



Rev. Mr. Jose Menemil P. Cerna
Theology 4
Mundelein Seminary
St. Mary Immaculate, Plainfield
Birthday: May 17

My name is Deacon Jose Menemil P. Cerna, I am an incoming Fourth Year Theology seminarian at Mundelein Seminary. I was ordained a Transitional Deacon last March 30, 2019.

I was born and raised in Cebu, Philippines. I have been here in the United States for three years. I got my American Permanent Resident Visa from the immigrant petition filed for me, way back in 2004 by my mother, Milagros P. Cerna, who is an American Citizen. I received it, together with my Green Card, in May of 2016.

There are thirteen children in my family, and I am the youngest. One of my brothers died a few hours after he was born, hence; we are twelve living children. I have six siblings who live in the Philippines and there are also six of us siblings who live in the United States. My mother is currently living with my brother's family in Joliet.

My father died in 1984 when I was 11 years old. After the death of my father, I became an active member of the Charismatic Renewal Prayer Group in our parish and became an altar server for two years. This was the beginning of my vocation to the priesthood. At that time, I already had a gut feeling that God was calling me to become a Priest. So, at that time, I had already decided to become a Priest someday. But my plan to become a Priest was delayed for many years because I explored the world first and worked in the corporate world for 14 years.

In 2009, I realized that the call of Our Lord Jesus to the priesthood still existed within me because it never went away during all those years. The call was so persistent. It might have gone away for a time, but it would come back, again and again, no matter how much I ignored it. My pastor, Fr. Orlando Ruiz, was the first one who enlightened me that indeed I still had the calling from God when I divulged to him that it had been my desire to become a Priest since the time I was 11 years old.

After consulting with my family, I quit my job, and I applied to be a seminarian for our Archdiocese of Cebu, Philippines in order to pursue my plan to become a Priest. I was formally accepted into our Archdiocesan Seminary, the Seminario Mayor de San Carlos, in Mabolo, Cebu City, Philippines in June of 2012. In 2015, I decided to transfer to the Diocese of Joliet because my American Permanent Resident Visa petition was about to be granted. I was formally accepted into the Diocese of Joliet by our previous Vocation Director, Fr. Burke Masters and Bishop Daniel Conlon in July of 2016.

This past summer, I spent nine weeks doing my Summer Assignment as a Transitional Deacon at St. Walter Parish in Roselle, IL under the guidance of the pastor, Fr. Mario Quejadas.

Please pray for me as I enter my last year of Theology studies at Mundelein Seminary. Thanks for all your support in encouraging and praying for vocations. God bless us all!