New priest pleased with first assignment

By PAUL KEDINGER
Editor

"I find it to be a very warm, hospitable place," comments Father Kenneth Domingue, newly assigned associate pastor at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, as he describes his first impressions of Ville Platte. "I enjoy the people. Being a Lafayette native of Cajun descent, the young priest smiles, "I'm not much different from them."

The area is quite familiar to him, after spending his intern year as deacon under the supervision of Father Millard Boyer at Our Lady Queen of Angels in Opelousas. He also counts Father Jay Voorhies, formerly assigned to the Ville Platte congregation, as a close friend.

A product of Lafayette public high school, he attended St. Joseph Seminary College in Covington.

His states his philosophy of his ministry is clear terms. "It's more like St. Francis' philosophy. Make me a channel of God's peace. Make me a channel of reconciliation between the people and God."

"I began to realize that when you're assigned to Ville Platte, to Sacred Heart, you become part of Belaire Cove, Vidrine and St. Joseph's, and then you become part of Sacred Heart School," he says, after beginning his assignment July 1. He was ordained by Bishop Harry J. Flynn on June 22.

"When I got here my view broadened," he laughs, "And, I've only been here during the summer when things are slow. Wait until school kicks up, then my eyes will really open."

He's pleased to learn Ville Platte "is so Catholic." He continues, "It's so intensely Catholic."

"I find the people to be very wonderful," he says. "I find the people to be very nice; holy people, too."

"They are very conscious of God in their everyday lives. I don't find them to be weekend Catholics," he emphasizes.

The young priest explains his personal feeling about being called to the priesthood were first formed when he was 10-years-old. He credits a movie about St. Francis of Assisi, "Brother Sun, Sister Moon," as having a major impact in his early years. "Ever since then, I grew up wanting to be a priest," he admits. That inspiration continues for Father Domingue as a member of the Secular Franciscan Order.

As a youth, he was an altar boy at his home parish, Our Lady of Fatima. He was a member of Boy Scout Troop 19 and earned the Eagle Scout award in 1979. He was stationed at St. Joseph's Church in Rayne for his pastor year and then studied theology at Notre Dame School of Theology in New Orleans.

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Asked to describe himself, Father Domingue uses the words "enthusiastic and adventurous."

He notes that his father and mother, Joe and Maggie, are deeply pleased with his vocation to the priesthood. "When we got closer and closer to ordination time," he says, "they didn't know ... we never had a priest before in the family ... and so they didn't know how to treat you." He adds, however that his father continues to treat him "just like everyone else. He can joke and cut up. He enjoys life."

Father Domingue comes from a large family which includes two older sisters, Mrs. Winnie Boehlein of Macon, Ga., and Pam Domingue of Roanoke, Va.; and two brothers, Melvin Wayne "Bubba" Domingue and David Domingue, both of Lafayette.

"My goal as a priest is to help people get closer to God, and not be so afraid of Church," he concludes. "To see the Church as a faith family."