

SOCIETY of OUR LADY
of the Most Holy Trinity

gray
robes

FALL 2021





GRAY ROBES FORMATION PROGRAM

SACRED HEART MAJOR SEMINARY IN DETROIT, MI

Theology III: Br. David Snow (MO)

Theology II: Br. Joseph Spears (KY)

Philosophy I: Br. Gregory Rice (PA)

PERMANENT BROTHERHOOD IN MISSION

Year V

Br. Uriel López (Mexico) - Detroit, MI

Year III

Br. Andrew Rowedder (MD) - Detroit, MI

Year II

Br. Adam Schmitzer (OH) - Detroit, MI

NOVIATE IN CORPUS CHRISTI

Andrew Collart (GA)

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***Whoever serves me must follow me; and
where I am, my servant also will be.***

John 12:26



Dear Friends and Benefactors of SOLT,

It is with great joy that we have returned to the SOLT House of Studies in Detroit to tackle another year of formation. With some prudentially relaxed protocols for Covid-19 in place, this year feels substantially different than last. There is expectation and positivity in the air.

Thankfully, this past summer the brothers were able to once again engage in ministerial work. The blessing of ministry and contact with God's people gives purpose to their studies, which can feel tedious and even test motivation. We are blessed with men who have a love for service, and who are "naturals" when it comes to being conduits of the Lord's grace. When they are given spaces and opportunities to serve, they make it look easy!

Whenever the brothers return from summer ministry, they come back with a renewed spirit. Apostolic works give them plenty to ponder and much to be thankful for. Time with other SOLT members enriches their experience of our community and provides them with different perspectives from the personnel of various generations in SOLT that they encounter.

Added to all that, every summer the Holy Spirit himself prepares unique experiences, challenges, and discoveries for each brother as He continues His delicate, constant, and wise creation of each man into a unique disciple of Jesus to manifest the face of Christ to the world. We pray that the brothers might know in themselves the tender and powerful movement of our Father's mercy as He guides them forward in these formative years.

I hope you enjoy reading about the summer graces as recounted in these pages by our brothers. Thank you for your continued support.

God's blessings to you,



Lights of Faith

Br. Andrew Rowedder, SOLT

This summer, a few other brothers and I were able to see spring begin twice at St. Ann's Parish on the Turtle Mountain Reservation of North Dakota. We witnessed the new shoots and leaves of saplings that literally sprang up from the ground, but we also saw new shoots of life in the volunteers, parishioners, and priests. God is always new.

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5). Before arriving at the mission, I knew very little about it. I had read about some of the great challenges but had also heard how many of our SOLT sisters found their vocations through serving there. It is true, there is much suffering on the reservation, but there are also lights that shine in the darkness.

For instance, the volunteers give time and love from their hearts to the children and families of the community. After speaking briefly with parishioners, it became clear how loved and dear the volunteers were to them, especially those volunteers who remained for a full year.

A light that some might miss is the group of parishioners who attend daily Mass. They are an unseen flame that

keeps the faith alive. I met a patriarch of the community and the parish who moved me with his devotional faith. His love for Our Lady, the Holy Family, and St. Ann were felt in his personal devotions surrounding the Mass and in his leading of the divine praises and rosary each day. Then there was the incredible and loveable man who overcame his addiction to alcohol through prayer. He now helps deliver food during the week to people who are unable to leave their houses. A retired police officer and a community college teacher help at the food distribution center by praying with the people and helping unload, package, and then distribute the food. These are only a few of the many lights which bring hope for those in the darkness.

This place, so tucked away and unseen by the rest of the country, is such a gift to our SOLT community. Getting to go and spend time there with the brothers, priests, volunteers, and people of the Turtle Mountains filled my heart with appreciation for the many hidden gems among our missions. I wish to be able to see them all and look forward to future adventures among them.

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." - John 1:5 ”

Above: Br. Andrew serving in Nuevo Laredo. Br. Andrew with Br. Uriel, Missionary Volunteers, and Sr. Leo in Belcourt, North Dakota.

SOLT

BROTHERS IN FORMATION



BR. DAVID SNOW, SOLT
Theology III
Missouri



BR. JOSEPH SPEARS, SOLT
Theology II
Kentucky



BR. URIEL LÓPEZ, SOLT
Year V Permanent Brotherhood
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BR. ANDREW ROWEDDER, SOLT
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BR. ADAM SCHMITZER, SOLT
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It was certainly a strong faith that I saw in the mission of Nuevo Laredo, the faith of the mustard seed having taken root and grown into the largest of plants



Above: Br. Andrew (left) and Br. Adam (right) preparing a fruit salad with Fr. Tristan Abbot, SOLT, the pastor of Our Lady of Refuge Parish in Nuevo Laredo.

The Mustard Tree

Br. Adam Schmitzer, SOLT

Broken mufflers, bumping music, and ATVs ruling the street; taco stands, front yard BBQs, and lively Spanish chatter; Lions hats, Tigers jerseys, and Pistons fans—OK, it's official, I'm back in Southwest Detroit after a summer visit to our mission in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. Coming back was a considerable change, but my time in Mexico is something I will not soon forget.

Nuevo Laredo is an incredible mission, although certainly not an easy place to live or work on many different levels. It can be crazy hot, poverty is generally present, and the ruling drug cartels are quite visible and sometimes scary—maybe these are a few of the reasons why the faith of many of the people I met there is so alive. The parish and its five mission churches all have busy Masses on the weekends, volunteers give much of their time and energy towards successful feast day celebrations, and a steady flow of adorers come faithfully for their holy hours from early in the morning to late at night.

I also saw this faith in the ministry of door-to-door evangelization with the youth group. At first, I was a little nervous with everything being in Spanish and because of the ever possible “worst case scenarios” that run through your mind with this kind of ministry. However, walking right beside me were young men and women, teenagers, holding their Bibles and more than willing to witness to their faith in God. I was also surprised that most of the people we visited were genuinely interested in talking about God and were quite happy to meet us.

One woman, for example, whose children were mixing with the wrong crowds, found hope at just seeing young people the same age as her children living out their faith in such a committed way. Another finally got an answer to one of her long-held questions about the Mass and was able to reserve a Mass intention for her father who had passed away from Covid. A third had a hard time holding back tears as we prayed together for the healing of some family problems.

It was certainly a strong faith that I saw in the mission of Nuevo Laredo, the faith of the mustard seed having taken root and grown into the largest of plants (cf. Matthew 13:31-32), and I'm very grateful for the opportunity to have been able to rest in its branches for a short while.



Riding the Air Waves

Br. David Snow, SOLT

I had my text in front of me, headphones on, water at the ready, and microphone straight ahead. The technician's fingers behind the glass counted down: five... four... three... two... one... "Today we are very pleased to welcome, on the Radio Family Rosary program, Br. David Snow, SOLT," Dorothy's voice sounded in my ears. After her brief introduction, it was my turn—time to put myself out there for thousands of listeners in Phoenix. Come, Holy Spirit!

Rewind! Back in April, when Fr. Mark told me that I would be spending the summer at Most Holy Trinity, our SOLT parish in Phoenix, Arizona, I wasn't too surprised. Since I had just finished my second year of theology, the seminary had me slated to do a summer parish internship. Most Holy Trinity was an ideal place to get lots of pastoral experience because of all its ministries and activities both in English and Spanish. I had a long list of things to try and do there: serve at weddings, baptisms, and regular Masses; attend RCIA and marriage prep classes; spend time with the youth group and some adult ministry groups; learn about parish administration. Being on the radio wasn't on the list or even on my radar, but God's ways are not my ways (cf. Isaiah 55:8-9).

While in the parish, I had been attending weekly meetings of the Legion of Mary. Each meeting, I would lead the group in their prayers and deliver a brief spiritual reflection. I was humbled when several of the members commented on how much they enjoyed my talks. Little did I know that one of them, Dorothy, had begun the Radio Family Rosary program in Phoenix years ago. One week after the meeting, she approached me and asked if I would be able to record four short reflections for the radio on faith and the nation during the week of July Fourth. My superiors gave me the green light, so I agreed.

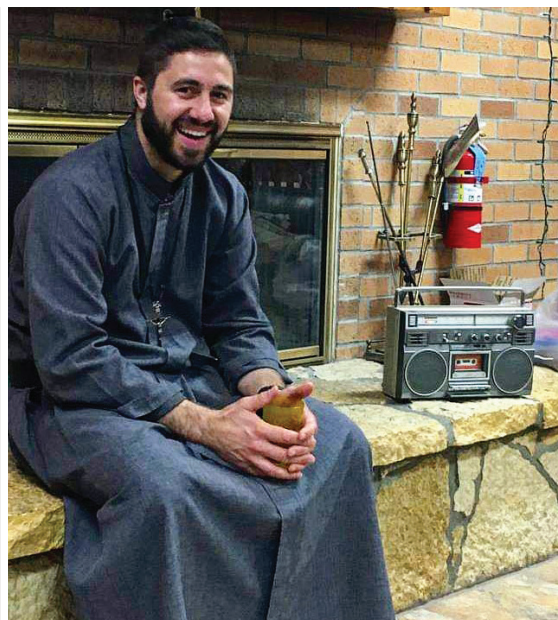


Br. David in the sound booth.

Over the next few weeks, I prayed over, wrote, and practiced my talks until one Wednesday morning I got an unexpected call from Dorothy. The station had half an hour available for us to record that very morning, so we had to strike while the iron was hot! About an hour later, I found myself in front of that microphone, praying to the Holy Spirit. How did it go, you ask? Well, listen for yourself: <http://www.radiofamilyrosary.com/july-2021-broadcasts/> (scroll down to the Week of July 5 module).



Being on the radio wasn't on the list or even on my radar, but God's ways are not my ways .



“What is a Priest?”

Br. Joseph Spears, SOLT

During the summer, I was speaking with a woman and her 7-year-old daughter. The mother told her daughter that I am studying to be a priest. Soon after this, the mother stepped away for a moment. The little girl looked up at me with a wide-eyed expression and asked a simple but profound question, “What is a priest?” To be honest, I felt embarrassed. I knew the mother and the little girl were not Catholic and not practicing any religion, thus any kind of reference to what a priest does would make little or no sense to her. I think I responded by saying something like, “A priest lives at the Church and he offers the Mass, and...” Knowing that I had no real good way to respond to her, I ashamedly changed the topic and left soon after. Since that encounter, I have taken time to reflect on what or who a priest is, along with how to explain it in simpler terms.

What is a priest? In short, a priest is a bridge between earthly things and heavenly things; he mediates between man and God. However, the only one who can truly bridge the gap between man and God is Jesus since He is both human and divine. Thus, a priest participates in the priesthood of Jesus Christ. The priest does this most visibly by offering the Mass in which he, as Christ, intercedes on behalf of the people to God. This is what Christ did for you and me while He was on the cross as the soldiers mocked him. Christ prayed for them, “Father,

forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). In the same fashion, this is what the priest does at Mass, and it flows from his identity as a priest of Jesus Christ.

This summer I was also able to witness the intercession of a priest on behalf of God’s people in another setting outside of the Mass. While I was in North Dakota, the parish received a call of a severe car accident. I decided to go with the priest to pray. Once we arrived, we found out that it was a young woman and her 3-year-old son. They had both just passed away but were still lying in the battered car. I stood and prayed while Fr. Michael prayed the Prayers for the Dead over both of them. In a real way, he was acting out of his priestly identity, interceding and bridging the gap for them between earth and heaven.

Reflecting on the identity of a priest as an intercessor has been extremely valuable but seeing that intercession in action has been even more formidable. It has given me greater confidence and awe in what the action of the priest means, especially at the Mass. Calvary is being re-presented there on the altar. By virtue of baptism, you and I participate in the common priesthood, the priesthood of the faithful. Thus, each Mass is an opportunity to intercede for others by joining our prayers with the ordained priest at the altar.

Above left: Br. Joseph serves at a Eucharistic procession in Belcourt, North Dakota. Above right: Br. Joseph at St. Ann's Mission.



Br. Uriel helps with food distribution in Belcourt, North Dakota.



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Br. Uriel, Br. Joseph and Br. Andrew spent their summer assignment serving with the SOLT Ecclesial Team in Belcourt, North Dakota.

On the front cover: Br. Gregory Rice (center, right) made his first promises with the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity July 11, 2021.



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