

# The Called: Father Kenneth Smith

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## **Father Kenneth Smith**

**Hometown:** Harrisburg

**Education:** Good Shepherd School in Camp Hill, Trinity High School, Harrisburg Area Community College, St. Pius X Seminary in Erlanger, Ky., Mount St. Mary's Seminary and University in Emmitsburg, Md.

**Current Assignment:** Pastor of St. Katharine Drexel Parish in Mechanicsburg



## **Tell me a little about your childhood.**

My hometown is Harrisburg. I was born in Harrisburg and baptized at St. Margaret Mary Parish in Penbrook. I was raised and grew up in Hampden Townships at Good Shepherd Parish in Camp Hill from ages 3-21.

I am the oldest of four children; my younger brother died before birth and I have two wonderful younger sisters. Mom and dad were both Catholic and we were brought up to love God and our faith and to practice it to the best of our ability, learning from their example and teaching. We were an ordinary Catholic family of the time (1957-1984) and we practiced the faith and learned the teachings of Jesus and the Church.

## **When did you first consider the priesthood?**

I first thought about my vocation in fourth grade and it persisted through elementary school and into high school, then it was put on a back burner but persistent through undergraduate school and working as a teller at then Dauphin Deposit Bank now M&T Bank. I finally applied for the seminary in 1978, three years after high school graduation.

## **What was your discernment like?**

I discerned my vocation through the habit of prayer, Mass, my parents' faith and example, my support from family and the example of good priests, religious sisters and wonderful people in our parish family at Good Shepherd. I developed a heart to love and serve as the oldest in the family with God's grace and invitation.

### **Where have you served?**

I have been a parochial vicar, hospital chaplain, high school chaplain and a pastor. I have been ordained for 36 years. I have served in McSherrystown, Harrisburg, Gettysburg, York, Lancaster, Orrtanna and Mechanicsburg.

### **Is there a part of your ministry that you enjoy most?**

I love parish life and its variety of pastoral and sacramental ministry. I love the Eucharist and celebrating Mass and the sacraments, especially Baptisms, Penance and Anointing of the Sick. I have been told that I have a special gift with the sick and dying, which has truly formed my life. I spent almost ten years as a hospital chaplain. I love to teach and pass on the faith.

### **What might you say to a young man who is considering/discerning entering seminary and pondering if he's being called?**

"Be still know that God is God and Father." He needs messengers and prophetic voices. He needs laborers in the vineyard to gather people unto himself. Pray, pray and pray; listen to the Shepherd's voice.

### **What you like to do when you have free time? What hobbies do you have?**

Reading, walking, enjoying nature, traveling. I've been to Rome and Italy, the Holy Land, Germany, Austria and Switzerland, Fatima and Lourdes, Greece, Hawaii, the Grand Canyon, to the Caribbean and am planning a pilgrimage in the footsteps of St. John Paul II in Poland. The highlight of my trip to Rome and the Vatican was to personally meet Pope St. John Paul II.

I am blessed to have met some wonderful, great families and people along the way. I am blessed to belong to a wonderful Emmaus priest support group.

I enjoy spending time with my best buddy, my dog, Max, an 11-year-old Lab!

I have a few great priest friends and a good many wonderful people that I call family! I am extremely blessed to be pastor of St. Katharine Drexel Parish – a wonderful parish family I call home.

I love being with family (Carleen and Larry, Zach and Bri, Nat and Rachel, and Kathy) and friends, sharing a good meal and a glass of wine and just being together.

Thank you for sharing my story as I begin my 37th year of ministry in May 2020!

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