



The MESSAGE

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Diocesan priests celebrate anniversary Masses

Father Kenneth Betz and Father Eugene Schmitt both celebrated anniversary Masses the weekend of May 31-June 1. Father Betz, top photo, celebrated the 60th anniversary of his priesthood ordination at the 9 a.m. Mass June 1 at St. James Parish in Haubstadt. Father Betz was ordained to the priesthood May 27, 1965. He is the senior parochial vicar at St. James Parish. Father Eugene Schmitt celebrated the 25th anniversary of his priesthood ordination with a Mass May 31 at St. Wendel Parish in St. Wendel. Ordained to the priesthood June 3, 2000, Father Schmitt is the pastor of Sts. Mary and John Parish in Evansville. For stories from the anniversary Masses, go to page 2.

The Message photos
by John Rohlf



Binary sunset, sacred dawn

By DEACON NICK BIEVER
Special to The Message



I didn't grow up dreaming of priesthood. I grew up dreaming about becoming a Jedi from Star Wars. In high school, my life was all about Vanderburgh County 4-H, building computers, playing video games and working shifts at Dairy Queen. By college, I was studying Computer Information Systems at USI and excited about cybersecurity and all things IT. But I felt like Luke Skywalker staring out at the binary sunset — not bored, just sensing something mystical waiting out there. A call I couldn't name yet. And then, it found me.

See [BIEVER](#), page 5

My grandfathers 'set an example of Christian fidelity' to follow

By DEACON KEITH HART
Special to The Message



When I think of priesthood, I tend to think of my grandfathers. My paternal grandfather was a farmer for about 60 years. He would sit in his open-cab Allis-Chalmers tractor tilling, then later air-conditioned International Harvesters, praying the Rosary to pass the time. He was a kind man who prayed for rain and

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Desire for priesthood was 'an ember in my heart'

By DEACON AARON HERRENBRUCK
Special to The Message



I've spent most of my life working really hard to be satisfied.

I am blessed by my family. From the very beginning I was given all that I need. Truly loving parents, an older brother and sister to look up to, and a little brother to look up to me. I have always known what true love feels like, because I had a family that loved me unconditionally. My parents instilled in me the Faith, they taught me that prayer and going to church

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Freedom in binding myself to God

By DEACON CLINT JOHNSON
Special to The Message



I hadn't considered priesthood to be a real option for me until my senior year of college. I didn't have a pull towards it when I was younger but instead always thought I was going to get married because that was the most familiar path to me, so the most certain and predictable. Going to church every Sunday was always a certainty, too, so I continued to do this out of habit even in college, and that's when I had my first big understanding that

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The Most Reverend
Joseph M. Siegel, D.D., STL
Bishop of the Diocese of Evansville
Is pleased to personally invite you to
the rite of Ordination of
DEACON NICK BIEVER
DEACON KEITH HART
DEACON AARON HERRENBRUCK
and
DEACON CLINT JOHNSON
to the
**SACRED ORDER
OF PRIESTHOOD**
Saturday, June 14, 2025
10:00 a.m. CDT
St. Benedict Cathedral
1328 Lincoln Avenue, Evansville, Indiana 47714
If you, your family and friends have never participated in an Ordination Mass, this is a unique opportunity for you. Please join us. All are welcome!