

Father David Peck

ST. CHARLES CHAPTER

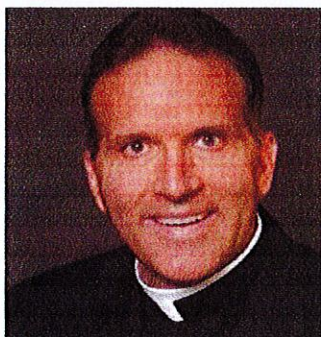
Prior Wall Street exec driven to shepherd marginalized and dying ...and to inspire Legates

CHANCES ARE YOUR PARISH

priest isn't a member of a fire department dive team or doesn't fly airplanes on his down time.

Father David Peck, 61, a former Wall Street financial executive, channels his driven personality into his roles as pastor of St. John Neumann Church in St. Charles, Illinois and as chaplain of Legatus' St. Charles Chapter.

Ordained 23 years ago after leaving his career in finance, Father Peck says he is happier and more fulfilled than ever as a priest, especially when he is ministering to the poor, the sick and the dying. He recently spoke with Legatus Magazine staff writer Brian Fraga.



Why did you leave Wall Street?

I worked on Wall Street for 10 years. I felt something was missing terribly. I really felt a lack of fulfillment, a lack of satisfaction even though I had done really well professionally. I just felt kind of spiritually dead.

I'd go to Mass every day at St. Patrick's Cathedral. I would constantly ask Our Lord, "What do you want of me?" So at 33 years old, I thought I needed to make a change. It was the hardest thing I've ever done in my life because my whole identity was wrapped up in Wall Street. That's who I was.

How did you discern a calling to the priesthood?

I took a year and a half of discernment of what I was going to do next while I continued to work. Well, I discerned right into the seminary.

Why did you become a priest for the Diocese of Rockford, Illinois?

I grew up here. I'm from a big family; I'm one of 13 children. My mom and dad are here. My dad is a Catholic convert. My parents have gone to daily Mass for 40 years.

In addition to being a pastor, you are also a fire and police chaplain. What is that like?

The fire chief one day asked me, "Are you going to be our chaplain or are you going to be one of us?" I didn't know what he was talking about. I said, "Like actually become a firefighter and go through the academy?" That's what he meant. So I became a certified firefighter as a priest. Right now, I'm on the dive team.

I'm a police chaplain as well. Unfortunately, I have to do a lot of difficult calls, like death notifications and people going through tough times like domestic violence. It's not my favorite thing to do, but the police really appreciate it. And a number of these guys have come into the Catholic Church. Several of them are going through RCIA.

Does your Wall Street experience help you in your capacity as a Legatus chaplain?

That's what kind of drew me to Legatus. That was my world. When I was going through those last couple of years on Wall Street, I was really discouraged. I kept asking the Lord, "Why did you have me get my MBA? Why did I put in all these hours?" Well, now I get it. What a God-send.

What value do you see Legatus having for its members?

You never feel like you're being apologetic for your faith. It's understood that the Catholic faith is really what informs us and grounds us. When I would go to cocktail parties on Wall Street, they were so draining. When I go to dinners with Legatus, they're so life-giving. It's a complete difference because we talk about things that matter. What a joy that is.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I play hockey on the side. I like to fly small airplanes like Cessnas. I love scuba diving and I love to sail. I'm also a pilgrimage director so I take people to Rome a lot, to Europe and around the world.

Right now my greatest joy is working with the poor and those who are sick and dying. I once looked for something that really made a difference. Well, this really makes a difference. **L**