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**Theology 3**  
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**Birthday: June 14**

I was born on June 14, 1993 in Joliet, IL. My parents, Laura Sida and Ramon Sida Jr, are both Mexican. My siblings are Karen Sida, Brenda Sida and Ricardo Sida, all of whom were born in Joliet. I am the oldest. I lived in Cuauhtémoc, Chihuahua, México up until I was 19 years old. During my Summer breaks, I would usually come to the States to visit my father's family. His parents and four brothers live in the Joliet area. This is why I eventually ended up studying for this great diocese.

My family has always been very active in the Church. I am a good Christian today because of the great Christian witness my parents gave my siblings and me. When I was preparing for my Confirmation, I attended a retreat in which I truly came to know the Lord and His great love for me. I knew that the Lord would always be an important part of my life and I began thinking about the priesthood. However, I was afraid to express my interest in the priesthood, so I tried to ignore the call for some time.

After this retreat, I became very active at my parish in Mexico. I became an altar server, where I got the chance to get to know some priests and learned about their lifestyle. I had wrong ideas about the priesthood and that is why I was afraid of letting my friends know that I was thinking about becoming a priest. In addition, I started teaching RE after my confirmation to first graders and even started a church choir! After a couple years of being actively involved in parish life, my pastor invited me to attend a retreat to pray and discern more actively about the possibility of joining seminary. During this retreat I really felt the Lord calling me to follow him more closely and to give up my life for Him. It was as a consequence that I entered seminary after my Sophomore year of high school. Quite young! This decision has marked my life and continues to do so.

At the same time, I always had a curiosity about what it would be like to be a seminarian and priest in the United States. My experience in the high school seminary in Juarez was very positive and helped me to learn many things about myself. But after I graduated from high school, I felt the Lord calling me to be a missionary and to come to the States.

In the summer of 2011, while visiting my family in Joliet, I met Fr. Burke Masters. He talked to me about the great need for bilingual priests in the diocese, people in need to hear the Gospel in their own language! He told me that the Hispanic community was growing very rapidly, and that the diocese could use some help with Spanish-speaking priests.

My time in formation has been a true blessing in my life. God has put so many wonderful people, parishioners, and experiences in my life that have helped me grow in

my vocation and in being more confident. For instance, during Fall semester my senior year of college, I had the opportunity to study in Rome, the “Eternal City.” It was a grace-filled experience that strengthened my faith as well as my desire to answer God’s call. In addition, a group of seminarians and I were blessed to serve Mass for Pope Francis on Christmas Eve at St. Peter’s Basilica!

This past Spring semester I was blessed to be assigned to Saint Mary Immaculate Parish for my pastoral internship. I just wanted to take the time to thank this wonderful and God-filled faith community for being so welcoming and help me see God in each of you. This semester really helped me to see a priest’s lifestyle – shout-out to Fr. Pat! – and what parish life is like, and all I can say is, this is how I want to spend the rest of my life! At the service of God’s Church.

This summer I did a hospital chaplaincy program as part of our training to become better listeners and to better help us enter into whatever situation a person is going through. It was an exhausting Summer, with many on-call days and nights, but I can truly say that I have grown in confidence that it is through the vocation to the priesthood that Jesus wants to bless other people through me.

This upcoming semester I will be entering my third year of Theology at Mundelein Seminary. Please keep me in your prayers and be assured of mine for you. Thanks for all your support. Without all of your hard work and prayers for vocations our diocese would not be blessed with so many holy vocations as we are. God bless you!