



**FATHER  
MARIO JACOBO**

## *St. Boniface Catholic Church and School welcomes Father Jacobo*

For most of his life, Mario Jacobo has been in a foot race with God. Though he heard God's voice at different times showing him the path to the priesthood, Jacobo's life ran its course – finishing high school, volunteering as a youth minister and as leader of the parish council at St. Clement Church in Calhoun, GA, and then as a manager at a carpet store.

But through it all, God was running beside him until Jacobo stopped and truly listened while praying in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

"Lord, why don't we just stop playing, let's stop the chase and show me what you want from me," Jacobo said he prayed. "I'm searching for love, but every time I think I've found love, it breaks my heart and I don't feel fulfilled. Why don't you show me the love you want me to have; show me the way to love like you love. Then I said, I want to be your priest, I want to be able to love like you love and help like you help."

Then, as in the Gospel of John when Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" Fr. Jacobo heard the same question three times from God.

"That was the moment when everything started aiming toward ordination," he said.

On May 28, 2016, at the age of 38, Jacobo once again heard that passage from the Gospel of John at his ordination to the priesthood along with four others at Christ the King Church in Little Rock.

"It's a beautiful feeling," Fr. Jacobo said of his impending ordination. "... I'm thinking of the passage of Jeremiah, 'I chose you from the womb of your mother' and like in Matthew, the tax collector, 'come and follow me.' I'm following him, trying to be his servant."

Fr. Jacobo was born in Mexico, the second oldest of five children raised by a single mother, Maria Urtes.

"She's my model. She's the model of a woman with strong faith in the midst of chaos," Fr. Jacobo said. "... I'm very close to her, so she was the one who encouraged me to continue. There were some occasions when the doubts would come in, fears; her words were, 'just pray and rely on God.'"

The family moved to Texas in 1985 and later to Georgia. Even as a child, he told his mother he wanted to be a priest. Fr. Jacobo assisted his pastor at St. Clement in translating the Mass into Spanish.

"It helped me a lot to desire my vocation," Fr. Jacobo said. "Working close to the priest I was able to see how he related to people; he wanted his flock to be heard and understood."

Fr. Jacobo entered the Seminary in 2007, at St. Joseph Seminary in Covington, LA. He later transferred to the Diocese of Little Rock, AR in 2011, after meeting vocations director Msgr. Scott Friend. Our Lady of the Holy Souls Church in Little Rock adopted him and welcomed him in as a parishioner.

As a priest, Fr. Jacobo said he's excited to "show the people the one who is love."

"The biggest lesson or the biggest thing I've learned is we must have our feet on the ground and our eyes fixed on the cross. Never forget we're still human, still fragile, we rely on the mercy and love of God every day, every day; every day we have to rely on that," Fr. Jacobo said. "It doesn't change who I am as a person, I'm still Mario. But God gave me a vocation to help others."