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**Birthday: August 30**

Following two years of philosophy studies at the Pontifical College Josephinum, I am certainly grateful to continue formation close by at Mundelein Seminary.

In the late summer of 1991, my parents Tom and Paula welcomed me into the world. I grew up in a close-knit family. My family firmly believes life is best lived in service with one another. By the grace of God, my older brother Brian and I went along with our parents' encouragement to embrace our Catholic faith. We have always shared dinner-time, summertime & Sunday Worship. The passing (into eternity) of my grandparents and most recently my own father, together have awakened me to the importance of leading a sacrificial and joyful life so to encourage the faith in others.

For over two decades as an active Catholic within the Joliet Diocese, I have learned to center my life on the Eucharist. Over the years I have volunteered as a lector, altar server & vocalist for the Sunday Liturgy. I also have assisted with high school youth ministry and several domestic mission trips. The spiritual support of a youth director, Mark Herwaldt, along with the witness of so many others has shown me what it means to live-out the Catholic faith. Fr. Bob Hoffenkamp, my pastor from 2004 until 2014, particularly challenged me to follow Christ as one of His priests.

In 2010, I enrolled at Dominican University, near Chicago. By double-majoring in Theology and Communications I hoped to discern both religious and secular vocations. During those four years of college, I spent most of my free time as leader in Catholic campus ministry, interfaith events and service immersion trips.

Following graduation in 2014, I spent six months job-searching and another six months as a full-time documentation clerk. In the spring of 2015, I became a full-time campus missionary through the Diocese of Rockford. On the campus Northern Illinois University, I led Bible studies, mentored male students in the faith and provided hospitality at the Newman Center. I collaborated with six other full-time missionaries to re-introduce college students to the rich beauty of Catholicism. Daily Mass, daily Eucharistic adoration and monthly spiritual direction kept me grounded in the life of the Church.

I once had dreams of becoming a cartoon animator or a master chef, but God seems to have other plans for me. Now as a young man, I firmly believe I am called me to discern work of providing the Sacraments to my brothers and sisters in Christ.

Among my favorite scripture passages is *the Road to Emmaus* (Luke 24), which expresses my reason for entering seminary. For quite some time Jesus Christ has shared his Word and Eucharist with me. My heart burns to share with others His invitation of Holy Communion. The inspiration of Venerable Rev. Samuel Mazzuchelli, OP, a missionary priest of the Midwest, affirms my potential vocation. He too must have appreciated the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Gospel of Luke.

*Fr. Samuel Mazzuchelli, son of St. Dominic, Pray for Us!*