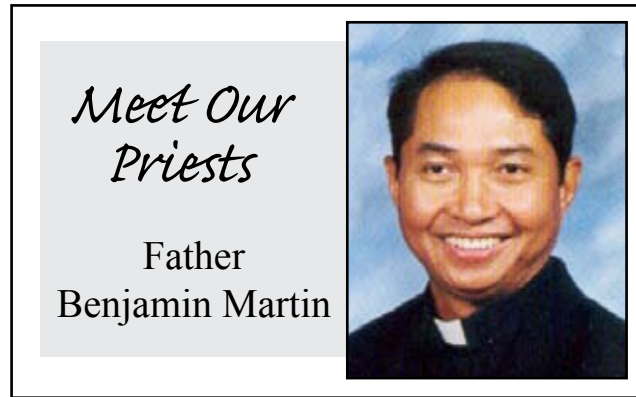


Father Benjamin Martin:

Dreams of flying gave wings to the priesthood



“Whenever I saw jets fly thousands of feet above my village, I used to watch until they disappeared. After my fourth grade, my pastor asked me if I wanted to go to minor seminary to try to become a priest.”

Father Benjamin Martin is from the Diocese of Patheingyi in Myanmar (formerly Burma). He came to serve in the Diocese of Dodge City as a missionary priest in 1997. He has been pastor of St. Mary, Marienthal; St. Anthony, Leoti; and St. Joseph, Tribune, since 1998. Father Benjamin was incardinated as a priest of the Diocese of Dodge City in 2005.

What was it that made you want to be a priest? Was there a particular individual who inspired you?

When I was young I did not know what made me want to be a priest. In fact I wanted to be an air line pilot. Whenever I saw jets fly thousands of feet above my village, I used to watch until they disappeared. After my fourth grade, my pastor asked me if I wanted to go to minor seminary to try

to become a priest. I agreed to try.

Who were the people who encouraged you in your vocation?

My mom was the special mentor for me who encourage me to have higher education and to live a priestly life free of all worldly anxieties.

What do you like most about being a priest?

Being a priest, I have less attachment for the world, less anxiety and freedom of spirit. That is pretty good feeling for me. I am still far away from being perfect in my awareness of God’s presence in my life as yet. Still trying.

What has been one of the greatest challenges you face in your ministry?

One of the greatest challenges in my ministry in this country is the difference of culture and custom. I come from a country where people are accustomed to listening and obeying priests

and elders with respect and love. It is not a problem for me to listen to people.

What do you like to do in your free time?

This country is self supporting mission country. People know very well what their responsibilities are and they fulfill them with generosity and love. It is amazing to work as priest in such a community of faith. I have less worries and more time to play golf and visit my friends, Burmese priests.

If you could take a vacation anywhere in the world, where would you go?

I would like to go to Rome and Europe when I take vacation.

What are your hobbies?

Reading is not my favorite hobby. I try to spare my eyes so that I can hunt and shoot a bull’s eye.