



NICHOLAS VANDE HEY

Seminary

Pontifical North American College
00120 Vatican City State, Europe

Mailing Address:

W2541 County Rd JJ
Kaukauna, WI 54130-9329

Year

Configuration III

Parish

Holy Cross Parish,
Kaukauna

Birthday

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Contact

nvandehey@pnac.org

What is the best type of ice cream?

The kind Fr. Mark Mleziva (our vocation director) buys when you are home from seminary because it is free and Wisconsin dairy is the best!

What do you consider to be your greatest personal victory?

While going an entire summer without losing a game of cornhole is a close second, perhaps the greatest personal victory is building authentic friendships. Real friendships that are not just based on convenience are challenging and require work, but they are an incredible gift!

What was the first thing that you learned about Jesus?

"Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so..." I do not remember when I learned this song, but I imagine I learned about Jesus' love for me early in life. The crazy thing is that I am still learning how Jesus loves me and how it impacts my life. His love is personal, immense, and challenging. Every day is an opportunity to encounter His love and grow in friendship with Him.

How have you celebrated this Jubilee Year?

In addition to visiting various jubilee sites in Rome, I also did two longer walking pilgrimages to celebrate the Jubilee Year. The first was in the footsteps of St. Francis de Sales in France and the second was following the life of Bl. James Miller here in Wisconsin. Pilgrimages remind us that we are all on a journey, that our journey has destination, and that destination is heaven! Both in life and on pilgrimage, there are real challenges, but if we walk with Jesus, there is always a reason to hope!

What is your favorite verse from St. Paul's writings?

Romans 8:15 says, "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship, through which we cry, 'Abba, Father!'" No one wants to be a slave or be afraid. Yet, Paul recognizes that there are times when we are afraid and do things we do not want to do: "I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (Rom 7:15). We can all relate to this struggle with sin, but God has given us

the Holy Spirit! Through baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit, we are set free from this slavery to sin so that we can "walk in newness of life" (Rom 6:4). Not only are we able to overcome sin, but we become God's adopted sons and daughters. This is an incredible gift to ponder! We can call God "Father!" When we trust that God is a good Father and we keep running back to Him, we can become truly free from fear!

Which virtue exemplified by St. Paul do you most aspire to?

On the road to Damascus, something happens to St. Paul: he encounters Jesus. After zealously pursuing the Jewish law and persecuting Christians, Paul's zeal is reoriented toward Jesus. He then goes to Arabia, the place where Moses and Elijah encountered God on Mount Sinai, perhaps to pray about this meeting with Jesus. I share this because I believe this encounter and prayer is the foundation of Paul's zeal for the Gospel. His incredible zeal comes from a real conviction that Jesus is the savior. He is so convicted of this truth that he desires to spread it to the whole world. He says in Romans 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith." Paul believes that the Gospel really does have power to transform lives. He desires everyone else to encounter the same love of Christ that he experienced. Because of his zeal, he willingly endures "afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments...hunger" (2 Cor 6:4-5) and yet he rejoices in his weakness because God's "power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9). He is so zealous for the Gospel that no trial or weakness can take away his hope. When I think about my own life, I desire that same zeal for the Gospel rooted in a deep relationship with Jesus. I hope to persevere willingly through any trial, trusting as Paul does that God will always provide.

Which saint should people invoke for your vocation?

St. Therese of Lisieux. Please pray that I might have a priestly heart that is missionary!