

The "call" to the priesthood varies from one to the next. Some men distinctly recall hearing God speak to them. Others remember feeling a tug deep within their hearts. Still, others remember first considering the priesthood because of the encouragement of family or friends. For our new pastor, Fr. Kenneth Kuntz, he remembers first considering the priesthood as a teenager, while working in the family barn with his father.



*Fr. Kenneth Kuntz*

"We were in the barn doing chores after one of my relatives had just been ordained and had celebrated his first Mass," Fr. Ken recalls. "My dad asked me if I had ever thought about the priesthood, and I said no – but something inside me clicked that said maybe I should think about it a little more."

That one thought led Fr. Ken to explore the calling soon after high school, when he attended St. Ambrose Seminary. After additional formation in Minnesota, he was ordained in Davenport in May 1977. Before joining our faith community, Fr. Ken served at five other parishes – including his most recent assignment, St. Mary in Iowa City, where he had been pastor for the last 16 years.

While the life of a pastor is obviously incredibly busy, it still suits Fr. Ken's personality, he says.

"I like the variety of it – celebrating the liturgy, hearing confessions, working with young people – I like it all, because it's not the same thing over and over again," he says. "My job description covers 50 or 60 things, which makes each day exciting because you've got so many different things to do."

Because of those "50 or 60 things," Fr. Ken recognizes that the contributions of the parish staff and parishioners are essential to a vibrant parish.



*Fr. Joseph Nguyen*

"There aren't enough hours in the day for me to do everything, so I really do have to rely a lot on other people," he says. "I really believe in collaborative ministry, because everybody has certain strengths and weaknesses."

Father mentions computers in particular as an area where he often depends on others' expertise for help.

"My dad was a carpenter and a farmer, and there wasn't anything that he couldn't fix or operate," Fr. Ken says. "Unfortunately I did not inherit that aptitude, so I often have to ask for help!"

While he works hard as a pastor, Fr. Ken also enjoys getting to take a break at the end of the day.

"I've been blessed with a good appetite," he says, with a laugh. "I enjoy going out to eat, and I've already seen that Clinton has some fun places to eat – and I understand that there are a lot of good cooks in Clinton!"

Before coming to Prince of Peace this month, Fr. Ken already had a glimpse of the faith life here when he visited last year.

"I am very impressed with the spirit of faith and charity that exists at Prince of Peace," he says. "I attended the dedication Mass of the new church a little over a year ago, and was amazed at the sense of excitement and joy that was so evident within the community. Having an awareness of church as family is something I certainly hope to foster and promote as pastor."

While Fr. Ken is working on his 34th year as a priest, our new parochial vicar, Fr. Joseph Nguyen, was hardly ordained 34 days ago.

A Vietnam native, Fr. Joseph made his way to Clinton via the Philippines. As a master's student in Economics in the Philippines, he met several missionary priests, who convinced him to consider a priestly

vocation. He began formation there, completing the required four years of Philosophy, and through those priests was introduced to the Diocese of Davenport. Fr. Joseph moved to the U.S. in 2005, and recently finished his formation at Mundelein Seminary, near Chicago.

“There were many difficulties and challenges on my way to the priesthood, but God never forgot me; He always gave me enough grace to overcome them,” Fr. Joseph says.

Fr. Joseph says his favorite part of being a priest is having the privilege of celebrating the sacraments. But like the rest of us, when he gets a bit of time to himself, he has his own pleasures: playing golf, and watching the Discovery Channel.

“My strengths are that I love to be with people, and I love to be a man for everyone who is in need,” Fr. Joseph says. “As a priest, this is the best opportunity for me to show God to other people, and to bring people closer to God.”