

TOGETHER

a monthly bulletin insert from the archdiocese

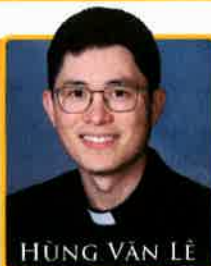


ARCHDIOCESE
of DUBUQUE

Comments regarding this insert may be sent to communications staff by emailing contactus@dbqarch.org or by calling (800) 876-3546 and asking for the director of communications.

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This document is available as a PDF at www.dbqarch.org/together



HUNG VAN LE

The Church of the Archdiocese of Dubuque calls
HUNG VAN LÊ
to be ordained for service
in the Order of the Priesthood.

Ordination Mass • Saturday, May 24 • 10:00 a.m.
Cathedral of St. Raphael • 231 Bluff Street, Dubuque, IA 52001

All are invited! Can't attend in person? Watch live: dbqarch.org/live-broadcasts

Approaching Ordination: An Interview with Deacon Hung Le

By Cassie Bird

In July of 2024, Deacon Hung Le was interviewed about his then-recent ordination to the diaconate. Now, in April 2025, Deacon Hung is approaching ordination to the priesthood on May 24.

Deacon Hung was born and raised in a devout Catholic family in northern Vietnam. After earning a bachelor's degree in religious studies in Ho Chi Minh City, he worked for a year before returning to his hometown. There, he spent four years assisting his pastor, which helped him become familiar with the Church's work and discern his vocation to the priesthood. In 2018, he came to the U.S. to enter priesthood formation. He spent three years in Dubuque learning English and studying Philosophy. For the past four years, he has been studying Theology at Mundelein Seminary in Chicago, Illinois.

Cassie: Deacon Hung, what has your final year of formation looked like?

Deacon Hung: My final year of formation has been a rich blend of practical and spiritual growth. I've been serving in a parish, preaching twice a month at the teaching parish, which has helped me connect theology to real-life ministry. Alongside that, I've continued my theological studies to deepen my

understanding of our faith, paired with focused preparation for priestly ministry through sacrament practicums.

I've also worked on my pastoral skills and leadership abilities, learning from formation sessions at the seminary and the wisdom of trusted priests who've guided me. Above all, I've kept nurturing my human and spiritual formation, knowing that growing in holiness is essential to serve well as a priest.

Cassie: Could you share about any impactful experiences during formation that have shaped how you will approach your ministry?

Deacon Hung: One of the most impactful experiences in my formation has been realizing the need to renew the priesthood, a vital mission for the Church after past challenges. I've seen how a priest's voice and presence in the community are essential. Without that, it's hard for faith to grow strong, since priests lead their parishes like heads of a household. This has made me focus on how I should live my priesthood with authenticity and purpose.

Here in Dubuque, I've also noticed people's faith can feel dormant, longing for connection in a busy, complex world. The Church here has deep knowledge but practices faith humbly, which has inspired me to help awaken that sleeping faith. I want to approach ministry with a

missionary spirit, sharing the Gospel in simple, fresh ways—what I've learned as the new evangelization. It's about meeting people where they are, listening, and adapting to their needs.

Formation has shown me that priesthood isn't about forcing anything—it's about walking with people. I hope to serve humbly, encouraging growth in faith while living a priesthood that rebuilds trust and makes a real difference.

Cassie: How have you felt supported by those surrounding you?

Deacon Hung: As I approach ordination, I feel truly blessed by the support surrounding me. The Archdiocese, under the guidance of the Archbishops [Zinkula and Jackels], has been an incredible sponsor for my education, leading me with care and wisdom. I'm grateful for so many good priests who've prayed for me, taught me, and guided me—helping with everything from small things like using a microwave to understanding the Archdiocese, priesthood, and pastoral life. Their support has made this journey feel possible.

I've also been uplifted by people who've supported me spiritually, emotionally, and financially, especially since I've been far from my family for seven years. Among them, the warm welcome of Vietnamese families and their community has been a special grace—their kindness and generosity have kept me grounded and reminded me of home. The parishes I've served in have been a blessing too—the pastors and parishioners welcomed me, took care of me, and taught me so much while I helped in little ways. With the Archbishop's leadership and everyone's encouragement, I feel I'm not alone on this path, and that's a gift I carry with me as I prepare for priesthood.

... Continue reading this article online at archdioceseone.org/yga-325

Celebrating the Jubilee for Youth and Adolescents

By Cassie Bird

The Archdiocese of Dubuque is celebrating the Jubilee of Youth and Adolescents in the month of April. Faith formation programs across the archdiocese are doing some amazing things to cater to the ministry needs of our young population, in addition to programming being offered by the Youth and Young Adult Ministry department at the Archdiocese of Dubuque Pastoral Center. April's Jubilee is the perfect time to recognize and celebrate these efforts, as well as the young people in the Archdiocese of Dubuque.

“There is probably no greater representative population for

“Pilgrims of Hope” than today's young people,” Kevin Feyen, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry says.

“Young people are on a journey of self-discovery, asking a lot of meaningful questions, trying to figure out who they are, and who God is. In that regard, they are very much pilgrims. We also know that the faith of young people is not a sure thing. A lot of our teens will struggle in the faith and may drift away from their Catholic identity. That is why we need to be a people of hope.”

Kevin emphasizes that one of the greatest gifts we can give young people is ownership over their own faith, and confidence that the Church will not abandon them if they get it wrong from time to time.

Part of Kevin's role with the archdiocese is to provide programs for adolescents that help them to explore their faith. For instance, his team hosted an event for high school teens called “EPIC – EmPowering Iowa Catholic Teens” on March 29. On March 30, the Iowa Catholic Youth Conference for middle schoolers hosted over 450 young people from Eastern Iowa for a high-energy day for those in grades

6-8. The Youth and Young Adult Ministry team is also in the midst of planning a trip to Indianapolis for the National Catholic Youth Conference. Over 800 young people and adults have already signed up for that optional experience. In addition, parishes are organizing summer trips to do service, attend Catholic conferences, and even travel all the way to Ohio for Damascus Camp. Young people are choosing to take these next steps in their faith journeys to participate in these experiences.

“For those of us who work with young people and are cheering for them to grow

as disciples, one challenging aspect of the Jubilee is letting the land go fallow. Too often we lean too heavily on our teens,” Kevin reflects.

“We place a lot of expectations for learning, serving, and leading others.

When we ask young people what they want from the Church, however, their answers are rather simple: love. They want us to listen to them, to let

them be kids, to assure them that they are safe and will not be judged. Maybe we in ministry can do our best this year to take the time to focus on helping our teens to means of evangelization.”

Kevin also speaks about how a challenge for today's young people is loneliness.

There is a false sense of connection being provided by social media, but online friends and followers are not the same thing as being a part of a community. Therefore, young people are hungering for authentic acceptance and connection.

“We have work to do to ensure that our parishes are embracing that desire. Parish leaders often report that their greatest hope is more youth involvement. Interestingly, that is what young people want, too,” Kevin surmises.

Faith formation and youth ministry programs across the Archdiocese are working to do just this. At the Church of the Resurrection in Dubuque, Melissa Tucker and Brian Nilles collaborate to provide unique programs that cater to the specific needs of today's young people.

... Continue reading this article online at dbqarch.org/april-jubilee.



A group of teens at the recent EPIC event

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

TOGETHER Publication to be discontinued as of June 2025.

The June 2025 edition of *Together* will be the final issue. After careful consideration, the Archdiocesan Communications Office has decided to discontinue this printed bulletin insert and instead deliver the same content through email moving forward.

There are several reasons for this change:

1. Format limitations: The publication has been limited to a double-sided sheet in order to minimize the burden on parishes for printing and stuffing bulletins. This constraint limits how much we can share.

2. Unmeasurable reach: We are unable to accurately determine how many people are reading *Together* in

its current printed form.

3. Limited engagement: We've heard that the publication hasn't gained the traction we had hoped for.

4. Better digital reach: Email allows us to more effectively and directly reach households across the archdiocese.

While we recognize that not every household has an email address, the vast majority do—whether or not they consider themselves tech-savvy. Shifting to a digital format will allow us to share more content with a broader audience in a cost-effective, measurable way.

To receive the same content via email, please sign up at: dbqarch.org/connect-with-us

Thank you for your continued support and engagement.