

## NEW JESUIT PRIESTS

# 2009 ORDINATION

*We introduce the Jesuits ordained to the priesthood in 2009 with a reflection by Brian Christopher, SJ (page 18), being ordained this summer in Spokane.*

## Claims on My Heart

Over the last twelve years, people have frequently expressed a mix of admiration and pity for the fact that Jesuit formation takes so long. It is the kind of admiration one feels watching someone walk over hot coals: impressive, but a little nuts. To be sure, much about this life is mysterious, so I often rely on stories as the least inadequate way of talking about what Jesuit priesthood means to me.

I spent the summer of 1996—a year before I entered the Jesuits—in the town of El Negrito, Honduras. Since I did not speak a word of Spanish, I spent my time with children in the local nutrition center. The center was filled to capacity with the most severe malnutrition cases: children with bloated bellies and empty stares, many of whom had been abandoned by their families and were essentially dying of poverty. They seemed as starved for affection as they were for food.

On my final day before returning to the United States, I went to the center to say goodbye to the kids and the staff. As I played one last round of tag with the kids, I noticed out of the corner of my eye a little girl sitting in the corner. She had sat there silently all afternoon, but suddenly she began to cry. I walked over, crouched down, and tried to distract her with toys and stuffed animals, but she would not be so easily



distracted. So I bent to pick her up, and as I did she stopped crying. Relieved that her screaming had stopped, I went to put her back down, but as soon as I made a move, she started crying again. Then a light bulb went off: it was as if she—or maybe it was Christ—were saying to me, “Brian, I’m not asking you to save me, I’m not asking you to entertain me, I’m just asking you to hold me.”

And so I did. I wrapped her in my arms and held her close. I could feel her whole body just relax. I fell in love that day “in a quite absolute and final way” with an abandoned and lonely little girl, whose name I never knew, who came from some dusty corner of the middle of nowhere. I did not want to let her go, and I still have not. She continues to make a claim on my heart.

For me, Jesuit priesthood is about allowing my heart to be claimed by those on the margins. It is about speaking the words that Christ longs to speak to a broken, lonely world: “I am with you.” It is about joining Christ in his mission of claiming the nameless, the abandoned, and those judged to be without worth.

This desire brought me to the Jesuits and has been confirmed and deepened through my twelve years of formation, whether working with AIDS shut-ins in Minneapolis, street gangs in Chicago, or homeless men in Boston.



**Fr. John Braverman**, 41, from Independence, Ohio, earned a PhD in biology from the University of California in Davis. He has taught biology at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., and Loyola University Chicago, where he also earned a graduate degree in health care ethics. After ordination, he will study theology at Santa Clara University in California and assist in pastoral ministry. (Maryland Province)



**Fr. Joseph Carver**, 38, from Syracuse, earned a BA in medieval history and theology from Saint Joseph’s University in Philadelphia and an MA in the same subjects from Oxford University. He taught at Jesuit High in Portland and taught philosophy in Colombia, and he has completed several “urban plunge” immersion trips. He hopes to lead retreats and promote ecological spirituality after ordination. (Oregon Province)



**Fr. Brian Christopher**, 34, from St. Louis, earned a BA in Russian and philosophy at Saint Louis University. He did gang ministry in Chicago's public housing projects, studied low-income housing in Camden, New Jersey, led retreats for the homeless, and worked as a mediator in courts and with housing authorities in Massachusetts. After ordination, he will work with street gangs at St. Martin de Porres Parish in Belize City. (Missouri Province)



**Fr. Richard Curry**, 66, from Philadelphia, joined the Jesuits as a brother in 1962. He has a PhD in theater from New York University and founded the National Theatre Workshop of the Handicapped in 1977. He has published books on Jesuit breadmaking and soupmaking, founded a bakery to support people with disabilities, and works with military chaplains on post-traumatic stress syndrome and spirituality. (Maryland Province)



**Fr. Brian Dunkle**, 34, from Freeport, New York, graduated from Harvard University with a bachelor's degree in Classics and earned a master's in Greek and Latin from Oxford University. He worked at Canisius College in Buffalo and St. Aloysius School in the Bronx and taught English to Polish Jesuits in Krakow. He will pursue a PhD in Classics after ordination. (New York Province)



**Fr. Christopher Hadley**, 39, from Seattle, has a bachelor's degree in liberal arts from St. John's College in Annapolis and a master's in education from Seattle University. He taught philosophy for the Service Learning Program at Gonzaga University in Spokane and served as deacon at St. Raphael Church in Medford, Massachusetts. He plans to pursue a PhD in theology after ordination. (Oregon Province)



**Fr. Thomas Kenny**, 36, from Belmont, Massachusetts, has an MA in health care ethics from Loyola University Chicago. He served as chaplain at Cook County Hospital in Chicago and deacon for the immigration and customs enforcement unit at a Suffolk County jail. He has worked with youth groups in the Amazon and at an orphanage in Salvador, Brazil. He will continue studying theology at Boston College this fall. (New England Province)



**Fr. Fernando Álvarez Lara**, 36, from Carmargo, Chihuahua, Mexico, has a BS in engineering from Texas Tech and an MA in philosophy and social sciences from Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores in Guadalajara, Mexico. He taught engineering at Seattle University and led immersion trips to Mexico and Colombia and pilgrimages to Spain and Turkey. He will work in campus ministry at Seattle University in the fall. (Oregon Province)



**Fr. R. Benjamin Osborne**, 34, from Winthrop, Minnesota, has a BA in theology from Marquette University in Milwaukee and a master's in U.S. history from Saint Louis University. He taught Scripture at Creighton Prep in Omaha and to novices in Kohima, India. He also served as spiritual director at a California prison and directed eight-day retreats. He plans to pursue a doctorate in American Catholic history after ordination. (Wisconsin Province)



**Fr. Joseph Riordan**, 33, from Eatontown, New Jersey, has a bachelor's degree in English and Spanish literature from Rutgers University. He taught classical languages and coached baseball at St. Peter's Prep in Jersey City, and he ministered at San Quentin State Prison in California. He will continue theology studies at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome after ordination. (New York Province)



**Fr. Martin Schreiber**, 33, from University Heights, Ohio, has a BS in finance from Miami University in Ohio. He taught theology and coached baseball and soccer at the University of Detroit Jesuit High School and Academy. He has led students on immersion trips to Haiti, worked in a Kenyan orphanage for HIV-positive children, and taught religion to orphans in Honduras. He will begin working on a PhD in education this fall. (Detroit Province)



**Fr. Dat Tran**, 41, from Saigon, has a master's degree in engineering from Portland State University and taught electrical and computer engineering at Seattle University. He has worked with the Jesuit Refugee Service in Thailand and coordinated the catechism program at Christ the Light Parish in Oakland, California. After ordination he will teach engineering at Gonzaga University in Spokane. (Oregon Province)



**Fr. Quan Tran**, 41, from Saigon, earned a degree in microbiology from the University of Washington. He taught at Jesuit High School in Portland and led students on a mission trip to rebuild houses in New Orleans, and he completed a clinical pastoral education program at Veterans Hospital in Seattle. After ordination he will work in campus ministry at Gonzaga University in Spokane. (Oregon Province)



**Fr. Matthew Walsh**, 37, from Prudenville, Michigan, studied humanities at Creighton University and earned an MA in philosophy from Loyola University Chicago. He taught religion at Red Cloud High School in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, worked with the homeless in San Francisco, and volunteered at Cristo Rey Jesuit High in Chicago. He plans to work in pastoral ministry and spiritual direction after ordination. (Wisconsin Province)



**Fr. Eric Watson**, 43, from Ashland, Oregon, earned a PhD in chemistry from Brown University. His other academic interests include English literature and art; he has studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and taught English to Jesuits in Poland. He directed eight-day retreats in Los Altos, California, and ministered on the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana. He will teach chemistry at Seattle University after ordination. (Oregon Province)



**Fr. Cyril Whitaker**, 52, from Cincinnati, has degrees in Classics, philosophy, education, and French from Xavier University in Cincinnati. He taught Classics and philosophy at Xavier and journeyed to Vietnam to teach English to seminarians, and he served at St. Paul Parish in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He will assist at St. Xavier Parish in Cincinnati and continue teaching after ordination. (Chicago Province)

# ORDINATION



IMAGES OF HAITIAN METAL ART  
COURTESY OF BEYOND BORDERS  
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