

Biographical Information for Seminarian Jacob Daul

My name is Jacob Daul, and I am a seminarian for the diocese of St. Augustine. I am the son of two Catholics from Wisconsin and I am the youngest of a brother and a sister. My home parish is St. Catherine of Siena, in Orange Park.

I was born a Catholic, but the faith was not a high priority of mine until 2015. It was then that I went on a confirmation retreat with St. Catherine's so to prepare myself for the sacrament of "graduation" from the Church. However, this would not be the end, but the beginning of my involvement with the Holy Church. I was exposed to the beauty of reconciliation, Mass, and adoration in one night, and that was the night that I had felt a connection to true love: the love of Christ through His mercy and sacrifice. I was confirmed on May 10, 2015, receiving the gifts I would need to begin discerning my calling in life. My first act after confirmation was joining a mission trip called Urban Plunge. Plunge is a St. Catherine's ritual where two weeks every summer, the youth travel down to St. Augustine to work on houses for the poor, elderly, or disabled. We do paint jobs, carpentry jobs, cleaning jobs, and more. The community we youth built and the work that we did for these people caused more joy than one can ever expect going into a trip like this. After we came home, at our return dinner, seminarian Michael Kieler invited the guys on the trip to attend the diocesan discernment retreat. I decided to go to this retreat so that the fire of love which burnt in my heart could persist. This is where my discernment began. There, all the seminarians seemed to be enthralled with just the notion of serving the Lord. Their dedication to doing God's will is truly evident during these retreats.

Jumping to 2016, I went on Urban Plunge for a second time, and this trip was just as impactful as the first. Afterwards, however, is where I had a great change in my life. I had my own car at this point, so I decided that I can make the drive to Mass on some weekday mornings, since my work didn't begin until 10:00am I went some mornings, then soon that turned into every morning. I had developed a need to go to Mass in the morning, for if I did not make it in the morning, then my whole day would be terrible; there would be a piece of me missing. On top of attending daily Mass at San Juan Del Rio, I would help with the maintenance if I had a late shift at my work. I found myself working from 7:00am to 7:00pm, whether at Church or at my job.

In the summer of 2017, I maintained the busy schedule I had set for myself the year before. God revealed the call He had for me at the discernment retreat for that year. The theme was "into the deep," which referred to one putting their trust in God despite all obstacles. I received the message and went "into the deep" by saying to myself that I could be a seminarian, one of these people who dedicate their lives to God. When I thought of this as my path for college, I received a great peace. Before this retreat, I was going to go to a university, not knowing what I wanted to study. This caused me great anxiety, for I was taking a great risk for an unknown path. The thought of me being ordained one day brings me true joy and a sense of purpose, a duty established by God through his holy Church.

Heading into my last summer before I enter the seminary, I could not be happier to be a seminarian for this diocese. I wear the black slacks and the white polo, the uniform of our

school, nearly every day. I do my best to act according to what God wills for me to do. The most integral part of life, especially after being accepted as a seminarian, is to rely on the Eucharist. I hardly let a day pass without going to Mass because the Body and Blood of Christ are my strength, and without Christ on the altar, I am nothing.