

"I'm looking forward to announcing the Good News in the ways the Lord will present to me, to look for the lost sheep and to welcome the prodigal son," he said, anticipating his ordination. He says the Lord called him "to follow in His footsteps, including the work He did on earth." To illustrate that point, Fr. Marroquin notes that between the ages of 14 and 24 he was a "carpenter's hand."

What sticks in his mind most about seminary life occurred during his second year which he terms a "hard but a very good time." It was hard, he explains, because at the time "I could not take it anymore. I was behind in school, it was very difficult for me to study and it seemed like an impossible thing to continue."

However, through the help of priests at the seminary, especially the spiritual director, "I took refuge in prayer and other spiritual exercises." He remembers vividly one night "crying in front of the Blessed Sacrament asking the Lord for help." Those prayers were answered when the Lord "gave me the strength and courage to continue."

Fr. Marroquin will be the homilist at his first Mass which he will celebrate on Sunday, May 27, 1:30 p.m., at Saint Mary Parish.



FATHER JOSÉ PABLO MURALLES

Deacon at Saint Aedan Parish in Jersey City and Saint Joseph Parish in East Rutherford, Father José Pablo Muralles was born in Guatemala City, Guatemala, and raised in Lamont, CA. He has six brothers and two sisters.

As a priest, Fr. Muralles is "looking forward to the adventure that God has prepared for me. I hope one day I will have the same vigor and spirit of Blessed John Paul II who really inspired me." He especially mentions the World Youth Days he attended at which the late pontiff officiated.

Fr. Muralles, 34, attended Redemptoris Mater Seminary. He was also a student at Seton Hall University. The new priest has a Bachelor of Science degree in Education and is working on a Master of Arts degree in Theology.

Although he grew up in a Catholic family, Fr. Muralles explains, he eventually became the "black sheep" of the family. It was during that time that God called him during the Feast of Saint Sebastian. During Mass, he recalls, he received an invitation to attend catechesis of the Neocatechumenal Way. Shortly thereafter he "more consciously entered and discovered the Catholic Church and was nourished by the Word of God." He emphasizes that "through the Neocatechumenal Way I was saved by the Church."

Inspired by the words of Blessed John Paul II—"do not be afraid to say 'yes,'" Fr. Muralles would advise a man who feels he might be being called by God to "let yourself be guided in your life by the Church which has true wisdom and is everlasting rather than by the worldly passions and ambitions that will lead you to sadness and confusion."

He received God's call in 2000 at a time when he was "planning on getting married." God, however, "suddenly changed my plans." Before that, he says, "the priesthood had never before been in my mind." Still discernment took time but he was helped by catechists in the Neocatechumenal Way and members of the clergy. He finally saw, the new priest notes, that "God was calling me for a greater marriage with the Church."

Fr. Muralles received his field education and served summers at Saint Aloysius Parish, Newark; Saint Mary Parish, Plainfield; Saint Anthony of Padua Parish, Union City; Saint Joseph Parish, East Rutherford and Saint Michael Medical Center, Newark.

He will be the homilist at his first Mass to be celebrated at noon on Sunday, May 27, at Saint Joseph Parish in East Rutherford.



FATHER ALEXANDER OROZCO

For Father Alexander Orozco, his journey to the priesthood included being manager of an Arabic restaurant, actor and model in his native Colombia. A deacon at Holy Trinity Parish in Westfield, Fr. Orozco, 34, attended Immaculate Conception Seminary. He received his field education and did summer ministry at Church of the Nativity in Midland Park.



He makes note of his field education at Saint Peter the Apostle Parish in River Edge. "This assignment was great for me because I became closer to the people who were in charge of the parish's groups. I learned a lot." The pastor, Father Michael Sheehan, Fr. Orozco explains, was his "guide and teacher. He is a great model of how to be a good pastor."

Equally influential was his pastoral experience at Saint Joseph's Hospital in Paterson. Working with the sick, he stresses, "made me feel a deep desire to become a priest soon." Especially important in his formation, Fr. Orozco notes, was Father Martin Rooney, the hospital chaplain.

Fr. Orozco reflects fondly as well on his past year as a deacon. "My experience as a deacon has changed my life completely in a very positive way" he declares adding "what a privilege it is to be allowed into people's lives just by virtue of my vocation."

"Without any doubt," he declares, the "most important element" of his seminary years was "my daily contact with Our Lord through Holy Mass, the Divine Office, the rosary and personal meditation." It was very important during those years, he continues, the lessons learned in integrating his life into the discipline that "serves as the foundation of true charity toward others."

Although raised in a Catholic family, Fr. Orozco explains, the faith was not practiced. It was at his Confirmation at the age of 18 that the future priest "started to be aware of my vocational calling." It was his mother, he adds, who urged him to be confirmed.

Following his Confirmation, Fr. Orozco learned of a new religious order in his country. He spoke to the superior about "my feelings to follow the Lord." He lived as a Religious in that community for a decade "then I came to the conclusion that I was called to be a priest." He arrived in the United States in the fall of 2008 and lived at the Archdiocese of Newark's discernment facility, Emmaus House.

Fr. Orozco will celebrate his first Mass at Church of the Nativity at 2 p.m. on Sunday, May 27. Father Duverney Bermudez will be the homilist.



FATHER JUAN CAMILO RESTREPO

The dream for Father Juan Camilo Restrepo is to grow daily in his relationship with God enabling him to be "a good priest every day walking together with the people toward a daily encounter with God."

Prior to his studies at Immaculate Conception Seminary, Fr. Restrepo, 32, spent four years in a seminary in his native Colombia. After four years he came to the realization he was quite young to be a priest and that he had not had any other type of experiences "that would allow me to grow and mature as a human being." He became involved in an environmental project in his hometown.



All the time, he explains, he still "felt the call to become a priest. It never disappeared from my mind and heart." Four years after leaving the seminary, he decided to return and "give myself a second chance." It was at that point in his life Fr. Restrepo learned of the Archdiocese of

Newark and began the process of making the move. Now, six years later, he is to become a priest for this "amazing Church with the help of God and thanks to my deceased friend, Father Hector Fabio Galvis Rios." Fr. Hector was ordained in 2009 and died in early 2011, serving as a priest for 20 months.

While at Emmaus House in Newark, the archdiocesan facility for discernment, Fr. Restrepo served weekends at Saint James the Apostle Parish in Springfield, which became his home parish.

His field education and summer ministry assignments included Saint Cecilia Parish in Kearny, the Institute for Priestly Formation in Omaha, NE, the Center for Hope in Scotch Plains where he ministered to the dying, and Saint Joseph Hospital in Paterson. His field assignment was at Saint Vincent DePaul Parish in Bayonne. Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in West Orange is where the future priest served his diaconate.

Recalling seminary life, Fr. Restrepo was struck by how men from every corner of the globe "meet at one place following God's call to become a priest. It was amazing to see how God worked in different ways within each of us." He discovered that what his fellow seminarians had in common was that they are all "the manifestation of God's creation who share a brotherhood in order to serve the people of God."

With ordination fast approaching, Fr. Restrepo is "looking forward to sharing my priesthood with the people of God. I just want to be present for the people and share with them the joy of following God who is the source of my life and my vocation."

Fr. Restrepo will celebrate his first Mass at Saint James Parish at noon on Sunday, May 27. Rev. Msgr. Raymond Kupke will be the homilist.



FATHER JOSE DEJESUS RODRIGUEZ

The seminary, Father Jose deJesus Rodriguez declares, "helped me to find the will of God in my life." That time of formation and preparation, he continues, is "a great journey with Jesus in which He explains the sacred scriptures. It's a great experience in which one learns human, spiritual, pastoral and intellectual values."



The seminary, Fr. Rodriguez notes, provides the opportunity to "live in a community and learn the responsibilities of the priesthood." It is also a "great opportunity" to build friendships and is a time "to listen to the voice of God in our hearts."

Fr. Rodriguez, 32, who is from Colombia, earned a master's degree in Theology from the Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology. He received his field education and did summer ministry at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Jersey City where he also served as a deacon.

Contemplating his life as a priest, Fr. Rodriguez says he wants to be "a holy man serving Christ in His Church my entire life." He sees his service as that of helping people seeking the presence of God, being a "compassionate and kind" priest. He describes the priesthood as "a journey where every day comes with its own particular mission and duties." As a priest, Fr. Rodriguez wants to follow Christ "according to His will." He considers the priesthood as the opportunity to answer questions especially those of "young people in a secularized world thirsty for the truth." It's through what Fr. Rodriguez terms "the mystery of vocation" that "I acknowledge the greatness of our God that provides the sacraments as the main tools for salvation."

Fr. Rodriguez will celebrate his first Mass at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, May 27 with Father Giordano Belanich as homilist.