



Seminarian Joshua Solarz

I am the 2nd oldest child of 4 to my parents, Melissa and Tony. I have an older brother, and a younger sister and brother. We have lived in Roselle, IL ever since I was born on October 12, 1997.

Though being confirmed in the Catholic Church by 8th grade, my faith life didn't hold any significance in my life before college. While attending Lake Park High School in Roselle, I spent all of my efforts pursuing success in the classroom and in extracurricular activities like soccer and tennis, eventually being accepted and enrolling into the University of Notre Dame. I found myself, however, feeling empty and unsatisfied throughout high school as I continued to focus on achievement alone.

For these reasons, I was looking forward to starting college and developing meaningful relationships within Notre Dame's dorm community. During my freshman year, I tried to be as involved as I could in the community, participating in our section football Fridays and joining Mass in our dorm chapel on Wednesday and Sunday evenings. Most guys in the dorm seemed to be attending Mass, so I figured I might as well. During my sophomore year, I started rooming with two of the holiest guys I had ever met, Dan and Vincent. Sharing a room with them gave me the space to ask them questions about the Catholic Church and for them to share the beauty of the Faith with me. After going to confession for the first time in 6 years, I felt the Lord calling me to a deeper relationship with Him and to a greater understanding of His Church. Junior year felt as if I was living out the Catholic Faith for the first time in my life, being able to serve my dorm's Faith community and spending more and more time in prayer in our chapel. It was during these hours of prayer that thoughts of priesthood were first presented to me, but I ignored them at the time.

Throughout college, I majored in Neuroscience and Behavior while also working within our Sports Medicine Department. I took classes as if I was going to apply to medical school, but I felt uneasy about this path throughout college. These feelings were confirmed after working in a doctor's office for a year after graduation, becoming convinced this was not where the Lord wanted me.

After graduation, I joined the Diocese of Joliet's Young Adult Discernment Group (Samuel Group) as a way to meet friends as I returned home from college. While not joining Samuel Group to discern my vocation, my heart was unexpectedly opened to the possibility of becoming a priest as I dove deeper into my relationship with God. After talking with a seminarian from my home parish, meeting with my Vocations Director for the first time, and finding peace and joy while praying about entering seminary, I became confident that this is where God was calling me next.

In Fall of 2023 I began seminary formation at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio. Thank you for your prayers as I begin this next journey!