

**FR. NICHOLAS BLACKWELL, O.CARM.**  
**RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

Fr. Nicholas Dustin Blackwell, O. Carm is from Mayville, MI. A small rural town where he was raised as a hunter and fisherman by his family. After graduating high school, he went to Northern Michigan University and earned a bachelor's degree in history with a minor focus in computer information systems. He wanted to be an archivist, yet God had different plans. After graduating, he joined the Peace Corps and served in The Gambia, West Africa. During his service, he was injured and lost a toe. After recovering, he entered the seminary for the Diocese of Saginaw; while at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, MI, he met a group of cloistered Carmelite nuns who introduced him to a woman who would become his big sis' St. Teresa of Avila. Here is where his vocation as a Carmelite began. He entered formation for the St. Elias Province of the Carmelite Order in January 2010. He made his solemn vows in August 2016 and was ordained a priest in 2017. During formation, he earned an STB and MDiv. from CUA in December 2016. In March 2019, he lost his left leg due to previous injuries from his service in West Africa. After losing his leg, he was approved to go on for further studies in Canon Law. He earned his Licentiate in Canon Law (JCL) in August 2023. He is currently studying for a Doctorate in Canon Law (JCD), and his dissertation topic is The Status of Incardination of a Cleric Dismissed from His Religious Institute. He also works as a canonical advisor for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, where he provides canonical assistance and guidance to all bishops in the USA. Fr. Nicholas supplies as a priest at Joint Andrews Airforce Base to support the work of the Archdiocese for Military Service while he resides in DC.