

James D. Ciupek was born in Buffalo, New York and raised in Cheektowaga by two wonderful Catholic parents. He grew up with an older brother and two younger sisters and attended grade school at his home parish, Queen of Martyrs. Jim's high school years were spent at Cheektowaga Central High. From there he went to Buffalo State College and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Chemistry. After graduation, he left the Buffalo area to do graduate studies at Purdue University. In 1984, he received a Ph.D. in Chemistry and moved to St. Louis, Missouri to work as a research chemist for Monsanto Company.

He remembers feeling called to the priesthood as early as high school but put off answering the call until much later. While at Purdue University, he found himself becoming more and more involved in his local parish. He became an Extraordinary Minister and taught religious education. When Jim moved to St. Louis to work, he once again became very involved in the parish community.

He decided to look into the possibility of becoming a priest since thoughts of the priesthood seemed to be frequently on his mind. When he discussed this idea with a priest in St. Louis, Jim expressed his struggle with trying to choose between the priesthood and married life, as he couldn't decide which path he should follow. His priest gave him some wonderful advice. He told Jim to pray that one of those choices would grow stronger. He also told Jim that he would know when he had arrived at the plan God had in mind for him when he felt at peace with his decision.

Jim found a spiritual director and frequently spent time praying at the Carmelite Monastery in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. After prayerful consideration, at the age of 33, Jim returned to Buffalo and entered Christ the King Seminary to begin studies for the priesthood. He received a Master of Divinity degree in May of 1996 and was ordained a Transitional Deacon the following June. Along with five other men, he was ordained to the priesthood on May 17, 1997 by Bishop Henry Mansell. Father Jim describes the experience as a time of nervousness and excitement as well as a day of great joy. He spent his first year as a priest at St. Gregory the Great Parish in Williamsville.

In 1998, he was assigned to the position of parochial vicar at SS. Peter and Paul Parish in Hamburg where he spent seven years. In June of 2005, Father Jim became the pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish in Alden. In the fall of 2017, Fr. Jim was assigned to Nativity of Our Lord in Orchard Park where he currently serves as Pastor.

For Father Jim, celebrating the Eucharist as well as helping people become more aware of a sense of God working in their lives are the best aspects of being a priest. The greatest challenge he sees as a priest, and more recently as a pastor, is the inability to meet all the ministerial needs of the people entrusted to his care. There are just not enough hours in the day to accomplish every task and address every concern.

To relieve stress and keep in good shape, Father Jim enjoys running, working out, and an occasional game of golf. On his days off, he spends time with his family.

Overall, Father Jim feels the priesthood is a great opportunity to do something worthwhile with your life as you help people. When working in the corporate world as a chemist, Father Jim wondered how much of a positive contribution he was making in people's lives. He was earning a good salary, but not really feeling fulfilled. Now he has no doubt that he is living the life he was called to live. Father Jim sums it up by saying, "personally, there is nothing else I'd rather do than be a Priest."

(Taken from Diocese of Buffalo website archives with updates added)

