

## FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



At the beginning of July, we had the joy of hosting three seminarians in our parish. They helped out while they were here, particularly by painting our life-size Nativity figures.

More than one of you was jolted to attention on entering the parking lot and finding the huge figures standing there!

I asked the seminarians if they would share a little of their stories with us. So here is the first installment!

My name is Giovanni Cuzziol, I'm 31 years old, and I'm from Rome, Italy. I'm the first of three, with two sisters after me. My father is a doctor and my mother stays at home. I had a pretty ordinary life, I went to school, graduated high school, and went to college. During college, I was able to work and study at the same time, and eventually I earned a BA in Political Science and International Relations. But I wasn't enough for me. I wanted more for my life and myself. So where to go to find new opportunity for my future? Of course, the United States of America! For some reason, I was always passionate about the USA and my dream was to live and work in this great country. In 2011, I came to this country to continue my education and eventually I graduated from Fairleigh Dickinson University with a MA in Criminal Justice. Also, I applied for a work visa and it was granted to me for one year, renewable.

My lifelong dream and project was almost fulfilled, I just needed a job to ensure my work visa. And I was lucky enough to actually find a job! At that moment, my project was basically fulfilled, my dream for which I fought a lot was realized. Everything perfect. But there was just one, single, problem: I wasn't happy. I had everything that I wanted in my life, and for some reason I was not happy, I felt unsatisfied because something was missing. It was disconcerting to realize that, after all the efforts made to reach that point, my situation was unresolved. I found myself alone, never satisfied, looking for more, for something, and everything seemed almost absurd. But God had mercy of me and came to my help.

I met the Neocatechumenal Way in Bergenfield and by participating in a community, I realized that the missing part was Jesus Christ. My life was absurd and pointless because God was not in the picture. Thanks to the Neocatechumenal Way I started to discover myself, my reality of sinner; I began to realize how enslaved I was to my sins, that deep down I was unable to love anyone except myself. I realized that I always lived my life in a very selfish way, only thinking about myself. Most importantly I discovered the love of God: he never judged me although I lived like a truly pagan. He loved me the way I was: a sinner.

Out of gratitude for the graces that the Lord gave me I'm now in a seminary in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Africa, one of the poorest and dangerous country (just Google it). Besides the amount of uncomfortable situation (no power, no running water, lots of insects, snakes, diseases) and crisis I witness that is possible to live and to experience the providence of God that never abandoned me in these four years in Africa. I'm experiencing that happiness come only by doing the will of God, which for me is to stay in Africa. I just spent two weeks in Our Lady Mother of the Church Parish in Woodcliff Lake and I'm thankful for all the people that I met there. I'll keep all of you in my prayers. Remember to pray for me and the mission in Congo.

*Giovanni*