**Katie** (00:00): I understand that you were in the Army. So what branch of Army were you in?

**Father John Himes** (00:04): I was in the field artillery.

**Katie** (00:04): Field artillery?

**Father John Himes** (00:06): Mm-hmm.

**Katie** (00:07): How long were you in the Army?

**Father John Himes** (00:09): 22 years.

**Katie** (00:10): What inspired you to join the Army?

**Father John Himes** (00:14): The first time I joined the Army was the draft board. I was drafted. I served two years, and then I got out of the Army and was a police officer for seven years and decided that I liked being in the Army much more than I liked being a police officer. So back in the Army.

**Katie** (00:36): Were you in any live battles?

**Father John Himes** (00:39): I fought in Vietnam and Desert Storm, Desert Shield and Panama.

**Katie** (00:46): What was it like?

**Father John Himes** (00:52): Intense.

**Katie** (00:54): Very intense.

**Father John Himes** (00:55): Very intense.

**Katie** (00:56): What year did you go home from the Army?

**Father John Himes** (00:59): I retired in 1999.

**Katie** (01:05): 1999. So you were a cop in Washington.

**Father John Himes** (01:07): Mm-hmm.

**Katie** (01:08): Why'd you decide to be a cop?

**Father John Himes** (01:11): Well, that's how I got out of the Army early, because at that time the president, who was Richard Nixon, was offering draftees early outs if they would go into law enforcement. And at that time I wasn't real happy after coming back from Vietnam. So the opportunity to get out of the Army 90 days early to be a police officer appealed to me and I thought I might like the work. So I applied and was accepted in Washington, DC as a police officer. Left 90 days early and went to the police academy.

**Katie** (01:46): What year were you sworn in into the police academy?

**Father John Himes** (01:48): 1970.

**Katie** (01:52): 1970. How long were you a cop?

**Father John Himes** (01:53): About six and a half years.

**Katie** (01:56): Six and a half years?

**Father John Himes** (01:56): Yea.

**Katie** (01:57): What was one of the biggest cases you worked on as a cop?

**Father John Himes** (02:02): Worked a sting operation involving the FBI, New York City police, New York City state troopers, Maryland state police, Alabama, Georgia state police involving expensive cars being stolen in places like New York, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Washington, DC. Then being sent down to Georgia and Alabama to be cut up, put back together again, and then sent to South America to be sold as new cars.

**Katie** (02:36): That's crazy.

**Father John Himes** (02:40): We took a chunk out of the mafia with that.

**Katie** (02:43): That's awesome. What year did you leave?

**Father John Himes** (02:45): '78.

**Katie** (02:46): '78. Why Marshall? Why did you feel called to Marshall, tiny little town?

**Father John Himes** (02:56): I'll tell you, Katie, that's probably the most interesting part of my journey. When I was asked to take the interview here in Marshall, I was also interviewing for a church in Austin and one at Fort Worth. And both my wife and I were very excited about either one of those two prospects. At that time, my mother lived in Fort Worth, my father had died, so that would've made us close to her. Most of my family lives in Northwest Texas, Southwest Oklahoma. So that would've put us closer to our family. But we also liked Austin, and the church was in South Austin, which was an area of Austin we particularly liked.

(03:44): Then the individual who's now our bishop, Andy Doyle, Bishop Doyle was then the canon to the ordinary. I mean, he was the assistant to the bishop at that time. And he told me that he would like me to accept the interview with the search committee for Marshall and I didn't even know where Marshall was. But since I was involved in search with other churches, you do things, sometimes you think you're doing them for practice. I figured it'd be a good experience to be interviewed by as many churches as possible and so I accepted the interview. And normally the interview process for a priest is that three or four people from that church come down to see you. And you may meet with those three or four people and then several weeks later meet with three or four more people. Well, when the team from Marshall came down, it was the entire search committee of 12 people and interviewed. I said, 'I'm going to be who I am, and you folks can take it or leave it, really. I'm not going to put on a dog and pony show for you."

(05:07): But it was a very good interview and I enjoyed the people that were part of the search committee from this parish. And the age spectrum from young to old people, men and women, was a great mix of a search committee. And both Megan and I enjoyed meeting with them and met with them for a day and a half. And a couple weeks later received a call and they asked if we would be willing to come up here for a visit. And since neither Megan and I had ever been up to this part of the state, we said, "Let's go up and see what this town Marshall looks like." So we drove up and spent the weekend. And then the second day we were here, members of the church committee brought us by and showed us the church.

(06:03): And when we saw the church and stepped inside the church, we both knew that this is where God was calling us. We just kind of looked at each other and go, "Why?" But we knew it. And part of that is also, I think God working is he's always given me a passion for ministry outside of urban areas. In one sense, an urban area is a very comfortable place to practice ministry because it's so spread out that you don't have to worry about being really in real close relationships with people. But in a small town, you have to be in relationship with the people who are in your parish. You can't avoid it.

(06:58): The church I was at in Houston, we had parishioners who lived 60 miles away from the church and they'd travel an hour to come to church. The only time you saw them was on Sunday or at a church function. You never saw them during the week. But in a place like Marshall, you see the parishioners every day. You get a chance to really be involved in their lives and their relationship with God. To me, that's one of the foundational aspects of ministry is being involved with the people God has called you to be the shepherd of. Not to simply see him once on Sunday and then not see them again for another week, but to be involved in their lives.

(07:44): I mean, one of the greatest privileges for a minister is to be able to baptize, marry, confirm and even bury the people that they know and love. And in a town like Marshall, serving as a rector at a parish in a town where you get to know the people, your parishioners and other people in the community, calls for very intimate relationships and a great deal of honesty. And I think that's the kind of ministry that our Lord himself tried to live out and lived out in his life. So coming to Marshall was just trying to be obedient to God's call again.

**Katie** (08:31): I also understand that you recently got a PhD.

**Father John Himes** (08:34): Yes.

**Katie** (08:34): What'd you get your PhD in?

**Father John Himes** (08:37): Got it in doctorate in liturgy.

**Katie** (08:42): In liturgy?

**Father John Himes** (08:44): Liturgy.

**Katie** (08:47): Why did you want it?

**Father John Himes** (08:49): I've always been intrigued. Well, I love learning, but I was always intrigued by the way the early church worshiped and how that worship grew over 2000 years and that we worship today very much like the early church. And the early church worshiped very much like the early synagogues of Israel. And how that process of us coming into a relationship with God and then worshiping God, I found fascinating because part of what liturgy is the way that you and I through our worship communicate with God and he communicates with us.

**Katie** (09:38): What made you feel called to be a priest?

**Father John Himes** (09:44): Well, it's not what I had planned for my retirement from the Army.

**Katie** (09:48): It was a big change in the [inaudible 00:09:50].

**Father John Himes** (09:49): Big change. Yeah, it is. And about three years before I retired, I felt that the career that I thought I was going to do after I retired wasn't really what I was wanting to do, what I was programed to do, if you will. Our family had always been a family that was involved in the church that we were going to. And I'd held lay positions of ministry and lay positions of leadership in churches. But it just seemed as I got close to retirement that God had something else in mind for me other than what I thought I wanted to do. And so I began exploring that and recognized that I had to make a decision if I was going to follow this path, well, it had to be a path that also my wife recognized that I was called to. So we both prayed about it for about a year and recognized that, okay, this is indeed the Lord calling us to ministry. And then I began the process of going through the commission on ministry and becoming a postulant and then going off to seminary again for another three years of schooling.

**Katie** (11:18): That's a lot of schooling.

**Father John Himes** (11:20): A lot of schooling. Yeah.

**Katie** (11:24): So what year did you become a priest?

**Father John Himes** (11:26): I was ordained in 2000.