

**Stephen Eickhoff**  
**Fourth Theology - Mundelein Seminary**  
**Parish: Our Lady of Mercy, Aurora**  
**Birthday: November 2**



This is my sixth and final year of seminary formation and I am beginning my fourth year of theology at Mundelein Seminary. Born in Memphis, TN – a great city, not least because our Bishop is from there – in 1975, my family first came to the Joliet Diocese from Virginia in 1990, and my parents have been parishioners at Our Lady of Mercy in Aurora ever since. I am the oldest of four children. One of my brothers lives and works in Brazil (I would love to visit), my sister lives in Normal, IL with her husband, and my youngest brother is at home. For my own part I moved around a good deal after graduating from Western Illinois, first attending St. Joseph's parish in Addison, and then St. Stephen's parish in Milwaukee, before returning to the Joliet Diocese (and Our Lady of Mercy) and beginning seminary studies.

Since becoming a seminarian I have studied for two years at the seminary in Conception Abbey in Missouri, and three more years at Mundelein Seminary. The past five years of study and prayer have been a revealing and rewarding experience for me, which has been of great help to me in confirming my vocation to the priesthood. The past year alone has been filled with wonderful opportunities for spiritual growth (and some sightseeing). Last winter I traveled to the Holy Land for a ten week long pilgrimage to Bethlehem, the Galilee, and Jerusalem. It was quite literally the experience of a lifetime to be able to spend so much time living in the land of the Bible. Closer to home, this past summer I finished an internship program working as a chaplain at Lutheran Advocate Hospital in Park Ridge, which was another marvelous opportunity to discover my future ministry.