

Biography of Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Ihemedu

Rev. Emmanuel Ihemedu is the second son and the last born of the seven children born to his parents, Mr. Innocent Ihemedu and Mrs. Cecilia Ihemedu. His parents and siblings live in Nigeria.

Rev. Ihemedu has always believed that a life that does not touch another life in a positive way is a wasted life. This value set, of making a humane difference in the lives of others, came from his parents. Early in life they taught him and siblings that for many the hope of *“being-and-becoming” a valued community member* depends on the ability to respond. For his father, imparting knowledge is one crucial way to unlock the doors of opportunities. This is what motivated him to pursue a career in education and teaching and to encourage his children when they chose to follow likewise. Except for his mother who worked at home, everyone in his family is a career educator of some sort. It is the same underlying philosophy – of touching hearts and changing lives, that moved Rev. Ihemedu to discern a path that joins the human spiritual ministry through a vocation in the Catholic priesthood with a pursuit of further service through counselor education and counseling psychology.

He attended high school seminary in his native country from 1986 to 1992, engaged in a further year of apostolic teaching work, and then entered Seat of Wisdom College Seminary in 1993 to study philosophy.

Because he thought that he was being called to community life, Rev. Ihemedu left the Seat of Wisdom Seminary in 1997 to join the Marians of the Immaculate Conception in Argentina. His affiliation as a Marian lasted just a year. A local Church worker from the U.S. inquired if he might be willing to serve the Church in the United States and, soon, Auxiliary Bishop Peter Rosazza of the Archdiocese of Hartford sought his relocation to the U.S. in January of 2000.

His seminary program resumed anew in Connecticut and took him across the many cities and towns of the Archdiocese of Hartford. Prior to ordination to the priesthood, Rev. Ihemedu held a job in a local pharmacy (Walgreen’s) as a nightshift store manager as well as a second job as a Technical Assistant, CenterEdge Project for the Office of Urban Affairs of the Archdiocese of Hartford where his charge was to help promote greater public understanding of Church efforts to address socio-economic issues and social justice in New Haven area cities and towns.

Following priestly ordination on May 20, 2006, he served as an assistant pastor of Saint Aedan and Saint Brendan Parishes in New Haven for three years. In August of 2009, Archbishop Mansell appointed him the pastor of the two dying and almost pronounced unsustainable multicultural parishes in Hartford, St. Justin and St. Michael. With a committed staff and willing parishioners, he took on the rebirth process which gradually resulted in steady renewal over six years, and thereafter to the successful merger of the two parishes.

During this journey, as some of the blessings that helped teach him how to minister, commune with, and to keep striving along as a member of his communities are: a B.A in Philosophy 2001; M.A. in Moral Theology 2004 and M.Div. in Theology 2006 (from Mount Saint Mary’s University & Seminary); M.S. in Counseling 2012 (Southern Connecticut State University) and a PhD in Counseling Psychology 2018 (University of Connecticut).

On August 21, 2018, Archbishop Leonard Blair appointed him the pastor of Saint John Paul the Great Parish in Torrington Connecticut. Besides his pastoral responsibilities, Rev. Ihemedu is also the chaplain and assistant professor in the department of counseling and applied behavioral studies at the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford. He is also the president of MaryCare (www.marycare.org), an old and reputable fully registered and completely exempt, 501 © 3, US nonprofit organization founded some three decades ago [1986] by Anne bates, a pedigreed New Englander and her father, the late G. Wallace Bates.