

## Fr. James Martins N. Ekeocha



Father James began his formation with St. Joseph's Society of the Sacred Heart, also known as the Josephites.

As a young boy growing up in Nigeria, he was the son of James and Anna and would attend daily Mass with his mother. "Out of the experience of 'playing Mass' at home, God instilled the desire to become a priest," he

said.

In his late teens, he began seminary studies and spent five years in a major seminary, but left to study philosophy at Ondo State University. In Nigeria, college graduates give one year of service. While teaching to fulfill that requirement, he decided to re-apply to the seminary. He then learned that the Josephites, whose primary ministry is to African Americans, were considering candidates from Nigeria.

The Josephites interviewed and accepted him. After two years of formation in Nigeria, he came to the United States. In 2001, the Josephites sent him to Xavier University in New Orleans to study history and theology. During that time, he wondered whether God was calling him to be a diocesan priest instead of a Josephite.

At Xavier, he met Father David Konderla, then vocation director for the Austin Diocese, who was visiting seminarians studying in New Orleans. Father Konderla helped him clarify God's call, and with the permission of the Josephites, he began formation for the Austin Diocese. In August 2002, he entered St. Mary's Seminary in Houston, where he had to begin his studies again. "This was a big sacrifice for the sake of the kingdom of God and my own salvation!" he said.

Fr. James Martins N. Ekeocha was ordained to the Priesthood of Christ on June 9, 2007. Fr. James served as the Associate Pastor of St. Thomas More Parish in Austin, Texas before being reassigned to St. Luke as the Pastor and the Administrator, effective July 1, 2011.

Welcome Father James!