



“They were fearful yet overjoyed”
(Mark 16:5)

Fearful yet overjoyed. This is how the first women felt when experiencing the Risen Lord for the first time. This is their reaction to encountering new life. I did not know what this mix of feelings was like until I was told I would be one of the new associate pastors at St. Raphael. There is fear because St. Raphael is a large parish, but also because it will be a new way of life for me. I will transition from the known life of seminary to my new priestly life in this parish. The unknown of living life as a priest has left me fearful but deeply humbled to be able to serve you all.

I am also overjoyed. I cannot wait to begin priestly ministry. After six years of preparation in the seminary, I am ready to immerse myself in the daily life of the parish as a priest. I am excited to offer the sacraments, to learn from you, and to assist you in your relationship with Jesus. I am also excited to get to know you.

In order for me to transition into life at St. Raphael, I want you to get to know me, as well. I am originally from Texas but please do not hold that against me. My family moved to Conway, AR when I was eight years old. I went to St. Joseph elementary and high school in Conway and graduated in 2006. I remained in Conway and received a Psychology and Spanish degree from the University of Central Arkansas (UCA). While at UCA, I worked in Catholic Campus Ministry for four years.

My family is an important part of my life. My parents, Richard & Theresa, instilled in me a love for my Catholic Faith. I am a middle child (between two brothers). My older brother, Ricky, is married to Aleksandra (from Macedonia) and they live in Dallas, TX. My younger brother, Michael, is married to Courtney and they live in Conway. We are competitive brothers and enjoy playing sports and games. Some of my hobbies include golfing and fishing but really any activity that allows me to spend some quality time with friends and family.

I ask for your prayers. I will be praying for all of you as I prepare to serve the parish of St. Raphael. I am fearful yet overjoyed to be an associate pastor for you. I am excited to serve you and to learn how to be a priest while serving you.

- Fr. William Burmester