

## **Christopher J. Devron, SJ**

### **Biographical Profile & Curriculum Vitae**

Rev. Christopher Devron, SJ is a Jesuit priest of the USA East Province of the Society of Jesus. The middle of three children, he grew up in Palatine (a northwest suburb of Chicago, Illinois) where he attended public schools until his undergraduate education at the University of Notre Dame. There he earned a Bachelor of Arts, with a double major in philosophy and government, and a concentration in PPE (Philosophy, Politics and Economics).

After being graduated in 1989, Chris moved to New York City to work as a volunteer teacher at Cardinal Spellman High School in the Bronx through a program of the Archdiocese of New York. He returned to Notre Dame to pursue graduate studies in theology, and entered the Society of Jesus in 1991. In 1993, he took first vows and then moved to Chicago to study at Loyola University where he earned a Master of Arts in the history of philosophy.

Between 1995-96, he served as interim executive director of the Inner-City Teaching Corps (ICTC) in Chicago. Founded by Pat Ryan, Jr. in 1993, the ICTC recruits and places recent college graduates as teachers in inner-city schools throughout Chicago. Under the direction of its board of directors, Chris solidified the ICTC's early success as a pilot program so that it could sustain and enhance its mission. He helped create its first advisory board and a partnership with the Loyola University School of Education so that volunteers could receive graduate credit for their professional development as ICTC volunteers. Chris worked closely with the Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of Chicago, principals at more than a dozen inner-city parochial schools on Chicago's west and south sides, and the Big Shoulders Fund. He then led a search to identify a long-term ICTC director.

Returning to New York City for two years (1996-98), he taught at the Gonzaga Middle School Program for Boys in Harlem—a Nativity-Miguel School—and created a scholarship program to assist Gonzaga students attending private high schools. The following year, he was assigned as director of the Loyola Youth Center in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

In 1998, he began graduate studies in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he earned a Master in Divinity at the Weston Jesuit School of Theology. He also earned a Master of Arts in theology with a focus in African American spirituality, through course work at the Harvard Divinity School and the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University (New Orleans, LA). In the summer of 1999, he was appointed a special adjunct professor of sociology at Saint Joseph's University (Philadelphia, PA), where he was part of a team of instructors who taught a summer traveling course on the history and spirituality of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement.

In 2001, he was ordained a Roman Catholic priest at the Fordham University Church (Bronx, NY). For the next six years he worked as the founding director of REACH (Recruiting Excellence for Academics in Catholic High Schools). REACH, an initiative of Regis High School, identifies, recruits and prepares academically gifted middle school boys who could not otherwise afford a Catholic, private secondary education, and assists their families with scholarship opportunities at Regis, Fordham Preparatory School, Xavier High School, The Loyola School and other private high schools in New York City.

Chris interacted with the strategic planning and education committees of the Regis Board of Trustees, regularly presenting to them the development, progress and impact of REACH. REACH—which includes a summer residential component at the University of Scranton (Scranton, PA) and Fordham University (Bronx, NY)—currently enrolls nearly 150 students from every borough. Now twenty years old, REACH has helped dozens of young people from New York City gain access to more than several million dollars in academic scholarships and financial aid at Catholic high schools throughout the city. During his tenure at REACH, Chris also taught theology and worked as a campus minister at Regis; chaired the school's committee on diversity; and developed a mentoring program for REACH students.

In 2008, Chris was appointed the founding president of Christ the King Jesuit College Preparatory School, on Chicago's West side—the 20th Cristo Rey model school opened since the first one (Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood) was founded in 1996. Christ the King is a Catholic Jesuit, independent, coeducational, college preparatory school for students from families on Chicago's west side who would otherwise not have access to a private secondary school education. Sponsored by the USA Midwest Province Jesuits, Christ the King offers students a strong academic and spiritual foundation integrated with a Corporate Work-Study Program in a safe, disciplined, faith-based and caring environment. During his tenure at Christ the King, Chris presided over the construction of its new \$30 million campus facility and steady growth in enrollment, formation of the board of trustees, and faculty and staff.

On March 4, 2011, Chris professed solemn final vows as a Jesuit in the Chapel of St. Ignatius Loyola at Christ the King Jesuit College Prep (Chicago, IL).

In 2013, Chris was appointed the president of Fordham Preparatory School (Bronx, NY). During his eight-year tenure, Chris has led the management team in developing and implementing several strategic priorities, including: sustaining a strong enrollment; more than doubling the school's endowment; developing a partnership with Regis High School to expand REACH; making significant upgrades and renovations to campus facilities; doubling the number of middle income students who receive tuition

assistance; launching a new program in Dignity, Belonging and Justice; and new academic programs and initiatives in STEAM, civics education, and standardized test preparation.

Chris has served on the numerous boards of directors and civic committees including: Loyola Academy (Wilmette, IL); Loyola University Chicago; UNO Charter School Network (Chicago, IL); Regis High School (NY, NY) and the Convent of the Sacred Heart (NY, NY). In 2012, he was appointed by Mayor Rahm Emanuel to serve on the City of Chicago's Commission on Child Safety Zones.

Since being ordained a priest, Chris has served as a weekend associate at the churches of St. Joseph of the Holy Family (Harlem, NY); St. Ignatius Loyola (NY, NY); St. Edmund (Oak Park, IL); Sts. John and Paul (Larchmont, NY) and St. Joseph (Bronxville, NY). He also served as chaplain at The Marymount School (NY, NY) and the Notre Dame Alumni Club of New York City.

Chris has led workshops and retreats on school diversity and inclusion for the Jesuit Schools Network, the New York State Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS), the Canisius High School Board of Trustees (Buffalo, NY) and The Loyola School (NY, NY). He has served as a guest on Fox Business Network to comment on current events in religion. Articles authored by Chris have been published in *America* magazine, the *New York Daily News*, the *Tablet*, the *Journal of Popular Culture* and *BustedHalo.com*. His work has been quoted extensively in several publications, including the *Times of London*.