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Brother Clinton Reed presents Brother Parker Jordan, kneeling, with the Brotherhood of Hope sword symbolic of "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph 6:17) after his final profession of vows. — Mike Ehrmann photo

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Your next issue will be July 31

Brothers bring community, hope to campus ministry

By John Sutton
Correspondent

Brother Ken Apuzzo doesn't often see many like Brother Parker Jordan.

As a campus minister and a member of the Brotherhood of Hope, Brother Ken usually meets students for the first time

when they get involved with Catholic events on campus, but Brother Parker was different.

From a young age and throughout high school, Brother Parker, a chaplain at The Catholic Center at Rutgers, New Brunswick, encountered the brothers through their ministry at his local parish in Talla-

hassee, Fla. At that time, Brother Ken was serving as the campus minister at Florida State University, also in Tallahassee, which allowed him to get to know Brother Parker and his family.

When it was time for Brother Parker to choose a college, his father told him

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Community fosters faith journeys

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he would help with tuition as long as he attended a college in Florida where the Brotherhood of Hope had a presence. That left Florida State as his only option.

Brother Parker's faith journey kicked into high gear after that decision was made. He had been home-schooled throughout high school, and when he encountered other students who were willing to talk openly about their own prayer lives, it was a revelation.

"Seeing that in the ministry and getting to the brothers through that way, I really grew in a whole new realm of respect for them seeing the fruits of the ministry," Jordan said. "I began to see them in a different light."

Brother Parker took the first step to joining the brotherhood during his college years by becoming an associate for a year. During that time, he got to know the brothers through prayer and experience by living with them for a year.

The formation process continued for Brother Parker with a year at Northeastern University in Boston followed by a year in novitiate. The novice year was a major turning point for Jordan.

"The doubts I had surrounding that year began one-by-one to be answered and brought into another light," he said. "It allowed me to see where the Lord was using them to transform me."

Brother Parker, who made his final vows at Holy Family Parish, Sacred Heart worship site, New Brunswick, July 5, was assigned to Rutgers, where he was reunited with Brother Ken, four years after taking a set of temporary vows year-by-year through the formation process. Brother Ken was serving as the campus minister at Rutgers at that time, and the story behind his own journey to the college may be as remarkable as Brother Parker's.

Brother Ken said his faith journey started at Rutgers as an undergraduate in the 1980s. After a year of some wild times with a fraternity on campus, he found a retreat sponsored by the brotherhood. From there, his journey to the brotherhood really got its start.

"I got on it and it was the first time in my life that I had met young Catholic guys, regular guys all different kinds of guys, but many of them had a personal faith with the Lord that I had just never ever heard of," Brother Ken said. "I just knew you had to go to Mass. By the end of that weekend, their sharings, their witness, that profoundly impacted me."

From that day, Brother Ken's journey with the brotherhood has taken him



Newly-professed Brother Parker Jordan, left, and Brother Ken Apuzzo, members of the Brotherhood of Hope, pose after the ceremony at Mass at Holy Family Parish, Sacred Heart worship site, New Brunswick, July 5.

—Mike Ehrmann photo

to campuses throughout the country to serve as campus minister. His mission is usually the same and somewhat daunting: enter campus and reform Catholic life for students.

That's what he helped do at The Catholic Center at Rutgers. When Brother Ken returned to the ministry eight years ago as a chaplain, he worked with the Oratorian priests who were running The Catholic Center at that time. For a year, they discussed ways to change the ministry by getting out on campus and meeting students rather than waiting for them to come to them. From the first event, a Texas Hold 'Em tournament, Brother Ken saw that the ministry would be reinvigorated.

"If you can find the right thing, get it out there, it can go," said Brother Ken, who is currently stationed at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, where he is working to reinvigorate the campus ministry there. "It wasn't about hold 'em night, but it brought people into the Catholic Center. They met and from there it gave us a springboard to get them to other things we did."

That sense of belonging and family atmosphere that has become such an integral part of the Rutgers Catholic Center is at the heart of the brotherhood's ministry. Brother Parker has experienced this from both sides of the coin. As a student, he was welcomed in and now as a brother, it is his job to bring this welcoming atmosphere to the students he encounters every day.

"This brotherhood is really made for each other," Brother Parker said. "It's about having each other's back. I would say one of the trademarks we really bring is community. And it all comes from our experiences with the love of the Lord."

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