



Hey everybody, my name is Fr. Tom Skaja, and I will be starting my new assignment as the parochial vicar of this four parish cluster on June 29th. Before I arrive, I would like to offer a few words about myself.

I grew up on a farm just north of Gilman, and my home parish is Annunciation Church in Mayhew Lake. To this day, I'm still a farm kid at heart, and I like to help out my family on the farm from time to time. I'm very thankful for my family, because they taught me at a very young age that Lord Jesus is everything, and we encounter Him most profoundly through the sacraments.

I first heard the call to the priesthood when I was about eight years old or so. The Lord didn't appear to me in a vision, nor did I hear a loud voice from heaven. Rather it was a gentle whisper, like the Lord was saying, "Be a priest." To this day, I still remember the peace I felt in hearing that call even at such a young age. In high school, I started looking into careers that helped people, like being in healthcare or even law enforcement. But wherever I looked, the whisper always came back to me, "Be a priest."

Eventually, during my senior year of high school, I discerned that it was time to enter the seminary. After the application process, I entered Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) Seminary in Winona, MN. During these years, I studied philosophy, and after graduating from St. Mary's, I moved on to the Saint Paul Seminary (SPS) in St. Paul, where I studied theology for four years. I was ordained a priest on June 6, 2020, and I have been serving the parishes of St. Michael in St. Cloud and St. Joseph in Waite Park since then.

With all that said, I'm really looking forward to serving you as a priest in the northern part of the diocese. I'm a big fan of the outdoors, so don't be afraid to give me a holler if you know any fishing hotspots! Please keep Fr. George and I in prayer as we begin ministry together in just a few days.

Peace,

Fr. Tom