



Society of the Divine Savior
SALVATORIANS

Apostles for our times.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Fr. Joe Jagodensky, SDS



Following twenty-two years as chaplain at Alexian Village of Milwaukee, Fr. Joe Jagodensky, SDS, was temporarily assigned to Queen of Apostles in Pewaukee, Wisconsin. Then, a little more than a year ago, he was asked to serve at St. Catherine of Alexandria in Brown Deer. “The Vicar of Clergy said, ‘I think you know the neighborhood,’” said Fr. Joe. “Since it’s half-mile from Alexian, I replied, I think you’re right.”

Fr. Joe’s predecessor was a lay parish director planning for her retirement in August 2020 after fourteen years. He began a few months early, in June, when the director passed away due to Leukemia. Virus restrictions remained substantial; therefore, a simple funeral for family only was allowed. The parish family missed the opportunity to ritualize their gratitude for her and their grief. Fr. Joe tried his best to maintain a calm, uplifting spirit.

In the year he has been ministering at St. Catherine’s, Fr. Joe has worked to build connections. “Relationships have got to be among the top callings for a Salvatorian,” he said. “They are built, no matter how short the time, and touch people’s lives.”

Fr. Joe attests that it is his writings and sermons that help him develop relationships. “Baked in my head and written at 350 degrees is a mixture of scripture and current affairs, sprinkled with bits of humor to keep their attention. I hope, each time, for a ‘taste and see’ from them and hope their digestion is shared in their relationships during the new week,” he said. Being in one city for a long time allows him to see relationships continue to blossom and expand. For example, years later, the principal of Christ King School told him that he baptized his son at St. Sebastian’s. He says, “It’s the person who stops you at a wedding, recalling a sermon given thirty years ago. It’s the son who contacts me because I buried his grandfather, and his mom just died. And it’s the principal of a school that remembers I baptized his son years ago.”

Relationships make the Body of Christ a living food and proof of Christ among us. All it takes is a listening ear and a hearing heart.

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