



BECAUSE *we are* CATHOLIC

From Ocean City Police Officer to High Profile Priest

Twenty years ago he was an Ocean City Police detective with thoughts of joining the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Now, Monsignor Steven Hurley is second in command at the Diocese of Wilmington, Delaware, which includes Maryland's Eastern Shore.

After growing up in Southern Maryland, Hurley was studying Computer Science at Salisbury University in 1989 when he got a summer job in the Ocean City Police Department as a booking officer.

"Once I was in that environment it caught on," Hurley said. "At that point I wanted to go into law enforcement. The next summer, I went back and was old enough to be a seasonal officer. When I graduated from college they hired me full-time. I had a great time and learned an awful lot. When you are 21 years old and walking around with a badge and gun, you learn to grow up pretty quickly."

While working his way up the ladder to detective, Hurley returned to Salisbury, earning an MBA and began the process of becoming an FBI agent. During that time, he was also becoming active at St. Luke's Catholic Parish on 99th Street as a lector and Eucharistic minister.

"It was a great foil to the negativity that could sometimes come with what a police officer has to deal with. It counteracted that and grounded me very much. It seemed like the more I volunteered, the more I wanted to do," added Hurley. "At some point, I thought what it would be like being a priest. It was just there. Sometimes people think you have some sort of 'aha' moment. My journey didn't include that experience. It was a culmination of experiences. There was a gentle pull, but it was constant. As much as I tried at the time, it wouldn't go away."



Msg. Steven Hurley as an officer of the Ocean City Police Department (left) and today (right) as Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia for the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington.

Hurley entered the seminary in the fall of 1998 at the age of 29 and was ordained in 2003. He is among many who have spent time in another career before changing for a vocation to the priesthood.

"People think I did a 180 degree turn from law enforcement to priest but it is not. To me, our goal is the same. That is to care for souls. We go about it differently, of course, but our ultimate goal is that notion. I see a lot of similarities," he explained. "When people think of police work they think of shootings and high speed chases, but in Ocean City that is a very small percentage. A lot of what we were doing was talking to people, helping people out of situations. As I look back, some of the most fulfilling moments was assuring folks that things were going to be

okay and being the only friendly face or helping hand that someone had."

Hurley quickly rose through the ranks in Wilmington. He was named chancellor of the diocese in 2010. Four years later, he was promoted to Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia by Bishop Francis Malooly.

"I have been blessed. Things fell into place, being in the right place at the right time," he said. "It has been a wonderful ride. Every day I learn more and more about what it means to be a priest. I had to let go of some things I learned in law enforcement but there are some things I will never forget. For instance, I always sit in a restaurant with my back against a wall."

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MARYLAND SERVES AND ADVOCATES FOR THE POOR, VULNERABLE AND THOSE IN NEED NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE CATHOLIC, BUT BECAUSE WE ARE CATHOLIC.