



Fr. Tim Holeda - Catholic Student Union

I arrived in Tallahassee in 1999 to begin my studies at Florida State University. Initially, I visited numerous churches around the area and was seeking a place to call home. My roommate, who was my good friend from high school, began attending the Co-Cathedral of St. Thomas More and got involved with the Catholic Student Union. Eventually, he attended their Fall Retreat that semester, and I saw the incredible impact it had on him when he returned. As he shared about it and I observed the change in his life, it stirred my heart to want to attend a retreat myself in the Spring.

The Lord revealed His presence to me with such intensity during that encounter (with Eucharistic Adoration) that I decided to make Christ the center of my life, become Catholic, and receive the Sacraments on that next Spring retreat. In response to God's grace breaking into my life, I entered the RCIA program the following fall and was fully initiated into the Church (Baptism, Communion, and Confirmation) on April 14th, 2001. I continued to be very involved with the Catholic Student Union as a student leader until I graduated in 2004, and it was during a Spring Break Mission Trip to serve the materially and spiritually poor in Boston, MA, where I realized that I really loved sharing my faith — I experienced such great joy when doing this sort of work! This realization on that unique mission helped me discern a call to the priesthood by steering me in the right direction. I eventually entered the seminary and was ordained a priest on June 4th, 2011 for the mission Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee.

Beyond any doubt, the retreat experience I had in the Spring of 2000 was the decisive moment in my life. It was the weekend I gave my life completely to the Lord, decided to change my life by following Christ as His disciple, and first experienced the inklings of a call to bring the good news to others as a priest. I have greatly encouraged others over the years to attend these retreats with the hope that they may encounter the Lord's love for them, and I currently lead retreats for adults in the

mission Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee while serving at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church and Trinity Catholic School. But my joy doesn't end there — my best friend who initially invited me on one of these retreats was ordained a priest in May 2015! This experience of God's love on retreat not only changed my life but has directly affected the lives of many other people!

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