

Continued from page 9

judge or condemn me. God helped me to enter the Neocatechumenal Way as a way to rediscover my faith, to really live my faith."

Fr. Garzón received his field education and did summer ministry at Saint Aloysius Parish, Newark; Holy Redeemer Parish, West New York and Saint Benedict Parish in Newark. He will celebrate his first Mass on Sunday, May 27, 11:30 a.m. at Holy Redeemer Parish. Father Carlo Fortunio will deliver the homily.

FATHER ESTEBAN NELSON GRANYAK

Attending an international vocational retreat in Italy as a young man, Father Esteban Nelson Granyak was invited to Redemptoris Mater Seminary. That is how he arrived in the United States a decade ago.

His journey to the priesthood, Fr. Granyak explains, began when he and his family were called into the Neocatechumenal Way. Before that, he recounts, his family was "non-religious and non-practicing." It was through the Neocatechumenal Way that his parents found "the message of the Good News and the love of Christ."

He likened the experience for himself and his family as "passing from death to life, from darkness to light thanks to our merciful God." However, he said a vocation to the priesthood originally was not part of his "plan of life." While studying engineering at the university in Chile he "had a girlfriend and was full of plans for the future, full of ambitions for success. Nevertheless there was a moment in which I felt I was building a 'shallow castle' and for some reason I wasn't happy. At that time I heard the words of Saint Paul: 'Brothers, the time is short, the one who has a wife lives as if he has none. The one who possesses as if he doesn't have anything... the appearance of this world is passing.' Those words struck me deeply. It was through the help and patience of my catechists in the Way and my community that I was able to discern my vocation."

The 32-year-old native of LaCalera, Chile, graduated cum laude with a bachelor's degree in science and is working on a Masters in Theology with a concentration in Scripture. Prior to serving his diaconate at Saint Aloysius Parish in Newark, Fr. Granyak received his field education and did summer ministry at Saint Aloysius.

In the seminary what made the most impact on the new priest were "the missionary activities and the discovery of the Word of God as active in my personal life, this has sustained me."

Looking toward a lifetime in the priesthood, Fr. Granyak hopes God will "grant me the grace to love Him with all my heart, to be faithful to Him, aware that without His help I can do nothing but sin, and to love the Church." He is equally hopeful that he can be "particularly active in the New Evangelization of this millennium and reach those who are far away from Christ in the same way Christ reached my family and me when we didn't know anything about the beauty of the Church. I hope also to be firm in announcing the truth in a world ruled by relativism."

Saint Aloysius Parish, Newark, is where Fr. Granyak will celebrate his first Mass on Sunday, May 27, at 11 a.m. He will be the homilist.

FATHER CHAREZ BANDA O GRINGCO

"There is no greater thing than to live the life that God wants for you for the rest of your life," declares Father Charez "Don" Banda O Gringco.

Born in the Philippines 32 years ago, Fr. Gringco holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting from

Holy Cross of Davao College in Davao City, the Philippines, and an MBA from Philippine Christian University, Manila. This month he was awarded a Master of Divinity in Pastoral Ministry degree from Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology and is now pursuing a Master of Arts in Biblical Studies at Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology.

Before attending Immaculate Conception Seminary, Fr. Gringco was a student at Our Lady of the Angels Seminary in the Philippines as well as Holy Apostles College Seminary in Cromwell, CT. He was a deacon at Queen of Peace Parish in North Arlington.

The gift of priesthood, he explains, is doing what God wants you to do with your life. Being a member of the clergy, he continues, "is a ministry where charity becomes a way of life and prayer becomes the source of strength in serving every person (a priest) meets in life."

His dream as a priest is "to win the world for Christ through Mary. My prayer is to rest constantly in the totally embracing love of God and to rely in the power of the Holy Spirit in performing my service to the community of faith. It might not be easy but by the grace of God and the prayer of the people of God, hardship will be turned into an opportunity of new evangelization of which each baptized Catholic Christian is called to live."

The seeds of his priesthood were sown in the Philippines where he worked with young people in his home town and was active in the diocesan youth apostolate. In high school he became involved in the Neocatechumenal Way and his college years saw the future priest join the Catholic Youth Fellowship. At the same time he was a facilitator of a peer counselor group.

After college he discerned for a missionary life but left after two years convinced he wanted to become an accountant. He held various accounting positions but eventually resigned in 2007 "to embrace the priestly formation in the Archdiocese of Newark."

Fr. Gringco is convinced his college experience, which he describes as "hectic academic years," as well as time spent in the business world combined to nourish his priestly vocation. "It was in the office when I clearly discerned the call to the priestly ministry for the people of God. A thought that came to me and is still vivid today is 'would this be my life forever, an accountant?'" He felt there was something in him "to do greater things than besides being an accountant (and that was) to live and offer my entire life for the service of the Church." He credits too the prayers of many people in his life.

His field education and summer ministry are extensive. They include his home parish of Saint Valentine in Bloomfield as well as a volunteer at Clara Maas Medical Center in Belleville. He also served at Saint Vincent DePaul Parish, Bayonne; the Center for Hope Hospice and Palliative Care (Peggy House), Scotch Plains; the Center for Hope Hospice and Palliative Care (Father Hudson House), Elizabeth; Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center, Paterson; and Saint Mary Parish, Closter.

His first Mass will be celebrated at noon on Sunday, May 27, at Saint Valentine Parish. Father Jack Donohue, in residence at the parish, will be the homilist. Fr. Gringco will celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving the following Sunday, June 3 also at noon, at Queen of Peace Parish. He will be the homilist.

FATHER JEIVI MIGUEL HÉRCULES

Fr. Jeivi Miguel Hércules, 29, studied for the priesthood at both Saint Andrew's Hall Seminary and Immaculate Conception Seminary. He was born in El Salvador and comes from a family of seven siblings.

After only a short time in the seminary, he explains, "one realizes that without prayer, one cannot be faithful to

the call to the priesthood." The pastoral experience, the new priest points out, is a major element in preparing for the priesthood. He describes the seminary years as "a great opportunity (to) develop love for the Eucharist. It's only if our lives are centered on Jesus in the Eucharist that we can become like Christ."

Before entering the seminary he was a member of the Charismatic prayer group at his home parish of Saint Mary's in Plainfield. While at Saint Andrew's Hall he was involved with the youth group at Saint James the Apostle Parish in Springfield and volunteered at the Home for the Blind in Jersey City. He was also among the volunteer ranks at Saint John's Soup Kitchen in Newark.

The future priest was involved in starting a Spanish prayer group at Saint Leo Parish in Elmwood Park. While at Immaculate Conception Seminary he received his field education at Saint Vincent DePaul Parish in Bayonne. He also attended the Institute for Priestly Formation in Omaha, NE. Fr. Hércules did hospice ministry and was assigned to Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center in Paterson and Saint Mary Parish, Closter. He was a deacon at Saint Rocco/Saint Brigid Parish in Union City.

After graduating from Plainfield High School he had intended to enter the military. But a year after graduation a friend asked him to attend a Charismatic retreat in the Bronx. "For the first time in my life I felt that Jesus was real and was with me." Soon after the retreat he began to attend Mass "more frequently" and became involved with the youth group at his home parish. It was the youth group experience that prompted him to "contemplate the possibility of entering the seminary." Once, Fr. Hércules recalls, when asked why he was in the seminary he answered "because I want to preach that Jesus is really alive in the Eucharist."

Looking back to his early years in the seminary, Fr. Hércules is candid: "I am a miracle because I never thought that I would be where I am right now."

Reflecting on his path to the priesthood, Fr. Hércules is convinced "we need small communities of faith in the parishes. It is there that vocations are born. One needs more involvement in the parish besides Sunday Mass in order to discover one's vocation. In retrospect, one thing is evident. God prepares one for this wonderful vocation."

Fr. Hércules will celebrate his first Mass on Sunday, May 27, at noon at Saint Rocco/Saint Brigid Parish. The homilist will be Rev. Msgr. Joseph R. Reilly, S.T.L., Ph.D. A week later, June 3, also at noon, he will celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving in Spanish at Saint Mary Parish. Father Manuel D. Rios, K.H.S., will be the homilist.

FATHER MARCO T. MARROQUÍN

"Go" is the answer Father Marco T. Marroquín says he would give a man who tells him he feels called to the priesthood.

"Do not hesitate to follow the Lord's call, you will be happy and better (for it)."

The 36-year-old native of San José del Golfo, Guatemala, and the fourth of 15 siblings, attended Redemptoris Mater Seminary and Seton Hall University. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Education and is completing a Master of Arts in Theology degree.

Fr. Marroquín, who was a deacon at Saint Mary Parish in Plainfield, did his field education and summer ministry at Saint Aloysius Parish, Newark; Saint Mary Parish, Plainfield; Holy Family Parish, Nutley and Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish and Saint Michael Medical Center both in Newark.

