

## RESPONSES TO PRIESTHOOD QUESTIONS:

I am fully aware that many of you did not have your questions answered on Vocation Sunday by Mr. Ed Karels. May I take a moment to try to respond to a few of them.

### 1. How long does it take to be a priest?

Two years of liberal arts in any college that provides these subjects and 4 years in Theological School.

### 2. Why did you want to become a priest?

I wanted to do something that would make a difference in the world. I felt the priesthood would give me that opportunity and it did. It is also a vocation that has many different possibilities. You work with young and old people. You work with city and farm people. You can work with people when they are born and when they die. You have a chance to make it possible for people to get to heaven. You can work in jails, hospitals, nursing homes, teaching High School, grade school. You can even study in Europe or Jerusalem. You can travel extensively. You have access to people in their homes, at the lake, & sometimes they take you on trips with them. You are in touch with different kinds of people...poor & rich...educated and self taught.. I have met the pope personally, shook hands with Dorothy Day, and had Garrison Keillor from Lake Wo-be-gone come to my house in Wilno and visit with me. It is a rewarding vocation, since I am working to save souls. It isn't boring. I never do the same thing every day all day long. I can choose what to do when I want to do it. I love to give a good sermon, talk to grade school children and visit with people. I enjoy it so much to be invited out. People are interesting. You can learn so much from them.

One of the main reasons why I was attracted to it was due to my parents. They loved priests and respected them. My first cousin became a priest in 1950 & that gave me an added incentive. It was the joys of being a priest that attracted me the most.

### 3. Is it hard work?

Sometimes. But it is enjoyable work and that's what makes it easy.

### 4. How many people are there in the Seminary?

In St. Paul there are 65.

### 5. Is it hard to learn?

Not any more. They help you so much. In the past when the seminary had 350 men studying, they couldn't give you the personal attention. But today that is all changed and they give you a great course. If you go to Rome to study you can travel all summer long and help out at Airforce bases to make money for your schooling. Hence you might teach Religion in Spain, Germany, France etc. It's exciting over there.

### 6. What kind of schooling do you get?

You study in a deeper way about God and how He works. You study the Bible, and psychology, and History of the Church, and the laws the Church has to guide it, you will learn Spanish, and if you like there is German, French & Greek along with Latin. That sounds harder than what it really is. The courses are so interesting I now wish I could study even more. I send away for tapes so I can study while I drive the car.

You study with other college students. You are not isolated behind bars. You will probably study at St. Thomas or St. Johns along with others who aren't going to be priests. The Church wants you today to see both worlds before you make that final step. When I went, we could leave campus in the afternoon to go shopping down town or work out at the Gym which has 3 basketball courts, hand ball courts, an Olympic size swimming pool or play football on three fields or Tennis on 6 different courts. It's a great life. And your classmates are the greatest. I still meet with them every 5 years. Last year we met in Arizona. Some of the happiest days of my life were spent in the Seminary. College days are special believe me.

In the evening you can study, attend special lectures of renowned speakers or watch T V in the many T V rooms they have. You aren't locked up.

7. When did you decide to become a priest and was it hard work?

I had it in mind from the Fourth Grade on. I thought it would go away since I wanted to be a pilot. I love flying...may be thats why I drive so fast. I made my final decision when I was a Senior in High School. I told no one since I wanted to go to the prom with LaDonna and I felt if she knew of my decision she might feel awkward going with me. It was a nun by the name of Sister Johnita from the Franciscan Order in Rochester, Mn. who gave me the final push. She took me aside one day from typing class and asked if I had ever considered it. And I said yes. She then put me on the Debate team so I could get experience talking on my feet. I loved debate. The year I debated, the question was, "The Welfare State...Should we have it." I took the negative side and argued against it. I still feel that way today. Oh by the Way, I really enjoyed the Prom! Pa was dead when it happened and Ma left me have the family car. It was a 1951 green Ford. I graduated in 1951 & still wear my graduation ring today.

8. Did you ever have any doubts about going into the seminary?

You bet I did. I had never lived away from home and I was so homesick that first year. I had difficulty with some of the subjects, but my classmates helped me out. They were so good to me. They even took me to their house for Christmas and Easter dinner since it was to far to drive home those days. I also wondered if this was really the life for me. But you know studying for the priesthood gives you many years to decide. Thats one amongst many good things about it. I also wondered if I was good enough to be at a seminary, since I always felt that being a priest was a lofty position. My spiritual director was a wonderful man by the name of Msgr. Hayden. He is now retired but was Pastor of the Cathedral in St. Paul. He once told me that I have one great asset that will help me make it through the seminary and through life. The asset is.."You never give up... you keep on trying." You will do well."

9. How much does it cost to go through the seminary totally? [Rent, Food, Tuition]

It costs \$16,000.00 dollars a year. Multiply that by 6 and you have some idea. However the Diocese has grants and Scholarships to help you. And many people and priests will also help you once they find out you are interested. You may remember the Vietnam family that you once had living in the convent here in Madison. One of their boys became a priest and he was supported by many Madison people. Don't let the dollar sign get in your way.

10. What is the worst thing about being in the seminary?

I hate that question. It is so negative. This answer may surprise you but I had two worse things about the seminary. One was how much more I wanted to learn and how little time I had to do it. The other was leaving all my classmates behind on ordination day knowing that I probably wouldn't see them again. They came from New York, Montana, Kentucky, Iowa, North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Nebraska & Michigan. I also hated to leave a great school with wonderful teachers. We had a curfew at 10 p.m. but they no longer keep that. That I didn't care for. And in my time we got up at 6:15 a.m. which they no longer do.

11. How do you explain Evolution vs Adam & Eve.

As a Catholic you may believe in Evolution or the parable of Adam & Eve. If you wish to accept Evolution, you must accept the fact that God created the first matter, regardless of what it is. Then you must accept the fact that as this matter evolved and developed and finally became man & women...at that point God created in it a soul, which gave it life. You cannot accept evolution without a Supreme Being in charge of it all the way and guiding it.

[I have absolutely no idea what this has to do with the Priesthood!]