

## MEET THE PRIESTS



### Fr. Jean Hughes Desir

Priest

Born in Limbe, a town on the North Coast of Haiti Island, Father Jean began focusing on becoming a priest as a young child. The third of four children, Father Jean, his two brothers and his sister, were raised primarily by their mother, Marlete Mondelus, after losing his father, Idevert Desir, at the age of five.

Raised in a devoutly Catholic home and neighborhood, Father Jean took notice of his mother's involvement in the Catholic Church. "She participated in many church groups, like charismatic and choir and also took care of the priests' vestments," he recalls. "Her involvement in church has a tremendous and significant impact on me. At the age of 10, right after my First Communion, I became an altar server. It was at this point I heard my initial calling".

Father Jean, who talked with his mother about every aspect of his life, told her about his being called by God. "When things didn't seem to be okay with me, my mom was always there to give me comfort, support and love. Whenever I was thrown into a valley of confusion and doubt, my mom was the one to bring me certitude and hope. She helped me identify the right voice, which was God's voice. It was God's voice telling me, "Don't be afraid. Come and follow me."

Father Jean admits that his own lack of confidence in himself led to him resisting or denying God's call. "I did not think I had the gifts I would need in order to serve God as a priest. I felt too young, too weak, and lacked the proper knowledge. However, in 2 Corinthians 12:9, I learned to be more comfortable in my poverty; reassured that there was power in weakness. Paul the Apostle, in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 1:26-31) shows it clearly: "God chooses the poor, the weak, those who are considered nothing to shame the proud and strong." I learned that it is our life in Jesus Christ that matters. We should boast of Him, not of ourselves. I realized when the Lord chooses the weak, He would supply what is necessary in order to fulfill the work that He wants done. By accepting to work in God's vineyard, and by saying, "Yes" to His call. He led me down the right path."

It was at this point that Fr. Jean dedicated his life to serving the Lord by attending daily Masses and by receiving the Eucharist every morning. "I think it was due to my regular attendance at this banquet of Jesus that personally spared me the usual moral agonies of my teenage years. Out of my own experiences I had become a staunch advocate of the Bread of Life and a firm believer in grace. I was a teen embattled and battling for Christianity, always ready and eager for a little verbal infighting in defense of my faith."

A line from the poet Goethe played a big part in Father Jean's journey into priest hood. Goethe wrote, "All human longing is really longing for God." Fr. Jean explained that the human heart is "frail and painfully empty until it held God's presence." While Father Jean's childhood faith was largely an echo of his mother, it was God who was calling him as a young adult. "I felt the ever gentle touch of God, like a soft hand caressing the face of my soul," he says. "God had touched me and the first inklings of my own faith and the first desires for God were being formed in me. There was also a sense of God's nearness that stirred in me when I was in sacred places like churches, temples, and perpetual adoration. It was imperative that God was everywhere watching me and that I had to behave."

Fr. Jean felt entering the service of God as a seminarian was the right thing to do despite the doubts of his friends who thought he would be pouring his life and talents down a useless drain. He entered the Novitiate in 1989 under the sponsorship of the Holy Order. He pronounced his first temporary vows in August of 1990 and integrally became a religious member for the next seven years.

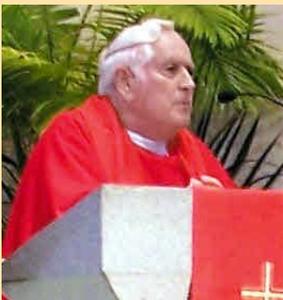
In 1996 Fr. Jean decided to leave the Order. "I left that Order because it did not correspond to my understanding of God's call," he explained. "My life was completely turned upside-down and I was not sure what I would do or where I would go next. There was an echo that kept echoing in my ear: "Should I join the Church in the United States or should I look for a beautiful woman and get married?"

Fr. Jean decided to leave the Church for what turned out to be a two-year stretch. Then, in August of 1998 he was accepted as a seminarian by the Diocese of Orlando, entering the St. John Vianney Seminary so that he could complete his undergraduate degree. "It was really a blessing," he said. "In May of 2000 I received my undergraduate degree in philosophy at St. John Vianney College Seminary before entering St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary in September of 2000. I spent the next three years completing my theological formation. On May 8, 2003, the Bishop of Orlando, Norbert M. Dorsey, CP, called me to order and I became a transitional deacon. On May 28, 2004 I was ordained a priest.

Fr. Jean's journey and his first assignment as a priest took him to St. Joseph's Church in Palm Bay. He stayed there for a little over three years before being transferred to Blessed Trinity in Ocala. Fr. Jean remained at Blessed Trinity for just over two years before getting what he terms as a "surprise call" from Bishop Wenske telling him he was taking over St. Faustina Parish with the mission of building a church. "St. Faustina in itself is really a challenge for me as a new Pastor," explains Fr. Jean. "My biggest challenge is to unite the people and see that everyone works together even though they come from different family backgrounds with different tempers and ideologies."

### Fr. Kevin MacGabhann

Retired Priest



Fr. Kevin was born of the late Seamus MacGabhann & Evelyn Burn in Dublin, Ireland.

He was ordained on June 13, 1963 at St. John's Cathedral in Waterford, Ireland. He came to the USA where he served as a priest in the Diocese of Palm Beach, Florida. He served there for many years before he retired around 2001. He is now residing in Dunnellon and has been assisting the parish of St. John the Baptist with the liturgy celebrations since 2004.

Fr. Kevin introduced St. John's with the very first Variety Show "Gales of Laughter" in April 2005, where parishioners enjoy an evening of laughter, music, dance and the company of friends. It is proudly produced, directed and cast by St. John's own parishioners! The show has been a tradition here ever since.