

July 2024

My dear parishioners,

Mid-June brought us what I would call a “WOW” week!

### *Record Number of Ordinations*

On Saturday, June 15 Cardinal Gregory ordained **16 new priests**—the largest number of any diocese in the country. The Basilica was packed, with people standing in the aisles as Mass began. Three hours and ten minutes later, the deacon announced, “Go in peace.” What a fantastic celebration!

After Mass the newly ordained received their assignments from the Cardinal. The men were anxious, nervous, and excited. And then—*the envelope, please*. Each was handed an envelope containing the names of his new parish and his pastor. Among the men ordained was **Deacon Isaac Sagastume**, who had ministered at our Cathedral parish this past year. When Isaac’s turn came, the Cardinal simply said, “**You’re going to the Cathedral!**” Isaac then made his way to meet his pastor—what an emotional moment! I was thrilled! I could have jumped to the top of the Basilica!

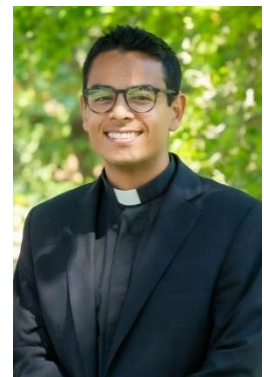
Then another newly ordained priest approached—**Fr. Joseph McHenry told me that he, too, was coming to the Cathedral!** I was again thrilled! I have known Joseph since his days assisting at Cathedral liturgies as a lay employee at the Office of Liturgy, before he entered seminary. As a seminarian he studied at Theological College at Catholic University. He became my contact with the DC seminarians and interviewed me as a featured alumnus for a TC quarterly publication.

The Cardinal had once said I would get “2 for 1” when Parochial Vicar **Fr. John Benson** moved to his next assignment. **Ordination day 2024** was indeed an exciting day. What a joy! Praise the Lord!

### *Welcome to our New Parochial Vicars*

**Fr. Isaac Sagastume** is a **native of Costa Rica** who arrived in the U.S. at the age of 6 and was raised in **Bergenfield, New Jersey**.

In a reflection on his vocation, Fr. Isaac writes, “After immigrating to the United States my family rarely went to church. It was through a difficult period in my mother’s health that she decided to return to the Church. She brought me to the Neocatechumenal Way where I began to have an encounter with the Lord. In 2013 at the World Youth Day in Brazil, I heard the call of the Lord to the priesthood.”



As he further shares, Fr. Isaac credits as important to his religious vocation, the parochial vicar of the parish his family attended when they returned to the Catholic Church—Father Manuel Duenas, a native of Burgos, Spain who now serves as vice-rector of the Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Newark, New Jersey. “Seeing how normal the priest of my parish was—he played soccer, joked, etc. —and how through the preaching he helped me to encounter Christ made me want to do the same.”

On Sunday, June 16, Fr. Isaac celebrated a superb **First Mass of Thanksgiving** here at the Cathedral. Everyone was so happy, including his family and friends from New Jersey, Arizona and elsewhere. It was a day to truly celebrate and welcome him to the Cathedral family as Parochial Vicar!



I also welcome **Fr. Joseph McHenry** to our parish family as Parochial Vicar! He has much experience in liturgy—which this liturgist truly appreciates—so his days at the Cathedral will be busy. In a vocations profile on the *dcpriest.org* website, he notes: “I helped coordinate liturgies for parish staffs as well as for the bishops of our diocese. Often, my work took me to many parishes across the archdiocese—some 75 in all! It was a great joy for me to see the vibrancy of our local church in festive occasions such as Confirmations, patronal feasts and altar dedications.”

While studying International Affairs at George Washington University, Joseph felt called to the priesthood. After graduation, he spent four years in formation at the Dominican House of Studies, but eventually was drawn to the diocesan priesthood. He writes: “I felt God inviting me to discern the priesthood further as part of this local Church of Washington where my faith had been nurtured for nearly a decade. I also love interacting and sharing the Gospel with people from all walks for life.” He entered seminary for the Archdiocese of Washington and earned a licentiate in philosophy from Catholic University.

Fr. McHenry is a **Massachusetts native who grew up in Buffalo** and remains a fan of the Buffalo Bills football team. He also enjoys hiking and road trips—he has visited nearly 100 parishes in the archdiocese. He also enjoys reading novels, short stories, histories and biographies.

Our Spanish-speaking members have worked with **Fr. Isaac** and are so excited to have him here with us. **Fr. Joseph** shares with me a real love of liturgy, so we will get along just fine.

### *Lay Staff Changes and Welcome to our Director of Communications*

I recently shared with you that long-time staff member **Maureen Hurley** is leaving her position as Assistant to the Rector. I am happy to report that I have hired **Mary Ferranti** (*photo at right*) as Maureen’s successor in parish communications, in the new position of **Director of Communications**. **Ana Triaureau**, formerly Staff Assistant, will assume Maureen’s non-communications responsibilities and will be my new Assistant, along with **Dan Evans** who has long served in that role, working with my engaged couples.



**Mary Ferranti** is a professional archivist with experience in overseeing and implementing communications strategies in libraries and historical societies. She has worked at the Carnegie Institution, the Chevy Chase Historical Society, and the U.S. Senate. She is presently the archivist for the Cathedral and a minister of hospitality at Sunday Mass. She received her M.S. degree in Library Services with a concentration in Archives Management from Columbia University. **I am thrilled to welcome Mary to our staff!** When you see Mary and her husband, Matt, at Mass, please welcome Mary, too.

I am so happy to share all this good news with you. It is a great day: **Let us rejoice and be glad!**

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Rev. Msgr. W. Ronald Jameson  
Rector