

SOCIETY of OUR LADY  
of the Most Holy Trinity

# gray robes

FALL 2023







## GRAY ROBES FORMATION PROGRAM

### SACRED HEART MAJOR SEMINARY IN DETROIT, MI

Theology IV: Dcn. Joseph Spears (KY)  
Theology I: Br. Gregory Rice (PA)  
Pre-Theology II: Br. Andrew Collart (GA)  
Pre-Theology I: Br. Nicholas Judge (MD)

### PERMANENT BROTHERHOOD IN MISSION

#### Year IV

Br. Andrew Rowedder (MD) - Detroit, MI

### NOVITIATE IN CORPUS CHRISTI

Rocky Garcia (TX)

### ASPIRANCY IN BELIZE

Cole Hamilton (FL)

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*Behold, I am making all things new.*

*Rev. 21:5*



Dear Friends and Benefactors of SOLT,

In the pages ahead you will read of a summer filled with activity and joyous events! Here at the SOLT House of Studies in Detroit we have had a few changes to the composition of our house, changes which were brought about by the Lord's blessing and faithfulness.

The summer months saw the departure of Br. Adam Schmitzer for Our Lady of Corpus Christi (OLCC) Retreat and Evangelization Center in Texas. After making his final profession in April at Holy Redeemer in Detroit, Br. Adam was ready to leave the nest and embark on his first assignment as a fully professed SOLT Brother! He resides at OLCC and is in charge primarily of maintenance, something which he is gifted at and which gives him life.

The summer also saw the ordination of Fr. David Snow to the priesthood. For his first assignment Fr. David made his way to the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation in Belcourt, North Dakota where he serves with the existing robust SOLT Ecclesial Family Team at St. Ann's Church. The mission in Belcourt is well known for the amount of pastoral work it demands of priests, as well as the harsh winters. These are sure to be formative years for Fr. Snow!

In Detroit, we welcomed the arrival of newly professed Br. Nick Judge. Br. Nick is beginning his studies at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Pre-Theology I. He hit the ground running and found his feet quickly at the house, helping to renovate a limping exercise room into an energizing environment for activity!

Finally, this summer was the summer of the SOLT General Chapter 2023. The three branches of SOLT – Priests & Brothers, Sisters, and Laity – all had representation at a gathering at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception on Long Island for two weeks of discussion and discernment for the way forward for SOLT. We are grateful to the Holy Trinity for that time of fraternity and grace, and we place all our decisions in our Mother's hands to bring fruit for her Son's kingdom.

Once again, a heartfelt thank you for your continued support of our brothers. Without you, we would not be moving forward in hope for the service of these men within the Church.

Peace and blessings,

*Fr. Mark*



# Friend, Come Higher

BR. GREGORY RICE, SOLT

In the fourteenth chapter of the Gospel of Luke, our Lord compels his disciples to take the lower seats at gatherings in order that the host may call them higher. At different moments I find myself in lower seats, though I did not necessarily choose them. In my incompleteness I look upwards, hoping the host will call. Jesus beckons from the table's head, inviting me higher by small steps, closer to His side. The particulars of life in formation incarnate this beckoning on a seasonal and daily basis. I only need to cooperate, trusting that these particulars are the fingerprints of His guidance.

This summer and fall, these particulars have included the odd combination of Spanish, distance running, and the study of theology. Two brothers and I were sent to Antigua, Guatemala (a beautiful, cobblestoned, Central American city), in order to study the language of the fastest-growing flock in the United States. It was a meditative time that expanded me interiorly. Following this, towards the end of the summer, I began training for a half-marathon, wrangled into it by my brothers and starting a new chapter in my recreational life. Lastly, beginning this fall, the seminary called me to enter the studies of theology as an official candidate for Holy Orders. These three developments have reoriented my time in Detroit, making this semester one which is different from those past, in ways outside of my choosing and blessed for that reason.

***..with time and patience, I have found new spaces in myself and gratitude for God's creativity."***

One thing these three have in common is that none of them are things I would choose. I am of a phlegmatic, borderline languid temperament and have found languages tedious and running a punishment. I also felt timid and held bittersweet pangs about leaving the comfort-zone of philosophy for the halls of theology. However, with time and patience, I have found new spaces in myself and gratitude for God's creativity. Spanish has opened me to conversations I never used to have, meeting people I'm grateful to know. Running has become a daily refreshment that I look forward to, reshaping other areas of my life. Theology, lastly, has proven to be as expansive and beautiful as the queen of the sciences ought to be. Through simple things, when I stop to think about them, God has been showing me that His ideas are far, far above mine. It is through strange combinations such as these that He wants to call me higher, closer to His all-embracing side.



*Top of page: Br. Greg along with Dcn. Joseph and Br. Andrew Collart have lunch at the home of a woman in Antigua whom they met at a Eucharistic procession in the town plaza.*

*Below: Br. Greg attends his fundamental theology class.*





# Shooting Your Shoot

BR. ANDREW ROWEDDER, SOLT

This year I was blessed to be a soccer coach for Holy Redeemer's middle school. My colleague, Coach Yeiger, and I have been drumming into the players the importance of awareness. There is positional awareness of one's own self, the opponent's position, and situational awareness of what the goal or purpose of the present moment involves, just to name a few. We particularly want each player to recognize the time to shoot the ball. This is critical! We say to each player, "Once you have entered into the other team's defensive third, look to shoot your shot." There is a tendency to freeze up or stutter when the opportunity is thrust upon you. Some players are afraid of losing the ball or missing the shot. We aim for the goal, and if we miss that is okay. It might bounce off the keeper's hands for a rebound shot, or be deflected out of bounds, resulting in another opportunity. But in the same vein, the shot might go in! All of that being said, it is very difficult and one might say impossible, to score a goal if one does not shoot.

This year, I took the opportunity to "shoot my shot" with teaching computers. And as I learned how to

teach the subject and how to teach it to the younger grades, I noticed that I wanted to teach them more about awareness to "take their shot" when it comes to technology. In other words, I wanted to teach them when to stop interacting with the play passively and to take action! Computers have increasingly improved our lives and have become interwoven into communication, daily work, and entertainment. Through technology, we learn to fix bikes, share concert and game tickets, and order rides from our phones, among so many other things. It also contains lots of content of varying topics on Youtube and podcasts that can fill your time. It can also be so helpful and interesting that hours after beginning with watching soccer highlights, I find myself watching the downfall of the Cranberries, or the effect of the industrial age on our teeth! I have definitely lost hours of my life by not knowing when to stop being merely receptive and to proactively take action. This is the value of knowing when to "take your shot!" I want to seize this opportunity as a coach and teacher to help prepare my students for the life of heaven, but for this life as well.

May they grow to be men and women of intentionality and action.

**Left:** Br. Andrew Rowedder talks with a soccer player while the team waits to take the field.

**Right:** Br. Greg and Br. Andrew Rowedder relax with Fr. Dave Brokke after a day of mentoring middleschoolers at St. Ann's Summer Camp in North Dakota.

# Instruments of Salvation

FR. DAVID SNOW, SOLT

After being ordained a priest in June and spending some time with family, I received my first assignment: St. Ann's Mission on the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation in Belcourt, North Dakota. I would replace Fr. Dave Brokke who had just been named vocations director for the priests and brothers of SOLT. On August 1st, I boarded a plane for a new state, a new mission, a new vocation.

When I arrived, I met a gentleman named Patrick Hall, a retired lawyer from Iowa who was aspiring to become a SOLT lay member and had been serving as a volunteer in Belcourt since March. As things got underway, I realized that Patrick played a key role in keeping the parish going. He was our sacristan, he helped at the food pantry, taught religion in the school, drove one of the school bus routes, and locked up the campus every night, among other things. He was also a great intercessor, weekly asking different members of our team how he could pray for them.

One rainy evening, I was helping the SOLT Missionary Volunteers set up for an event when our school principal pulled me aside to tell me about an emergency outside the adoration chapel. I ran to the chapel and saw the police performing CPR on someone. When I got close enough, I saw that it was Patrick. He was on his back, semiconscious, gasping for air. I immediately took out my holy oil and gave him the last rites and the apostolic pardon.

While we waited for the ambulance, one of the officers indicated the door of the chapel, asking if the keys in it were Patrick's. I saw them dangling in the lock and said yes, that locking the chapel each night was one of Patrick's duties. I rode with the police to the emergency room, and Fr. Tony, one of the other priests, met me there to pray. The trauma team could not resuscitate Patrick. He died about half an hour after we found him. He had suffered a massive heart attack.

Although Patrick's passing was tragic, God gave him so much amazing grace that night. He made sure that I was there to anoint him and that Fr. Tony and I could pray chaplets of Divine Mercy for him in the ER. And in Detroit, Fr. Dave Brokke had heard what was happening and offered Mass for Patrick as he was dying. After returning home that night, I remembered Patrick's keys dangling in the lock and thought, he served the Lord to the very end. While I still pray for the repose of his soul, I have great confidence that Patrick is in heaven, that Jesus welcomed him with the words of the Gospel, "Well done, good and faithful servant... enter into the joy of your master" (Matthew 25:21). That night, God made me, his priest, an instrument of salvation for Patrick.




**He was also a great intercessor, weekly asking ... how he could pray for them.**

*Above: Elevating the chalice, Fr. David Snow celebrates Mass with Fr. Dave Brokke for the volunteer orientation retreat in August.*

*Left: Patrick Hall on the volunteer orientation retreat.*





# Generosity in Guatemala

BR. ANDREW COLLART, SOLT

“Franciscanos?” I turn from the dismal sight before me—the smoking hood of our car, a spreading puddle of transmission fluid leeching out beneath it. Beside me, his hands jammed in the pockets of a wrinkled pinstriped suit, stands a Guatemalan businessman with an attitude of assured, cool confidence. I respond, “No, pero somos similares a ellos; somos hermanos religiosos.” He nods.

My hopes were dashed; we had been making a pilgrimage to Santiago Atitlán, the mission of the martyr-priest Blessed Stanley Rother!

But, before you could say “John Robinson!” we found ourselves invited inside the businessman’s trendy establishment. He seated us and proffered an offer of coffee on the house, which a waiter promptly delivered with some cookies. We shared that we had been trying to reach a church another two hour drive and boat ride distant on the further shore of Lake Atitlán. (Now we might even have difficulty making it to Sunday Mass!) I began to pray my rosary. Shortly thereafter, the businessman returned to us announcing that he knew someone who would chauffeur us on our journey; but for now, have breakfast! Such generosity stunned me!

We gratefully breakfasted, thanked the owner, and went outside where our driver gestured with a smile to his vehicle. Our Spanish teacher taking the front-passenger side, I clambered into the back with Br. Joseph and Br. Greg. Pulling back out onto the highway, I swivelled around—coming face-to-face with an old man sitting in the hatch of the car! All I could think to exclaim was, “¡Hola Señor!”

He just smiled back.

Speaking with our driver, we learned that the man in the back was his father-in-law! The restaurant owner was an evangelical pastor. He had asked one of the deacons who helped him out at his church to come and help us with his car. The immediate and good-natured generosity of them both was a profound sign of Providence for us and a witness of Christian solidarity and charity. (I insisted on exchanging seats with the father-in-law on the return home!)

That day proved to be filled with graces. Later on in the summer I again found myself on a road trip, going to Texas for an ordination with Br. Andrew Rowedder and Campbell, a SOLT Missionary Volunteer. Derailed by a blown tire, we pulled off to “shoe the horse,” as Campbell expressed it. Seemingly an inconvenience (like the Guatemalan incident), while we were seeking the interstate again, we “by chance” happened upon an enormous edifice with copper-colored domes rising from the industrial outskirts of Oklahoma City...the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine!

A faithful shepherd, Fr. Stanley gave his life willingly for his people even after receiving death threats, passing up an opportunity to stay safely in Oklahoma, being there for an ordination. Instead, he returned to his people in Guatemala, for whose sakes he dedicated his life. He exemplifies for me the simplicity of generous charity, free from superfluous calculations, just as our Guatemalan friends witnessed. I am grateful for Blessed Stanley’s closeness to me this summer.

*Above: Br. Greg, Br. Andrew Collart, and Dcn. Joseph in the city of Antigua for Spanish immersion.*

# SOLT

## 2023-2024 BROTHERS IN FORMATION



**DCN. JOSEPH SPEARS**

*Theology IV  
Kentucky*



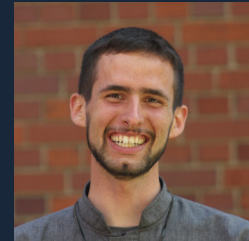
**BR. ANDREW ROWEDDER**

*Year IV Permanent  
Consecrated Brotherhood  
Maryland*



**BR. GREGORY RICE**

*Theology I  
Pennsylvania*



**BR. ANDREW COLLART**

*Pre-Theology II  
Georgia*



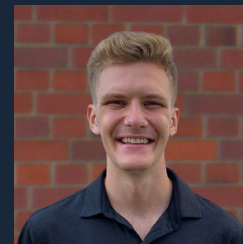
**BR. NICHOLAS JUDGE**

*Pre-Theology I  
Maryland*



**ROCKY GARCIA**

*Novitiate  
Texas*



**COLE HAMILTON**

*Aspirancy  
FL*

### *Something That Will Last*

“ I think I'll build my life of the next little given task  
I love the tranquil security of the value that will last  
I'm thankful for the purity of the morning that's not past  
if I could preserve it beyond the morning Mass  
I'd call that a type of Heaven I'd breathe it till my last  
I lose myself in trivia I trade my sense of now  
for porridge and some poultry duped by golden cow  
give me morning purity give me simple tasks  
give me simple beauty something that will last. ”

**BR. GREGORY RICE, SOLT**



*Fr. David Snow gives his priestly blessing on his ordination day to Br. Adam Schmitzer who made his perpetual profession in April.*



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GRAY ROBES FORMATION PROGRAM  
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U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Robstown, TX  
Permit No. 774

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### 2023-2024 SOLT BROTHERS IN FORMATION



*Br. Greg, Br. Andrew Rowedder, and Br. Andrew Collart, along with Fr. Dave Brokke, welcome the newly professed Br. Nick (2nd from right), to help serve in North Dakota at St. Ann's Mission on the Turtle Mountain Reservation in July.*

### On the front cover:

*Dcn. Joseph and Br. Greg walk through the streets of Antigua on the way to Spanish school after attending morning Mass.*



SOCIETY of OUR LADY  
of the Most Holy Trinity

gray  
robes

SPRING 2023