



John Wade, at left, is ordained on May 26, 1956, at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Cathedral in Oklahoma City. Behind the ordinands is Bishop Charles Buswell from the Diocese of Pueblo, Colo.



Father Wade with first confirmation candidates in St. Joseph Church, Buffalo, May 1962.



Father Larry Lange, a Diocesan priest who died in 2003, joins Father Wade, Father Martin Morgan and then-Father Patrick Gaalaas at a monthly meeting of the Jesu Caritas support group for priests circa 1990.



Father Wade with, from left, Sister Mary Constance West, S.S.M., Sister Mary Generosa, S.S.M., and Sister Mary Therese Gottschalk, S.S.M.

For priests, ‘retirement’ is relative

By MARILYN DUCK

Father John Wade, who is celebrating the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood this year, retired in 2002, and he has enjoyed many of the things most people hope retirement will bring: He has traveled extensively; had more time to work on his beloved golf game before he had to give it up last year when he was 75 because of back problems.

He is able to spend more time with his family, including brother, Padre Patricio Wade, S.J., who since 1966 has served the people of Honduras, and currently is staying with his brother while awaiting possible heart valve surgery at St. John Medical Center.

But when the Eastern Oklahoma Catholic tried to set up a time to meet Father Wade to search through his scrapbook for photographs that illustrate a lifetime of service to the Catholics of Oklahoma, the appointment wasn't that easy to make.

Father Wade celebrated 8 a.m. Mass that morning at Our Lady of Sorrows Convent in Broken Arrow, and at 11 a.m., he did so again for the sisters of St. Joseph Monastery.

On Tuesday afternoons at 3 p.m., he joins other retired priests who on a rotating basis hear reconciliation at Sts. Peter and Paul Church. He's chaplain to both the convent and the monastery and hears reconciliation there for the sisters "whenever they ask."

He does the same for the residents of St. Clare Convent, an assisted living center adjacent to Our Lady of Sorrows, and he's chaplain for Monte Cassino School.

It's all part of the calling of a priest –

Father Wade's ministries

- St. Francis Xavier Church**, Enid, 1956-1959
- St. Mary Church**, Ardmore, **St. Cecilia Church**, Healdton, and **St. Francis Xavier Church**, Sulphur 1959-1960
- St. Mary Church**, Guthrie, 1960-1962
- St. Joseph Church**, Buffalo, and **Holy Name Church**, Shattuck, 1962-1965
- Our Lady of Victory Church**, Purcell, and **St. John the Baptist**, Lexington, 1965-1970
- St. Jude Church**, Tulsa, 1970-1976
- Judicial Vicar**, Marriage Tribunal, 1973-2000
- Our Lady of Guadalupe**, Tulsa, 1973-1976
- Sts. Peter & Paul**, Tulsa, in residence, 1976-1979
- St. John Medical Center**, Tulsa, 1979-2002

retired or not, Father Wade said.

Father Wade does have a scrapbook, but a visitor quickly was steered to his dining room table. On a laptop computer was a DVD – complete with music and voice-overs by Father Wade – describing his childhood as the oldest of three children who grew up in Oklahoma City, his education at St. Louis Preparatory Seminary and St. John's Home Mission Seminary in Little Rock, his ordination in the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Oklahoma City, his

assignments in parishes throughout what was the Diocese of Oklahoma and later in the Diocese of Tulsa. Father Wade also served as the first judicial vicar for the Tulsa Diocese's Marriage Tribunal – though he never received a degree in Canon law. For 25 years, he was chaplain at St. John Medical Center.

Over the years, he has traveled all around the world, and the DVD displays many photos from his journeys in the American West and upper Canada, in Mexico, Ireland, the Holy Land, Germany, Switzerland, France and, of course, Honduras.

The DVD was created by Sister Loretta Hall, who initially became interested in new media when working with Kevin Sartorius and Biff Hall, who helped her put together a web site for the Province of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother (www.ssmfranciscans.org).

"I talked him into doing it last year, and we wound up with a masterpiece," Sister Loretta said. "All the pictures he has at his home, I have on that DVD."

The DVD was shown at the Wade family reunion last spring at Western Hills State Lodge, and Father Wade seemed startled when told that many groups – the Vocations Office, seminaries, Catholic schools, the Serra Club and others – might enjoy it.

But of course he was open to the idea. "I was trying to do it for my family, but it's for everybody, anybody."

The attitude of being of assistance in any way he might be is consistent with how Father Wade describes his 50 years of ministry: "I was not called to be successful in the Church, I was called to be faithful."



A couple of years ago, Father Wade returned to see his first pastorate in Buffalo.



John Wade, at left, his mother Muriel, and his younger brother Jarrel, who now goes by Padre Patricio S.J., on vacation in eastern Oklahoma.



Father Wade and Padre Patricio enjoyed Thanksgiving dinner Nov. 23 with the nuns at Our Lady of Sorrows Convent in Broken Arrow.



Father Wade traveled to St. Malo Retreat Center in Estes Park, Colo., with Father Dan Perlinski in 1989.

Second Christmas collection supports retired priest

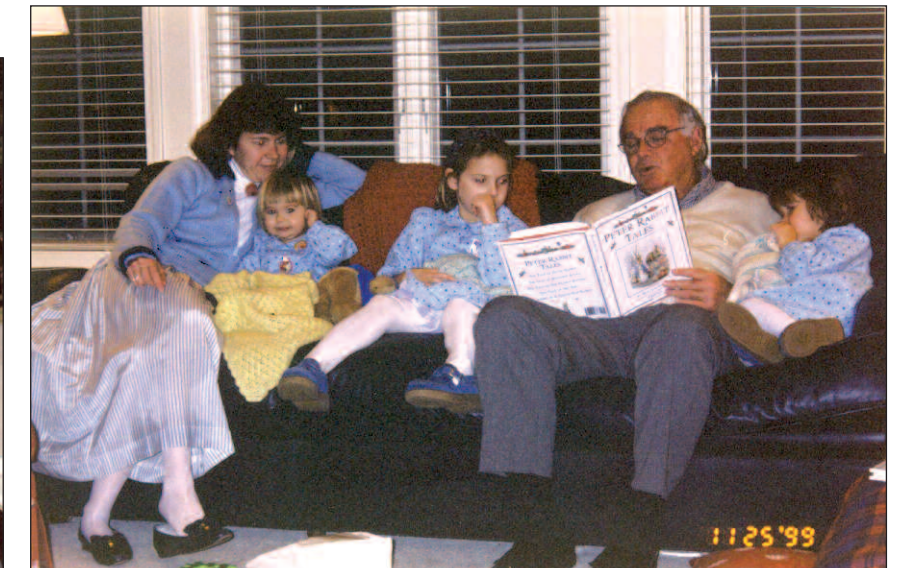
Father John Wade is what the retired priests of the Diocese like to call this year's "poster boy" for the annual effort to encourage contributions to the second collection that will be taken at Christmas Masses to benefit the priest retirement fund.

The Diocese of Tulsa has 20 retired priests, and the fund that supports them is almost \$1.2 million underfunded. Bishop Edward J. Slattery has designated the Christmas second collection as the vehicle by which he hopes to raise an extra \$120,000 over the next 14 years so that the fund can be actuarially sound by the year 2020.

"They continue their generous service in different capacities, but providing for them becomes the responsibility of the Diocese," the Bishop has said.

As the story about Father Wade shows, many of the "retired" priests continue to serve the people, some as senior priests, others as chaplains, and many fill in and celebrate Mass when a pastor is called away.

"We're on call – we're good for the priests because we're around, but we're not on the payroll," Father Wade said.



Father Wade reads to his cousin Wade Freeman Jr.'s children around Thanksgiving 1999 in Kansas City, Kan.