

Father Jim was born on September 10, 1962. His parents are Chet and Dolores Smalarz. He has one older brother, Tim. Father Jim was raised in Dearborn Heights, where his parents still live, and attended Our Lady of Grace School, Dearborn Heights. He graduated from Dearborn High School in 1981 and went on to complete two years at Henry Ford Community College. Father Jim transferred to the University of Michigan, Dearborn and earned a Bachelor degree in Business Administration in 1986. For the next twelve years he held positions in banking and the auto industry.

In the mid 90's Father Jim became actively involved in his home parish, Church of the Divine Child, Dearborn where he spent time thinking and praying about the priesthood and gathering information. In 1998 he made the decision to enter Sacred Heart Major Seminary to find out for certain if priesthood was the life to which he was called. His family and friends were encouraging and happy to support Jim as he responded to God's grace in his life.

After six years of prayer, study and discernment at the Sacred Heart Seminary, Father James Smalarz was ordained to priesthood for the Archdiocese of Detroit at the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Detroit on May 29, 2004.

Since his ordination, Father Smalarz served as pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish, Monroe; pastor of St. Christopher Parish, Detroit and associate pastor at the National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica, Royal Oak and associate pastor at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish, Farmington. Father Jim was assigned pastor of Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Parish effective July 1, 2017.

Father Jim welcomes involvement from the parishioners at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Parish and School and is happy to see the many ways a parish and school can flourish when parishioners use their gifts and talents to serve their parish and school in thanksgiving to God for the many graces and blessings they have received. Father Smalarz enjoys participating in the life of a parish school where he can be present to students as he helps them gain an awareness of God's presence in their lives.

In the Mosaic, a publication of Sacred Heart Major Seminary Fr. Jim writes, *"I love being a priest not just for two or three specific reasons. I love being a priest because priesthood is the right fit for me. I experience a sense of fulfillment as a priest by participating in the lives of parishioners and their families using the unique set of gifts and talents with which God has blessed me. In celebrating the sacraments of the Church as well as presiding at Mass, I derive great satisfaction in assisting parishioners with understanding the relevance of the Catholic faith for their lives in the twenty-first century. I am grateful for the many opportunities God has provided me with not only to be the vessel by which God offers his grace and love to mankind, but also for the incredible experiences I've had of receiving his grace and love through the many wonderful people God has called me to serve."*

For anyone who thinks they might be interested in becoming a priest, Father Jim says *"All of us*

*are called to serve God. As I acquired a greater awareness of God's presence in my life, I came to recognize God's call to serve Him as a priest. For those who are thinking of becoming a priest I would encourage them to pray regularly and talk with priests who can offer them direction and advice."*