



Volume 9, Issue 2  
Summer 2021

The Official Newsletter of the Legionaries of Christ and Regnum Christi

## A Call to Serve

As Teachers, Shepherds, and Priests

Rejoice! By the end of this summer, 27 Legionaries are scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood. They have spent over a decade in study and formation, typically around 12 years, aided by the prayers and support from family, friends, and benefactors. The sacrament of Holy Orders is a great blessing to celebrate and they are grateful to everyone who helped them along the way. Readers of MISSION know how much we need priests dedicated to serving the others in the name of Jesus Christ. So, on their behalf, thank-you – and thanks be to God!

Four American Legionaries are being ordained this year – Dcn Vinh Pham, Dcn Michael Sester, and Dcn Russle Ward, and Dcn Seth Sabata. Three of the ordinations will take place after this issue is printed, so we are only able to share photos from Father Seth Sabata who was ordained by Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz on Saturday April 10th at North American Martyrs Catholic Church in Lincoln, Nebraska.

In his ordination homily, Bishop Bruskewitz stressed both the great honor and the undeserved nature of the office of priesthood, saying, “Remember that no one takes this honor for himself, but only one who has been called by God.” This humbling realization is shared by all the new priests. Fr. Seth prefaced his vocation testimony with a quotation by St Pope John Paul II:

“Vocation, more than our own choice, is a response to God’s unmerited call” (August 4, 2019)

In his testimony, Fr. Seth recalled some of the things that prepared him to hear and answer God’s call. He grew up in a loving Catholic family and was an altar server from an early age. He attended Catholic grade school and high school. As a freshman at Benedictine College, he started to attend daily Mass



Fr. Seth Sabata kneels before Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz during his ordination Mass in Lincoln, Nebraska.

and began praying the Rosary daily. Even the death of his older sister from a car accident, when he was thirteen, deepened and strengthened his faith. He wrote, “There is no situation too dark and difficult for our Lord and his healing light.”

The summer after his first year in college, Fr. Seth traveled with Legionary Summer Candidates (those discerning a call to the Legionary priesthood) to a Regnum Christi conference in Atlanta. On the way, they stopped for the night and had a time of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. There he perceived that the Lord was calling him to join the Legionaries of Christ. Not long after he entered the novitiate in Cheshire and the rest, as they say, is history.

Bishop Bruskewitz, spoke of the role of priests to be teachers, shepherds, and priests: “You have been taken from among men and appointed on their behalf for things that pertain to God” ... “Preach the Gospel, shepherd God’s people, and celebrate the sacred liturgy, especially the Lord’s sacrifice.”

After reflecting on his own faith journey, he gives this advice and encouragement:

*(continued on the following page)*

“The Lord did so many other things in my heart to prepare me for my vocation. The more we dig into our own past with the eyes of faith, the more we can see how our Heavenly Father is always acting, no matter what the situation. He works in the heart of each one of us. He plants desires in each one of our hearts and speaks to us through

people, events and opportunities. Do not be afraid to look into your heart and let the Lord speak to you!”

*Please remember in your prayers the 27 new Legionary priests and the 36 Legionary brothers scheduled to be ordained as transitional deacons this year.*



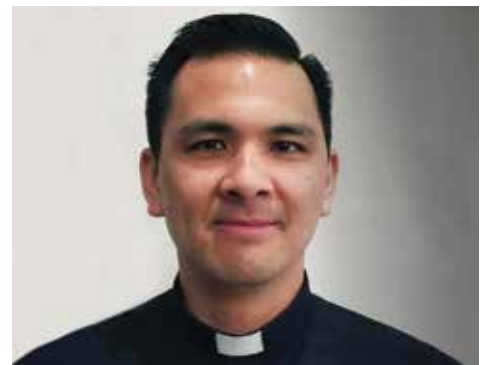
**Fr. Seth Sabata** was born in Lincoln, Nebraska. He attended Benedictine College in Kansas for one year and studied biochemistry. There he met the Legionaries of Christ for the first time. During his freshman year at college, he also participated in humanitarian missions in New Orleans, which was still recovering from Hurricane Katrina. Through the Regnum Christi members, he again met Legionary priests and felt his first call join the Legion. Ordained on April 10, 2021, he will

carry out his first apostolic mission in Manila, Philippines, accompanying university and high school students, working in the young men's section and assisting in the development of a new school.

**Fr. Michael Sester** was born in Minnesota and entered the Legionary minor seminary for high school before entering the Legions' novitiate in Cheshire, Connecticut. He spent two years in Monterrey, Mexico as a youth work assistant and as a middle school formation instructor. He is currently working in Santiago, Chile as a youth work director and as high school formation instructor in the Everest School. Fr. Michael was ordained a priest in Atlanta, Georgia.



**Fr. Russell Ward** was raised in Flint, Michigan, the oldest of seven. He entered the Legionary minor seminary at 15 before joining the novitiate in Cheshire, Connecticut. He continued his studies in Rome obtaining a Master's in Philosophy and a Bachelor's in Theology. He is currently studying for a Master of Theology at Notre Dame University. After this, he hopes to pursue a doctorate to teach seminarians in the Legionary university in Rome. He was ordained a priest in Lansing, Michigan.



**Fr. Vinh Pham** was born in Orange County, California, the son of a refugee family. He moved to Georgia after high school and earned an associate degree in automotive computers and worked two years for Mercedes Benz. He entered the Legionary novitiate in 2009. He served in the Cincinnati-Kentucky locality as assistant youth director for two years. His assignment as a priest is to the DC-Arlington-Baltimore youth section. Fr. Vinh was ordained a priest in Atlanta, Georgia.



Congratulations to the seven American Legionaries scheduled to be ordained deacons on July 31st at Notre Dame parish in Indiana by Bishop Robert J. McLory. From left to right their names are: Br. Tarrison Ngugen, Br. Michael Sternhagen, Br. Luke Rawicki, Br. Erik Burkel, Br. John VanDorpe, Br. Dain Sherber, and Br. Robert Antonio. Please remember in your prayers all 36 Legionaries being ordained deacons throughout the world.



## Focus on Vocations

### Opportunities for Discernment in Cheshire

#### Come and See

Our Summer Candidacy program (from the end of June through August) is for men considering the Legionary



Seminarians and candidates evangelize on the town green.

priesthood. They get a taste of the religious life – the schedule of prayer and Adoration, meals, recreation, and different course studies. Formation is offered from the basics of good vocation discernment to a more complete understanding of the charism and mission of Regnum Christi.

Organized community outreach activity rounds out their experience. Typically, the candidates have previously attended a Test Your Call Weekend. At the end of the summer, many are expected to enter the Cheshire Novitiate. Please remember them in your prayers.

#### Mass of Religious Professions

On Saturday, September 4th, some of our seminarians will take an important step in their path to the priesthood. They will be taking their first formal vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. Save the date and check for details later this summer at [lcheshire.org](http://lcheshire.org) to see if in-person attendance is possible. The Mass will be live-streamed on the internet. Please join us in celebrating this special occasion.

#### Vocation Summit

A Vocations Summit, being held in Cheshire from September 2-6, is an opportunity not only to learn from others, but to network. When people are isolated as

they often are today, the chance to collaborate with like-minded people can make a huge difference. Priests, consecrated, and lay leaders will discuss strategies to promote vocations.



Fr. Martin Connor LC

The summit brings together people called to be part of the New Evangelization and encourage vocations in the Church. One “tried and true” way to develop what Fr. Martin Connor calls “mission mindfulness” is through the family – namely, the “domestic Church.” To increase vocations, we must strengthen Catholic family life. The summit will explore concrete ways that strengthen individuals and families. The Movement helps lay Catholics through prayer and community activities to discover their mission, putting their gifts at the service of the Church

In his first seven years as a Legionary, Fr. Martin Connor was chaplain to a school in Dublin, Ireland and director of a Family Center where he taught extensively on Theology of the Body. He then worked as chaplain to Regnum Christi youth programs in Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. He has also served in the leadership of the missionary program RC Mission Corps. Now, in his 20th year as a priest, Fr. Martin was assigned last year as the Legionary of Christ National Director of Vocations.

As National Director, he works with a team of priests across the country: three regional vocations directors, five local vocations directors, and four community vocations coordinators. Their overarching goal is to build a vocational culture that fosters “openness to God’s plan.” Vocational directors and coordinators accompany lay people with initiatives such as Adoration for Vocations to help engage them in the work and needs of the Church. In addition to current efforts, the vocation team is rolling out an ongoing plan to increase use of the internet to reach more youth.



Fr. Shawn Aaron, Territorial Director for North America presides at the Mass of Religious Professions on September 5, 2020

## A World in Need of Fathers

### Follow the Example of Saint Joseph

If we are to believe television and movies, we would conclude that fathers are sad saps. Pop culture frequently portrays fathers as clueless men who fail to rise to any occasion. Now, more than ever, we need the heroic example of St. Joseph, a father who always rose to the occasion. We need fathers who strive to be heroes.

The world today tells us to look always for our own comfort and happiness. Happiness eludes us when we search for it. Focusing on happiness is truly being “not of right mind.” It is when we seek to serve that we find happiness. St. Joseph is the perfect example of such an attitude. He put others first, in every instance. His life found its meaning in serving his family. The world today needs men like the humble carpenter from Nazareth.

The first key to St. Joseph being a hero was that he sacrificed himself willingly. Rather than pursue an earthly career or even grasp at his natural right to raise his own family, he put the desires of God and the needs of the Holy Family above his own. To “take care of number one” does not make someone a better man. Rather, he should take care of those entrusted to him.

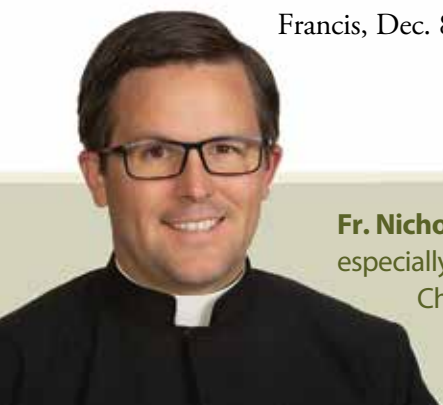
The second key to St. Joseph being a hero was that his sacrifice did not finish until it became a perfect gift. Since that first journey to Bethlehem, Joseph was always giving of himself to Mary and Jesus. He found a humble abode for Mary to give birth to the Savior. He raised Jesus well.

The third key to St. Joseph being a hero was his unconquerable trust. When other men would have desired to flee in fear, Joseph stayed faithfully with Jesus and Mary. He refused to be frustrated by the mishaps of life and, instead, embraced the hand of Providence that guided his decisions and activities.

“Joseph found happiness not in mere self-sacrifice but in self-gift. In him, we never see frustration but only trust. His patient silence was the prelude to concrete expressions of trust. Our world today needs fathers” (Pope Francis, Dec. 8, 2020, *Patris Corde*).



Modern society seems to have given men “a pass” on being responsible. It is almost expected that men will fail their families—a faithful man is considered the exception. Following the example of St. Joseph, we will be able to proclaim an ideal of manhood where the father is a source of unconditional support and love in the home. The world, and men, will be happier.



**Fr. Nicholas Sheehy** has worked with ECYD and Regnum Christi both in the United States and abroad, especially in El Salvador and Germany. He is currently serving on the formation team of the Legionaries of Christ Novitiate and College of Humanities in Cheshire, Connecticut.

He blogs, vlogs and podcasts at [www.fathernicholas.com](http://www.fathernicholas.com).



## Caring for the Unborn and the Underserved

Pro-Life Work in Wichita



Jody Elson

“What are you doing for the poor?”

This was the question that Dr. Jody Elson’s spiritual director asked her one day during spiritual guidance, and it’s the one that ultimately gave focus to Jody’s career as a family physician dedicated to some of the most vulnerable sectors of the population: the unborn, the poor and the underserved.

Jody grew up with a strong faith foundation; she was raised in a Catholic family and was introduced to Regnum Christi as a young adult. She decided to pursue a medical degree at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, moving to Wichita, Kansas, in order to do her residency in family medicine through the Via Christi Residency Program. It was here, in downtown Wichita, that Jody was introduced to the Guadalupe Clinic, a diocesan-run primary care health clinic founded in 1985 with funding from the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, and which is devoted to serving the area’s poor and uninsured.

As part of the women’s health rotation during her residency, Jody would volunteer at Guadalupe Clinic, where she had the opportunity to encounter a diverse patient population with a wide variety of needs. When the rotation and her residency were over, Jody felt called to continue her volunteer work with the clinic. “I felt obligated to support the mission as a Catholic health care provider, and I just wanted to give back to the community in some way,” says Jody, who has been volunteering at the clinic ever since.

Guadalupe Clinic is a nonprofit health clinic, funded entirely by grants, fundraisers and donations, and other than a core set of paid administrative and clinic staff that forms the foundation of the clinic, it depends entirely on volunteers. The majority of patient care is provided by volunteer nurses, practitioners and physicians like Jody, who volunteer their time for those unable to afford consistent health care.

Currently, Jody is working at a new practice called Antioch Med, a direct primary care practice that, because it does not contract with insurance companies, can provide care at a much lower cost. She is also trained as a medical consultant in NaProTECHNOLOGY (Natural Procreative Technology), which is an approach to female health and fertility that, in line with the teachings of the Church, cooperates with and aims to restore a woman’s natural procreative and gynecological system. The majority of the NaPro patients that she treats—and ministers to—are women suffering from pregnancy loss or infertility, and it is with these women that Jody feels her faith has an enormous influence on her role as a health care provider.

For Jody, the key to being a compassionate and authentically Catholic health care provider is to constantly turn to the Divine Physician as her motivation and her model. “So much of Jesus’ work in Scripture is related to healing, and it helps me to serve others better to try to see Jesus in them,” says Jody. “I pray for my patients every day.”

Jody has been a member of Regnum Christi for fourteen years, and is currently the RC Women’s Section Director in Wichita, Kansas. Last year she was the recipient of the Pay It Forward Award, which honors local volunteers for their contribution to the Wichita community.





Don't Miss Out On  
**The Best Night of the Year!**

Mark Your Calendar  
**Saturday, October 16<sup>TH</sup>**  
on YouTube and Facebook



*More Details Coming Soon!*

**Like to Run?** or just walk?

You can support Legionary vocations by doing what you love... any time, now thru September 6th. Simply sign up at <https://bit.ly/3n0r064> and log your miles today!!!



## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

*Please be sure to call ahead to make sure your event has not been postponed*

### Atlanta Area

#### **Retreats, marriage prep and enrichment**

See website (events or services) for dates and information.

[www.rcatlanta.org](http://www.rcatlanta.org) | 770-837-2798

### Washington, D.C. Area – OLB Retreat Center

#### **Retreats, marriage prep and enrichment**

See website for dates and information.

[www.ourladyofbethesda.org](http://www.ourladyofbethesda.org)

301-365-0612

### Connecticut Area

#### **Legion of Christ Novitiate & College of Humanities**

See events at [www.LCCheshire.org](http://www.LCCheshire.org) | 203-271-0805

### Dallas Area

#### **Retreats, marriage prep and enrichment**

See website (events) for dates and information.

[www.dfw-rc.org](http://www.dfw-rc.org)

### North Carolina Area

#### **Retreats, spiritual exercises and enrichment**

See website (retreats or events) for dates and information.

[www.rcnorthcarolina.org](http://www.rcnorthcarolina.org)

### Greater Ohio Valley Area

#### **Retreats, spiritual exercises and enrichment**

See web site (events) for dates and information.

[www.rcohiovalley.org](http://www.rcohiovalley.org)

### Houston Area

#### **Retreats, spiritual exercises and enrichment**

See website (resources) for dates and information.

[www.thykingdomcome.us](http://www.thykingdomcome.us)

### New York/New Jersey/Connecticut Area

#### **Retreats, marriage prep and enrichment**

See website (events) for dates and information.

[www.regnumchristinyctnj.org](http://www.regnumchristinyctnj.org)

914-244-3685 | [info@RegnumChristinyctnj.org](mailto:info@RegnumChristinyctnj.org)

### Missions

#### **Online spiritual resources/retreat guides**

[www.rcspirituality.org](http://www.rcspirituality.org)

Study Circle Guides, Ask a Priest - Q&A

[contact@rcspirituality.org](mailto:contact@rcspirituality.org)

#### **Mission Youth Missions – international missions**

See website for dates:

[www.missionyouth.com](http://www.missionyouth.com) | 855-556-6872

[missionyouth@missionnetwork.com](mailto:missionyouth@missionnetwork.com)

#### **Helping Hands Medical Missions**

See website (join) for dates: [www.hhmm.org](http://www.hhmm.org)

972-253-1800 | [mission@hhmm.org](mailto:mission@hhmm.org)



## Sweat the Small Stuff

### The Little Things in Life Matter

She was such a little thing. Let's call her Mary. Mary was a 14 year old drug user, alcoholic, juvenile offender, and now, a pregnant unwed teenager.

Mary found herself in front of a judge who was evaluating Mary's latest violation of probation. The exasperated judge ordered Mary (yes, ordered her) to have an abortion, or she'd be returned to juvenile detention in Northington with little hope of release.

Local missionaries learned of Mary's plight and rushed to the courthouse where they found her...huddled in a dark corner...alone. She looked up, and reached into her coat and pulled out a crumpled flyer a Catholic pro-life activist had long ago given her. "Is this true?" she asked. "Yes, Mary," came the reply, "It's all true." Mary then sobbed, "Then why doesn't anyone care?!"

What happens when we're faithful in little things? Ask Mary. The missionaries connected her with a generous family from a nearby parish, who took Mary in, giving her small stuff...tutoring, rehab, and pre-natal care for that little life.

Mary of Northington, like Mary of Nazareth, went on to have her baby, thanks to little Christs doing little things. Want to hear another small miracle? Mary's father, himself an alcoholic, was so moved by Mary and her new friends, that he too entered rehab and ultimately reconciled with the Catholic Church he had long ago abandoned.

She was such a little thing. Be faithful to her spirit and to all little things. Rejoice in small responsibilities. Seize little opportunities. Sweat the small stuff.

Whoever is faithful with little things  
will be faithful with the great - Luke 16:10

Little things like Mary don't seem to matter anymore. "Don't sweat the small stuff". "Look out for number 1". That, we're told, is how the real world works. Well, real world, meet the real Gospel of Jesus Christ!

We've got to sweat the small stuff because, first and foremost, we are small stuff. As Catholic Christians (the very word "Christian" means "little Christs") we are called to seek Christ where he will be found, in the little things...in the wombs of unwed teenagers from Northington to Nazareth... our God becomes small so his glory might become great.



CATHOLIC  
PRO-LIFE

For more on how God and you can  
make little things great, visit us at:



PlannedLiving.org

Supporting the Legionaries of Christ





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### Our Mission

We work as Jesus did. We reveal his love, form apostles and send them out to help build the Kingdom of Christ. We help awaken the individual and the family to their mission in life and in the Church.

### Who We Are

We are an apostolic movement of evangelization composed of four vocations – Legionaries of Christ, Consecrated Women, Lay Consecrated Men and Lay Members – called to help people discover Christ's love and build his Kingdom.

### What We Do

Regnum Christi has a Christ-centered spirituality that is lived together in communion with all members, in union with the whole Church and through a mission to build the Kingdom of Christ.

## ON OUR MASTHEAD

Br. Sterling Foley LC – Lafayette, Louisiana

Br. Raphael Meyer LC – Freiburg, Germany

## Missionaries in Action | Witnesses In a Secular World

### Holy Week Missions

The love of Jesus was brought to the streets of Philadelphia as well as nine other cities in the United States, Canada and the Philippines during Holy Week. Sponsored by Mission Youth, a Catholic international missionary organization associated with Regnum Christi, this year's missions engaged about 1,500 people. Among their activities: praying outside abortion clinics; giving out food, water and clothing; helping in homeless shelters or soup kitchens; inviting people back to Church and the sacraments; and participating in Holy Week liturgies.

Missionaries on the street looked into the eyes of people

who haven't been around family or friends in many months or years, speaking their names. They walked through trash-covered sidewalks with a wooden cross, meeting people in their lowest moments, asking if they had prayer intentions, writing them on a note and nailing them to the cross.

On Good Friday, they portrayed Jesus' Passion on a mile-long route through the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia, considered an epicenter of the opioid crisis. They played the parts of Jesus, the guards, the weeping women, Simon of Cyrene and Mary as the crowd prayed the Stations of the Cross and sang songs of praise. Heads turned from apartments ten stories high and from restaurants along the street.

One woman ran up to them and said, "Last year you prayed with me to beat cancer and conceive a child. My daughter is two months old and I am cancer-free! Thank you!" Even one such miracle is worth everything for a volunteer missionary.

Mission Youth seeks to provide mission opportunities to teens, young people and Catholic families. To learn more or to get involved, contact the Mission Youth Support Team at [missionyouth.com](http://missionyouth.com) and consider sponsoring a mission or a missionary near you!



The Passion of Jesus during Holy Week in Philadelphia.