

STA *in touch*

SUMMER 2014

PRIEST DISCERNMENT GROUP

As a freshman at Iowa State University, Jon Schmeckel was drawn to daily Mass. Fr. Jon Seda noticed and asked him whether he had ever considered the priesthood. Because a few priests had asked him the same question in high school, Jon Schmeckel took the question seriously. "It was clear that I should give God the chance at least to hear about it." He started attending the Priest Discernment Group (PDG), which Fr. Jon started in 1990 when he was at STA the first time. Fr. Jon continued the group when he was reassigned to STA and there are now 20 - 23 men who meet regularly.

The PDG meets at Fr. Jon's home four times each semester after the 7 pm Sunday night Mass. They pray and discuss readings and then at 9:30 pm "pizza magically arrives." Fr. Jon says that during the meal some of the best conversations happen.

In addition to making connections to other like-minded men, the group has also taken road trips to seminaries. "There is only so much discernment they can do here. It's helpful for them to go to a seminary and see if they can visualize themselves there," Fr. Jon explains.

Fr. Jon says the goal of the PDG is, "to let them figure it out themselves." He has

two rules: "Commitment that they come and confidentiality. I ask that they don't mention who else is in the group."

Jon Schmeckel has been open about his choice to not only belong to the discernment group but also that he is heading to the St. Francis de Sales Seminary in St. Francis, Wisconsin in August. He says the PDG has been a great help. "It gives you faces you can relate with. You see people at Mass or on campus and it helps me recognize other men who are also thinking of becoming a priest. It takes away the feeling that I'm doing this on my own."

Another influence on Jon Schmeckel's faith was his grandmother, Monica, a practicing Catholic. Her husband had Parkinson's disease and Jon watched her care for his daily needs and knew that although it was not fun, there was something more. It required a special kind of love.

"In terms of the secular world, the idea of the priesthood seems silly. But in terms of God, then it seems like a love affair, which is something everyone is seeking - to love someone who loves them back," Jon Schmeckel says.

Five men from the PDG are entering the seminary this fall.



Jon Schmeckel

St. Thomas Aquinas Church and Catholic Student Center

✦ Gathered ✦ Transformed ✦ Sent

FRIENDS AND ALUMNI NEWS

Bundle of Joy!

Corey ('03) and Dana ('02) Dreckman welcomed Annie Lucia Dreckman on December 29, 2013. She is joined by her two sisters, Maddie, 6 and Giana, 4. Dreckman's now live in Jacksonville, Florida.



Jacob Brancaleon (former ISU student) is planning to enter the Trappist Monastery near Dubuque after he graduates from Loras College this summer. However, first he is spending three weeks in India doing mission work with FOCUS - Fellowship of Catholic University Students. While in India he and others will be working with the Missionaries of Charity, the order Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta founded.

ISU Women's Golf Coach and STA parishioner, **Christie Marten's** golf team headed to the NCAA Championship in Tulsa, Oklahoma this May for the first time in the history of ISU women's golf. The team placed 23rd and Junior Chonlada Chayanun earned a 7th place ranking.



Annette White lived in Ames for nine years but never saw the poverty around her. A 2013 ISU graduate in biology, with a minor in Spanish, Annette is now the manager of the nonprofit Primary HealthCare Clinic

in Ames. "I didn't realize how much of a need there was for people who don't have access to medical care," she said. The clinic will serve anyone whether they have insurance or not. The Ames clinic is funded by a government grant and currently sees about 65 patients each week.

Annette says she is using skills she honed while leading a group of STA students to our sister parish in Honduras. "The trip to Honduras really helped me develop leadership skills. I had to plan the trip, manage the budget and schedule and lead meetings. I was also working with the poor, so there are similarities to what I'm doing now." She's put her Spanish to good use, interpreting for the large Hispanic population in Ames.

She's learning more about herself in the process of serving the diverse group of clients. And striving to serve with compassion and integrity.

STA in touch is the alumni newsletter for St. Thomas Aquinas Church and Catholic Student Center. Writer and editor Clare Bills is the Coordinator of Ministries. If you have information to share in the next issue, please contact Clare by mail: 2210 Lincoln Way, Ames, IA 50014 or phone: 515-292-3810 or email: clare@staparish.net.

Look for current and past issues online at: www.staparish.net - under "Resources."

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FROM THE PADRE'S DESK



Many of our alums will have fond, or at least sort of fond, memories of studying in our STA library. This summer, our librarian for the last 31 years, Anne Recker, is retiring. This makes her the second longest serving staff person in our history, but still falls short of Fr. Supple's 49 years of service to STA. A resident parishioner, Libby Franke, will serve as librarian as a volunteer, or better put, as a disciple. Thank you to both Anne and Libby.

If you have not been to campustown recently, it sure looks different. Most of the buildings between STA and Welch Ave are now torn down to make way for new apartments and retail space. ISU is also planning to add 700 beds just east of Buchanan Hall. So in a couple of years, over 1000 more students will be living within a couple of blocks of STA, which I think is great.

This is the summer of weddings for me, with 14 in a row, mostly of alums who want to begin their marriage in a church that they feel close to. With so many couples, I am thinking of having them wear name tags during the wedding so I don't get the wrong name for the vows. It is beautiful to see so many couples begin their life together at STA.

Have a great summer y'all, and thanks for STA-ing in touch.

Father Jon Seda

Bookmark



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ISU Grad Serves at Vatican Chrism Mass

Former STA parishioner, Jeff Dole, proclaimed the Gospel for the annual Vatican Chrism Mass at St. Peter's Basilica April 17, 2014. He was attending the North American College in Rome. He is pictured at right with Pope Francis before the proclamation. (The photo was used with permission from Osservatore Romano.)

Jeff is a 2008 ISU grad from Pella who is a seminarian and will be ordained June 28 for the Archdiocese of Dubuque.

While getting his engineering degree at ISU, he served as the chair of the Campus Ministry Commission. He also completed a 2012 summer internship at St. Cecilia, in Ames, working with the LifeTeen program.



2008 ISU Grad Jeff Dole with Pope Francis in Rome