Will, Your Heart, Your Spirit, because I love You and ask no other reward but to love You more and more.

With a firm love, I will love You with all my heart while on earth and continue to love You perfectly during all eternity. Amen.

CAN YOU SUPPORT OUR SEMINARIANS?

We know times are hard for everyone right now, and we greatly appreciate any support you can give our seminarians.



The **Msgr. George A. Carton College Seminarian Scholarship Fund** helps fund our college-level seminarians by providing money for their tuition,

room and board. To donate to the Msgr. Carton Fund, [click here](#).



The **St. Therese Fund** pays for the tuition, room and board for theologians; salaries; office costs; and marketing expenses that help keep our seminarian program

afloat. To donate to the St. Therese Fund, [click here](#).



The **Seminarian Aid Fund** helps our seminarians pay for expenses regarding medical emergencies, or travel home for a death or other

family emergency. To donate to the Seminarian Aid Fund, [click here](#).