



Society of the Divine Savior
SALVATORIANS

Apostles for our times.

BROTHER, WHAT A LIFE

Bro. John Hauenstein, SDS

A school fair planted the seed for boys in 7th and 8th grade to consider a vocation. John Hauenstein, now Bro. John, SDS, was there and became interested in the priesthood. The people in his life supported him but also encouraged him to finish high school first, rather than going straight to minor seminary from junior high. So, he did.

His passion for music and the organ drew him to his church choir during those high school years. He met two Polish Salvatorian priests here; one of them was Fr. Andrew Pitlok, SDS. "I can't remember how I happened to meet them, but they made an impression," he said. "It was Fr. Andrew who told me he had it all mapped out for me...he was right."

Religious formation included a year of service within a Salvatorian ministry. Bro. John was assigned to a second-grade classroom in Alabama. Ultimately, he obtained his master's degree in early childhood education. Opportunities to engage more fully with religious communities were plentiful. And in time, Bro. John recognized that devotion to the priesthood wasn't his calling, but that life as a religious brother felt right.

Bro. John had spent more than two decades teaching primary grades in Alabama schools when he was asked to come to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to minister to the elderly. Initially, he hesitated because so much of his ministry had been with little ones. "I didn't feel equipped to minister to the elderly," he said. "But God had a better idea."

Bro. John began taking Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) classes to help him in his healthcare giver ministry. He eventually moved to Alexian Village in Milwaukee, where most of our retired Salvatorian priests and brothers reside. When he began working with the men, he was humbled. However, his goal is to always hear them and be present. "This ministry was just in the wings, waiting for me until I was ready," he said. "I am always learning and supporting the members. Sometimes I need to have difficult health conversations, and I try to be compassionate, kind, and gentle while we talk, always assuring the member any choice in their health care is ultimately their own."

"Thank God I took all of those CAN classes," he said. "I've learned so much from the medical teams and about medicine over the years. As a result, I feel I can serve and be a compassionate and trustworthy advocate for our priests and brothers."

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As a resident at Alexian Village, Bro. John serves as the chapel organist and plays the accordion. He also has the privilege of helping other residents he meets in the elevator, halls, and dining area who need a hand, an ear, or a calming presence.

“My ministry is a joy and where I am meant to serve. I have had the pleasure of serving these men for 26 years!” he reflected. “God has always helped with the biggest challenges. Like giving me enough wisdom and decision-making abilities at critical times.”



Captions (l-r)

a. Bro. John during his early days in Alabama.

b. Talking with Bro. Tom Meyer, SDS who resides at Alexian Village

c. As a resident at Alexian Village, Bro. John also serves as organist for chapel services.