

Father Ted Skalsky: 'I like being able to help people on their way to salvation'

Father Ted Skalsky was born in Great Bend, the son of Theodore and Hermina (Buessing) Skalsky. He is a religious vocation of St. Bernard Parish in Belpre. He was ordained by Bishop Marion F. Forst on June 10, 1972. Father Ted was pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Dodge City from 1997 to 2001. He has been pastor of the Cathedral parish since that time.

What was it that made you want to be a priest?

There was something attractive about the priesthood. It is hard to say what it was at that time. I remember Father John Vesecky telling about being called out for sick calls at anytime of the day or night. That was very attractive to me. I had very little idea what the life of a priest was like. The only priest I had known well was Father Vesecky. He was pastor of our parish from the time I was five until I was 14. I remember my mother asking me if I had ever thought of being a priest. I also remember someone saying that if someone had thought about being a priest that they should look into it in more detail.

Was there a particular individual who inspired you to become a priest?

It was Father John Vesecky more than anyone else.

Who were people who encouraged you in your vocation?

As I said, my mother asked me if I had thought about it, but she never pushed in any way. There was an atmosphere of encouraging vocations in those days. The Sisters talked about vocations in school and we prayed a lot for vocations. The whole atmosphere of the Church made one aware that a vocation to the priesthood was a very good thing.

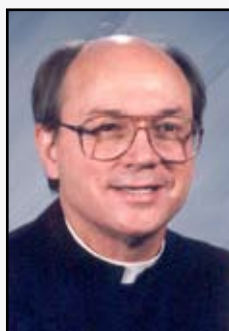
What do you like most about being a priest?

Meet Our Priests

This week's featured priest:

Father
Ted Skalsky

YEAR FOR PRIESTS



"Even the best of doctors can only keep people alive for so long. A person who helps people in their relationship with God can help them in a way that will have eternal value."

I like being able to help people on their way to salvation. Many other professions help people in important ways, but a priest can help people in ways that will last for an eternity. Even the best of doctors can only keep people alive for so long. A person who helps people in their relationship with God can help them in a way that will have eternal value.

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

I think the greatest challenge is ministering in a secular culture that no longer accepts the basic Christian values. It is hard because there is no longer a solid point of reference in people's minds. For many, the teachings of the Church no longer carry authority. Neither do the Scriptures. When those two things are seen as one point of view among many, there is no longer a solid foundation upon which to teach. I find that very hard. It is also a real challenge to uphold teachings which are no longer accepted in our secular culture.

What has been one of the highlights, so far, of your priesthood?

It is hard to pick one highlight. Each parish and every assignment have presented different challenges, but I have enjoyed every assignment that I have received. I found a great deal of fulfillment during the years that I served on the Engaged

Encounter Team. Now I find it very fulfilling to work in a multi-cultural community.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I have always liked to do things with my hands. I have enjoyed woodworking, although I do very little of that now. I have also enjoyed baking bread. I still enjoy fixing things around the house and I have recently learned to do limited work recovering liturgical books. Often in my work as a priest, I do not see the results of what I do. Working with my hands gives me the opportunity to

see the results of my labor. I also enjoy reading. I watch very little television. I find other things much more enjoyable and rewarding.

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

I am not a traveling person. I always put off making plans for a vacation. There are many places I would like to see, but I probably will not make the effort to go. I would like to see the churches of Europe. I would enjoy visiting the Holy Land. I would enjoy seeing Alaska. I have never been to the Northwestern part of the United States. That would be attractive to me.

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy reading. I read the magazine, *Mother Earth News*. Most of the books I am reading now are spiritual reading books, like *Open Wide the Doors to Christ* by S.C. Biela. I have enjoyed Christopher West's book, *Heaven's Song*. I have enjoyed reading Pope John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*. Another book that has spoken to me is *He Leadeth Me* by Walter Ciszek. I have a lot of books on my "to be read" stack. I enjoy taking a few days away and going to a cabin where I can rest, read and pray. I have done that for several days every year for the last few years. I really cherish that time very much.