



# St. John the Baptist

CATHOLIC CHURCH

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## Fulfilled Through Answering the Call: Fr. Kevin Butler Shares His Vocation Story

Even though our pastor, Fr. Kevin Butler, took different career paths earlier in his career prior to entering the priesthood, the call to serve was always there.

"Working in business, I just wasn't being fulfilled," Fr. Butler says. "I wasn't serving like I wanted to, so that's why I tried to go the education route. But even teaching, there was still a desire to serve at a deeper level. Eventually, I had to trust that our Lord would fulfill that desire at another level if I would give Him my whole heart and my whole life."

Fr. Butler grew up in the Diocese of Rockford in a faith-filled Catholic family. Service was always a part of his life, and he became active in his home parish at a young age.

"My parents were very involved; very dedicated to taking me and my siblings to Mass," he says. "When we got a little older, they required us to join a ministry."



*Fr. Kevin Butler recently celebrated 10 years of serving God and the Church as a priest.*

So, Fr. Butler decided to become an altar server in fifth grade.

"My dad had this idea of having me and my brother learn to altar serve by going to 6:15 a.m. daily Mass," Fr. Butler says, with a chuckle.

In hindsight, it was while serving at Mass that young Fr. Butler first began to be called to the priesthood.

"When I was serving 6:15 Mass, I felt very comfortable in the sanctuary,"

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# St. John the Baptist

## Fulfilled Through Answering the Call *continued from front cover*

Fr. Butler says. “I was drawn in a way to the altar and the ambo, almost like a magnet.”

During his middle and high school years, Fr. Butler was very active in youth group and retreats but not necessarily with a vocation to the priesthood in mind.

“I always had that in my heart as a possibility, but I just wasn’t ready,” Fr. Butler says. “I went to college and I still wasn’t sure if I was called to be married and have a big family, or be a priest.”

Shortly after college while working with a group of people to host a retreat, Fr. Butler began deepening his faith. He started going to daily Mass again and regularly praying the Rosary.

“Something was happening at the Rosary and the Mass,” Fr. Butler says. “I was really drawn to Mary and the Eucharist like never before, in a powerful way.”

He had the opportunity to make a pilgrimage to Medjugorje, as well as to see Pope John Paul II at World Youth Day in Denver.

“I became so rooted in my faith after that, I became unshakable,” Fr. Butler says. “It was another time of conversion in my heart. I felt great love for the Holy Father and the Church.”

At this point, Fr. Butler, who had studied Business Administration, Marketing and Communications in college, and was working in business, realized he was unfulfilled and went back to school to get his master’s degree in Elementary Education and Math. After teaching for a number of years, he found himself still not fully happy and decided to go back to business, working for Motorola.

But through those years, the Lord continued to draw Fr. Butler closer. Father continued attending daily Mass and praying the Rosary, and then began serving at a monthly adoration Holy Hour at his home parish, and getting to know priests in the diocese.

“I finally decided to let go of everything – I just let go and took a chance,” Fr. Butler says. “I



*Fr. Butler first experienced God gently calling him to the priesthood as a young altar server, and now is glad to encourage young people to be open to God’s voice.*

let go of a good job and went to seminary. God saw me through and now I just celebrated my 10-year anniversary of ordination to the priesthood.

“I feel like God was preparing me for this all along,” he continues. “He had me in the world for a while, and my experience working in a cubicle at Motorola or teaching in the schools, my business degree – I’ve used all of that in my priesthood. It wasn’t wasted.”

Fr. Butler’s favorite parts of being a priest include celebrating the sacraments, preaching and spending time serving his parishioners, especially young people and their families. He taught at Catholic high schools for the first seven years of his priesthood before coming to St. John the Baptist, and he continues to be very involved with our Confirmation program and with the YDisciple groups, and training altar servers.

“I have a charism for the young people and I feel very directed to try to form them so they don’t leave the Church after high school – I do everything I can to get them rooted,” says Fr. Butler, who plays

*continued on back cover*

*A Letter From Our Pastor*

## Save Room on Your Busy Schedules for Stewardship

Dear Parishioners,

I don't know about you, but I still get a surge of adrenalin as the beginning of September approaches. Even though I'm no longer in school, I feel a sense of anticipation when I see the shelves filled with brand-new notebooks, composition books, and all the assorted items students use. I'm aware once again of the great hopes, exciting dreams, and good intentions that a new school year holds.

Even for those parishioners not directly involved in school, September marks new beginnings. Labor Day traditionally marks the unofficial end of the summer vacation season, and our calendars may reflect that. Many of you have calendars a lot like mine — they're full year-round with appointments and obligations. But even for us, things get busier in September as various organizations that took a break during summer begin their regular round of meetings again.

Nevertheless, I have a request for you as you fill up your fall schedules. First thing, please put in some time to share the talents God has given you. As you are aware, as Christian disciples — as stewards — we are called to return to God a portion of the Time, Talent, and Treasure He has entrusted to us. We should make our commitments to God when we begin our planning, so that we don't offer Him just the scraps of time and energy left over after everything else.



Make this September the month you make a commitment to sing in the choir, including attending rehearsals. Or begin working with our parish religious education in one way or another. Or volunteer to help in the parish office one morning a week. Or help care for the parish grounds. Or join the Knights of Columbus. Or join a social service ministry. Or... well, you get the idea.

There are many ministries and groups within the parish where you can serve, and you'll find that you receive even as you give. Hardly anyone in the parish can't find at least one activity in which they can participate and which fits their schedule. If you aren't involved, make this September the month to change that.

Thinking about commitments, some people say they don't have Time for prayer. Again, it's a matter of priorities, and I challenge any one of you to demonstrate to me that you can't pray at least one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be during the course of the day. That's at least a beginning.

In Christ,

*Fr. Butler*

Fr. Butler, Pastor

*Many of you have calendars a lot like mine — they're full year-round with appointments and obligations. But even for us, things get busier in September as various organizations that took a break during summer begin their regular round of meetings again.*

# St. John the Baptist

## Questions and Answers About O

Once again, it's time for our Annual Stewardship Renewal. Every year, someone asks, as you may have asked yourself, "Didn't we just have a Stewardship Renewal? Aren't we sufficiently 'renewed' by now?" Yes, we had a Stewardship Renewal last year, and we're going to have one next year, too! This is an annual occurrence – part of the rhythm of parish life at St. John the Baptist. Just as the Church proposes a time of spiritual renewal each Lent, we believe in the importance of a yearly examination of commitment. Is the Lord asking you to give more time, talent, or treasure to our parish this year? The following Q&A about our Stewardship Renewal should help you discern your commitments to St. John the Baptist this year.

*Commitment Weekend is Sept. 30/Oct. 1.  
Don't forget to bring your Commitment  
Card to Mass!*

**I feel like my life is already too full with family obligations and work obligations. I barely even have time to relax. How can I possibly share my time and talents with St. John the Baptist?**

We all have many obligations to our families, jobs, schools, and other endeavors. But we also all have the same number of hours in the day with which to accomplish these things. The issue is not how much time we have, but how we prioritize that time.

Before you fill out your Commitment Card, take some time to reflect on your priorities, and where God fits into your day-to-day life. Remember, living as true stewards of God's gifts involves giving back the first fruits of what He has given to us in thanksgiving, not the "leftovers."

**I am happy with my current level of parish participation. Why do I need to keep filling out a Commitment Card every year?**

As part of the renewal process, it is important that we consider our current level of participation in parish life at St. John the Baptist. Sometimes, the call to

stewardship involves the quality of service in addition to its quantity. In looking through the opportunities for ministry available at the parish, you may find yourself drawn to a new ministry you haven't tried before, or new ways to share of your time with God to enrich and enlighten your prayer life. So, even though your current level of parish participation might not change drastically, the ways in which you participate may evolve as you grow in living the stewardship way of life.

Even if you end up continuing to participate in the exact same ministries as you have in the past, marking and turning in a Commitment Card means you have reviewed your present ministries and recommitted yourself to them.

**I'm not very active in the Church and, frankly, feel like it may be too late to get involved. Why should I fill out a Commitment Card?**

It's never too late to renew your faith life, and filling out a Commitment Card is a simple step through which you can immediately re-enter the life of the parish. Our parish community is not here to judge you, but to welcome and nourish you in your faith journey. Begin by checking the box that says, "Attend weekly Mass and Holy Days of Obligation," and take some time to discern additional ways in which God is calling you from that starting point.

**I'm physically unable to attend Mass or be active in parish life at St. John the Baptist. Is there any reason for me to submit a Commitment Card?**

Of course! Your prayers are just as important to the success of our parish community in carrying out its mission as ministry participation and financial contributions. Take a moment to look over some of the opportunities to spend quiet time with God listed in the "Stewardship of Time" section of the Commitment Card, and take a step towards growing in your relationship with Christ and His Church.

# Our Annual Stewardship Renewal

**I'm reluctant to make a financial pledge for the year in case my circumstances change and I'm unable to fulfill it. Should I?**

Your Commitment Card is not a legally binding contract; it is a pledge of intentions. Make your pledge based on what you are setting out to do to give back to God, and do your best to fulfill that pledge. If your financial circumstances change, your gift will likely change, as well, but it is still important to prioritize God first. Nobody is going to send the bill collector to your house if you can't fulfill your pledge due to a change in your financial situation! But we've all got to start somewhere, and it's important that we begin our commitment by writing down our goals for giving back of our gifts to God.

**I've expressed interest in a ministry in the past through filling out a Commitment Card, but nobody from the parish ever followed up with me about it.**

While we do our best to consistently follow up with everyone who has shown interest in the opportunities for ministry at St. John the Baptist, we are human, and we sometimes fall short in our follow-up. If this has happened to you in the past, we sincerely apologize, and we encourage you to renew your interest in any activities in which you might like to participate by filling out a Commitment Card this year. Every year, we go into the renewal with every intention of making sure that everyone who has expressed interest is contacted with more information, and we will do so again this year.

**I don't agree with everything that goes on at St. John the Baptist. I feel like when I fill out a Commitment Card, it condones the things I disagree with.**

In filling out a Commitment Card, you are not making a pledge between yourself and St. John the Baptist; you are making a pledge between yourself and God. Disagreements occur in life. This is a part of being human, and we respect the opinions of each and every member of our parish family. But it is of utmost importance that each of us fulfills our discipleship of Christ by growing in our relationship with Him and utilizing the gifts He has given us to carry out His mission on Earth, regardless of disagreements or misunderstandings. Beyond helping the parish, filling out a Commitment Card expresses a devotion to spiritual growth and a strong belief in the Catholic faith.



**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST**  
CATHOLIC CHURCH

**2017 Commitment Card**  
My Offering of Time, Talent & Treasure

\_\_\_\_\_  
First & Last Name (One card per family; PRINT PLEASE)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State ZIP

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone (with area code)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

After completion, please bring this card to Mass on **Sept. 30/Oct. 1**, or mail using the envelope provided. Thank you and God bless you!

*Every parish family receives a special "Stewardship Package" in the mail that further explains our parish's vision of stewardship. It includes a booklet that describes every ministry in the parish, as well as your Commitment Card.*

## Chuck and Sandy Durancik Find Blessings in the Midst of Trial: “You Just Have to Have Faith”

We’ve all heard the expression “fair-weather fan,” referring to someone who roots wholeheartedly for a specific sports team — as long as that team is winning. Perhaps just as common as the fair-weather sports fan is the churchgoer who has a “fair-weather faith.” It’s much easier, after all, to believe that there is someone watching out for us when things are going well. It takes a much stronger and richer faith, however, to weather the storms that can come our way in life. And there are few things more inspiring than witnessing our brothers and sisters in Christ who are able to face life’s greatest trials with an unwavering and steadfast faith. In parishioners Chuck and Sandy Durancik, we have an example of such faith-filled people right here at St. John the Baptist.

Both of the Duranciks were raised in strong Catholic families — Chuck in Cicero, Ill., and Sandy in rural Wisconsin. Just a few miles from the dairy farm on which Sandy grew up is the Our Lady of Good Help Shrine, and it has been a long-standing tradition for her family to make pilgrimages to the shrine to pray special intentions for those who are critically ill or injured. Chuck also came from a devout family, and attended his home parish’s grade school as a boy.

The couple met in 1973, when Chuck’s position as a special agent with the Treasury Department in Milwaukee brought him to northeast Wisconsin. Shortly after, Chuck was reassigned to Seattle and Sandy followed him there. The two were married in 1974. When Sandy took a job with a travel agency in Seattle, the newlyweds had little idea that their lives were about to change. Sandy’s supervisor, John — a music minister for a local parish — soon invited the



*Sandy and Chuck Durancik*

Duranciks to attend a seminar on “Life in the Spirit.” The seminar became a conversion experience for both of them, and they began to dive into parish life, attending a weekly prayer group at the home of John and his wife, Jan; helping with the church youth group; and increasing their donations to the parish and charities.

Around the same time that they were beginning to live their faith more actively, the Duranciks also began facing a test of that faith, as their dreams of starting a family had gone unrealized for several years.

“Our friends John and Jan knew of our prayers for children,” Chuck recalls. “Then their teenage son, Rob, attended a teen ‘Life in the Spirit’ seminar and returned to tell his mom, ‘The Duranciks are going to have a baby; I prayed for them at the seminar.’ A month later, we told Jan that we had a surprise, and she told us she already knew, and shared Rob’s story. Our daughter, Jennifer, was born that fall, then Paula two years later, and Steve one and a half years later.”

Over the following years, Chuck’s various assignments for work led the family to move several times. Each time, the Duranciks established themselves in a new parish and stayed deeply involved in church life. It would be the tremendous strength of their personal faith and prayer life — in addition to a supportive parish “family” — that would later help them to weather the greatest storm a parent can face. In 1997, Chuck and Sandy lost their youngest child, Steve, to meningitis during his senior year of high school.

Even in the darkest moments of grief, the Duranciks never questioned or lost faith that God had a plan for their lives.

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## Chuck and Sandy Durancik Find Blessings in the Midst of Trial *continued from page 6*

“A lot of people would say, ‘Aren’t you angry?’ or ‘This should never have happened,’” Sandy remembers. “And I don’t know if it is just because I have a lot of faith, but I never felt that way. I never once asked why it had to be him, or said he was too young. I never had those feelings.

“That hole in your heart is always there,” she continues. “But God showed us in a lot of ways after his death, reasons why he went when he did and as quickly as he did. So, I know that there was a reason, and I wrote down all of those things and I kept reading them, and it reassured me that he had a place to go.”

In 2001, the Duranciks moved to Lake Holiday and became parishioners here at St. John the Baptist. Soon after, Chuck began bookkeeping for the parish, while Sandy worked in the parish office at St. Patrick until her 2011 retirement. In 2016, the couple accompanied Fr. Butler to a stewardship conference in Kansas. Following that experience, Chuck began to ask God for guidance on how to become more prayerful and evangelize more.

As Chuck now remarks: “Be careful what you pray for...” In October 2016, he was diagnosed with tonsil cancer and began chemotherapy treatment followed by radiation. Having to keep his upper body perfectly immobile during radiation, Chuck began bringing a finger rosary to pray with during treatment, while Sandy did the same in the waiting room.

Soon, nurses and staff began to ask them about the rosaries and bringing the couple prayer requests.

“I provided the radiation therapy staff with a supply of finger rosaries and gave Lighthouse CDs to a couple of marginally practicing Catholics,” Chuck says. “This was answered prayer both for how to better pray, and for evangelization by demonstration of faith.

“Recent tests have shown I’m in remission,” he continues. “And I thank God for the many answered prayers. While I wouldn’t recommend this treatment for losing weight, I did lose 40 pounds and have been

taken off my diabetes medication. I guess my attitude is, you just never know what God’s plan is.”

During cancer treatment, Chuck began a new habit that he still continues today by keeping a small notebook in which he records people’s prayer intentions, as well as a list of things he is thankful for. The intentional counting of blessings is something that the Duranciks credit for keeping their faith life so strong in tough times.

Sandy, who has undergone serious medical intervention herself in the form of several brain surgeries, emphasizes the importance of remaining thankful for blessings received, even in the midst of tribulation.

“You’re here and you’re breathing and the sun is shining,” she says. “If you make a list of all the things you’re thankful for, then the list of things to complain about doesn’t seem so big. I think the main thing is to trust, trust, trust. It’s not for us to ask why bad things happen – they just do. You just have to have faith that God takes care of us.”

Looking back on the storms that he and his wife have weathered over the years, Chuck agrees with Sandy that the most important thing in life is keeping the faith that God is always with us.

“As I once heard at a conference, the good news is that God has a plan for your life – the bad news is that it’s not your plan,” Chuck says. “It’s not necessarily an easy road, and there will be hard times. Obviously, He’s not done with us, because we’re still here. Now we just have to listen and discern His will for us.”

Having faced so many trials with such a steadfast faith, the Duranciks feel blessed to continue to pursue God’s will in their lives. Currently, they serve as ushers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, and on the parish’s welcome team for new families. They are energized to see our parish’s growth in the area of stewardship over the past few years, and are thankful for the opportunities they continue to be given to put their faith in action!



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**Return Service Requested**

### Mass Times

Saturdays 5:00 PM  
Sundays 8:00 and 10:30 AM  
Weekdays:  
Tuesdays 6:30 PM  
M, W, Th, F 7:00 AM

### Sacrament of Reconciliation

Tuesdays 5:00 PM  
Saturdays 4:00 PM  
or by appointment

### Adoration

Tuesdays 5-6 PM and  
First Fridays 7:30 AM-9:00 PM with  
Benediction 9:00 PM

## Fulfilled Through Answering the Call *continued from page 2*

basketball, paintball and laser tag with the teens, as well as regularly offering them opportunities to meet Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration and the Sacrament of Confession.

Fr. Butler also finds himself very fulfilled in the role of “spiritual fatherhood,” caring for the needs of his parishioners.

“I look at the parishioners as my spiritual children and I really try to be a spiritual father to them,” Fr. Butler says. “I had a strong desire in my heart to help and serve others and a strong desire to pass on the faith, so I love being able to do that.”

The answer to Father’s deep desire to live a life of service to others is being fulfilled in God’s call, to serve the Church and the world as His priest.

“It all comes back to serving and being there for people,” Fr. Butler says. “The whole priesthood

is about serving others. I love the ways Jesus works through me.”

Fr. Butler encourages those who may be considering a call to serve God as a priest to be open to hearing the Lord’s voice. He suggests that prioritizing prayer, daily Mass, the Rosary, attending spiritual retreats, and becoming more involved in the parish as good ways to start.

“It’s hard in our world – there is so much noise, it’s hard to hear His voice,” Fr. Butler says. “But when God calls you, He repeats it. Try to listen to what Jesus might be trying to tell you.

“It takes courage – don’t be afraid!” he adds. “God still calls today, and if He’s calling you, there’s nothing else that will make you happier, more fulfilled, more joyful.”

*Visit [www.rockforddiocese.org/vocations](http://www.rockforddiocese.org/vocations) to learn more about discerning a vocation.*