

Seminarian Profile: Deacon Dan Oudenhoven

I was born on May 5th, 1985 in La Crosse, Wisconsin to Gary and Amy Oudenhoven. Within the first year of my life, my family moved to the Green Bay area for a number of years and then moved to Peshtigo, Wisconsin which is where I did most of my elementary school. I went to Catholic schools until I started the 7th grade which is when my family moved to Stevens Point, WI. I went to junior high and high school in the Stevens Point area public school district. I studied two years at the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point before transferring to the University of Wisconsin Madison where I graduated from in 2007 with a degree in Philosophy. I am the middle child of three siblings. I have an older brother, Father Tim, who is a priest for the Diocese of La Crosse and a younger sister, Tracey, who is a doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin- Madison.

I did not begin to think seriously about the priesthood until my junior year in college. I was going through college trying to find the right major for myself and was never at peace with anything I tried. My first semester at Madison during my junior year, I began to get discouraged and have anxiety about finding a major because I was not finding anything that I enjoyed. It was at this time that I began to start asking what does God want me to do with my life, rather than what do I want to do with my life. This was spurred on by an experience of consolation at Mass. The experience of Christ's love caused me to become interested again in prayer and growing in relationship with Jesus Christ. Early on I felt called to the priesthood, but was too scared to seriously discern the call or let others know. Through spiritual direction with a priest and a discernment group I was able to gain the courage and clarity in my call to priesthood to apply for seminary during my senior year of college. I entered Mundelein seminary in Mundelein, Illinois after college and have spent the last five years studying pre-theology for one year, and now starting my fourth year of theology.

Now, I have much greater faith and hope that God wants to fulfill my heart's desire for peace and understand it is found in living out my vocation to Holy Orders. I was ordained a deacon on June 11th, 2011, the vigil of Pentecost, at my home parish of St. Bronislava in Plover by Bishop William Callahan. The Holy Spirit gave me gifts of peace and joy which flooded my heart and confirmed my desire to give my life to Christ and His Church through the promises of prayer, obedience, and celibacy. Now having lived out diaconal ministry for four months I have only been strengthened in the grace of my ordination to be at the service of charity. I look forward to my last year of seminary which I find to be a time for deeper prayer and study of priestly ministry, so that I can prepare for priestly ordination on June 23rd, 2012. Please keep me in your prayers as I approach this day and be assured of my daily prayers for all those living in the Diocese of La Crosse.