

Ripple Effect

Winning an eighth grade catechism Sunday quiz contest earned him a trip to St. Nazianz in Wisconsin and an introduction to the Salvatorian priests and brothers ministering there. "It was a welcoming and inspiring visit," said Fr. Al Wagner SDS. "Of course, I was just a kid but it opened a new way of life for me and widened my perspective of the world. I returned during Christmas vacation that same year." The rest is history.

Through the years, Fr. Al has ministered cross-country from Washington DC to California and a little in between. He embraced cultural, religious and racial diversity with each new assignment; from parish to campus ministry, youth ministry, and hospital and assisted living chaplaincies.

"No matter who you are, change is hard – you lose a bit of control. Yet with each move I've made, my ministry evolved, and that's a good thing," said Fr. Al. "New experiences; uncomfortable at first, always blossomed into something amazing."

Recently assigned as Chaplain for St. Anne's Salvatorian Center in Milwaukee, Wis., Fr. Al is now connecting with seniors who are dealing with the emotions, fears, and reality of circumstances due to advancing age and needing assisted living support. He has found that using his own experience of upheaval and re-adjusting each time he was asked to consider another ministry, has had significance for many that he visits with at St. Anne's.

"Salvatorians along the way have encouraged me to be open to opportunities where God is present and see how things evolve. Life as a Salvatorian has been an ongoing discernment process for me," he said. "I'm grateful for being exposed to a vast diversity of people. It's helped me see how interactions can change perspective and how that perspective can open the eyes of others to embrace inclusivity and a sense of belonging."

"It's not about MY ministry, it is about what ministry really is and what it means to the people we encounter," he said. "It's Fr. Jordan's mission for us...to proclaim the love of God 'through all ways and means.'"

[Photo C: Caption]

Fr. Al Wagner SDS, ministers to residents and family's at St. Anne's.

[Photo D: no additional Caption]