

Comet Alumni Spotlight

JP Stedwill Class of 2012



Educational Background: Following the completion of my elementary at St. Thomas the Apostle, I attended Peoria Notre Dame High School. My experiences of learning about the Faith in the classroom and the inspiration of faithful teachers, administrators, and chaplains in the Catholic schools was a huge positive influence in my life. These experiences prompted me to continue my education at a Catholic institution after high school which led me to Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas. Throughout my undergraduate, I pursued a double major in biology and philosophy with an emphasis on preparation for medical school. My spiritual life continued to grow in college due to an increased dedication to prayer and the influence of Catholic friends and mentors. I began to consider more seriously the intention to become a medical doctor to serve the suffering and infirm. I found myself drawn by the nobility of the medical profession in serving those who are physically in need; however, as I grew in a deeper maturity and intentionality in my relationship with God, I felt that our Lord may be calling me to become a different type of servant and healer. During my senior year of undergraduate, despite having been accepted to the University of Kansas Medical School and receiving a scholarship offer through the United States Navy, I was given the grace of interior freedom and peace in setting aside my plans to enter seminary to discern a possible calling to the priesthood for the Diocese Of Peoria. I entered seminary in the fall of 2020 and completed my first two years of formation at Mount Saint Mary Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland. I then continued my studies at Our Lady of the Lake Mundelein Seminary in the northern suburbs of Chicago. I will finish my course of formation at Mundelein Seminary, and God-willing I will be ordained to the Catholic priesthood in the Diocese Of Peoria in the Spring of 2026.

Family: I continue to be blessed by my immediate and extended family in their support for my vocation to the priesthood. My parents' witness to a faithful and Christ-centered marriage has always been a pillar in my life, and my six siblings have not only helped me grow immeasurably in virtue but are some of my closest friends in life. Additionally, one of the personal joys of entering seminary and preparing for the celibate life of a Catholic priest has been experiencing the reality and deep sense of fulfillment in becoming a spiritual father in our diocese.

Favorite experience as a St. Thomas Comet:

Some of my favorite memories from my time at St. Thomas include taking part in a number of extracurricular activities including student government, scholastic bowl, cross-country, and playing on our championship soccer team during my eighth grade year.

St. Thomas teacher who made an impact on you:

Mrs. Crawford had a very positive impact on me during junior high. She challenged and encouraged us in the classroom, and she was especially influential in helping me develop leadership skills through my involvement with student government.

Piece of advice for current Comets:

Trust in the sheer goodness of our Lord and the plan He has made for you! I'd like to share the words from my namesake and role model that have moved me deeply, "*Do not be afraid! Life with Christ is a wonderful adventure. He alone can give full meaning to life, he alone is the center of history. Live by Him!*" (St. John Paul II).

