

Dear friends in Christ,

There was a moment during my Confirmation Mass that came and went, and I forgot all about it, until almost a decade later when I was nearing ordination. I had returned to my seat after Holy Communion and was seated on the aisle. Billie Mazzei, a long-time parishioner who knew just about everybody, stopped by my chair, bent over and asked, “Have you ever thought about being a priest?” I don’t remember what I said. I remember laughing inside and thinking that she should ask my girlfriend that question – who was seated a few rows ahead of me. One or two others maybe had mentioned something similar to me in the prior year or two. But no, it wasn’t something I had ever thought about.

As I said – I completely forgot about it. But God laughs, too, and the Holy Spirit in me was now at work. A year later, and yes, a few more promptings by others, and I had started actively discerning a possible vocation to the priesthood. As I started looking at college, and a few options of majors and life professions, I started to ask, “What does God want me to do with the life He has given me?”

Vocations are callings from God to help us on our way to Heaven. It’s an important question to get right as we want to live with Him. Which means it’s important that we cultivate an environment within our families and community where we encourage our young people in particular to seek God’s calling in their life and promote the goodness of the covenant and sacrament of marriage, priesthood, and religious life.

The Archbishop is asking all of us to share the names of those we think might have a calling to the priesthood or religious life, who will all receive a letter from him. See the separate bulletin article for more information. In whom do you see those qualities that might be the seedbed of a life lived for others? May we encourage one another, and especially our young people, to seek not just God’s presence, but his will and calling in our lives.

In a similar but unrelated vein, there are three degrees of the one sacrament of Holy Orders – deacons, priests and bishops. Universal church law grants deacons, therefore, who are clerics, the permission to wear clerical shirts. Our permanent deacons have not been allowed to historically to avoid confusion. However, the Archbishop is now permitting them to wear gray clerical shirts when engaged in ministry to help aid them as visible signs of God’s presence and work with and for his people. So you might see Deacon Marco in clerics now.

In Christ,
Fr. Matthew Oakland

“Jesus Christ, yesterday and today, the same forever.”