

# Future priest hopes to offer 'authentic witness' to Gospel

*Editor's note: This is the second of three profiles of men who are on schedule to be ordained priests of the Archdiocese of Baltimore in June.*

After 12 years of public schooling, the decision to attend Mount St. Mary's University proved life-changing for Deacon Matthew T. Himes.

"I had not at that time really owned my faith and developed a very deep personal relationship with God," said Deacon Himes, a graduate of Perry Hall High School. "It's not that nothing existed before, it's just that I hadn't committed to or owned my faith."

He formed a bond with a small group of students – some solid in their faith and others looking for answers – who attended a Kairos retreat in the spring of freshman year.

"It was a time for self-examination and a time for developing a closer relationship with Jesus, but also engaging with exploring the life of the church," he said. "I began to look at things in a different way. ... I was really seeking for that deeper relationship with Christ and the church."

A mission trip to Appalachia with the Glenmary Home Missioners and multiple summers volunteering with Camp GLOW helped solidify his desire to reach others.

"I had to really move beyond my comfort zone and understand the reality of people's lives and the reality of their need for love and, ultimately, their desire for God," he said.

One evening when praying in the Mount chapel, he said, priesthood was "was placed in my heart and in my mind."

"It was spoken with peace and with love and I truly believe that this was the Lord placing this in my heart," Deacon Himes recalled.

Father Brian Nolan, then-chaplain of the Mount, was instrumental in helping Deacon Himes learn more about the commitment involved.

After graduating in 2011 with his bachelor's degree in elementary and special education, Deacon Himes entered the Urban Catholic Teacher Corps in Boston. For two years, while pursuing a master's degree in education from Boston College, he taught fourth grade at a Catholic school in the city.

"I began to feel more and more of a desire to not only minister to the students in the classroom, but ... to give of my life to their families and to the church and to minister to people and to draw them closer to Jesus," Deacon Himes said. "I believe that this desire was the Lord calling me into the priesthood."

He entered St. Mary's Seminary in 2013. His pastoral assignments included St. Mark in Fallston, where he shared a wing of the rectory with Father William Foley, who works in the office of pastoral service for retired priests.

"He has a great love for ministering to people," said Father Foley, who will vest Deacon Himes at his ordination. "He doesn't look at people's age - he relates well across the board to people of all ages. ... He's got all of the makings and qualities of a good priest."

Deacon Himes enjoys traveling, photography, drawing, outdoor activities and movies. "Toy Story 4," the latest installment of his favorite movie series, is set to release June 21, the night before his ordination - and he might even try to catch a midnight showing.

What he desires most is to bring people closer to Jesus.

"I deeply desire to be an authentic witness to the Gospel and show others and guide others to understand that the church helps us be the authentic witness," Deacon Himes said. "I also think there is a deep crisis of isolation and I desire to accompany people and help them see that they're not alone in their struggles, and in their weaknesses, and in their joys, and that the Lord is always with them."

# ***Deacon Matthew T. Himes***

***Age:*** 29

***Sponsoring Parish:*** St. Isaac Jogues, Carney

***Family:*** Son of Tom and Betty Himes; one younger sister, Rebecca

***Education:*** Bachelor's degree in elementary and special education, Mount St. Mary's University, Emmitsburg; master's degree in education from Boston College; St. Mary's Seminary, Roland Park

***Pastoral assignments:*** Missionaries of Charity Gift of Hope, Baltimore; St. Clare, Essex; St. Ambrose, Park Heights; Spanish Immersion in Mexico City; Bon Secours Hospital, Baltimore; St. Mark, Fallston; Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, Homeland; Sacred Heart, Glyndon

*Also see:*

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