



February 26, 2022

Bishop Ronald Hicks in consultation with the Priest Personnel Board has appointed **Fr. Michael Kearney** to succeed Fr. Don McLaughlin as Pastor of Our Lady of Mercy in Aurora effective July 1, 2022.

Fr. Michael writes: *"I grew up in Naperville, just down the road, since I was four years old. I went to Naperville Central for high school and I can remember coming to play against Waubonsie High School in volleyball. I went to the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana and received my General Engineering degree concentrated in Control Theory Robotics with the hope to go in consulting work after college. God, clearly had a different plan.*

Fr. Michael Kearney

It was in college my love for my Catholic faith grew exponentially and I wanted to share my faith with others. After college I was blessed to do 7 years of college ministry and missionary work with FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students). I worked at Washington University in St. Louis, Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, University of Kansas City in Missouri, and University of Colorado in Boulder!

After hearing the Lord call me to the priesthood through prayer and ministry, I knew the Lord was calling me to serve in the Diocese of Joliet where I grew up! I was ordained a Priest in May of 2016 and was assigned at Visitation Parish in Elmhurst. And after 3 years, I was blessed to be assigned to serve in seminary formation helping young men discern their own vocational calling toward priesthood at St. John Vianney Minor Seminary in St. Paul Minnesota. I currently serve as Formation Advisor and Spiritual Director for men in college seminary, including men from our own diocese.

I'm truly excited to be named by Bishop Ronald Hicks to be your next pastor at Our Lady of Mercy. I know I have many things to learn, but excited to be back in the Diocese and be back in parish life! I joke with my brother priests; I'm being called up from the Minors (as I worked at a minor seminary). Please know of my prayers and I look forward to meeting you in July!"

While I don't know Fr. Michael personally – he is one of our more recently ordained – Fr. James knows him well and assures me that Fr. Michael will make a great pastor for OLM. I ask your prayers for Fr. Michael as OLM will be his first pastorate. I also ask you to give him, as you have given me, your warm enthusiastic welcome and support!

- Fr. Don