

So here we are! After 30 years of priesthood, I'm finally up north! Any further up north, and I wouldn't be in the Diocese of Green Bay.

A little about myself: I was born in Green Bay WI to Joe and Nancy Dorner. They celebrated 60 years of marriage this past November. I have four younger sisters, three brothers-in-law and 13 nieces and nephews. They all live in Wisconsin, with the exception a one sister and her family being in the Twin cities.

I grew up east of Green Bay, in Kewaunee County, directly under Door County, in a town called Pilsen. Our parish was St. Joseph's, a community of around 250 families. There, I was baptized, received my first communion, was confirmed, and celebrated my first Mass. Pilsen is a very special place to me. For 43 years, my parents ran Pilsen Service and Body Shop, serving Pilsen and the surrounding communities. We had customers from Luxemburg, where I went to High school, Kewaunee, Denmark, and of course Green Bay.

I discerned the call to priesthood my sophomore year of High school. That is a whole other story. But I can say this much: from as far back as I can remember, for me, God was never an idea, or a question, or someone who

might exist. I felt his presence and his love from a very young age. I want to share this friendship and his teachings with you the best I can, because I think it makes all the difference. We are not alone here and there is an eternity of joy and peace for those of us who accept his invitation to live as his children.

While very young, I consumed all the little booklets and pamphlets in the back of Church. (In fact, I still have one of them in my office after all these years.)

Bishop Maida sent me for my studies and formation to St. John Vianney Seminary, part of the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul MN. I graduated in 1990 with a degree in Philosophy, History and Latin. Then Bishop sent me to Rome where I studied with the Dominicans. I graduated with an M.A. in Theology and was ordained July 8th, 1995, on my 27th birthday. Born and ordained on the same day....I take that as a sign I was born to be a priest.

I enjoy running, biking, canoeing, deer hunting, trap shooting, playing chess, reading and... sharpening knives. How I got into that, is another story, but don't let it scare you.

After being ordained we were asked if we would like an assignment in the north. Evidently, in the 90s they were struggling to find such priests, but I always enjoyed the north. We used to have a cabin in Armstrong Creek. Growing up, that is where we hunted and spent many of our weekends. You see, my Grandpa Dorner did cattle business with the Dudas in Goodman. A friendship was born and they invited our family to join them in the hunt. Fortunately, the Dudas knew how to harvest deer. They were masters at organizing drives. From the stories I heard, and the pictures I saw, in the old days, they always seemed to have 12 deer hanging. By the time I was hunting, the hunting party was smaller, but we still took our share. And a big part of deer hunting, was going to Mass opening weekend at St. Stanislaus in Armstrong Creek, with Fr. Ed Novakowski, God rest his soul. He had a big impact on my vocation to the priesthood. **So when I was asked if I was open to being assigned in the North,** I said yes. As a result, after four years as an assistant in Green Bay, I received my first pastorate in Wausaukee and Amberg. Four years later, I was asked to be pastor at Holy Family in Marinette. 11 years after that, in 2014, Bishop asked me to go south, first to the Cathedral and

St. John's in Green Bay, and these past 6 years at St. Bernadette's in Appleton.

In 30 years of priesthood, I never asked for a specific parish, with one exception. Back in 1999, there were several open listings. I requested Niagara, Pembine and Aurora. The answer was no, but 25 years later here I am. What is the chance of that? All things in God's time, right? I'm really happy to be with you.

Since late April, after my assignment was made public, I've been coming up to meet with leadership and staff, in preparation for the move. I've been very humbled by the warm welcome. With your prayers and support, I hope to be the priest you need, and that we can grow closer to the Lord and experience more deeply the joy, peace, and strength he wishes to share with us.

I hope to meet many of you this coming Wednesday evening at our little meet and greet. There is a sign-up sheet in back. Also, I would love to join you for dinner at your home sometime in the coming months, some Friday or Saturday evening. We will have a sign-up sheet in a week or two. I'm looking for a chance to share a meal in your home, offer a house blessing, get to know you better and hear your perspectives on our parishes and

communities. I hope to get up to speed as fast as possible about our strengths, weaknesses and opportunities as a Christian community being called to Love the lord our God with... and our neighbor as ourselves.

I know you have had your share of challenges in the past few years. **I don't pretend to have all the answers,** but if we pray and work together, I'm confident, with God's help, all will be well.

Our world needs Jesus now more than ever. He has chosen to reveal his face, his love and grace, to this local community, through you and me. There are many lonely hurting people in our corner of the Church of Green Bay. I pray we can come together, and be that icon of his compassion and joy, especially to those who do not yet know him, or have lost their way for a bit.

In closing, I look forward to experiencing and sharing the Good News with you, please God for many years. I look forward to seeing all the miracles, big and small, he is going to work for us. God bless you.