

# Father Ted Stoecklein:

## *Loving God, His people, and Dug the dog*

### *Meet Our Priests*

This week's featured priest:

Father  
Ted Stoecklein

YEAR FOR PRIESTS



“...Mary, the Mother of God ... has been my constant consolation before and during priesthood.”

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

Initially I think it was the respect that my parents showed to Father Roger Meitl (then pastor of Sacred Heart, Colby), and the solemnity with which Mass was celebrated when I was a child. Later when I seriously considered the priesthood, I think it was a love for Sacred Scripture coupled with the goodness of the many priests I met while traveling with NET Ministries.

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

I can't narrow it down to one. Most definitely my parents had the most influence, but I didn't realize it until after they were gone. At the time my parents died, I didn't even want to be Catholic. It wasn't until I grew out of adolescence that I began to appreciate their faithfulness to the Church. Three of my brothers were ministers in the Assemblies of God church. Inadvertently they influenced me by their passion for loving and serving Christ. The priests who were most inspiring for me were Father John Lager, Father Fred Gaglia, Father John Williams, Father Joe Breaux, and Bishop Stan Schlarman. From a distance

Pope John Paul II was a tremendous inspiration, but I never did meet him. Then there is Mary, the Mother of God. She has been my constant consolation before and during priesthood.

#### **Who were people who encouraged you in your vocation?**

Mostly the girls that I dated... just kidding. Above all, my step-mother, Barbara. I once went to look at Conception Seminary just so she would leave me alone about being a priest. When I was working for Msgr. Norbert Temaat in Garden City, he probably would have killed me or at least fired me if he didn't think I was a good prospect for the seminary. I probably would not be in the Diocese of Dodge City without the encouragement of Scotty and Lea Ann Scott.

#### **What do you like most about being a priest?**

I used to say preaching and hearing confessions. Now I would say it is the life of prayer that I love most.

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

The biggest struggle is being a public person. As a priest you are always in the

public eye. That is hard for me.

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

One thing that sticks out is visiting the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico twice.

#### **What do you like to do in your free time?**

I absolutely love spending time with my dog, Dug.

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

This coming November I'm planning an elk hunt in Colorado. For me, there is no better vacation than going on a hunt. I honestly do not have a desire to go out of the country any more.

#### **What are your hobbies?**

I used to have to make up hobbies when someone asked me this question because I had no other hobbies than watching TV and eating pizza. But about five years ago a friend introduced me to pheasant hunting and now I'm hooked. I love to fish as well, but I can't take my dog because he keeps swimming out and bringing the line back to me. Of course I still like watching TV and eating pizza.