

# Father Hubert Jurjewicz's Biography

## PART 2 – GROWING IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

Like all young boys what I wanted to be when I grew up kept changing: a firefighter, a doctor and because of my love for animals, even a veterinarian. But the call to priesthood, was a persistent and relentless thought in my mind and in my heart, that would not give up and would always bring me back to my true purpose in life.

A definite moment in my spiritual life happened when I was preparing for my Confirmation in 8th grade. Many things were happening during that time. Attending daily Mass became extremely important for me. I was actively involved in various ministries in my parish and was attending a Bible group called "Oaza" (the Oasis). During this time I met a wonderful priest who inspired me with his faith and his works. This friendship was and continues to be a central part of my life. Before my Confirmation he asked me, if I was determined to do something to be better prepared to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. For me this was a once in a lifetime confession. More than ever, I felt this inner voice in my heart telling me to work hard and to open myself for a deeper awareness of the Holy Spirit's presence in my life. "Be Open," were the guiding words I seemed to hear all the time. It was 1996, heading into the Technical High School of Szczecinek, Poland, I decided to take a concrete step towards the priesthood by serving Him at the altar.

My desire to work for the Catholic Church has always been a strong one, placed deep in my heart. Because of this I tried to help in any way, and in any ministry, I could. When I was working in the Church I felt happy, and my heart felt at "home." Anything that I would do since the beginning of high school always evolved around the Church. My participation in Church became my whole life and it was the beginning of my path to become a priest.

The final decision to enter Seminary came when I graduated High School. I entered Seminary in Poland in the year 2000. My years in Seminary was some of the most precious and valuable time in my life. It was filled with growth and challenged me personally and ministerially. More than ever, I discovered in Seminary my love and need of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. There are no words to describe the peace and joy of being in front of Jesus and saying to Him, "I am all yours."

During my seminarian years I also developed a strong devotion to our Blessed Mother. In fact, the motto of my Priesthood is "Totus Tuus", the same one as Pope John Paul II, (*Totus Tuus was Saint John Paul II's apostolic motto. It is a Latin phrase meaning "totally thine" and expressed his personal Consecration to Mary based on the spiritual approach of Saint Louis de Montfort and the Mariology in his works*).

I am sure that it was our Blessed Mother who helped me through all these years of discernment. She has been my best teacher and I have entrusted my priesthood to her.

During my stay at Saint Nicolas Parish, I befriended a priest working in a diocese in Connecticut. Many of our talks were often devoted to the topic of the Catholic Church in the United States. As in any journey, you have to be open to where the road leads you. These talks prompted me to think about working as a priest in the United States. He introduced me to the Vice Rector of the Orchard Lake Seminary, the Polish-American Seminary. And by no coincidence, the Vice Rector was visiting Poland when I called him, so we were able to meet right away, it was December 2007. He put me in contact with Bishop Arthur J. Serratelli to discuss the possibility of coming to work in the Diocese of Paterson. After a few months wait, and through the grace of God, I received permission in April 2008, from my former bishop, to come to the United States. Although this process seemed to take forever, I never lost trust in God that He was leading me down the right road.

In August 2008 I received my official letter from the Diocese of Paterson inviting me to come. Bishop Arthur J. Serratelli graciously appointed me as a transitional Deacon of St. Rose of Lima in East Hanover. Only nine months after, in May 23, 2009, I was ordained a priest by Bishop Serratelli and he appointed me as the Vicar of St. Rose.

I welcomed my new assignment with excitement and an openness of mind and heart. Nothing gives me greater joy than to dedicate my life to the service of others, especially young people, who are our future. To be of service to others, is to be a conduit of God's grace, and that is the heart of being a priest. Our Blessed Mother gave us the ultimate example of saying Yes to God's call. She must have felt uneasiness at first, being asked to be the Mother of God, but her enormous faith and complete trust in God, let her say Yes without any fear of the future. The same way, I answer with a Yes and trust in God as I continue my priestly journey in Hewitt.