

## Novices who entered the USA Midwest Province of the Society of Jesus on August 19, 2017



**Matthew Bjorklund**, 32, was born and raised in St. Paul, Minnesota. He earned a degree in Film & Television Production from Brown College and went on to co-found *Slate of Mind Productions*. He has received awards for his feature film and numerous short films, and has gained attention in the Twin Cities for his work. For the past several years, Matt has worked as a union steward for SEIU and as a political organizer for the DFL House Caucus, along with 15 years of service as a paraprofessional in the public school system. In the spring semester of 2017, he served as a Jesuit *donné* in Detroit, serving those encountering homeless at the Pope Francis Warming Center. He enjoys watching films, sports, reading, writing, and is a fitness enthusiast.



### **Carl Caceres**

Carl Caceres, 28, earned a BA in philosophy and theology/religious studies from the University of Scranton and a Master's in student affairs in higher education from Miami University in Oxford, OH. He has worked as a hall director, academic adviser and most recently as a campus minister, coordinating retreats for students at Xavier University in Cincinnati, OH. Carl is a former tennis player and enjoys cheering on his favorite sports teams, watching thought-provoking films and shooting free throws.



### **Spencer Liechty**

Spencer Liechty, 25, grew up in Indianapolis and graduated from Xavier University in Cincinnati with a bachelor's in political science. After graduating, he was a team leader in AmeriCorps NCCC, worked at a transition housing program, and spent a year serving in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps as a patients' rights advocate at a nonprofit law foundation in San Jose, California. Spencer enjoys learning about social justice issues, playing and watching sports, running, and traveling.



**Michael Pederson**, 27, grew up in Eastern Iowa and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from St. Johns University in Collegeville, MN. Michael then pursued a year of community and volunteer work through Amate House in Chicago. This work led to a more years of community service, teaching in Loyola Marymount University's PLACE Corps program, teaching and earning a graduate degree in secondary education. He is passionate about the environment. He enjoys playing most sports, coaching soccer and wrestling, reading, watching anything narrated by David Attenborough, and learning languages, especially Spanish.



**Conor Sullivan**, 25, is a native of Hingham, Massachusetts. He graduated from the College of the Holy Cross in 2014 with a degree in history and theatre. After college, Conor joined the Jesuit Volunteer Corps and worked at Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in Minneapolis as a gym instructor. Upon completing JVC, he worked for an additional year at Cristo Rey in the assistant principal's office. Matt enjoys puzzles, yard games, podcasts, singing, and Boston sports. Conor also collects flags and plays multiple instruments.



### **Jonathon Wojtkowiak**

Jonathon Wojtkowiak, 23, spent the 2016-2017 academic year as a donné at Red Cloud Indian School, in South Dakota, where he was a P.E. instructor for grades K-8. It was there that he became more familiar with the Jesuit way of life and ministry. During that school year he applied to the Society of Jesus and was accepted. Jonathon spent much of his youth in Gaylord, Michigan and went to college at Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. He graduated from CMU with a bachelor's degree in Economics and Statistics. Jonathon enjoys a wide variety of activities and is always open to trying new things. Jonathon enjoys life, laughs often and during his free time, he can most often be found reading, studying Spanish, writing, or exercising.



### **Matthew Zurcher**

Matthew, 27, grew up in Warren, Pennsylvania. At Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, he initially pursued music composition and conducting before also studying theater, literature, and American cultural history on his way to earning a Bachelor of Humanities and Arts. After brief appointments as a conductor and film critic, Matthew served for two years as a live-in manager at drug and alcohol recovery houses in Northeast Ohio. During this time, he encountered a joyful call to serve the rejected, poor, and incarcerated. He discovered the Jesuits after stumbling on the writings of Anthony De Mello and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. He has spent the last year enjoying Jesuit community, teaching English, and driving a school bus at Red Cloud High School on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Matthew's interests include ice cream, Phish, and songwriting.