



Society of the Divine Savior
SALVATORIANS

Apostles for our times.

EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE WITH GOD

Fr. Peter Schuessler, SDS

Fr. Peter Schuessler, SDS, Vicar Provincial and Director of Formation for our USA Province, recently shared this personal account of his own vocation journey:

I have always thought that the “annunciation” moment of my vocation occurred when I was in Sunday school for kids who went to public school. I had been talking in the back of the room loud enough to disturb Sister. At the end of the class, she called me up front to see her. She told me that I should not talk so much in class. Then she said, “You have the face of a priest.” I guess I have been wondering what the face of a priest looks like ever since.

For me, the call to be a religious priest came at different times and in some unusual ways. The college I attended was non-denominational, so Mass could not be celebrated on campus. One afternoon, I was sitting in the library when a priest, Fr. Mike, assigned by the diocese to serve as chaplain for Catholic students on campus, came up to me and asked if I would help him distribute flyers. Fr. Mike found a local Church close by willing to let us have Mass on Sunday evening, and he wanted to get the word out.

We became good friends, and he was very influential in helping me take a new look at the possibility of the priesthood. After college, I worked for a drug rehabilitation center in New York City. I hadn’t given up the priesthood idea, but I felt I needed some good life experience outside of school and the Church. My experience with the drug program, especially accompanying young people with their struggles, was an important moment in my vocational journey. One of the sayings used in the program was that “we see ourselves best in the eyes of our brothers (and sisters).” In other words, healing came from community support and from oneself. I remember reflecting on how the first thing Jesus did when he began his ministry was to gather a community to himself.

Having read Thomas Merton’s “Seven Story Mountain,” I was initially drawn to the idea of monastic life. During a Trappist monastery retreat in Utah, one of the brothers and I were bagging bread together. It was Lent, and the monastery was on silence for the rest of the afternoon. But, like a pesky mosquito, the desire to talk to this monk and ask a lot of questions about his vocation and life in the monastery just would not go away. That experience contributed to the insight that I probably was not called to the monastic life.

Ultimately, my priest friend from college gave me a brochure from the Salvatorians, a religious community that I was not familiar with. On the cover of the pamphlet was written the words, “Everything is Possible with God.” That did it. I began meeting a group of Salvatorians in

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Maryland, priests and brothers who were down to earth and committed to their work to make Jesus the Savior known, and I was hooked. The rest is history!



Fr. Peter Schuessler, SDS, Vicar Provincial and Director of Formation [2022]



Fr. Mike was a helpful mentor.



Fr. Peter with his first class of Novices



Fr. Peter's early days in Alabama



Fr. Peter as Formation Director, welcoming Ricardo to candidature