

Biographical Information for Seminarian Jared De Leo

I was baptized in the Lutheran Evangelical Church, but my family never attended services. My Catholic dad was in the Navy, so we moved around north and central Florida as well as southern Georgia. When we finally settled in Gainesville, my mother decided that her, my sister, and I would join the Catholic Church by going through the RCIA program at Queen of Peace Catholic Community in Gainesville. I received my first communion in eighth grade, and my pastor in his infinite wisdom decided that I should be confirmed with my peers in tenth grade.

To be confirmed, I became involved with my parish youth group, which opened me up to a loving God with whom I previously had a very childish relationship. Thanks to the influence of a great youth minister and the prayers of many, I eventually became a teen leader for two years in my parish youth group. When I entered college, I became an adult leader and Confirmation catechist for the next five years.

During Lent in the Year for Priests (March 2010), I felt the first inklings of the call to priesthood praying one day after Mass, which I did not immediately embrace. By that summer, I knew that I was called to priesthood, but I resisted still in answering the call though I continued to pray and spend time with Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament. I owe a great deal of gratitude to the University of Florida Catholic Campus Ministry at St. Augustine's Catholic Church & Student Center, especially because of the many great friends that I made during my involvement there that made me more open to the Lord's will for my life.

Two years later, I visited St. John Vianney College Seminary on a Come and See Weekend, and afterwards, I made the decision to apply to become a seminarian for the Diocese of St. Augustine. I have no regrets about my decision, and in fact, I have never been happier in my whole life.